

September 2016 - May 2017

Research Seminar Series 180

Swarm robotics: a tool to study collective behaviours in biological systems

Dr. Eliseo Ferrante
Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Swarm robotics studies the design of collective behaviours for swarms of robots, that is, it tries to understand how individual robots should behave and interact with each other in such a way as to achieve a collective-level, emergent behaviour. Swarm robotics has both a scientific as well as an engineering soul. From a scientific perspective, it aims at using robots as a model of real living organisms that live in groups, such as ants, bees, birds, fish, in order to understand key behavioural properties that lead to their self-organisation, and how and why such behaviours evolved. From an engineering perspective, the goal is to use this understanding to design robots with minimal hardware and communication requirements, in order to use their emergent self-organising collective behaviour to solve problems in large unstructured and unpredictable environments. In this talk, after giving a short overview on the research projects I worked on, I will specifically focus on one that has been carried out at the interface between robotics and evolutionary biology. I will present a study on the evolution of task specialisation and task partitioning in robot and ants societies. In this study, using computer simulations, we evolved for the first time the task allocation mechanism as well as the individual behaviour needed to carry out the individual sub-tasks in a foraging scenario inspired by leaf-cutter ants. I will show the implications of my studies on both engineering and biology.

Research Seminar Series 181

Do you need some TLC?

Kay Sanderson, Douglas Russell, Glenys Henry, Samantha Roberts, Alveena Javed, Sudipa Majumdar, Lucyann Kerry, Damien Riviez, Faiza Umar, Jaspreet Singh Sethi, Abigail Cruz
Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Teaching and learning is at the heart of what we do and through our daily practice in the classroom and our research activities and events and competitions, we strive to achieve the objectives of the Academic Strategy set out by Middlesex London, 2015-17. The Teaching and Learning Committee has been established to help us support these objectives and to assist in the development of our own Teaching and Learning strategy. Our aim is to foster a more nurturing, creative and smart learning and working environment for both students and staff alike. Our focus is on successful change initiatives, by incorporating both vision and reflection in our daily practice. Therefore, fostering a move towards effective practitioners, who are supported by smart systems, which will enable them to enhance students learning and employability, whilst developing their own PD and movement on the career ladder. During this seminar we will provide a brief overview of the initial four projects being developed by the TLC and each team will expand on the reasoning behind them and the benefits attached. There will be an opportunity at the end of the seminar for a short discussion and for you to submit your ideas for future projects.

Research Seminar Series 182

Being Fit and Feeling Pleased: The Mediational Role of Physical Self- Efficacy in Women of the United Arab Emirates

Magdalena Mosanya

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Objective: High prevalence of mood disorders among women in the United Arab Emirates might be derived from low levels of physical activity. The present study aimed to explore the underlying mechanism through which physical activity affects mood by examining the possible mediating role of physical self-efficacy. Design: A cross-sectional investigation was performed on a population opportunistically sampled among women in the UAE ($n = 160$). Main Outcome Measures: The analysis was based on the Baron and Kenny (1986) four steps mediation model which allowed the identification of the mediation effect through a series of simple and multiple linear regression analyses. Results: The results confirmed that physical self-efficacy mediates the relationship between physical activity and mood but only partially. Conclusions: In consequence, exercise-based interventions designed to improve mood should also include physical self-efficacy enhancement, as this may constitute a complementary mechanism of mood regulation. Implications for women in the UAE are discussed in light of such results.

Research Seminar Series 183

Developing a System for and Applications with Full Body Ownership of a Humanoid Robot

Sameer Kishore

University of Barcelona

Abstract

It has been shown that with appropriate multisensory stimulation an illusion of owning an artificial object as part of their own body can be induced in people. Such body ownership illusions have been shown to occur with artificial limbs, such as rubber hands, and even entire artificial or virtual bodies. In our research, we aim to apply this phenomenon of full body ownership illusions in the context of humanoid robots, and develop real-world applications where this technology could be beneficial. In this talk, after giving a brief introduction about the concept of body ownership illusions, I will describe the system that we have developed, where a user is embodied in a humanoid robot that is present in a different physical location, and can use this robotic body to interact with the remote environment as if they were physically present in that location. This is carried out by fusing the multisensory data of the visitor with the robot, thereby transforming the visitor's 'consciousness' to the robot's body. In particular, the focus of the talk will be on one specific application that was developed for the purposes of 'Tele-Immersive Journalism' where a combination of virtual reality and robotics was used to beam a physical representation of a journalist from Los

Angeles to Barcelona, where they could conduct interviews and moderate a debate among students while embodied in a robot.

Research Seminar Series 184

Commercial Surrogacy in India: Ban or Regulate?
Professor Ajit Karnik
Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Surrogacy is understood as a situation when a woman carries and gives birth to a baby for the couple which wants to have a child. There are two kinds of surrogacy: Altruistic (where the surrogate mother receives no monetary compensation) and Commercial (where the surrogate mother receives monetary compensation beyond the medical expenses involved). Most countries have banned surrogacy (e.g. France and Germany) while others permit only altruistic surrogacy (e.g. Australia and the UK). Commercial surrogacy is still legal in some countries such as India and Thailand. However, the Government of India proposes to introduce legislation that will ban commercial surrogacy in India. This, it is expected, will eliminate the surrogacy market and protect the welfare of potential surrogate mothers. This note discusses the fears that are associated with the welfare of surrogate mothers such as exploitation, inability to give informed consent and threats to their mental and physical health. However, I question the efficacy of a ban as a means of protecting surrogate mothers since an illegal market for such transactions will, inevitably, emerge and compromise their welfare even further. I argue that government intervention in the form of better regulation will likely serve the purpose far better.

Research Seminar Series 185

Dubai, City of Life: Striding Two Worlds

Evelyn Stubbs

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

This presentation examines the techniques employed by Arab film directors in speaking back to negative stereotyping of Arabs in Hollywood film. It discusses the film *City of Life* (dir. Mostafa, 2009: UAE: Filmworks) within the milieu of postmodernism. The “city of life” Dubai strides across two worlds: the postmodern, fast paced world of hyperreal artefacts and the traditional world of conservative family values and religion. These domains are both evident in the film and are analysed within the framework of Baudrillard’s *simulacra* (2010) and Lyotard’s *grand narratives* (1986). Viewed from a postmodern perspective, Dubai as reflected in *City of Life* is therefore a city of contradictions and juxtapositions, which is symptomatic of the playful signification so evident in postmodernism. The film opens up the opportunity of viewing lifestyles of Arabs and expats in a manner that is often at odds with the more stereotypical representations offered by Hollywood.

Research Seminar Series 186

'Engendered' well-being. The importance of being content with one's gender identity.

Douglas Russell

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

This presentation will focus on presenting historic and contemporary measures of gender identity in an interactive way, as well as presenting recent findings of a study investigating how gender identity affects individuals' psychological well-being. Recent updates to measurements of gender identity take into account personal and public gender models and the effect of gender stereotypes on behavior. Contemporary studies identifying links between gender and psychological well-being are merited. Research investigating children's developing identity and well-being has found gender typicality to be a significant predictor of self-worth and adjustment whilst studies on adults have found the same to be predictive of self-esteem. The current study identifies a shift in the 21st century in the effect gender identity has on psychological well-being across age groups, implying the need for appropriate psychoeducation regarding gender and well-being both in adolescence and adulthood.

Research Seminar Series 187

An American in Pyongyang: A photo essay of a tourist to North Korea

Dr. Cody Morris Paris

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

In the summer of 2014, I traveled to Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea during my holiday. I spent a total of six days on tour. In this photo essay, I will provide a glimpse at life in Pyongyang and provide reflections on my experiences. Kim Jong Un and the DPRK have invested heavily to develop its tourism infrastructure with hopes of attracting upwards of 2 million international tourists (mostly from China) by 2020. Currently, there are about 100,000 tourists visiting the DPRK annually of those only about 5-6000 are non-Chinese tourists.

Research Seminar Series 188

An Exploratory Study of Undergraduate Students' Learning from Case Study Competitions in the United Arab Emirates

Muneeza Shoaib, Vijaya Kumar, and Neelofer Mashood

Abstract

This exploratory study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of case study competitions as learning tools from the perspective of undergraduate students who have already participated in such competitions in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study considers the affective, cognitive and skills development aspects of learning. Quantitative data is collected by surveying undergraduate students from various universities in the UAE who participated in any case study competition. This is done to understand the cognitive, affective, and skill development these students perceive to derive from participating in such competitions. The data is analysed with the help of frequency tables and descriptive statistics. The findings of the study affirm the benefits of the case method in promoting student learning and engagement even in a competitive environment. Most dimensions of the learning exhibit high mean scores and low standard deviation suggesting that the participants perceive case study competitions to have a positive impact on their learning and skills development. However, it is evident that the participants did not like the ambiguity associated with having to make decisions with incomplete information, especially in a competitive context. Moreover, they find library, referencing, and writing skills less vital to the learning process in case study competitions. The findings of this exploratory study are beneficial for educational institutions, professional bodies, and companies for the purpose of student learning and teaching, development of transferable and employability skills, and knowledge transfer between industry and academia in the UAE. The findings may also provide some insights to the organizers of such events and facilitate them in designing their marketing campaigns surrounding case study competitions. The education literature clearly highlights the benefits of the case method for active and experiential learning. Despite the increasing number of local, regional and global competitions, the larger number of graduates, and an extremely competitive work environment, the efficacy of such events in the various domains of learning has not been explored. This study aims to fill that gap.

Research Seminar Series 189

Fostering a Reading Motivational Environment for K-3 Students

Nuzhat Dawood

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

This presentation includes a review of literature that focuses on the fundamental factors of reading motivation and some of its effective strategies of creating classroom cultures that foster reading motivation for K-3 Arabic school students in the Middle Eastern countries. Although the study focused reading motivation of children in the United Arab Emirates but it will help teachers and parents in any country because student motivational factors are universal. It also includes a section on the activities of (a) building self-esteem, and (b) instructional motivation for students. These activities are designed to help create opportunities

for children to build vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, prediction, inferring, and many other skills which will ultimately help them in the development of reading motivation. The conclusions indicate that teacher's positive attitudes, parent's involvement, stimulating classroom environments, library facilities, self-efficacy, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are all responsible for the development of reading motivation in children.

Research Seminar Series 190

Borat Revisited: Film, Image Building, and Emerging Tourism in Kazakhstan

Lucyann Kerry

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

This research examines the relationship of film representations with an emerging tourism in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. It argues that films depicting Kazakhstan will support the future development of tourism's potential in the Central Asian country. I further argue that the film industry's globalization processes of production, distribution and exhibition are interconnected with this tourism development and serve as an effective promotional strategy. Although the film *Borat* (2006) made fun of an imaginary Kazakhstan, the country had responded to these misrepresentations with an image building multi-million dollar 'Heart of Eurasia' campaign and the production of feature films showing the country's mythic past. As the only Central Asian country to be nominated for an academy award with the Genghis Khan biography 'Mongol' in 2008 Kazakhstan has used film to counter what it perceived as negative representations. It has a well-developed film production infrastructure and a government commitment to fund production. Yet recently it has also come to realize that *Borat* has had a positive influence and boosted its tourism.

Although tourism in Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic and the ninth-largest country by area, has been largely underdeveloped, its government has now started a tourism initiative, 'Tourism Industry Development Plan 2020'. Its goals include seeking investment, the creation of new jobs in a tourism industry and increasing tourism's contribution to the country's GDP. This is at a time when it is launching a ten part television series *Kazakh Khanate*, based on *Game of Thrones*, as a 'visual extravaganza' of its history and the establishment of the first Khanate in 1465. Targeting Chinese, Turkish, and English speaking markets, this series may generate appealing representations for the growth of tourism. The research for this paper uses an analysis of industry trade press and industry data for production, exhibition and distribution within a theoretical framework of Tomlinson's theory of globalization and culture. This theory is based on the conceptualization of cultural representations and economy as forming complex connectivities in global markets. This research analyzes these connectivities to better understand the synergistic relationship of film and the tourism. It concludes that new film representations may have a positive influence for tourism growth in Kazakhstan.

Research Seminar Series 191

Impressing for Success: A Gendered Analysis of a Key Social Capital Accumulation Strategy

Savita Kumra

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Social capital theory assesses the career benefits that accrue to individuals from the stock of relationships they have. Such benefits can be in the form of guidance and advice, access to key projects and assignments and help with setting up business deals. However, when assessing whether such career-enhancing resources are available equally to men and women, we find that gender impacts on the access to and accumulation of social capital. The article seeks to address two key research questions. The first is whether women are aware of the need to accumulate social capital to advance their careers and the second is whether they use impression management techniques in order to assist them in doing this. Findings are reported from a study in an international consulting firm with 19 female consultants. In respect of research question one the findings indicate that women in the sample are aware of the need to accumulate social capital to advance their careers; with particular emphasis being placed on the importance of gaining access to influential sponsors. In respect of research question two, the findings confirm that women in the sample do perceive the necessity to utilise impression management techniques to help them to accumulate social capital. This is done in a defensive way and is linked to ensuring that one is seen as ambitious, likable and available. It is argued that these are key organizational norms, and it is perceived that in order to accumulate social capital, women need to actively work to dispel the negative stereotypes that attach to them because of their gender. The article calls for greater recognition of the impact that masculine organizational cultures have on the career development of women, who not only have to perform at a high level but are also required to expend additional energy conforming to masculine organizational cultures they have had little say in creating.

Research Seminar Series 192

Short term Investment Opportunities in Emerging Markets

Rajesh Mohnot

Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

Stock market returns have constantly been attractive, especially in developed countries, and this is one of the reasons everyone likes to invest in this market. If historical facts and figures are reviewed, it is evident that stock market returns have been double digits in many decades since 1900. Stock markets in developed countries, especially the US, returned around 10% in 1900s, 15% in 1920s, 19% in 1950s, 18% in 1980s and 1990s, and 16% in 2010-13. More importantly, these stock market returns have historically outperformed corporate bonds and treasury bills returns. It has always been a field of inquiry for individual and institutional investors to observe the past behavior of stock prices in order to determine their probable future course of movement. While technical stock analysts use graphs to predict the future movement of stock prices, fundamentalists more often consider the economic, industry, and company-specific factors to rationally predict the future movements of stock prices. Both have succeeded in the past in indicating future value of stocks, but not

always. This research is a work-in-progress study which aims to investigate whether short-term opportunities exist in emerging markets. Risk-return profile will be examined using the Sharpe model in order to find which time horizons provide better returns. The research also attempts to find out if time varying characteristics across different time horizons can be predicted, and if investors can explore short-term opportunities around them.

Research Seminar Series 193

A Case Study in Human Centred Visualisation: Principles, Questions and Inspirations
Simon Attfield
Middlesex University London

Abstract

Interactive visualisations are tools which are intended to help users explore data in the interests of deriving insight. Designing the right information visualisation for a given user-problem however remains as much an art as it is science. In this talk, I will walk through the problem, design and evaluation of a visualisation tool for patterns of life analysis. I will show how some general principles as well as some less general principles were brought to bear on design decisions and how inspiration also arrived from an artist's videos of flocking birds. One of the questions I will engage with is whether the use of animation in visualisation can provide analytic advantage. I also report an experimental evaluation of the system with users which addressed some questions of user performance and user experience with the system.

Research Seminar Series 194

Hiring Trends and Employability Skills for Job Aspirants in UAE: An empirical study
Shanthi Rajan
Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

In a diverse and global business environment such as United Arab Emirates (UAE), organisations are constantly confronting challenges with attracting and retaining skilled manpower. Employers and graduates have different expectations of the work place. Expectations of graduates' getting work placement purely lies with the belief that they have acquired essential knowledge, skills and abilities to perform well at work, whereas, employers' expectations about educational institutions are that it will provide students with fundamental skills and workplace competencies for them to perform well. A recent report on UAE HR trends and employability assert that organisations are on the lookout for knowledgeable professionals who are both job and organization fit. Given the importance of UAE's vision (NQA framework) which is '*to build a UAE education and training system that includes vocational education and training and improves its relationship with the economy and labour market*' the purpose of this paper is to explore the relevance and workplace demands of employability of college graduates. In order to identify the gap and expectations and chalk out effective strategies, this research will focus on collecting data from the banking industry. The findings will reveal the importance of focusing on certain essential foundation skills as well as workplace behavioral competencies that could enhance employability of college graduates. Further, it will also recommend the importance of continuous communication that needs to be maintained between industry and academia as lack of communication could lead to a void in terms of understanding the changing demands of the industry thereby restricting academic institutions to update their academic contents to enhance employability.

Research Seminar Series 195

Semantic Integration and Dissemination of Medical Information

Aisha Naseer

Sahara Innovations Limited / Fujitsu Laboratories of Europe Limited

Abstract

Healthcare data and medical information need to be seamlessly accessible and available at all times to the various healthcare stakeholders. Inability to share, integrate and access critical healthcare information is a challenge for the healthcare IT. Moreover, semantic interoperability of health-related heterogeneous data sources is a challenging issue and HealthGrids are expected to address this challenge in a systematic manner. This research talk presents a novel architecture: ASIDS (Architecture for Semantic Integration of Data Sources), a potential candidate for solving the challenge of semantic interoperability of geographically distributed heterogeneous data sources. ASIDS has three main components that are loosely coupled (through interfaces) in a distributed manner. This architecture sets the basis for future research in terms of implementing a HealthGrid application in real environments.

Research Seminar Series 196

Gender and Employability in the GCC: Looking Forward?

Mona Hamade

Unity for Global Development

Abstract

There is a strong correlation matching the skills of graduates and their entry into the labour market. Bridging the gap between soft skills in higher education and what's needed in the labour market will unlock the potential of human capital across the GCC. This presentation is part of a larger research based on my PhD thesis findings at the University of Cambridge Centre for Gender Studies, my current book on Gender and the Workforce in the UAE, and Career Development Workshops. It seeks to elucidate the main barriers – structural, institutional, and normative – to women's educational attainment and enhanced economic participation in GCC countries. It will explore policies and practical measures to promote more "female-inclusive growth" throughout the region. This talk seeks to shed light on the need to translate high number of graduates into active contributors to the economy. This issue is one of the main priorities for government, universities as well as the private sector across the GCC. Thus, engaging with researchers, practitioners and policy makers interested in youth employment and capacity building in the GCC. The research methodology is informed by a combination of qualitative interviews with graduates and experts. Field interviews were conducted with graduates and leading experts in recruitment and diversity in the UAE and London between 2012-2016. The overall conclusions present gender focused and flexible recommendations in an effort to reduce the gap in employability skills and increase youths' productivity in the national workforce.

Research Seminar Series 197

Assessment of Bilingual Language Context and Its Effects on Interference Suppression

Angélique Blackburn

Texas A&M International University

Abstract

Bilinguals often outperform monolinguals on tasks that require suppression of interference from irrelevant stimulus information, likely as a result of strengthening neural networks involved in managing interference between languages (Martin-Rhee & Bialystok, 2008). However, not all studies have replicated this bilingual advantage, indicating that bilingualism alone may not be responsible (Hilchey & Klein, 2011). To test this, the Assessment of Code Switching Experience Survey (ACSES) was designed to categorize bilinguals according to how they use their languages, specifically, how often they switch between two languages within a conversation (code switch; Blackburn, 2013). Bilinguals with different code-switching experience were compared during sentence reading and interference suppression tasks to determine whether code-switching experience modulates both the ability to comprehend a code switch and the ability to suppress non-linguistic interference. Results indicate that code switching experience impacts both language cognition and aspects of cognition that are not specific to language. A survey of the field suggests that bilingual experience strengthens aspects of cognition specific to the way in which language is used by each bilingual. Results are framed according to the Adaptive Control Hypothesis – that language control differs across bilingual contexts and repeatedly engaging each aspect of control differentially impacts the brain – and a new survey to assess time spent in each bilingual context will be discussed (Green & Abutalebi, 2013).

Research Seminar Series 198

Literacy acquisition and dyslexia as a function of orthographic transparency
Ilhan Raman
Middlesex University, UK

Abstract

Successful acquisition and execution of literacy skills are perceived as fundamental aspects in contemporary everyday life. Although much research has been conducted to understand cognitive processes involved in learning how to read and write, it must nevertheless be noted that until relatively recently the focus was primarily Anglo-centric. Therefore, emerging theoretical accounts in the field provided explanations solely for literacy development in English. However, alphabetic writing systems vary on many factors one of which is based on orthographic transparency, i.e. the ease with which one can generate phonology (sound) from graphemes (letters). Since the 1990s, attention shifted to examining the role of orthographic transparency on reading in different alphabetic writing systems. Given that dyslexia is estimated to affect approximately 10% of the human population (World Health Organisation), understanding the role of orthographic transparency in reading development has become of paramount importance. The aim of this talk is to review some of the research and theories that address typical and atypical reading development in dyslexia across several alphabetic writing systems from an orthographic transparency perspective.

Research Seminar Series 199

More or less than the sum of its parts? Mapping the Dark Triad of personality onto a single
Dark Core
Bianca Bertl
Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

The Dark Triad of personality has received considerable attention since its introduction to the literature. However, this personality configuration has been assumed to be merely based on observed positive intercorrelations between narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, whereas the underlying factorial structure has not yet been thoroughly investigated. This study set out to test the factorial structure of the Dark Triad, and further examined one proposed conceptual extension, namely the Dark Tetrad, with trait sadism included. A large, community-based sample (N = 2463, 56% women, mean age = 41.4 yr.) completed self-report measures of the adverse personality traits narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy, and sadism. Structural equation modelling indicated a better fit for a single latent Dark Core, as compared with assuming the Dark Triad traits as independent constructs. Adding sadism did not improve the explanatory value of the construct. These findings suggest that aversive personalities may best be represented by a single Dark Core of personality.

Research Seminar Series 200

Deena Abdo, Teneille Saayman, Yeshoda Singhanian, Juno Srivastava, Ruby Shaniah
Oayda, Tina Jose, Nada Hamayun Al Hammadi, Amna Nasser

To mark this special occasion, Middlesex University Dubai proudly hosted a **celebration of student research**. This seminar involved a discussion by a panel of former students, who have excelled in research and who have been recognised for their research achievements. It was an interactive seminar where panel members shared their experiences of research engagement, and expanded upon how research has shaped the course of their academic and professional lives.

Research Seminar Series 201

Real change: Authentic content for sustainable development education

Mariam Abonil
Middlesex University Dubai
Learose Pinkham
University of Vienna

Abstract

A rapidly globalizing and conflicted world hastens the need for tertiary curricula to foster development of real-life problem-solving skills. Literature shows that models of learning used to achieve objectives involving awareness of sustainable development must reflect those goals through curriculum design based on authentic content. With basis in the works of Dewey and Freire, who posited both the interplay between governments and their people (Dewey, 1916) and the implication for group work in world transformation through education (Freire, 1970), a World Simulation Activity (WSA) activity was created to support the teaching of sustainability in and across educational settings. A term-long group-work exercise based on the WSA was then used to investigate facilitation of effective learning of authentic content through practical application of sustainable development goals. This qualitative study at an offshore private university in the UAE was carried out with three cohorts in a non-specialist foundation year. Preliminary findings show inclusion of this activity, along with the use of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning and student-led governance, created a knowledge-building approach to scaffolded content, contributing to wider applications of course material. Specifically, the concepts of collaboration, use of real-world research, and accountability for decision-making were observed. These observations will be discussed with regard to the incorporation of such activities into future university curricula.

Research Seminar Series 202
TLC: Pilot programmes prepared!

Teaching and Learning Committee
Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

The Teaching and Learning Committee has spent the year preparing and piloting a number of products and services to support student learning and faculty professional development across Middlesex University Dubai. Enhancing educational quality was the main focus of each project, with an emphasis on either faculty or students. The first project was a part-time observation form to support part-time faculty in improving pedagogical practice and better supporting student outcomes. The second project focused on the use of a human relations tool to better support students and faculty in their ability to understand themselves and others, and to work together. The third project centred on the development of a survey tool to better understand the barriers to achievement in post graduate studies to create a training programme to support incoming postgraduate students. The final project has a focus on digital tools to support faculty in teaching students general academic skills across all disciplines through the use of podcasts, Camtasia and Articulate.

Research Seminar Series 203

Analysis of 196 cases of ADHD seen in Singhania Clinic Dubai with a focus on
environmental factors
Rajeshree Singhania
Singhania Clinic

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to identify the incidence of environmental factors in a sample of children with ADHD in Dubai, in order to highlight the role of epigenetics in this highly genetic disorder. A sample of 196 children diagnosed with ADHD at Singhania Clinic between 1996 and 2016 was taken. A retrospective analysis was conducted based on comprehensive psychoeducational assessments and patient histories in this cohort. The incidence of perinatal problems was found to be 46.4%; family history suggestive of ADHD was 48.7%; maternal depression was 13.8%; 66.7% of cases were not studying in their first language; 71.8% of children had changed school at least once and 44% had changed schools multiple times. Additionally, the rates of allergies was 15.9% and allergy related disorders were high: asthma (17.4%); ear infections (16.4%); recurrent tonsillitis (15.4%) and Eczema (5.1%). Large percentages of the sample displayed these specific environmental factors. This may indicate that the role of epigenetics in the incidence of ADHD is important. This study highlights the importance of the environmental factors on ADHD. Specifically reducing allergies, stabilising the child's school environment, and focusing on oral language skills may be helpful in improving ADHD outcomes. Further research into the causal relationship between these factors and the incidence of ADHD should be examined and addressed.

Research Seminar Series 204

Influencing factors of materialism among residents of the UAE: The role of mortality salience
and spirituality
Anita Shrivastava, Jakob Pietschnig, Ainey Yousuf, and Seada Kassie
Middlesex University Dubai

Abstract

According to the theoretical work on Terror Management theory (TMT), the management of existential insecurity and fears of mortality critically informs human behaviour. The awareness of mortality (mortality salience or MS) has been implicated in consumer behaviour and materialistic aspirations, which are generally considered maladaptive (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010). Most spiritual philosophies render materialistic pursuits incompatible with leading a meaningful life and recently spirituality has been shown to reduce the desire to consume conspicuously (Stillman, Finchan, Vohs, Lambert, & Phillips, 2012). The aim of the present study was to examine the influence of mortality salience and spirituality upon materialistic thinking. The hypothesis predicts that there will be a significant difference between type of schema (mortality salience, and spirituality) and materialistic thinking. The sample comprised of opportunistically recruited Psychology student volunteers. Data from twelve out of 72 originally recruited participants were discarded from analysis due to experimental attrition and missing data. Consequently, data from 60 (55f, mean age = 24.44, SD = 6.51) were included in our analyses. A within-subjects design with 3 conditions (mortality vs. spirituality vs. controls) was applied. Conditions were counterbalanced (i.e., 6 different possible sequences) and questionnaires were administered to the participants on the same day of 3 consecutive weeks. The participants were assessed on materialistic thinking after being provided with one of three different quotations in each week – one related to spirituality, one to mortality, and a neutral quotation. We did not find any significant differences in mean self-reported materialism scores between conditions (mortality vs. spirituality vs. control) in a repeated-measures analysis of variance ($F(2, 58) = 1.143, p = .326, \eta^2 = .04$). In view of these surprising results, reflections on the nature of materialism in a diversified domain of cultural and economic viewpoints are offered, along with implications on the conceptual foundations of TMT.

Research Seminar Series 205

An institutional analysis of the nature of corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting in a developing country context: A case study of the Indian petrol and gas industry

Shilpi Banerjee
Royal Holloway, University of London, UK

Abstract

The evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the Indian petroleum and gas industry from a philanthropic/charity based model to a more 'institutionalised' corporate giving model in recent years has marked a dynamic shift in the ways companies define their CSR and report about their CSR to stakeholders. This shift is demonstrated by a remarkable growth in CSR spending, growth in corporate codes of conduct, CSR legislations and social reporting in recent times. Companies today attach greater importance to their social and environmental impacts, embracing various CSR initiatives, engaging more with the local communities and displaying a 'nationalistic' and 'patriotic' fervor in all their CSR activities indicating a de-globalisation of CSR. In my Ph.D. thesis I argue how this rapidly changing CSR landscape indicates CSR being 'enacted ceremoniously' as a response to perceived expectations arising from various institutional pressures that has led to a corporate commitment for communicating CSR reports. The findings of the study indicate how companies CSR reporting has taken new forms since the launch of the Companies Act of 2013 and how this can be understood as a new form of 'ceremonial myth' little more than a symbolic action meant to testify the company's good faith and its adherence to shared beliefs in order to gain legitimacy.

Research Seminar Series 205

Understanding Learning Transfer Process in Different Contexts
Khalil M. Dirani

Texas A&M University

Abstract

Researchers have identified variables likely to foster transfer such as supervisor and peer support, role ambiguity, negative change, job stress, intrinsic and extrinsic incentives, among others (Bates et al., 2000; Colquitt et al., 2000). Traditional learning transfer models such as Baldwin and Ford (1988) model or the learning transfer system inventory (LTSI, Bates et al., 2005) are frequently used to measure factors affecting transfer of training and to help human resource development (HRD) practitioners move beyond the question of whether training works to why training works (Holton et al., 2000). However, little attention has been given to understanding other factors, not included in traditional transfer models in assisting individuals and organizations with the training transfer. In addition, little space has been dedicated to the process of transfer in particular contexts and cultures. This work examines the transfer of training within two distinct cultures: The military context, and the Lebanese business context. This work used self-reported data from individuals in the two contexts in an attempt to understand the process of training transfer and to learn about how different groups transferring the skills and knowledge learned in training to their workplace. Results provide a better understanding on how HRD scholars and practitioners can work with and prepare individuals successfully transfer training skills to the workforce taking into consideration a variety of individual and organizational factors including adult learning principles, motivation to transfer, individual and organizational engagement, peers, and supervisors' support.