

New Content From *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

June 09, 2022



[The Sweet Spot: When Children’s Developing Abilities, Brains, and Knowledge Make Them Better Learners Than Adults](#)

Samantha Gualtieri and Amy S. Finn

Gualtieri and Finn outline the instances in which young children outperform older children and adults across domains, including mastering language, using probabilistic information, detecting causal relations, remembering certain information, and even solving problems. They then examine how children’s reduced cognitive abilities, ongoing brain development, more limited prior knowledge, and heightened tendency to explore may benefit their cognitive performance. They hold that considering all of these factors together is essential for understanding the ways in which children’s learning is unique and that science has much to learn from a careful consideration of childhood.

[Measuring Racial Discrimination Remotely: A Contemporary Review of Unobtrusive Measures](#)

Samantha J. Kellar and Erika V. Hall

Kellar and Hall discuss how to adapt classic face-to-face measures to remote/online platforms and provide recommendations for implementing unobtrusive measures—those that assess a participant’s discriminatory action without their knowledge that the specific discriminatory action is under observation—into remote examinations of discrimination. They address the pattern of socially desirable responding in examinations of racial discrimination, in which participants are particularly determined to present themselves as ethical and moral. Kellar and Hall analyze the concern that remote platforms may foster inauthentic participant responses and review unobtrusive studies, discussing how unobtrusive measures have changed over time.

[Well-Being Science for Teaching and the General Public](#)

William Tov, Derrick Wirtz, Kostadin Kushlev, Robert Biswas-Diener, and Ed Diener

Tov and colleagues present an overview of eight findings from well-being research that they believe

teachers and authors should consider when covering well-being in the classroom and in material for the public in general. These findings include the benefits of well-being, cultural and societal diversity in well-being, processes such as adaptation, and influences such as income. They also explored the prevalence of these topics in 15 of the most popular introductory psychology textbooks. Nearly all discussed some of these topics, such as social relationships and well-being, but there was less frequent coverage of other topics, including the impact of culture and society.

[Psychological Selfishness](#)

Ryan W. Carlson, Chance Adkins, M. J. Crockett, and Margaret S. Clark

Carlson and colleagues propose a framework in which selfishness is seen as a psychological construction. According to this framework, people perceive selfishness when they detect someone's situation-specific desire to benefit the self as disregarding others' desires and the situation's prevailing social expectations. The authors argue that detecting and deterring such psychological selfishness in both oneself and others facilitates the maintenance of social cohesion and close relationships. They also show how using this psychological framework may promote coherence in interdisciplinary research on selfishness and provide insights for interventions to prevent or remediate its negative effects.

[A Community-Embedded Implementation Model for Mental-Health Interventions: Reaching the Hardest to Reach](#)

Eve S. Puffer and David Ayuku

The mental-health-care treatment gap remains very large in low-resource communities. Puffer and Ayuku propose an implementation model—the community-embedded model (CEM)—to expand access to and address the burden of mental-health disorders. Key elements of the CEM include (a) embedding the model in an existing, community-based social setting; (b) delivering prevention and treatment in tandem; (c) using multiproblem interventions; (d) delivering treatment through lay providers within the social setting; and (e) facilitating relationships between community settings and external systems of care. They use a case study to illustrate the application of the CEM within the social setting of religious congregations in Kenya.

[Understanding the Magnitude of Psychological Differences Between Women and Men Requires Seeing the Forest and the Trees](#)

Alice H. Eagly and William Revelle

Whether women and men are psychologically similar or different is a contentious issue in psychological science. This article demonstrates that larger and smaller sex/gender differences might reflect different ways of organizing the same data. For single psychological constructs, larger differences emerge from averaging multiple components that differ by sex/gender to produce measures of the construct's overall typicality for each sex/gender. For example, averaging self-ratings on personality traits yields larger sex/gender differences on measures of femininity and masculinity relative to differences in their components. These analyses encourage researchers to recognize that in psychological data, sex/gender similarities and differences are interdependent.

[Toward a New Science of Psychedelic Social Psychology: The Effects of MDMA \(Ecstasy\) on Social Connection](#)

Sonja Lyubomirsky

Lyubomirsky proposes that social psychologists have much to gain by incorporating psychoactive substances into their research programs. She uses MDMA, a manmade stimulant and psychedelic drug that is currently illegal, as an example. MDMA allows investigators to isolate the psychological mechanisms—and brain pathways—underlying felt social connection and thus to reveal what should be targeted in future (nondrug) studies. Lyubomirsky introduces a conceptual model that presents psychological mechanisms that MDMA stimulates (lowered fear, increased sociability, more chemistry), as well as its potential long-term impacts (improved relationships, reduced loneliness, stronger therapeutic alliances). She discusses promising research areas for building a new science of psychedelic social psychology that ultimately might inform interventions to directly improve people's lives.

[Neoliberalism and the Ideological Construction of Equity Beliefs](#)

Shahrazad Goudarzi, Vivienne Badaan, and Eric D. Knowles

Distributive beliefs based on equity (rewards proportionate to merit) have dominated research into how people evaluate the fairness of resource distributions, to the detriment of beliefs based on need (distributions are proportioned according to individuals' needs) and equality (distributions are equal for all). However, Goudarzi and colleagues review research suggesting that distributive beliefs vary across developmental stages, persons, cultures, and economic structures. They present data from more than 160 countries indicating that neoliberal economic structures—the globally dominant socioeconomic model that advocates for privatization, abolition of the welfare state, and curtailment of redistributive programs—contribute to equity-based distributive beliefs. This suggests that distributive beliefs can result from ideologies and are contingent on the socioeconomic and historical contexts in which people are embedded.

[Taking Stock and Moving Forward: A Personalized Perspective on Mixed Emotions](#)

Melody M. Moore and Elizabeth A. Martin

Moore and Martin provide an overview of the literature on mixed emotions and discuss factors contributing to the lack of integration within and between fields. They propose an organizing framework for the literature on the basis of two goals: solving the bipolar–bivariate debate (positive and negative emotion are bipolar endpoints of a single valence dimension, rather than separate dimensions) and understanding the subjective experience of mixed emotions. They present an individual-focused personalized perspective that can be used when studying the subjective experience of mixed emotions and emphasize the importance of assessing both state and trait emotions and contexts.

[Adopted Utility Calculus: Origins of a Concept of Social Affiliation](#)

Lindsey J. Powell

Powell proposes that the concept of social affiliation, available in infancy, is based on the extent to which individuals evaluate the goals and needs of others. This proposal grounds affiliation in intuitive psychology as formalized in the naive-utility-calculus model. This model describes how an observer expects an actor to calculate the utility (or value) of an action as the difference between the outcome's expected reward and the action's expected cost. Thinking of social affiliation within the naive-utility-calculus model can account for findings from studies of infants' social-affiliation reasoning without the

need of using additional innate mechanisms (e.g., moral sense). Powell discusses how this conceptualization might be relevant to social reasoning and learning across the life span.