

PhD Theses defended in 2012

January

On January 9, 2012 **Roos Pals** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Zoo-ming in on restoration: Physical features and restorativeness of environments" at University of Groningen.

Promotors

Prof.dr. E.M. Steg (University of Groningen)

Prof.dr. K.I. van Oudenhoven – van der Zee (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Dr. F.W. Siero (University of Groningen)

Summary

This thesis examined how environmental characteristics influence peoples' preference for environments, the extent to which people experience pleasure, and how well people can restore from stress and mental fatigue in these environments. Previous research has shown that there is a relationship between restorative characteristics of environments (fascination, novelty, escape, coherence, and compatibility) and restorative outcomes (preference, pleasure, restoration). One aim of this thesis was to get more insight into the relationships between physical environmental features, restorative characteristics and restorative outcomes. First a questionnaire was developed to measure restorative characteristics of specific environments (in this case zoo attractions). Second I found support that virtual reality is a valid tool to examine the restorative quality of environments. Third it was examined how physical features (the design of street furniture) in a virtual environment affects preference, pleasure and restoration via perceived coherence. Unnaturally designed furniture appeared to negatively influence perceived coherence, and diminish preference, pleasure, and restoration. Fourth it was examined how physical features (color, shape, organization) influence perceived coherence of and preference for abstract stimuli. Unity in color and shape and an orderly organization enhanced perceived coherence, whereas variety in color enhanced preference. Insight in the relationships between physical features, restorative characteristics and restorative outcomes are valuable, because this knowledge about what physical features can enhance restorative outcomes can ultimately be used to design attractive and healthy environments.

On January 13, 2012 **Gerben Langendijk** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Power, Procedural Fairness & Prosocial Behavior" at Open University, Heerlen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. J. von Grumbkow (Open University of the Netherlands)

Co-promotor

Dr. M. van Dijke (Open University of the Netherlands)

On January 20, 2012 **Stephanie Welten** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Concerning Shame" at Tilburg University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. M. Zeelenberg (University of Tilburg)

Co-promotor

Dr. S. M. Breugelmans (University of Tilburg)

Summary

Shame is the emotion that people experience when they make mistakes that reveal negative aspects of who they are. It is perhaps the most intense negative emotion because it concerns how people feel about themselves. Our knowledge of shame has increased tremendously over the years. However, there are still some core questions left unanswered. Why can people also feel ashamed for the mistakes of others when they did not do anything wrong themselves? Is the negative self-evaluation in shame the result of people's own negative evaluations or of other people's negative evaluations? And how is it possible that shame sometimes motivates people to withdraw themselves and sometimes motivates them to act socially towards others? These and other questions are addressed in this dissertation. An analysis of classical and contemporary literature on shame is combined with 18 empirical studies to provide an integrative account of this fascinating emotion. At the core of shame lies a concern for a threatened self-image. All manifestations of shame – including vicarious, empathic, and collective variants – can be understood from this perspective.

February

On February 16, 2012 **Maarten Zaal** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Collective action: A regulatory focus perspective" at Leiden University.

Promotors

Prof.dr. N. Ellemers (Leiden University)

Co-promotors

Dr. C. van Laar (Leiden University)

Dr. T. Stahl (Leiden University)

Summary

In this dissertation I investigate how individuals respond to collective disadvantage from the perspective of regulatory focus theory. Regulatory focus theory distinguishes between two motivational systems: promotion focus, the system in charge of the approach of positive end-states, and prevention focus, the system in charge of the avoidance of negative end-states. In 7 studies I investigate the effects of promotion and prevention focus on 1) low status group members' choice between seeking individual or group status improvement, 2) their level of commitment to collective status improvement and 3) the extent to which they see hostile forms of collective action (e.g. riots, sabotage) as justified. The results showed that activation of the prevention system (compared to activation of the promotion system) causes members of low status groups 1) to prefer collective status improvement over individual status improvement, 2) to commit to collective action when they value its goal, even when the likelihood of achieving this goal is low and 3) to come to see hostile forms of collective action as justified in order to reach group status improvement. I conclude that activation of the prevention system is more conducive to collective action than activation of the promotion focus.

On February 17, 2012 **Erik Bijleveld** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "The unconscious and conscious foundations of human reward pursuit" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. H. Aarts (Utrecht University)

Co-promotors

Dr.ir. R. Custers (Utrecht University)

Summary

Human reward pursuit is often found to be governed by conscious assessments of expected value and required effort. Yet, research also indicates that rewards are initially valued and processed outside awareness, using rudimentary brain structures. Building on both findings, a new framework is proposed for understanding human performance in the service of attaining rewards. In essence, this framework suggests that people initially process rewards unconsciously, which can boost effort and facilitate performance. Subsequently, people may process rewards more fully, which allows them to make strategic decisions based on task conditions, and to consciously reflect on rewards. Intriguingly, these specific processes associated with full reward processing can cause initial vs. full reward processing to have different effects on performance.

This dissertation presents a formulation of this framework (Chapter 2), as well as a series of studies that support it (Chapters 3–6). All except for one of these studies make use of an experimental paradigm in which participants are presented with coins of high vs. low value, which they can earn by performing well on a task, e.g., retaining a series of digits. Importantly, these coins are sometimes presented subliminally (i.e., too briefly to be consciously perceived), allowing people to process these coins only initially. In other cases, these coins are presented supraliminally (i.e., so that they can be consciously perceived), giving people the opportunity to process them more fully. In the studies in this dissertation, this methodology is used to explore the outcomes of initial vs. full reward processing separately, in terms of effort and performance. In line with the novel framework, these studies show that initial reward processing can instigate the recruitment of effort and facilitate performance to attain the reward, outside of awareness. Yet, only when they are fully processed, people may make strategic decisions based on the reward, which may cause the effects of initial vs. full reward processing to diverge. While people's strategic choices may sometimes help them to conserve effort and to attain rewards (e.g., Chapter 4), they can also backfire and hurt instead of help performance (e.g., Chapter 6). Furthermore, the present dissertation also provides an illustration of that such processes also occur in real life, outside the psychological laboratory (Chapter 7).

On February 28, 2012 **Koen Dijkstra** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Intuition Versus Deliberation: the Role of Information Processing in Judgment and Decision Making" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotors

Prof.dr. J. van der Pligt (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotors

Dr. G.A. van Kleef (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

Traditionally it is thought that the best judgments and decisions are made after a careful analysis of the pros and cons. However, research shows that deliberation can have detrimental effects on judgment and decision making, and that relying on intuition can outperform judgments based on analyses and reasoning. The goal of the current dissertation is to improve our understanding of intuition in judgment and decision-making.

I show that the way we make decisions affects how we attend to and process information, which in turn affects the quality of our judgments and decisions. When we rely on reasons or analyze, we focus on details and possibly ignore other valuable sources of information. When relying on intuition we focus on the global picture and incorporate affective reactions and processing fluency as information in our judgment.

However, preference for particular decision strategies is affected by processing style. A local focus induces a preference for and reliance on deliberation, while a global focus induces a preference for and reliance on intuition. Also, people experience more value of the decision outcome when the strategy they are using fits their current orientation, that is, when they make deliberate decisions in a local focus or intuitive decisions in a global focus.

Furthermore, I show that the effects of relying on intuition or on reasons depend on individuals' knowledge and experience. Judgments and decisions made by novices (individuals low on experience and knowledge) and experts (individuals high on experience and knowledge) are unaffected by judgment mode. Novices perform poorly and experts adequately, irrespective of whether they rely on reasons or on intuition. Intermediates however (those who are high on experience and low on knowledge), benefit from relying on intuition, in comparison to relying on reasons.

In addition I discuss theoretical and practical implications.

March

On March 1, 2012 **Janina Marguc** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Stepping Back While Staying Engaged: On the Cognitive Effects of Obstacles" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. J.A. Förster (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotor

Dr. G.A. van Kleef (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

What happens on a basic cognitive level when we realize that we did not buy an important ingredient for the romantic dinner we are about to prepare, when the main sponsor for the festival we are organizing has cancelled in the last minute, or when we think about how to overcome the biggest possible obstacle to an important personal goal? Are the changes in our perception and our thinking useful for dealing with obstacles?

The first aim of this dissertation was to examine whether and when people respond to obstacles by mentally "stepping back and looking at the bigger picture." The second aim was to explore how this cognitive response might help people deal with obstacles that stand in the way of reaching their goals.

In this research, obstacles were defined as interfering forces (Higgins, 2006) that prevent people from reaching a goal along the most direct, or initially intended path and that require them to figure out what to do and how to deal with the obstacle (Marguc, Förster, & Van Kleef, 2011). It was predicted, and found, that obstacles can lead people to focus more on the overall Gestalt rather than the details of objects, to perform better on tasks that require active integration of seemingly unrelated concepts, and to increase the psychological distance between themselves and other objects. Furthermore, the results revealed that the basic cognitive processes elicited by obstacles help people to find more creative means towards their goals.

Notably a more distanced perspective on the overall situation would seem of little use when people are not motivated to follow through with what they are doing. Therefore the above effects were mainly expected, and found, when people are highly engaged in ongoing activities and when the obstacle appears on their own path to their goal rather than on other people's paths to their goals.

In short, the results from this dissertation suggest that engaged individuals routinely respond to obstacles by mentally "stepping back" and "looking at the bigger picture." This response in turn facilitates creative striving. The present findings are relevant for research on self-regulation, for organizations, and for people who have difficulties dealing with obstacles

On March 29, 2012 **Marjette Slijkhuis** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "A Structured Approach to Need for Structure at Work" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. N. W. van Yperen (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Dr. E. F. Rietzschel (University of Groningen)

Summary

Working life is changing. In many modern organizations it is no longer the supervisor who decides where or when employees work, but the employees themselves. This change is also referred to as the New World of Work (NWW) and is best understood through developments in IT. The high amount of freedom that goes with the NWW can cause ambiguity and uncertainty. This will be especially difficult for people who find it difficult to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty, such as people with a high need for structure. The results of this dissertation first of all showed that for employees high in need for structure there is no (positive) relationship between autonomy and motivation, whereas this relation does exist for people low in need for structure. We also showed that the motivation and creative performance of people high in need for structure was not influenced by feedback that decreases or increases autonomy. Furthermore, for employees high in need for structure, we found supervisors' close monitoring practices to positively relate to intrinsic motivation. Finally, we showed that people high in PNS tend to approach tasks algorithmically. On the other hand, we found that employees low in PNS do not profit from a closely monitoring supervisor. Moreover, these employees preferred a heuristic (i.e. not a step-by-step) task approach. In short, these results suggest that people high in PNS do not benefit from the high amount of autonomy, freedom and flexibility that comes with the NWW. Instead, they will flourish in organizations that are well-organized and can provide clarity, while people with a low need for structure flourish in organizations that apply the NWW.

April

On April 5, 2012 **Monica Blaga** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Performance attainment and intrinsic motivation: An achievement goal approach" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. N.W. van Yperen (University of Groningen)

Summary

This dissertation focuses on achievement goals, one specific type of personal goals pursued in achievement situations. Achievement goals, the mental representations of the individual's desired levels of competence in the short-term or in the long-term (Elliot, 2005), can energize, direct, and organize one's behavior, and can predict one's performance and levels of intrinsic motivation. The aim of this dissertation was twofold. Firstly, in three meta-analyses, the relationships between achievement goals and performance attainment and achievement goals and intrinsic motivation were systematically explored. Secondly, in two experiments, some relevant, yet largely neglected issues in achievement goal research (i.e., target goals and the moderating potential of achievement goals) were addressed.

Results across the meta-analyses suggest that the direct relations between personally adopted achievement goals and performance attainment and between achievement goals and intrinsic motivation were moderated by achievement domain (education, work, and sports), achievement goal measures (i.e., the scales used to measure achievement goals), and specific socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., nationality). Also, the effects of assigned achievement goals on performance were moderated by specific study characteristics (feedback anticipation and time pressure).

Results in the two experiments indicate that combining achievement goals with targets of different levels of difficulty may differently predict performance attainment as a function of the individual's level of performance expectancy. Furthermore, particular "target" achievement goals disrupted the positive relations between initial task interest and performance.

Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

On April 19, 2012 **Anita de Vries** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Specificity in Personality Measurement" at VU University Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. M. Ph. Born, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Co-promotor

Dr. R.E. de Vries, VU University Amsterdam

Summary

Employees and students show all kinds of productive and less productive behaviors at work and at school. Five of these behaviors have been studied in this dissertation: (1) job performance, (2) organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), (3) counterproductive work behavior (CWB), (4) academic performance, and (5) counterproductive academic behavior (CAB). Our results support the findings of numerous previous studies showing that personality can contribute to the prediction of these work and academic criteria (e.g. Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; OfConnor & Paunonen, 2007). In particular, the results provide the first empirical evidence indicating that the new sixth personality dimension, Honesty/Humility/Integrity, is the second best predictor of academic performance, after Conscientiousness. However, our findings also show that Honesty/Humility/Integrity and its facets are not significantly related to job performance. We therefore conclude that scholars would be wise to be careful before concluding that Honesty/Humility and Integrity are important predictors of job performance. Furthermore, the main purpose of this dissertation was to improve the prediction of academic and work outcomes by means of personality measures. One important conclusion is that the predictive validity of personality increases by focusing on relevant narrow traits instead of the respective broad traits. Another important conclusion is that the predictive validity of personality also improves when a specific and relevant context is added to the personality items. Taken together, this dissertation accentuates the importance of trait and contextual specificity in personality measurement in order to improve the prediction of work and academic outcomes.

On April 20, 2012 **Floor Kroese** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Tricky treats: How and when temptations boost self-control" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. D.T.D. de Ridder (Utrecht University)

Co-promotor

Dr. C. Evers (Utrecht University)

Summary

The overall aim of this dissertation was to explore how and when temptations boost self-control. More specifically, we aimed to a) replicate and extend previous findings showing that temptations yield enhanced self-control on cognitive as well as behavioral measures; b) examine the role of temptation strength as a possible moderator of counteractive control processes; and c) explore whether facilitative temptation-goal associations could be established in people having trouble resisting temptations. The aims were addressed in five empirical chapters, reporting on twelve experiments that were conducted in the context of food temptations.

First, it was demonstrated that participants who were confronted with food temptations, compared to those who viewed neutral stimuli, reported higher healthy eating intentions and were more likely to pick a healthy over an unhealthy cookie on a subsequent behavioral measure (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, it was shown that self-control processes were activated to a larger extent in response to strong, as compared to weak temptations. For example, participants in the strong temptation conditions displayed higher mental accessibility of the dieting goal (Studies 3.1 and 3.2) and consumed less of the food temptation (Study 3.3) compared to participants in the weak temptation conditions. Chapter 4, then, showed that weak temptations are (sometimes unjustly) perceived to be less unhealthy compared to strong temptations, explaining why weight-conscious people consume more from weak temptations than from strong temptations.

In Chapter 5 we introduced cognitive resources as a moderator for the effect of temptation strength on self-control, to consolidate our paradoxical findings with the mere intuitive prediction that people would be better able to deal with weak rather than strong temptations. It was shown that when cognitive resources were high, participants consumed more from weak than from strong temptations, replicating our previous findings. However, when cognitive resources were low, the opposite pattern was found and participants consumed more from strong than from weak temptations.

Finally, in Chapter 6 it was shown that unsuccessful dieters who made an implementation intention linking a temptation (i.e., chocolate) to their dieting goal, as compared to those who only formulated the intention to diet, became more successful in resisting temptations. Not only did they display facilitated temptation-goal associations as assessed with a primed lexical decision task, we also demonstrated that the strength of this mental association was related to actual chocolate intake in the following week.

Based on the current research it is concluded that temptations are not always bad. Rather than being subjected to their hedonic impulses, people are often well able to resist temptations when appropriate defensive self-regulation mechanisms are activated. However, it is important to realize that people should be especially alert when facing weak temptations, as these may be the 'tricky treats'.

June

On June 15, 2012 **Bastiaan Rutjens** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Start making sense: Compensatory responses to control- and meaning threats" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. J. van der Pligt (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotor

Dr. F. van Harreveld (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

People are motivated to believe that they live meaningful lives in an orderly and sense-making world. However, they will sometimes encounter uncontrollability and chaos. This dissertation addressed two fundamental human needs, control and meaning, and assessed, in six empirical chapters, how threats to these needs affect compensatory beliefs and preferences. In the case of control-threat, it was found that people seek to restore perceptions of order. When people experience existential threat, they are motivated to affirm perceptions of meaning. Whereas previous research primarily focused on faith in religious and governmental agents and institutions as sources of order and meaning, the current research shows that order and meaning can also be found in scientific worldviews and theories, as well as in more abstract conceptions related to belief in human and societal progress. The differences and similarities between threats to control and meaning are discussed in the General Discussion, where it is argued that they partially overlap but have distinct and unique characteristics as well. Moreover, it is contended that this also applies to the compensatory belief systems that people affirm as a response to threat – many of these beliefs and preferences (such as religious belief and belief in progress) can be described as multidimensional and are comprised of different aspects that help to assuage specific threats. In other words, these beliefs serve multiple psychological functions. To conclude, this dissertation focuses on how people make sense of a world that can appear random, uncontrollable, and meaningless. To cope with such threatening perceptions, people actively pursue compensation by drawing from secular, scientific, and religious belief systems that help to restore order and meaning in life.

On June 20, 2012 **Marije de Goede** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Searching for a match: The formation of Person-Organization fit perceptions" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. A.E.M. van Vianen (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotor

Dr. U.-C. Klehe (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

In addition to instrumental motives such as pay, career opportunities, and location, job-seekers' attraction to an organization seems to be based on their impression of fit with their prospective work environment. Especially, perceptions of Person-Organization (PO) fit are strong predictors of affective responses toward organizations. Surprisingly, the sources for and development of PO fit perceptions are hardly studied. This dissertation provides a more complete understanding of how people, and especially job-seekers, develop perceptions of PO fit. People's PO fit perceptions are generally assumed to encompass an overall comparison of personal and organizational values. However, in contrast to this general assumption, the chapters in this dissertation have shown that PO fit is not an exogenous and static construct that is the result of an objective comparison of personal and organizational characteristics for several reasons. First, the content of the P and O components as operationalized by researchers and (recruiting) organizations does not reflect the content that people themselves have in mind when assessing their PO fit (Chapter 2). Second, people weigh the P and O components in a different way than PO fit researchers tend to assume: some types of information are weighed more heavily than other ones. As a result, job-seekers tend to focus on a limited set of organizational features when assessing their future PO fit instead of making an overall comparison (Chapter 3). In addition, PO fit perceptions are less stable than previously expected: the sources of PO fit perceptions can change depending on someone's regulatory orientation or time perspective (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). Job-seekers as well as organizations should be aware that job-seekers' PO fit perceptions might not be a valid reflection of future reality. Most importantly, organizational information might not be processed in a way that PO fit perceptions during job search are a good predictor of PO fit perceptions after being employed. Both factors in- and outside of an organization's control determine people's experience of PO fit with a specific organization.

On June 26, 2012 **Marleen Gillebaart** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "When people favor novelty over familiarity and how novelty affects creative processes" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. J.A. Forster (UvA)

Co-promotor

Dr. M. Rotteveel (UvA)

Summary

How people react to novelty and the idea that people usually prefer familiarity has been a much-studied topic in psychology. Although 'openness to novelty' is considered a key human trait, scholars tend to agree that familiarity is preferable to people because of its 'warm glow' and lack of potential danger. However, in this dissertation it is demonstrated that this is not the whole story. Combining Novelty Categorization Theory with Regulatory Focus Theory, this dissertation shows that besides our inherent preference for the safe and comfortable familiar, we also want something new from time to time. These shifts in preference seem to relate to context, motivational states, and the way we process novel and familiar stimuli. Cues of exploration and growth, operationalized through a promotion focus, high power, and the color blue, make novelty appealing to us, while cues of security, operationalized through a prevention focus, low power, and the color red, lead to an amplified preference for familiarity. Furthermore, novelty can help us in creative processes, but can also work against us, depending on the kind of creativity we pursue. Previous research demonstrated that priming and framing novelty leads to global information processing, while priming and framing familiarity leads to local information processing. Research in this dissertation shows that, most likely through these changes in information processing, novelty leads to more divergent creativity, while it leads to less convergent creativity. Summarizing, the studies demonstrate the value, characteristics, and effects of novelty, and add valuable insights to existing theory and the existing framework of empirical research on this subject.

July

On July 9, 2012 **Liga Klavina** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "They steal our women" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. A.P. Buunk (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Dr. T.V. Pollet (VU University Amsterdam)

Summary

In addition to competing over territories and resources, gaining and defending of (potential) mates has been part of intergroup conflicts throughout human history. The focus of this thesis is on the reactions towards outgroup members as romantic rivals. Being aware of a potential threat to one's mating opportunities in intergroup contexts is considered to be especially relevant among men. Acquiring status benefits via successful intergroup competition can contribute to the desirability of men as potential romantic partners. Thus, for males the benefits (directly, as defending and acquiring mates and, indirectly, as increase of status) often outweigh the potential risks of intergroup conflict, contributing to their involvement in such conflicts and their vigilance to rivals. The reactions towards potential outgroup rivals (intergroup intrasexual competition) were explored as an individual differences variable in culturally diverse samples. The intergroup intrasexual competition was positively associated with both, the vigilance to same-sex rivals (intrasexual competition), and the tendency to dominate other groups (intergroup competition). Overall, men scored higher on intergroup intrasexual competition than women (Chapter 3). The current investigation also shows that outgroup members seen as interested in short-term romance were especially likely to evoke jealousy (Chapter 2). Additionally, when outgroup was presented as a threat to mating opportunities, among men it led to increased implicit negativity towards outgroup men in the instance disease threat was also salient (Chapter 4). Salient group identity can increase alertness to threats relevant to the group represented by that identity. Compared to only salient gender (e.g. man) or national (e.g. Latvian) identity, when both were activated (e.g., Latvian man), male participants showed the highest vigilance to outgroup rivals (Chapter 5). Adding mating threat to the explorations of the threats outgroups are perceived to pose can contribute to understanding of prejudice. It is suggested that intergroup biases are regarded as a gendered phenomena, where both, the gender of the agent (the one evaluating) and the gender of the target (the one being evaluated) are important to take into account.

September

On September 27, 2012 **Jessanne Mastop** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "On postural reactions: Contextual effects on perceptions of and reactions to postures" at Leiden University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. E. van Dijk (Leiden University)

Co-promotor

Dr. M. Stel (Tilburg University)

Summary

The aim of the current dissertation was to provide more insight in people's nonverbal reactions to and perceptions of nonverbal behavior in interactions. We argue that nonverbal reactions are not simply linked to nonverbal expressions of others, but that social context influences how people react to and perceive such expressions.

In the first empirical chapter it was examined whether information of a target's status influenced nonverbal reactions. In the second empirical chapter we examined whether the legitimacy of such status positions also influenced nonverbal reactions. Finally, in the third empirical chapter we investigated whether nonverbal reactions influence the perceptions of dominance, conflict avoidance, and conflict in the interaction.

Results demonstrate that social contexts influence people's nonverbal reactions. It was shown that people mimic or complement a target's expanded or constricted posture depending on the relative status position and on whether or not this status position was obtained in a legitimate way. Furthermore, results show that the contrast between the postures of interaction partners, influence the degree to which people perceive postures as dominant and conflict avoidant.

Also, the contrast influences the degree to which people perceive conflict in the interaction.

Overall, from the findings presented in this dissertation it can be concluded that nonverbal reactions are influenced by the social context. Furthermore, these reactions influence the perceptions people have about the behavior and situation. This knowledge may be used to obtain a better understanding of perceptions and nonverbal reactions in everyday life and can be used to signal effectiveness of and possible problems in interpersonal communication.

October

On October 29, 2012 **Joep Hofhuis** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Dealing with Differences: Managing the Benefits and Threats of Cultural Diversity in the Workplace" at University of Groningen.

Promotor

Prof.dr. K.I. van Oudenhoven - van der Zee (University of Groningen)

Co-promotor

Prof.dr. S. Otten (University of Groningen)

Summary

Dealing with cultural diversity in the workplace is an important challenge for modern organisations. Existing research shows that cultural diversity may have positive outcomes for organizations, such as increased creativity and innovation in teams, as well as negative outcomes, particularly for social interactions in the workplace.

The dissertation *Dealing with Differences: Managing the Benefits and Threats of Cultural Diversity in the Workplace*, by Joep Hofhuis, present four studies which provide new insights in the way organizations can minimize the negative effects of diversity, while still allowing them to take advantage of the positive effects.

The research in this dissertation shows that employees are not necessarily pro or con diversity, as is often assumed, but instead may possess a more nuanced view. They may recognize both positive and negative outcomes at the same time. Furthermore, this dissertation provides evidence that a strong diversity climate – an organizational climate characterized by openness and appreciation of diversity – may be the key to reducing diversity-related problems. Additionally, such a climate will allow organizations to take advantage of the possible benefits of diversity.

Finally, a study is presented which examines cultural diversity in selection and assessment procedures. It shows that recruiters who have a positive view on diversity may be better able to spot potential talent among candidates with a different cultural background.

November

On November 28, 2012 **Laura Dannenberg** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Fooling the feeling of doing: A goal perspective on illusions of agency" at University of Amsterdam.

Promotor

Prof.dr. J.A. Förster (University of Amsterdam)

Co-promotor

Dr. N.B. Jostmann (University of Amsterdam)

Summary

Experiences of agency inform people that they are authors of events and result primarily from the inference, rather than the direct observation, that there is a causal relation between one's action and an event in the world. Experiences of agency highly depend on the match between an anticipated and an observed action outcome. Experimentally, agency experiences can be induced when in fact no self-causation has taken place. When people are primed with consistent prior outcome information in an ambiguous situation, people are more likely to claim causation for an ensuing event, than without an outcome prime. This effect describes the illusion of agency. Previous research suggests that one moderating condition to the susceptibility to agency illusions is the degree to which people are prepared to process information about the outcomes of their actions. Furthermore, feeling as an agent is especially vital when people pursue goals in order to identify own effectiveness. Literally, when trying to get something done, people are tuned to the perception of outcomes. This overly preparedness to process information relating to the to-be attained goal subsides as soon as a goal has been successfully attained, one knows how to be effective or one has the power to reach one's goals.

In line with this reasoning, it was proposed and found that conditions such as completed goal pursuit, upward counterfactual thinking (knowing what to do) and high power (having the power to do it), which reduce a focus on outcomes, also reduce illusions of agency. Specifically, in Chapter 2 it was found that when goal pursuit has been completed, illusions of agency subside. Furthermore, in Chapter 3, it was found that upward counterfactual thoughts - "If only I had done X, then things would have been better" - that let people dismiss concern with higher order outcomes, reduce illusions of agency, but only when they are relevant to a future situation. Lastly, in Chapter 4 it was found that people in high power positions, in contrast to those in low or equal power positions, are less susceptible to illusions of agency.

Together, people's state of goal pursuit could be identified as an important moderator to the occurrence of agency illusions. When people completed a goal, when they know what to do through counterfactual thinking or when they have the power to realize their goals, otherwise robust illusions of agency subside.

On November 30, 2012 **Yvette van Osch** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Show or hide your pride" at Tilburg University.

Promotor

Prof. dr. M. Zeelenberg (Tilburg University)

Co-promotor

Dr. S. Breugelmans (Tilburg University)

Summary

People are generally proud of their achievements and show others their pride. That is why people are said to be as proud as peacocks. The expression of pride is regarded functional: Drawing attention to your achievements will gain you status in the eyes of others. However, the dissertation *Show or Hide Your Pride* reveals that people often do not display their pride, but inhibit its expression.

Why would people inhibit pride expressions if it has been shown that expressing pride is beneficial for personal status gain. A series of studies revealed that people inhibit their pride in situations in which their pride expressions could hurt others. This tendency is influenced by the specific situation in terms of type of relationship and relevance of the achievement domain for the observer of the expression, but also by culture specific norms. To illustrate, students more readily express their pride towards students who major in another subject, than to students who major in the same subject. Or, Chinese gold medal winners express just as much pride as American gold medal winners at Olympic games, but less pride at national championships. Furthermore, the dissertation sheds light on the psychological mechanism that explains why pride leads to its expression, namely pride is characterized by inflated perceptions of the self.

December

On December 6, 2012 **Jessie de Witt Huberts** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "License to Sin: A justification-based account of self-regulation failure" at Utrecht University.

Promotor

Prof.dr. D.T.D. de Ridder (Utrecht University)

Co-promotor

Dr. C. Evers (Utrecht University)

Summary

Few phenomena question the authority of reason over our behavior more than self-regulation failure. As a result, most accounts of self-regulation failure have explained such self-defeating behavior as arising from impulsive factors that undermine our ability to act as we intend. In the present dissertation the conventional notion that self-regulation failure is by default the result of a disabled reflective system was challenged. Instead, it was hypothesized that reasoning processes might even contribute actively to self-regulation failure.

Specifically, by applying principles from the literature on judgment and decision making to self-regulation, we hypothesized that by looking for justifications, sometimes reasoning allows people to engage in behavior that violates their own goals.

The empirical findings reported in this dissertation reveal that confrontation with tempting hedonic products may elicit justification processes to justify indulgence in the forbidden treat, rather than elicit impulsive reactions as is assumed by most models of self-regulation. Such justification processes elicited by temptations in the environment can facilitate self-regulation failure and cannot be accounted for by other explanations of self-regulation failure, such as the goal progress model or resource depletion. The finding that justification processes can also explain failures in self-regulation that have traditionally been labelled as impulsive, such as negative affect, further delineates the importance of a justification-based account as an additional explanation for self-regulation failure. Importantly, justifications only have an impact on guilty pleasures, but do not influence performance in neutral self-control tasks (e.g., a Stroop task) or the consumption of equally attractive products that do not constitute a goal-violation. This suggests that a justification-based account is particularly relevant in situations where goal striving is compromised by the hedonic promise of a temptation. From this follows that experiencing a self-regulation dilemma between opposing forces is a prerequisite to trigger justification processes. Whereas this self-regulation conflict is generally elicited by temptations in the environment, for some people –such as restrained eaters- this conflict is permanently accessible. As a result, possessing a justification triggers a hedonic orientation in restrained eaters, even without a temptation being present.

Together, the findings reviewed and analyzed in the present dissertation provide compelling arguments that integrating a justification-based account into models of self-regulation is crucial to capture the full scope of processes underlying self-regulation failure.

On December 7, 2012 **Marleen Redeker** successfully defended the PhD thesis entitled "Around Leadership: Using the Leadership Circumplex to Study the Impact of Individual Characteristics on Perceptions of Leadership" at VU University Amsterdam.

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Summary

When studying the leadership literature, it is found that an overwhelming number of leadership models have been proposed. Each model focuses on different aspects of leadership. Recently, there has been quite some debate about these models, about their content, theoretical grounding, and the psychometric quality of their operationalizations (Avolio, 2007; DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011; Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). The first part of this dissertation (Chapter 2) will therefore attend to the problems with existing leadership models and will propose a new model, with an accompanying operationalization. This model provides the opportunity to summarize leadership comprehensively using a more overarching and theoretically grounded conceptualization of leadership styles. This model was developed to also include the opportunity to measure leadership with both self- and other-ratings. One of the reasons for using other-ratings is that research has shown that self-ratings alone are quite inaccurate and invalid (e.g., Fleenor, Smither, Atwater, Braddy, & Sturm, 2010; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; London, & Smither, 1995). Therefore, more and more researchers, but also practitioners, use ratings from multiple sources. These multisource ratings provide a lot of insights, but also raise one very important, but often understudied, question: What is the influence of characteristics of both the leader and the rater on perceptions of leadership? To answer this question, the second part of this dissertation (Chapters 3, 4, & 5) zooms in on a) two important characteristics, i.e., hierarchical perspective of the leadership-rater, and gender of the leader and the leadership-rater and its influence on leadership ratings, b) the stereotypes that exist with respect to gender, leadership styles, and leader effectiveness, and c) the perceptual inferences individuals make based on the facial characteristics of people in leadership positions. The remaining part of this introduction will provide an overview of the literature concerning the issues that are covered in the first and the second part of this dissertation.