T101

Assessing neural computations supporting memory in 4-year-olds using a latent variable approach

Work in progress

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1. INTRODUCTION

Two distinct neural computations performed by the hippocampus contribute differentially to behavioral memory outcomes[1].

Pattern separation (PS)—supported by the dentate gyrus (DG) of the hippocampus—is a computation that transforms highly similar representations into non-overlapping representations, supporting specificity of memories [2].

Pattern completion (PC)—supported by the cornu ammonis 3(CA3) of the hippocampus—is a computation that restores degraded or incomplete representations based on previously stored information, supporting generalization [3].

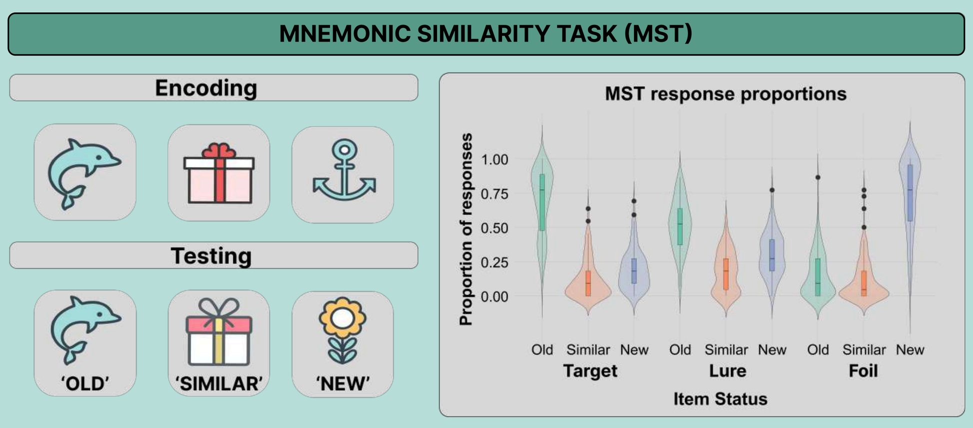
Differential development of PS and PC drives the shift from a focus on abstracting regularities through experience to remembering unique events in early ontogeny [4].

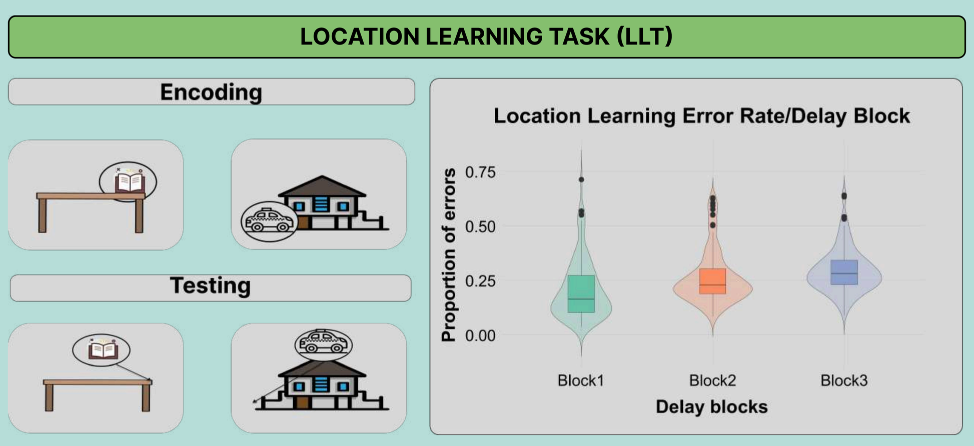
2. METHODS

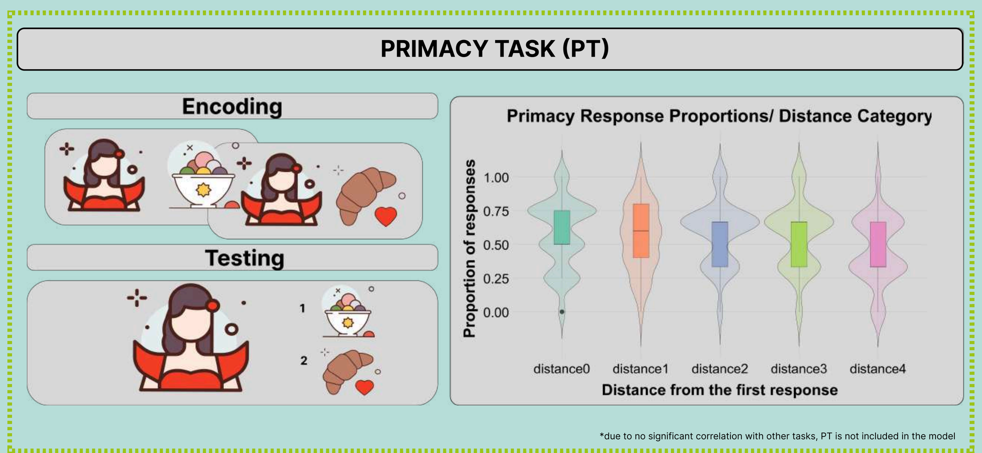
- First wave of a 3-year longitudinal study of 4–6-year-old children.
- Participants: 131 four-year-olds (mean age = 54.2 months, SD = 3.02; 62 female).
- No direct task exists to measure Pattern Separation (PS) and Pattern Completion (PC) → modeled as latent variables using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).
- Compared a two-factor PC–PS model with a one-factor memory model.
- Hippocampal segmentation from MRI scans was performed to examine neural correlates of task performance.
- Hypothesis: In 4-year-old children, a latent memory structure can be identified, with a two-factor model providing a better explanation of individual differences than a one-factor model.

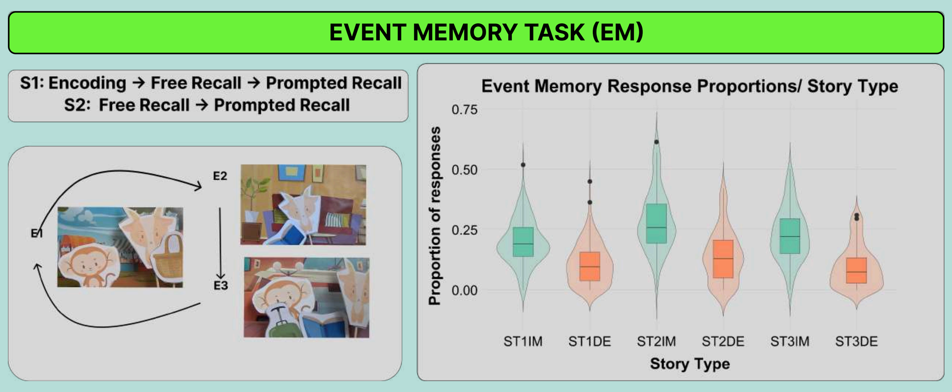
3. TASK BATTERY AND RESULTS

Pattern separation tasks and results

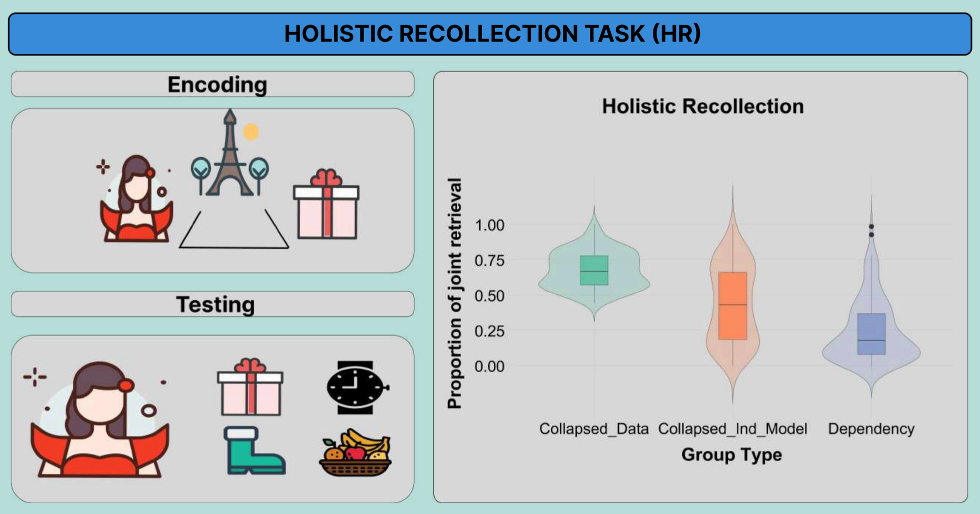


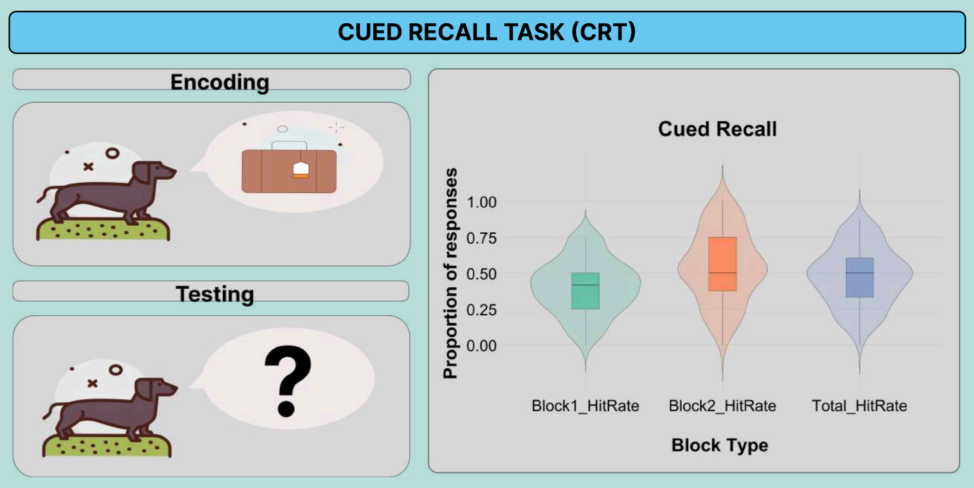


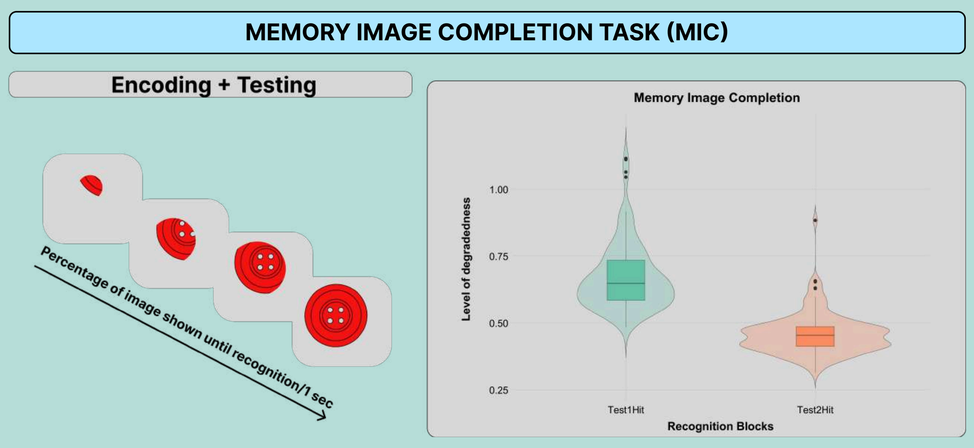




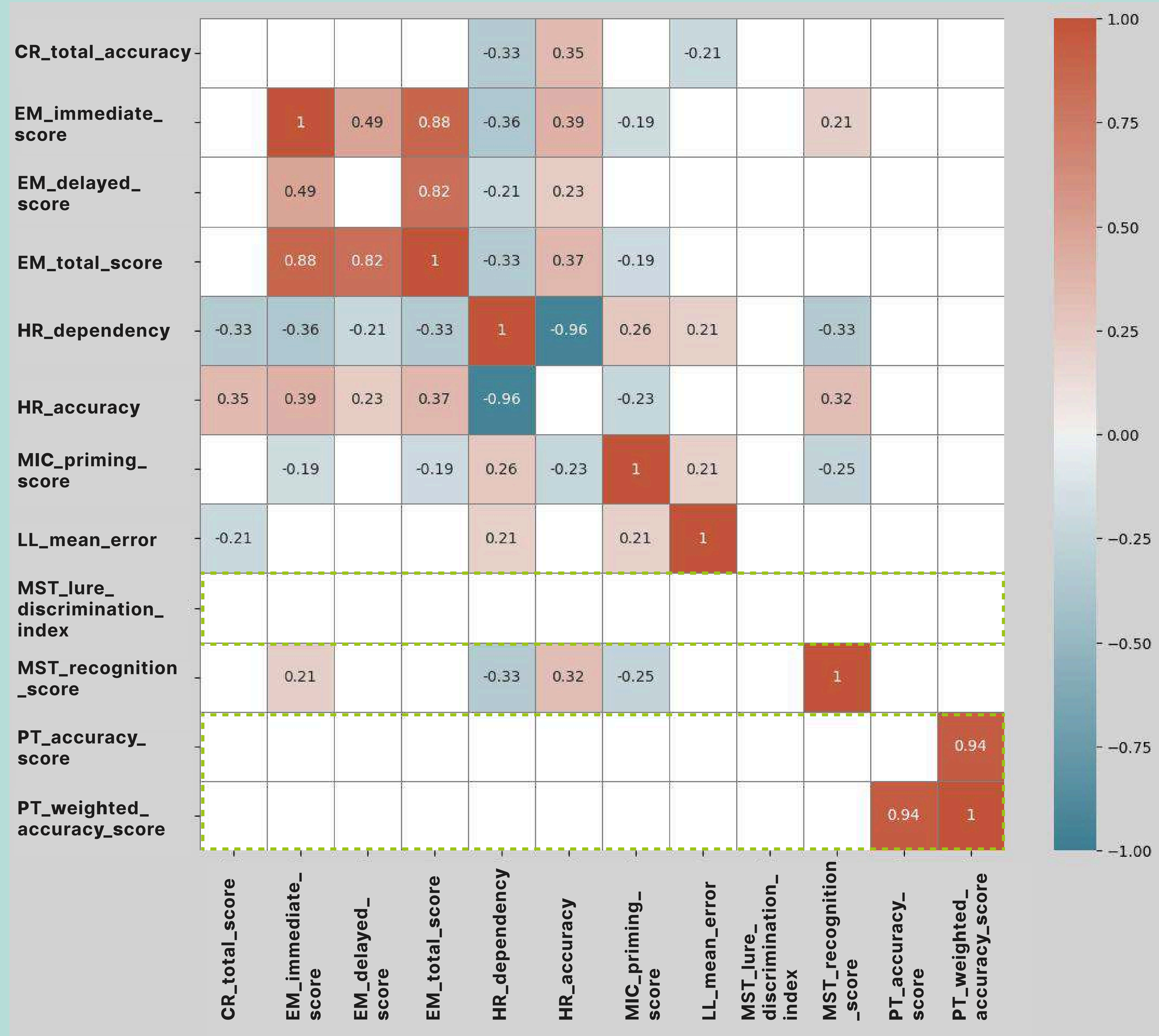
Pattern completion tasks and results







4. TASK CORRELATIONS



Variable Selection and Factor Structure

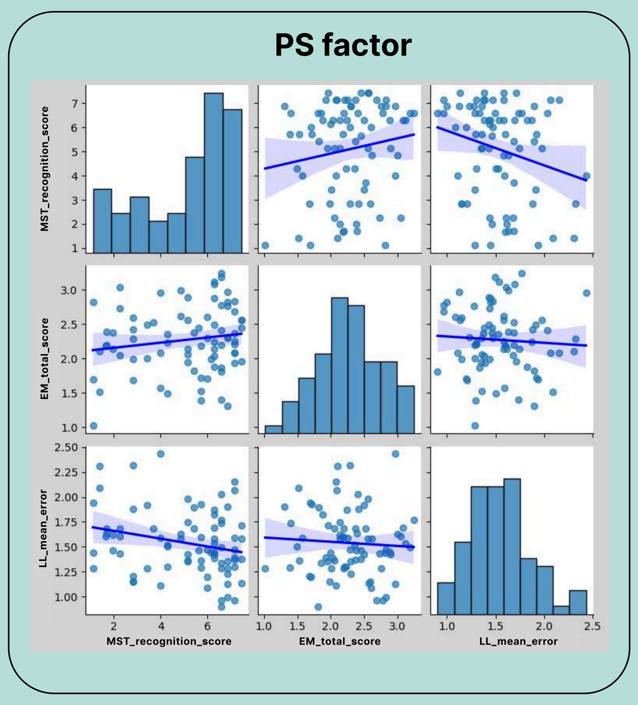
Based on the correlation matrix, none of the Primacy Task (PT) variables correlated significantly with other indicators and were excluded. For the Holistic Recollection Task, we retained the primary variable (HR_dependency). In the Mnemonic Similarity Task, the primary variable (MST_lure_discrimination_index) showed no significant correlations; therefore, we used the secondary measure (MST_recognition_score).

The resulting two-factor structure was:

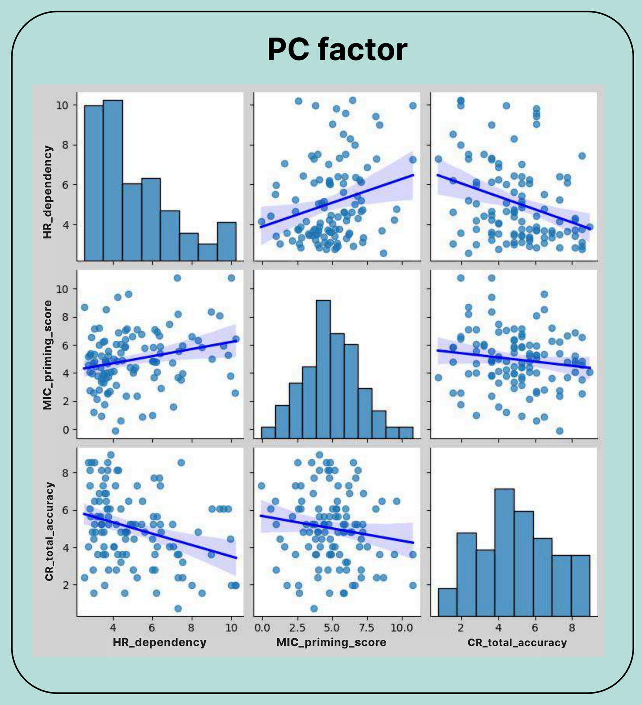
PS ← LLT (loclearning), MST (mst_rr), EM (em_total)

PC ← MIC (mic), HR (holrec_dep), CR (cuedrecall)

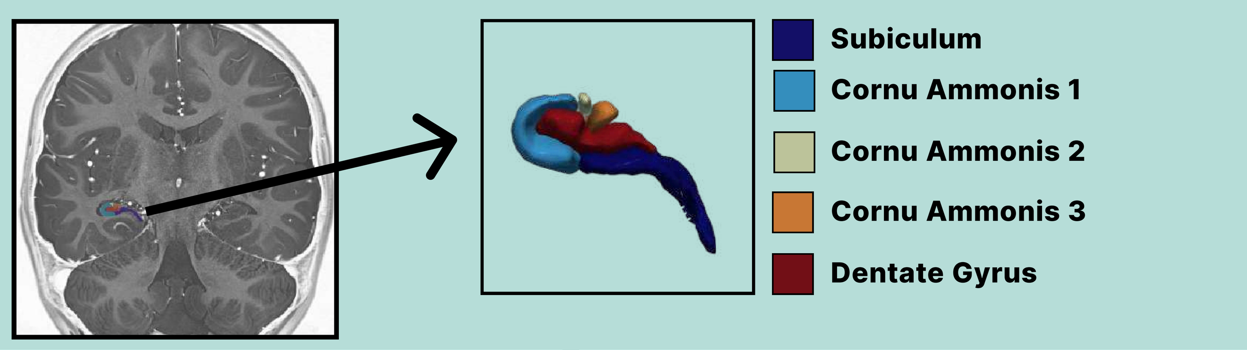
PS factor



PC factor



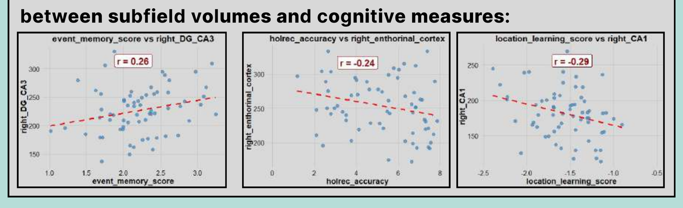
5. HIPPOCAMPAL SEGMENTATION PROGRESS



Manual and automated segmentation of high-resolution PD images (0.4×0.4×2 mm)

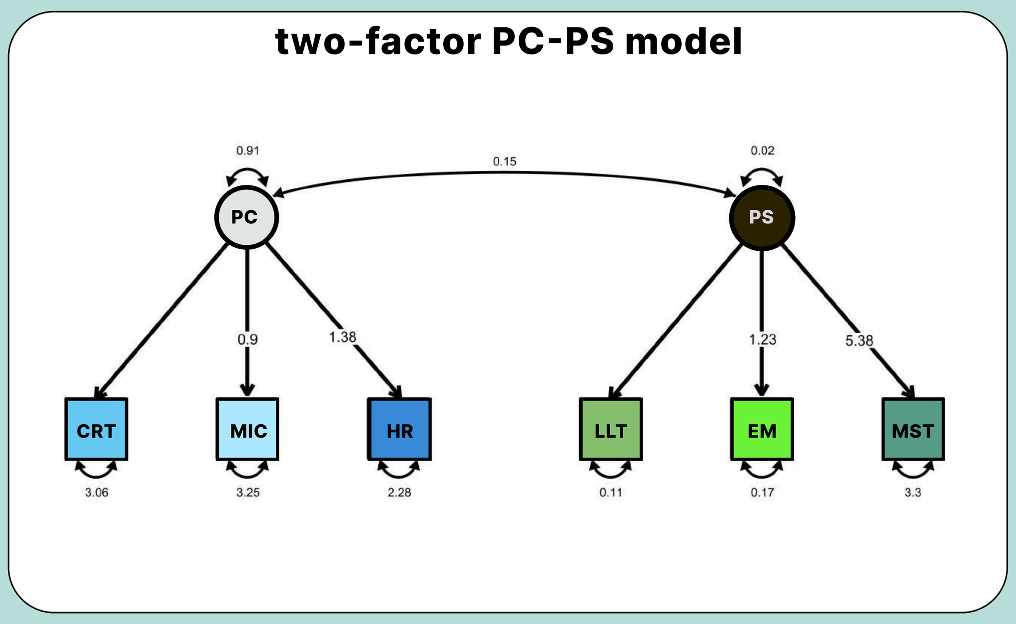
- Longitudinal analyses of target subfields changes using latent change score model
- Ongoing development of a child HC atlas, separating CA1–CA3–DG [5] (for more information check poster T41.)

Using our previous atlas, we observed significant correlations between subfield volumes and cognitive measures:



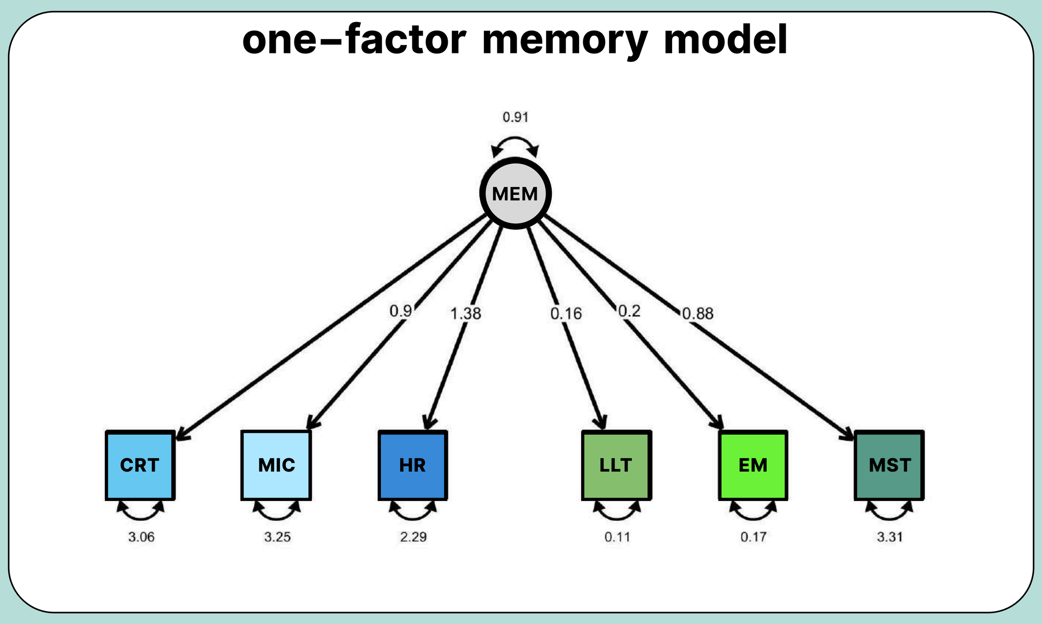
6. STUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

two-factor PC-PS model



Model Fit parameters: CFI = 1.058; RMSEA =0.00

one-factor memory model



Model Fit parameters: CFI = 1.08; RMSEA =0.00

Key Findings:
1. Both the one-factor and two-factor models showed excellent fit to the data based on CFI and RMSEA values, which were above the recommended cutoffs.
2. The Chi-square difference test was used to compare the nested models. The one-factor model demonstrated a significantly better fit ($\chi2$ (1)=16.856; p<0.001), indicating it is the statistically preferred model.

7. DISCUSSION

1. The findings suggest that memory-related computations may potentially be assessed assessed in 4-year-old children using a latent variable modeling approach.

2. Both the two-factor PC–PS model and the one-factor memory model fit the data; however, Chi-square comparisons indicated that the one-factor memory model provides the best fit.

3. Preliminary hippocampal segmentation analyses further suggest a potential link between behavioral performance and hippocampal subfield volume.

8. References

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