

Encouraging Diversity in Psychology

September 30, 2014

October 2014 Student Notebook Announcements

Student Research. Are you in the initial development stages of your research? Apply for the [APS Student Research Grant Competition](#). Applications are due by November 16.

Research on diversity should inform our actions as educators, clinicians, and members of the workplace. APS and its Student Caucus (APSSC) have an ongoing commitment to encouraging research on diversity.

As part of this commitment, the RISE competition was created in 1999 by the APSSC to encourage research on socially and economically underrepresented groups. Since then, 56 students have been selected as RISE Research Award (RRA) winners. As the RISE Coordinator, I would like to expand upon what research projects would be most suited for this award. I will draw examples from my personal research, past RRA winners, and other scholarly sources.

Pamela Hays's (1996, 2008) "ADDRESSING" model is used as a framework to reflect sociocultural diversity and to determine appropriate research projects eligible for the RRA. According to Hays, consideration of **age**, developmental **disabilities**, acquired **disabilities**, **religion**, **ethnicity**, **sexual orientation**, **socioeconomic status**, **indigenous group membership**, **nationality**, and **gender** contributes to a complete understanding of cultural identity. Each factor can help researchers understand underrepresented groups and oppressive forces.

ADDRESSING Model and the RRA

Age. Research on prejudice against children, adolescents, and older adults is appropriate for RRA consideration. **Paul J. Schroeder, III**, a 2010 RRA winner, examined working memory in older adults using unrelated and story-based contexts. He found story-based contexts were useful in the completion of working memory tasks. Similarly, **Igor Grossmann**, a 2008 winner, explored whether older adults used more dialectical principles than younger adults. Dialectical thinking was higher among older adults but was not associated with other cognitive processes. He subsequently published several articles on this topic (Grossmann, Karasawa, Kan, & Kitayama, 2014; Kross & Grossmann, 2012).

Developmental Disabilities and Acquired Disabilities. Intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and cerebral palsy are examples of congenital disabilities, whereas the effects of multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury, and amputation are examples of acquired disabilities, according to Hays's model. No RRA winners have focused on developmental disabilities, but several winning projects have focused on the impact of acquired disabilities. **Bridget R. Jeter**, a 2012 winner, explored the relationship among hope, stress, and depression in patients with multiple sclerosis. Increased hope

was associated with lower stress and depression. As such, hopefulness might be used as part of a treatment plan to promote self-efficacy among chronically ill patients and reduce various psychological disorders in that population. **Gloria Luong**, a 2009 winner, explored socioemotional functioning among individuals with spinal cord injury and found that older adults reported fewer negative social and emotional experiences.

Religious Minority Groups. Research on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, or the psychological processes of religious minority groups are examples of studies that would be appropriate for submission. No RRA winners have come from this domain; nevertheless, since it is one of my research areas, I will offer examples. I have written about the importance of providing culturally appropriate psychotherapy for Jewish clients by viewing them as both ethnically and religiously heterogeneous (Kaplin, 2013). In my doctoral study, I examined the relationship between religiosity and substance use in the Jewish community and found that substance-use rates decreased as a function of religious belief and practice (Kaplin, 2014).

Ethnic Minorities. APSSC encourages students to submit research on racism and disparate treatment of ethnic minorities. **Jennifer Duckworth**, a 2013 winner, explored the relationship among race/ethnicity, childhood weight, and substance use. She found that underweight males were at decreased risk of early drinking and cannabis use, while obesity was much less predictive of early cannabis use among African American females than among White females. **Allison L. Skinner**, a 2011 winner, examined whether a driver's race (Arab vs. Caucasian) was tied to blame for an auto accident. She found that participants blamed the Arab driver more than they blamed the Caucasian driver, with males attributing more blame than females.

Socioeconomic Status. Studies examining individuals who face socioeconomic challenges such as less education, lower income, or low-paying occupations are examples of research in this domain. **DeLeon L. Gray**, a 2008 winner, explored the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as a tool to examine predictors of condom negotiation efficacy (i.e., ability to persuade sexual partners to use a condom). He found TRA was useful in predicting condom use among low-income youth. Similarly, **Nicole J. Walden**, a 2007 winner, explored how family obligation can reduce life stressors and negative outcomes in low-income families. Socioeconomically disadvantaged youth reported similar family obligation across ethnic groups, and family obligation was associated with fewer life stressors and suspensions and less subsequent delinquency.

Sexual Orientation. Research on heterosexism, homophobia, and challenges for LGBT community members are examples of appropriate research topics. **Gal Slonim**, a 2012 RRA winner and past RISE Coordinator, was interested in how sexual stereotypes affect stereotypes of singles. Single targets, in general, were perceived in a negative light. When study participants were informed of targets' sexual orientations, the difference between ratings of coupled and single targets was largest when the sexual orientation of the participant and the target was the same. **Laurie Messerli**, a 2006 winner, studied sexual orientation and expert testimony. She found that expert testimony worked equally well to assist jurors in understanding imminent danger and the use of self-defense regardless of whether the person on trial was heterosexual or homosexual. Jurors were more inclined to believe allegations of learned helplessness involving homosexual couples than they were inclined to believe similar allegations involving heterosexual couples.

Indigenous Populations. Research on native populations, such as the Native American and Alaskan Native populations, would be highly relevant for this award. **Sonika K. Ung**, a 2014 RISE Competition winner, researched health disparities in cultural minority populations, working with Native American and mainstream type 2 diabetes patients in Chile. Using structural equation modeling, she found that cultural beliefs and self-efficacy played a role in nutrition adherence among native Mapuches and non-Mapuches.

National Origin. Research on refugees, immigrants, and international populations are examples of topics related to national origin. **Stephen M. Chen**, a 2010 winner, examined bicultural identity in Chinese-American immigrant mothers and their children. He sought to measure how emotional expression and “display rules” (i.e., cultural norms regarding when and where it is appropriate to express one’s emotions) relate to the development of a more Americanized identity. Increased emotional expressivity was found to be positively associated with specific domains of American cultural orientation. Similarly, **Alaina Brenick**, a 2007 winner, explored stereotypes of Palestinians, Israelis (Israeli-Jewish or Israeli-Palestinian), and Jordanians as a basis for intergroup exclusion. She found that differences in country, customs, and language can be used to either include or exclude members of an outgroup. These differences were greatest among Palestinian children. However, most children used prosocial moral reasoning, regardless of nationality.

Gender. Research on sexism or gender-based issues is a good choice for submission to the RISE competition. **Sophia Edukere Green**, a 2014 winner, conducted research on the relationship among maternal stress, depression, and anxiety in neonates. Increased social support and coping among expectant mothers were inversely related to Neonatal Behavioral Assessment Scale scores on autonomic stability, habituation, motor development, and regulation of state at birth and 4 weeks later. **Sylvia P. Perry**, a 2006 winner, examined how coping styles relate to female math performance and found that defensive pessimism led to higher math performance for participants primed with a stereotype.

Concluding Remarks

As is evident from these 15 projects, RISE Award projects reflect a wide range of research on socially and economically underrepresented groups across several areas. Winners of the RISE Award have gone on to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals, accept academic positions, and embark on remarkable careers. If you have any questions about this article or the RISE Research Award, please feel free to [contact me](#). æ

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