

# **PhD Theses defended in 2010**

## **January**

On January 15, 2010 **Luuk Albers** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Double You? Function and Form of Implicit and Explicit Self-Esteem" at University of Amsterdam.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. A.J. Dijksterhuis, Radboud University Nijmegen

Prof.dr. J. van der Pligt, University of Amsterdam

On January 19, 2010 **Daniel Lakens** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Abstract Concepts in Grounded Cognition" at Utrecht University.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. G.R. Semin, Utrecht University

**Co-promotor**

Dr. F. Foroni, VU University Amsterdam

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**Summary**

When people think about abstract concepts such as morality, time or good and bad, they structure their thoughts based on concrete experiences. This thesis shows that morality is associated with perceptual equality or symmetry. It also reveals that when people are asked to judge in which ear the word 'future' is presented louder (when in reality it is presented equally loud to both ears) they point more often to their right ear, compared to words like 'past'. Thus, people do not only see a timeline from the left to the right, but also hear the future stronger in their right ear. The opposition between right and wrong is associated with the opposition between white and black. Perceptual information in isolation, however, does not necessarily have to carry meaning – white is only positive in opposition to the negativity of black. These results reveal that our brain does not work as an independent computer, a widely used metaphor for human cognition. Instead, even highly abstract thought is based the structuring of meaning in concrete dimensions. These new insights improve our understanding about how brains store and represent information, and can be used to communicate abstract concepts more efficiently, or improve the way we teach young children the meaning of abstract concepts. Abstract thought is one of the most sophisticated abilities of human beings, and acknowledging the importance of perceptual representations will substantially improve our understanding of abstract reasoning.

# February

On February 5, 2010 **Maarten Wubben** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Social Functions of Emotions in Social Dilemmas" at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

## Promotors

Prof.dr. D. de Cremer, EUR

Prof.dr. E. van Dijk, UL

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## Summary

Social dilemmas, or situations in which individual and collective interests collide, elicit strong emotions. But are these emotions socially functional in that they signal an emotional person's intentions and beliefs, thereby coordinating social interactions and establishing cooperation? Generally, they are, as four empirical chapters showed.

First, emotions were found to help in establishing cooperation through direct reciprocity. That is, when two people had the opportunity to repeatedly do each other favors, people were more likely to cooperate when their failure to return a favor was reciprocated while disappointment was expressed, rather than anger or no emotion. Expressing disappointment did not convey a negative impression and was even rewarded more afterwards than expressing anger or no emotion.

Second, anger and disappointment also helped to establish cooperation through indirect reciprocity. Indirect reciprocity occurs when not a recipient, but a third party reciprocates cooperation or non-cooperation (i.e., defection). But cooperation through indirect reciprocity is only possible if unjustified defection (i.e., defection motivated by greed) is distinguished from justified defection (i.e., defection to discourage unjustified defection). Anger and disappointment help to make this distinction. Defection out of anger or disappointment was seen as a justified response to unjustified defection and was responded to cooperatively. Disappointment also signaled that a defector had defected less often than when anger was expressed.

Third, emotions can lead people to implement structural solutions in step-level public good dilemmas. In such dilemmas, a specific number of endowments must be donated to realize a public good. However, not contributing is tempting, because defectors benefit equally from the public good as cooperators. Anger was found to signal bleaker prospects than guilt for successfully coordination of individual contributions to realize the public good, making that people were more likely to prefer the structural solutions of exiting the group and installing a democratic leader. This was only found, however, when the person communicating anger or guilt had many endowments and when an explicit promise to contribute had not already been made.

Finally, emotions can lead people to coordinate their contributions more successfully in step-level public good dilemmas. Guilt was found to signal future cooperation by both the group member expressing guilt and the group member towards whom it was experienced.

Consequently, people were willing to contribute their fair share to realize the public good, even when it was difficult to obtain.

It is concluded that emotions are indispensable, socially informative cues in social dilemmas.

# March

On March 25, 2010 **Matthijs Baas** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Psychology of Creativity: Moods, Minds and Motives" at University of Amsterdam.

## Promotors

Prof. dr. C.K.W. de Dreu (UvA)

Dr. B.A. Nijstad (UvA)

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## Summary

This dissertation examined whether, when, and why do moods and motivational states influence creativity? The findings of a meta-analysis of the mood-creativity relationship and eight studies in which specific moods and motivational states were experimentally induced showed that some conventional ideas about when and how creativity is achieved are not correct. People are not more creative when they are relieved, relaxed, sad, or depressed. However, it appeared that mood states that activate the individual, such as happiness, anger, and fear, do promote creativity. Moreover, the findings of this dissertation suggest that this is also true for motivational states that activate the individual (e.g., approach states, unsuccessful avoidance motivation), which lead to more creativity than motivational states that deactivate the individual (e.g., successful avoidance). Finally, the present dissertation showed how these activating moods and motivational states have their effects on creativity. Some activating states had their creativity enhancing effects primarily because of increased flexibility (the use of broad and inclusive cognitive categories, global as opposed to local processing of information, and flat associative hierarchies) and others primarily through increased persistence (the focused and systematic exploration of a few possible solutions and perspectives in great depth and prolonged and motivated effort). Current findings suggest that activating mood states stimulate creativity primarily through flexibility when the motivational orientation is towards approach (e.g., happiness) and primarily through persistence when the motivational orientation is towards avoidance (e.g., fear).

## April

On April 8, 2010 **Elanor Kamans** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "When the weak hit back: studies on the role of power in intergroup conflict" at University of Groningen.

### Summary

In my dissertation, I studied when the weak hit back. That is, I investigated under which circumstances powerless groups respond with offensive action to provocations made by the powerful. The first answer my dissertation gives is that it depends on whether it is functional to do so. As conflicts can take different forms, they can also pose different threats; e.g. sometimes physical safety is threatened, while at other times economic resources are at stake. I proposed that in intergroup conflict threat content is important in understanding the reactions of those who experience these threats the most: the powerless. The results indeed show that powerless groups experience more threat, resulting in both more anger and fear. Moreover, threat content determines which emotions elicit behavior that adequately deals with the situation, and thus is functional. When confronted with a physically threatening outgroup, fear elicits an avoidance reaction in powerless groups. When valuable resources are threatened, however, anger makes powerless group members want to confront the outgroup, at least when they identify strongly.

The second answer to the question when do the weak hit back is: when they have nothing to lose by doing so. The reasoning here was that groups that are already in a very disadvantaged and hopeless situation have nothing to lose by acting in offensive ways. That is, they do not need to worry about the costs that are associated with offensive action. I showed that more extreme, conflictual responses were indeed likely when groups are low in both power and status, and thus occupy a very disadvantaged position.

I further investigated how groups hit back. Do people challenge the outgroup in a constructive way, or is their behavior likely to be non-constructive? The idea I tested here was that this would depend on whether groups were certain about the outcome of the conflict. For the powerless, uncertain conflict situations offer an opportunity; therefore, they are likely to fight constructively in order not to provoke the outgroup and, thereby, waste their chances. For the powerful, on the other hand, uncertainty of outcome is threatening, which might cause them to adopt less constructive conflict strategies. The question we asked here was not when do the weak hit back, but how do they hit back? The answer this dissertation gives is: the weak will hit back constructively when they have opportunities to do so.

On April 8, 2010 **Skyler Hawk** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Changing Channels: Flexibility in Empathic Emotion Processes" at University of Amsterdam.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Agneta H. Fischer

Dr. Gerben A. van Kleef

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### **Summary**

The idea that empathic emotions can be activated by many different social, situational, and internal stimuli has enjoyed a long history. Few investigations, however, have focused on how these different influences promote flexibility in the processes leading to emotional convergence. Drawing upon recent theories of embodied cognition (Barsalou et al., 2003; Niedenthal, 2007), this thesis aimed to demonstrate the ways that internal representations of emotion facilitate such responses at multiple points, from initial expression to subsequent introspection. In particular, the flexibility with which discrete emotions can be communicated, understood, and simulated across different modalities of experience underscores the importance of empathic emotions for adaptive individual and social functioning (Hoffman, 1981, 2008). In particular, the presented studies suggest flexibility in empathic processes by showing that: 1) different nonverbal channels of emotion expression are particularly effective in communicating particular emotions, and are differently adaptive in different social contexts; 2) individuals can form representations of another's emotions in a variety of nonverbal channels, instead of being limited to a more literal mimicry of an interaction partner's nonverbal behaviors, and that these additional responses also contribute to the intensity of one's subjective empathic reactions; and 3) different affective and situational cues available to observers can activate embodied representations that ultimately influence their own subjective feelings, even in absence of overt emotion cues from a target. The studies presented here thus suggest that the processes leading to emotional convergence can occur regardless of which cues to another's emotion are actually present. Thus, people can rely upon different sources of information to understand and represent other people's feelings, and subsequently experience those emotions as their own. "Changing channels" in these ways can thus promote our connections to the emotional lives of others.

On April 13, 2010 **Nailah Ayub** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "National Diversity and Conflict: The Role of Social Attitudes and Beliefs" at Leiden University.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Karen A. Jehn

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**Summary**

The main focus of this dissertation was to explain the relationship between diversity and performance through the moderating effects of social attitudes. To elaborate on the moderating effects of attitudes, I explored the proposed models with field surveys in organizations and scenario studies. In this dissertation, I proposed that social attitudes can be considered as moderators of diversity within workgroups. Specifically focusing on nationalistic attitudes in nationally diverse workgroups, I proposed that nationalism negatively affects workgroups such that group members experience more relationship and process conflicts and less task conflict when members of a nationally diverse workgroup hold nationalistic attitudes towards other members within their group. I followed the theoretical model with an empirical study where I distinguished between two elements of nationalism, namely, national preference and nationalistic outgroup derogation. Results showed that outgroup derogation was the stronger moderator which increased relationship conflict and task conflict. Further investigation showed that attitudes such as social distance and national stereotypes can induce conflicts but that diversity can moderate the relationship between these attitudes and conflicts such that diversity increases task conflict and decreases relationship and process conflicts. In an attempt to explore how a group can experience positive conflict and perform despite nationalistic attitudes, I studied perceived respect and similarity preference. Whereas similarity preference negatively affected the group, respect helped increase task conflict and performance while decreasing relationship and process conflicts.

On April 14, 2010 **Joyce Rupert** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Diversity faultlines and team learning" at Leiden University.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Karen A. Jehn

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**Summary**

With the increased globalization of society and importance of teamwork, workgroup diversity has become a central aspect of organizational life (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Research has shown that although workgroup diversity can potentially have beneficial effects, teams often have problems in managing their diversity (e.g. Mannix & Neale, 2006; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Central to this thesis is the faultline perspective (Lau & Murnighan, 1998), which focuses on the demographic alignment of diversity attributes in a group creating relatively homogeneous subgroups within a team (e.g. all females in a group are sales managers, all males are accountants). Research has shown that these subgroup divisions resulting from diversity faultlines can disrupt group processes and performance (e.g. Bezrukova, Jehn, Zanutto, & Thatcher, 2009; Homan et al., 2007a; 2007b; 2008; Li & Hambrick, 2005; Molleman, 2005; Rico, et al., 2007; Sani, 2005; Sawyer, Houlette & Yeagley, 2003). So far, relatively few studies have examined the relationship between faultlines and team learning and those that have, have found mixed results (Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003; Lau & Murnighan, 2005).

In this dissertation, I examined the relationship between faultlines and team learning, using a multi-method approach. A typology and instrument for measuring team learning types was developed based on the topics that teams can learn about: task, process, and social learning. Furthermore, I attempted to reconcile past findings by examining which circumstances can change the capacity of faultline teams to learn. In addition, I considered different underlying mechanisms that can explain faultline effects on team learning. More specifically, I extended past faultline research by considering different aspects of faultlines, such as the role of perceptions of faultlines and faultline distance as moderators of the relationship between objective faultlines and team learning. These aspects of faultlines inhibited team learning in faultline groups. On the other hand, team learning was stimulated when team members knew each other well, when the distance between subgroups was low and when the team's error culture was focused on the management of errors rather than on error aversion. Finally, the team's psychological safety, transactive memory, and open communication were found to explain the relationship between faultlines and team learning. The results of this dissertation have important implications for future research and for the management of diversity in organizations. When diversity faultlines are managed well, subgroups can act as healthy divides stimulating team learning and performance.



## **June**

On June 1, 2010 **Nevra Cem** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Organizational citizenship behavior and counterproductive work behavior: Cross-cultural comparisons between Turkey and the Netherlands" at Erasmus University.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Marise Ph Born

Prof.dr. Henk van der Molen.

### **Co-promotor**

Dr. Eva Deraus

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## **Summary**

This research project explores cultural determinants that facilitate positive employee behavior. In the literature, this behavior is identified as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). The dissertation also focuses on factors related to counterproductive work behavior (CWB). CWB is defined as behavior that explicitly runs counter to the goal of the organization (e.g., breaking organizational rules). The studies were carried out in Turkey and the Netherlands. These two countries are different in several cultural aspects, among which are the values of individualism and collectivism and social beliefs. These differences may have relevance for OCB and CWB. Most organizational behavior theories have been developed and empirically tested among western samples. However, western-based organizational theories may be insufficient to explain many organizational phenomena in non-western cultures. This dissertation therefore aims to highlight the importance of cultural factors that may influence organizational processes.

On June 10, 2010 **Dennis Bleeker** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Representing or defecting? The pursuit of individual upward mobility in low status groups" at Leiden University.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Naomi Ellemers, Leiden University

Dr. Colette van Laar, Leiden University

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### **Summary**

The upward mobility of members of low status groups, such as ethnic minorities and women, still advances with difficulty. Members of low status groups continue to be underrepresented in higher management positions and in academia. These facts run counter to the goal of a properly functioning diverse workforce. This dissertation investigated the conditions under which the individual upward mobility of members of low status groups is likely to succeed and when it is likely to meet resistance. In addition, it examines how upwardly mobile individuals can create such beneficial conditions.

The results presented in this dissertation show support from fellow members of the low status group to be a key resource. Such ingroup support enables members of low status groups to persevere in the pursuit of individual upward mobility, even in the face of opposition from the high status outgroup. The results indicate that ingroup support is given to individuals the more they are perceived to represent the ingroup with their upward mobility. Moreover, the extent to which upwardly mobile individuals are perceived as representatives depends on how they associate with the low status ingroup.

The results also show that the degree to which upwardly mobile individuals display their association with the low status group affects whether they meet resistance from the outgroup. While the high status outgroup is concerned about behavioral displays, it is less concerned with affective identification of upwardly mobile individuals of low status groups with their group. Explanations of the effects of ingroup support, ingroup association, and outgroup resistance are offered. Through its focus on the role of the ingroup in upward mobility the research presented in this dissertation advances previous work on individual upward mobility in low status groups.

On June 14, 2010 **Ron Broeders** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "On Situated and Embodied Knowledge Regarding Moral Issues" at Utrecht University.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. Kees van den Bos (Utrecht University)

On June 21, 2010 **Margriet Braun** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Dealing with a deviant group member" at University of Groningen.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. S. Otten, University of Groningen

Prof.dr. E.H. Gordijn, University of Groningen

Prof.dr. D.A. Stapel, University of Tilburg

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### **Summary**

A couple of years ago a small boy was killed inside his school. In an interview an inhabitant of the village this incident happened in, said that the fact that a fellow village inhabitant committed the crime made the situation even worse. Although this is an extreme example, in daily life we regularly encounter group members who behave in an aggressive or negatively deviant manner and inflict harm onto their own group. This dissertation gives insight into how people respond to such a group member. Three aspects are investigated: the role of perceived intentions of the perpetrator, the role of cognitive resources and the goals people have when responding to such a group member.

The starting point of this thesis is that people strive for a positive group image. Our findings show that also when people respond to a negatively deviant group member, they have the group image at heart.

Perceived intentions of the perpetrator are important, but only when this perpetrator is a group member of the victim. When he or she clearly had the intention to inflict harm and thus forms a threat to the positive group image, a strongly negative reaction occurs. When intentions are ambiguous, the reaction is only mildly negative. The group member gets the benefit of the doubt.

Perceived intentions play no role when someone is not in the circumstances to fully give attention to what is happening. Whether the harm was intentional or not, when attention has to be divided, the automatic association between ingroup and positivity results in an only mildly negative reaction.

Finally, we found that people are not so much inclined to exclude a negatively deviant group member from the group. They rather try to educate this person and teach that the behavior is unacceptable.

A deviant member can elicit strongly negative reactions, but it is ingroup love that ultimately shapes the reactions to such a member.

# July

On July 2, 2010 **Job van der Schalk** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Echoing Emotions: Reactions to Emotional Displays in Intergroup Context" at University of Amsterdam.

## **Promotor**

Prof.dr. A.H. Fischer

## **Co-promotors**

Prof.dr. D. Wigboldus

Dr. B.J. Doosje

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## **Summary**

The thesis discusses research that investigates how intergroup context and group based identity influence reactions to the emotions of others, and how these reactions, in turn, influence the relationships between members of different groups. It is hypothesized that there is more emotional contagion between ingroup members than between outgroup members. Another hypothesis is that the perception of expressed emotions will increase social bonding between ingroup members, but not between outgroup members. The results of three sets of studies largely confirm these propositions.

Using a new standardized set of filmed emotion expressions featuring North-European and Mediterranean models—the Amsterdam Dynamic Facial Expression Set (ADFES)—, the studies in Chapter 2 demonstrate that there is an ingroup advantage in emotion recognition. The studies also show that observing emotional displays of ingroup members increases liking of these models, but that this does not increase liking of outgroup models. Chapter 3 reveals that emotional expressions of anger and fear are mimicked to a greater extent when they are expressed by ingroup members than when they are expressed by outgroup members, and that expressions of outgroup members evoke emotions that diverge from the displays that are perceived. Moreover, mimicry of anger and fear displays increases liking for ingroup members, but not for outgroup members. Happiness displays, however, are mimicked independent of group membership. We suggest that happiness signals affiliation, and that this can overcome group boundaries. In the studies of Chapter 4 we therefore manipulated participants' need for affiliation by having participants think about their mortality. The findings reveal that when mortality is salient, individuals converge more to outgroup happiness displays, and that attitudes towards the outgroup become more positive. In response to anger displays, in contrast, individuals converge more to ingroup displays, and attitudes towards the outgroup become more negative. These findings show that reactions to emotions of others are influenced by both group context and motivational factors. In Chapter 5, a model of emotional convergence and divergence in intergroup context is introduced. The findings show that emotional displays bring individuals together when they share group membership, but drive individuals apart when they do not share group membership. Happiness displays, however, can overcome group boundaries, because individuals converge to outgroup happiness to the same extent as they do to ingroup happiness—sometimes even more so. Awareness of the differential responsiveness to emotions of ingroup and outgroup members may improve day-to-day intergroup interactions.

# September

On September 9, 2010 **Geertje Schuitema** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Priceless policies. Factors influencing the acceptability of transport pricing policies" at University of Groningen.

## **Promotor**

Prof.dr. E.M. Steg, RuG

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## **Summary**

Transport pricing policies are often assumed to be effective strategies to affect people's car use, but, due to a lack of public support, these policies are often not implemented. Therefore, we examined which factors influence the acceptability of these pricing policies. First, the acceptability of transport pricing policies was shown to be strongly related to the revenue allocation: acceptability increased when revenues were allocated to car users. Second, the acceptability was also shown to increase when people expected car-related problems, such as congestion, pollution and parking problems, to reduce. Reductions in car-related problems will benefit society as a whole, but also individual car users, for example when their travel times decrease or local air quality improves. The acceptability of transport pricing policies increased particularly when people actually experience that car-related problems were solved or decreased. Third, acceptability of transport pricing policies was shown to be strongly related to the extent to which people consider the costs and benefits of these policies to be fairly distributed. We found that transport pricing policies were particularly perceived to be fair and acceptable when the distribution of costs and benefits would benefit nature, the environment and future generations and when everybody would be equally affected. This study has important practical implications: the acceptability of transport pricing policies can be enhanced when it is clearly communicated that pricing policies will result in a reduction of car-related problems. In addition, the acceptability is also likely to increase when people experience the positive effects of policies, for example via trials.

On September 17, 2010 **Annefloor Klep** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Sharing of Affect: Pathways, Processes, and Performance" at VU University Amsterdam.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Henk van der Flier

Prof.dr. Barbara Wisse

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### **Summary**

Whether you tell your best friend what feelings you experienced when your terrifying roommate revealed he has a crush on you, check the affective responses of your colleagues when your boss introduces the new secretary, or notice that you have been emotionally contaminated by the negativity of your mother-in-law, the sharing of affect (i.e., moods and emotions) occurs almost everyday, and therefore seems an inevitable aspect of social and organizational life. The main goal of this dissertation was to increase our understanding of the effects of positive and negative affective sharing on individual and group outcomes in social settings. More specifically, by examining interactive effects of valence of affect and affective sharing in combination with several other intra-individual processes, intragroup processes and contextual factors (affective certainty, conflict, and future interaction expectation), we hope to come to a more refined account on the role of affective sharing in groups.

In the present dissertation we employed a wide variety of methods; computer-mediated laboratory studies, a scenario study, cross-sectional field studies, and experimental (three-person) group studies, to test our hypotheses. The results of these studies showed that: (1) interactive sharing of affect (the dynamic path to group affect) yields stronger effects on task performance and group dynamics than non-interactive sharing of affect (the static path to group affect), (2) shared positive (vs. shared negative) affect enhances creative task performance, whereas shared negative (vs. shared positive) affect especially increases analytical task performance, (3) shared negative affect strengthens feelings of belongingness and leads to a higher level of information sharing in groups, (4) positive affect increases creativity, especially when people interactively share their feelings and when they are affectively uncertain, which may partially be explained by an increased tendency to cooperate, (5) the sharing of positive affect may expose the potential beneficial effects of task conflict, whereas the sharing of negative affect may mitigate the detrimental effects of relationship conflict, and (6) the sharing of negative affect may be deemed particularly influential when group members expect prolonged group longevity.

The findings of the present dissertation show that affective sharing has profound consequences for both individual and work group functioning and therefore may have important implications for applied settings.

On September 24, 2010 **Femke van Horen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Breaking the mould on copycats: What makes product imitation strategies successful?" at Tilburg University.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Diederik Stapel (UvT)

Prof.dr. Rik Pieters (UvT)

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### **Summary**

Imitations are abundant and a familiar sight to consumers. Supermarket products often copy the name, logo, and/or the package design of national leader brands, in order to free-ride on the positive associations attached to these leader brands. Despite the frequent use of such product imitation strategies, it is however less clear when they are successful and why. This dissertation sheds new light on this important question and demonstrates that whether imitation helps copycats and results in positive evaluation, or hurts copycats and results in negative evaluation, is not only determined by package similarity but is also critically dependent on the circumstances under which the copycat is evaluated (e.g., how products are ordered on the shelves and whether the context induces uncertainty). Furthermore and in contrast to the current opinion, this dissertation shows that high similarity copycats can backfire and reduce consumer's liking of copycats, whilst subtler forms of copycatting can free-ride more effectively on the leader brand's equity. These effects were demonstrated in numerous product categories by using brand names and packaging as stimuli and by using lawyers, students, and household panels as samples. Because this dissertation examines the mechanisms underlying copycat effectiveness beyond consumer confusion (where consumers misidentify the copycat for the original), the subsequent findings are an important supplement to the existing literature.



# October

On October 1, 2010 **Petra Hopman** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Group members reflecting on intergroup relations" at VU University Amsterdam.

## **Promotor**

Prof.dr. P.A.M. van Lange, VU

## **Co-promotor**

Dr. E.A.C. van Leeuwen, VU

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## **Summary**

People generally want to be part of highly valued groups. Perhaps the best way to increase the social standing of one's group is to stand out, as a group, as much as possible against a relevant other group. Existing (inter)group literature teaches us how group members, with their characteristics and behaviours, can positively or negatively affect the image of their own group ('ingroup) vis-à-vis a relevant other group ('outgroup'). Through a series of experiments, the current thesis lends support to the notion that outgroup members may as well affect a group's capacity to positively distinguish itself from an outgroup. More specifically, this thesis shows that when an outgroup openly embraces rather than rejects a transgressing outgroup member who can be considered typical for the outgroup, this readily elicits positive feelings among the ingroup. The explicit association of a relevant outgroup with anti-normative behaviour may well provides the ingroup with an enhanced relative standing. The current thesis also demonstrates that groups might strategically use the communication of damaging outgroup information to enhance or confirm the relative standing of their own group. Since people's need for their group to outperform or outshine other groups is rather universal, and people generally belong to -for example- different organisations, business teams, (backings of) sports teams, political parties, nations, ethnicities and religions, quite some day-to-day intergroup phenomena can be further elucidated on the basis of the current thesis.

On October 1, 2010 **Janneke Oostrom** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "New Technology in Personnel Selection: The Validity and Acceptability of Multimedia Tests" at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. M.Ph. Born, EUR

Prof.dr. H.T. van der Molen, EUR

### **Co-promotors**

Dr. A.W. Serlie, GITP/EUR

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## **Summary**

More and more organizations make use of new technology for the delivery of multimedia tests. In a multimedia test, applicants are presented with a variety of job-related situations. The situations freeze at an important moment and applicants are asked to indicate how they would act in these particular situations. This type of multimedia test is called a multimedia situational judgment test (SJT). Recently, another innovative multimedia test has entered personnel selection practices, namely a webcam test. In a webcam test applicants are presented with situations through the use of video clips and are then asked to act out their response, while being filmed by a webcam. Although organizations have rushed to incorporate multimedia SJTs and webcam tests into their selection systems, research regarding these type of tests still is scarce. This dissertation aimed to address this shortcoming by presenting five empirical studies on the validity and acceptability of multimedia tests.

The results demonstrated that multimedia tests can be useful and valuable predictors of academic and job performance beyond traditional measures as cognitive ability tests, personality questionnaires, and job knowledge tests. Also, as implicit measures of personality traits multimedia tests seem a valuable instrument for personnel selection practices. However, multimedia tests were only able to predict conceptually aligned criterion measures. Therefore, it is important to clearly specify the criterion domain when incorporating multimedia tests into selection systems. Furthermore, it was found that multimedia tests are related to Big Five personality dimensions and to job experience, but not to cognitive ability. As selection instruments with smaller cognitive loading produce smaller subgroup differences, using multimedia tests may be an effective strategy to reduce adverse impact.

Regarding the acceptability of multimedia tests, it was found that applicants react more positively to multimedia tests than to more traditional tests, such as cognitive ability tests. However, not only the type of selection instrument or medium itself was found to affect applicant reactions, also individual differences, such as openness to experience, general belief in tests, and (perceived) test performance were found to affect applicant reactions. However, pretest reactions and posttest reactions were affected by different factors. Pretest reactions were affected by applicants' general beliefs in tests, whereas posttest reactions were affected by applicants' test performance via self-assessed test performance. The nature of the applicant and time of measurement of applicant reactions therefore should be carefully considered when designing interventions to improve applicant reactions.

On October 4, 2010 **Niek van Ulzen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Exploring affective perception and social action" at VU University Amsterdam.

### **Promotors**

Prof.dr. Gün R. Semin (UU)

Prof.dr. Peter J. Beek (VU)

### **Co-promotor**

Dr. Raoul R.D. Oudejans (VU)

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## **Summary**

The present theses comprises two research lines that are inspired by the overarching theme of embodied cognition, namely (1) the influence of affect on visual perception, and (2) the interpersonal coordination of movement.

The first research line deals with the question whether and how affective information influences size perception. In a first experiments participants judged the size of circles with and without affective (i.e., positive, neutral and negative IAPS) pictures in a straightforward manner. In a second experiment stimuli were embedded in the Ebbinghaus illusion. In a third experiment size judgments of circles with affective pictures were compared with size judgments of circles with blurred counterparts of these pictures. Results indicated that a) circles with pictures were estimated to be smaller than circles without pictures; b) circles with negative pictures were estimated to be larger than circles with positive or neutral pictures; c) the Ebbinghaus illusion was weakest for a negative target; d) size estimations of circles containing affective pictures took longer and were less accurate than size estimations of circles containing blurred pictures; and e) for affective stimuli, circles with negative pictures were evaluated more elaborately than circles with positive pictures. Apparently, affective stimulus properties influence size estimation beyond physical stimulus properties due to different processing forms. Among affective stimuli negative stimuli are underestimated less than positive stimuli due to increased attentional demands.

The second line of research investigates whether two people spontaneously coordinate their stepping when walking side-by-side and whether this phenomenon abides by a dynamical model for rhythmic interlimb coordination, the HKB-model. In a first experiment walker pairs were instructed to synchronize their steps in phase ( $0^\circ$ ) or in antiphase ( $180^\circ$ ) or received no coordination instructions. Without instructions clear evidence was found for spontaneous entrainment. However, during instructed coordination specific predictions of the HKB-model were absent. In a second experiment, walker pairs were invited to coordinate their stepping movements at seven prescribed relative phases. Variability of in- and antiphase should be lowest, for which we found no support. Intermediate relative phases should be attracted to in- and antiphase, which was partially supported: for metronome-paced walking in-phase coordination acted as an attractor; for unpaced continuation both in- and antiphase coordination acted as an attractor. The absolute shift away from the required relative phase should be highest for a required relative phase of  $90^\circ$ , which was found to be the case. All in all, it appears that the spontaneous coordination observed during walking side-by-side goes beyond the HKB-model.

On October 14, 2010 **Simon Dalley** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Women's body dissatisfaction and restrictive eating behaviour: A tyranny of a thin-ideal or a fear of fat?" at University of Groningen.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. B.P. Buunk (RuG)

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**Summary**

Why do a majority of women experience body image dissatisfaction in contemporary Western society? Moreover, why do significant numbers of women engage unhealthy forms of restrictive eating in an attempt to assuage such dissatisfaction? The conventional wisdom appears to be that how a woman thinks, feels and behaves toward her body is always about the perceived distance from an extreme standard of thinness, usually in the form of an external media image or an internal ideal. From this perspective, women's body image dissatisfaction is seen as always resulting from a perception of being too distant from the cultural aesthetic "thin-ideal". Following on from this, any associated restrictive eating behaviour is always an attempt to approach some manifestation of this reference standard. However, this thesis finds that under certain conditions women's body image dissatisfaction and restrictive eating behaviour can also be a consequence of being too close to an unattractive fat or overweight body. More importantly, the findings of this thesis also indicate that a perception of being too close to a fat or overweight body standard can have a more profound impact on women's body image dissatisfaction and restrictive eating behaviour than a perception of being too distant from a thin-ideal body standard. Thus it may be that unhealthy forms of restrictive eating, and indeed eating pathology, in women can be more about avoiding an undesired fat or overweight body than approaching a desired thin-ideal body.

## **November**

On November 11, 2010 **Katarzyna Ewa Kubacka** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The Rules of Attraction: Trust, Anxiety and Gratitude" at VU University Amsterdam.

### **Co-promotor**

Dr. C. Finkenauer, VU

On November 12, 2010 **Paul Preenen** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Challenge at Work: A matter of give and take" at University of Amsterdam.

**Promotor**

Prof.dr. A.E.M. van Vianen, UvA

**Co-promotor**

Dr.ing. I.E. de Pater, UvA

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**Summary**

Job challenge is highly relevant for employees and their organizations. Despite the growing amount of research on job challenge, many issues concerning the conceptualization, antecedents, processes, and outcomes of job challenge remain to be examined.

This dissertation comprises five empirical chapters with seven studies employing multiple samples and research methods that aimed to examine the issues as mentioned above. These studies have increased our understanding of job challenge in multiple ways. First, job challenge is a broad concept including task and context characteristics, and people's subjective perceptions of challenge as positive stimulation, competence testing, and uncertainty. Second, people's goal orientations are not only important for task choices but also for the motivational and mood outcomes of performing challenging tasks. People with a mastery-approach orientation tend to choose challenging tasks and, when challenged, they show more positive affective and motivational reactions. Third, supervisors' goal orientations tend to influence employees' opportunities for performing challenging tasks. Performance-approach oriented supervisors could withhold their employees from challenging experiences which, in turn, may undermine employees' learning and development. Finally, because of its positive influence on on-the-job learning, job challenge will decrease rather than increase voluntary turnover.

On November 19, 2010 **Loes Kessels** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "May I have your attention please? A neuroscientific study into message attention for health information" at Maastricht University.

### **Promotor**

Prof.dr. G. Kok, UM

### **Co-promotors**

Dr. R.A.C. Ruiter, UM

Dr. B. Jansma, UM/NC

Dr. V. van de Ven, UM/NC

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## **Summary**

The current research project was meant to improve our knowledge of the underlying working mechanisms of different health education methods. In particular, attention processes for personally relevant threatening health messages were investigated. Five empirical studies explored attention processes for tailored health messages and threatening health information by applying the methods of EEG, fMRI, eye tracking and reaction times.

In the first EEG-study, attention processes for tailored versus non-tailored nutrition education messages were compared. The ERP results showed that tailored information leads to more attention for the message than non-tailored information. It was concluded that self-relevant information is more systematically processed than information that is less self-relevant.

Study 2 explored attention processes for tailored versus non-tailored messages in combination with threatening health information. The ERP findings confirmed that tailoring is an effective means to draw attention to health messages, whereas threat information seems to result in a loss in message attention.

In the third EEG-study, attention capture and attention disengagement processes for self-relevant threatening health information were investigated. High and low threat smoking pictures were presented among participant for whom the information was self-relevant (smokers) or non-self-relevant (non-smokers). ERP findings provided support for the hypothesis that threatening health information causes more efficient disengagement among those for whom the health threat is self-relevant.

fMRI was used in the fourth study to explore brain regions involved in processing self-relevant threatening health information. Smokers and non-smokers viewed high and low threat health smoking pictures. Threat modulation was visible in emotion-related regions, including the amygdala. Smokers and non-smokers showed no difference in brain activation in the amygdala and reaction times when processing high threat self-relevant information.

In the last study we explored attention processes for cigarette packages containing coping information referring to ways to quit smoking, high threat smoking information or low smoking threat information. Eye movements were recorded while smokers and non-smokers viewed the cigarette packages. This study showed attention preferences for coping information irrespective of whether the person already follows the recommended behaviour

or not.

This thesis showed that message tailoring and coping information are potentially effective tools to increase attention for health information. Although investigating the relation between self-relevance, threatening health information and attention reveals a complex pattern of results, presenting threatening health information can cause defensive reactions. Finally, to measure attention processes for health information it is recommended to apply neuroscience techniques to obtain objective measures of attention during message processing.