

Julie Abaci

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EDUCATION

The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ

08/2020 – 05/2024

B.A. Psychology, Philosophy Minor

GPA: 3.99/4.0, *Summa Cum Laude*

Honors Thesis: *A path model of collective action's impact on well-being among women*

Advisors: Ashley Borders, Ph.D., John Ruscio, Ph.D.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

09/2024 – present

Research Coordinator, **Regulation, Action, and Motivated Perception (RAMP) Lab**

Advisor: Dr. Shana Cole

- Conducting NSF-funded research on political polarization, perceptual and attentional biases in sociopolitical information processing, and collective action.
- Designing visual stimuli and perceptual tasks in Qualtrics to assess whether ideological threats amplify threat perception, potentially driving collective action.
- Using two-way ANOVAs and regression analyses to assess whether participants who view ideologically threatening information demonstrate motivated perceptions of visual stimuli, particularly through matching and numerical estimation tasks.
- Collecting and analyzing data from over 3,000 participants using Prolific and SPSS.
- Overseeing 10 lab research assistants, including recruitment, training, orientation, and performance evaluation.
- Managing lab resource allocation, grant budgeting, communications, and meeting schedules.

Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

06/2023 – 08/2023

Research Fellow, **Princeton Neuroscience Summer Internship Program**

Title: *A Task-Based Model of Uncertainty's Impact on Reinforcement Learning: A Focus on Socioeconomic Status*

Advisors: Dr. Rachel L Bedder, Dr. Yael Niv

- Identified a gap in the adverse life circumstance literature: inconsistent findings on neural and perceptive reactivity to rewards and losses across socioeconomic status groups.
- Designed a computational task in Python to assess whether uncertainty in early life impacts one's reactivity to rewards and losses in later life.
- Modeled environmental uncertainty and certainty in two critical environments, as well as a post-critical environment comprised of a reinforcement learning task.
- Using the Rescorla-Wagner model for learning, agents' learning rates were optimized in the critical environment and applied to the post-critical environment.

- When analyzing the agents' prediction errors in the post-critical environment, findings indicate that those who undergo uncertain critical periods show greater reactivity to rewards and losses—resulting in enhanced performance on a learning task.

The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ

Thesis Student, Psychology Senior Honors Thesis

01/2023 – 05/2024

Advisor: Dr. Ashley Borders

Committee Members: Dr. Shaun Wiley, Dr. Adaurennaya Onyewuenyi

- Identified conflicting findings in the collective action literature: collective action participation against sexism results in both positive and negative impacts on well-being across women, primarily as a function of politicized identity and perceived discrimination.
- Analyzed old data sets in the exploratory phase to find consistent patterns across several variables using regression and correlation analyses in SPSS.
- Proposed a novel mediation model wherein politicized identification with feminists mediates the relationship between collective action and positive outcomes, and perceived discrimination mediates the relationship between collective action and negative outcomes.
- To validate my model, I compiled a set of surveys in Qualtrics to measure variables relating to group identification, life satisfaction, anxiety, depression, rumination, and collective action participation.
- Collected data via student recruitment and snowball sampling in fall 2023 ($N = 143$).
- Used structural equation modeling in MPlus during spring 2024, and both mediators' indirect effects were supported. The positive pathway was supported fully, but the direct effect of collective action on psychological distress was not supported.

Student Researcher, Senior Independent Research

01/2024 – 06/2024

Title: Developing a Package in R to Test the Presence of Momentum in Sports Data

Advisor: Dr. John Ruscio

- Developed a statistical package in R tailored for analyzing binary data sequences, aiming to detect momentum or non-random patterns: <https://github.com/abacij/momentum-package>
- The aim of this project was to address the need for a tool facilitating efficient and reproducible analyses of binary data in situations where human assessments of randomness may be flawed, such as detecting momentum in sports data.
- R code was written to provide output for three test results: the number of streaks of wins and losses within a given sequence (runs), autocorrelations, and conditional probabilities. Each test analyzes data to detect deviation from chance-level expectations.
- Visual output is included for each test: observed values plotted on the sampling distribution for the runs and autocorrelations tests, and a bowtie graph for conditional probabilities.
- Culminated the project with a tutorial style paper on how the package can be used.

Student Researcher, Senior Independent Research

08/2023 – 12/2023

Title: A Review of Error in Decision Making and Proposed Classification of Suitable Hygiene Methods

Advisor: Dr. John Ruscio

- Analyzed literature on bias and noise in decision-making and judgment, with an emphasis on works authored by Dr. Daniel Kahneman, psychologist and economist.

- Organized a conceptual framework wherein hygiene methods for mitigating judgment error are organized into broad categories and linked to applicable sources of bias and noise.
- Worked towards filling a gap in the literature: the need for a comprehensive, accessible framework that classifies types of judgment error, sources of such error, and applicable decision hygiene methods.
- The final research paper is being shared with Dr. Ruscio's future students as a user-friendly guide to judgment error and methods of improving one's decision-making.

Research Assistant, Identity Development across the African Diaspora Lab 08/2023 – 05/2024

Project Title: *The Moderating Role of John Henryism on Black College Students' Relationship with Institutional Race-Related Stressors and Anxiety*

Advisor: Dr. Adaurennaya Onyewuenyi

- Analyzed literature on racial discrimination, well-being, and coping mechanisms such as John Henryism.
- Collaborated with a small group of lab-mates to propose a model wherein John Henryism moderates the relationships between institutional racism, ethnic group membership, and anxiety.
- Motivated by a lack of sufficient research in the literature on John Henryism as a moderator for mental health outcomes, such as anxiety, among Black college students specifically.
- Facilitated a lab discussion on the effects of John Henryism on mental health among Black college students, with an emphasis on xenophobia against one's ethnic background and perceived institutional racism.
- Utilized archived data from a study completed in a previous semester on the Black student experience at TCNJ to run regression and correlation analyses in SPSS.
- Completed a culminating research paper on our statistical and theoretical findings on coping across Black student populations.

Student Researcher, Independent Course Project 03/2023 – 06/2023

Title: *Intertwining Personal and Environmental Well-Being in Textbook Accessibility Reform*

Advisor: Dr. Janet Gray

- Pursued an independent project during my enrollment in an Honors Eco-feminism Course.
- Argued in favor of open-access textbook adoption across higher education by discussing the implications for student success and environmental well-being.
- Used published journal articles, books, corporate websites, and peer discussions to gain information on the textbook publishing industry and its impact on low-income, first-generation college students.
- Outlined potential solutions to inaccessibility in higher education that are feasible for institutions, beneficial for consumers, and kind to the environment.
- Presented a poster at TCNJ that highlighted open-access as a partial solution for educational inequity, student health and academic issues, carbon emissions, and deforestation.

Research Assistant, Clinical Outcomes and Processes Lab 01/2022 – 12/2022

Project Title: *The Role of Rumination as a Transdiagnostic Factor in Comorbid Depression and Anxiety*

Advisor: Dr. Ashley Borders

- Collaboratively analyzed literature on the relationship between ruminative thinking in clinical outcomes with lab-mates in weekly meetings.
- Individually compiled a literature review focused on the link between ruminative thinking and the co-occurrence of depression and anxiety symptoms.
- Led a lab discussion on the maladaptive effects of rumination on individuals coping with depression and anxiety, as well as clinical implications for treatment.
- Collected measures to compile into a Qualtrics survey to assess the correlates of rumination, depression, and anxiety.
- Collaborated with lab-mates in the following semester to analyze data from a study on instrumental emotion regulation using SPSS.
- Results indicated that participants used rumination to maintain negative emotions when it was deemed useful to achieve a desired goal.

Student Researcher, Independent Research

01/2022 – 05/2022

Title: *A Review and Cross-Cultural Assessment of Jonathan Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory*

Advisor: Dr. John Ruscio

- Researched Jonathan Haidt's Moral Foundations Theory and its cross-cultural applications.
- Sought to further understand the mechanisms through which individuals make moral judgments and how these differ across environmental contexts.
- Synthesized ideas to form an outline of the history of moral theory and an overview Moral Foundations Theory.
- Independently managed scheduling and progress in the research and writing process.
- Completed a literature review on the history of moral theory in psychology and philosophy, the novelty of Jonathan Haidt's theory, the theory's components, its cultural implications using Hofstede's cultural dimensions, as well as its application in politics and social class.

BOOK CHAPTERS

1. Ruscio, J., & Abaci, J. (2025). From Despair and Helplessness to Constructive Problem-Solving: Seeking Information Rather than Letting It Find You. In *Critical Thinking Across Disciplines, Vol. 2: Applications in the Digital Age* (pp. 155-180). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

1. Abaci, J., Wiley, S., Koc, Y., and Borders, A. (In Prep). A dual pathway model of collective action's impact on well-being among women.

PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCES

1. Abaci, J. & Cole, S. (2026, February). *Ideology and Motivated Perception of Sociopolitical Images*. Upcoming poster presentation at the annual Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) convention. Chicago, IL.

2. **Abaci, J.** & Ruscio, J. (2024, April). *Package Development for Meta-Analyses in Jamovi*. Oral presentation at TCNJ's annual Celebration of Student Achievement (COSA). Ewing, NJ.
3. **Abaci, J.** & Borders, A. (2024, April). *Collective Action's Impact on Well-Being Among Marginalized Group Members*. Oral presentation at TCNJ's annual Celebration of Student Achievement (COSA). Ewing, NJ.
4. **Abaci, J.,** Bedder R.L., Niv, Y. (2023, November). *A Task-Based Model of Uncertainty's Impact on Reinforcement Learning: A Focus on Socioeconomic Status*. Poster Presented at the annual Society for Neuroscience Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience (FUN) poster session. District of Columbia.
5. **Abaci, J.,** Bedder R.L., Niv, Y. (2023, August). *A Task-Based Model of Uncertainty's Impact on Reinforcement Learning: A Focus on Socioeconomic Status*. Oral presentation at a Niv Lab meeting at Princeton University. Princeton, NJ.
6. **Abaci, J.,** Bedder R.L., Niv, Y. (2023, July). *A Task-Based Model of Uncertainty's Impact on Reinforcement Learning: A Focus on Socioeconomic Status*. Oral presentation at the annual Leadership Alliance National Symposium Research Conference. Hartford, CT.
7. **Abaci, J.** (2023, April). *Freedom & Wealth: Challenging the Libertarian Debate*. Oral presentation at Swarthmore College's annual Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium. Swarthmore, PA.
8. **Abaci, J.** (2023, April). *Intertwining Personal and Environmental Wellbeing in Textbook Accessibility Reform*. Poster presented at TCNJ's annual Celebration of Student Achievement (COSA). Ewing, NJ.
9. **Abaci, J.,** Bocco, E., Diana, A., Hairston, K., Manion, C., Mitten, R., Pede, L., Shnaider, A., Villareal, L., Borders, A. (2023, March). *Does Rumination Serve as an Instrumental Emotion Regulation Strategy?* Poster presented at the annual convention of the Eastern Psychological Association. Boston, MA.

HONORS & AWARDS

Princeton Neuroscience Internship Scholarship (NSF Funded)	06/2023
TCNJ Humanities & Social Sciences Dean Award, Senior Honors Thesis Scholarship	06/2023
Conference Travel Dean Award	04/2023
Phi Beta Kappa	03/2023
Phi Kappa Phi	03/2023
Phi Sigma Tau, The International Honor Society for Philosophers	11/2023
Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology	03/2022
TCNJ Honors Program Scholar	08/2020
TCNJ Merit Scholarship	08/2020 – 05/2024
TCNJ Dean's List	12/2020 – 05/2024

TEACHING & MENTORING

The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ

Paid Peer Tutor, TCNJ Tutoring Center

08/2023 – 05/2024

Director: Professor Karen Deaver

- Served as a peer tutor for psychology and philosophy courses that I successfully completed.
- Conducted free 30-minute or one-hour sessions to assist students in strengthening their study skills or grasping complex concepts.
- Facilitated writing consultations, which offered in-depth feedback on students' written work.
- Provided academic support and guided students to TCNJ's resources for student success and mental health when needed.

Teaching Assistant, Alcohol Studies Research Seminar

01/2023 – 05/2023

Advisor: Dr. Margaret Martinetti

- Collaborated with Dr. Martinetti to effectively deliver course content to students enrolled in a research seminar.
- Provided feedback on syllabus and assignment content to optimize class time.
- Reviewed and graded student work on papers, assignments, and discussion posts.
- Held weekly office hours to support and encourage students seeking help.

SERVICE

Service at Rutgers UniversityOrganizer, Graduate Application Co-Working Program, *Psychology Department* 2025**Service at Princeton University**Invited Panelist (x2), Alumni Summer Neuroscience Panel, *Princeton Neuroscience Institute* 2024-2025**Service at The College of New Jersey**Invited Panelist, IDAD Lab and Mentee Alumni Panel, *Psychology Department* 2024Student Organizer and Researcher, PlayLab Grant Project, *School of Education* 2023

- Assisted in developing a newly established PlayLab to address issues of on-campus student mental health.

CommunityResearch Volunteer, HomeWorks Trenton, *Trenton, NJ* 2025

- Assisting in research and curriculum development for a Global Justice Learning Program within a free, community-based after-school residential program for girls from disenfranchised groups.

WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

Prospective PhD and RA Event in Psychology (PPREP), Harvard University, Virtual 10/2023*Yale Graduate School Virtual Preview Days, Yale University, Virtual* 11/2023

CERTIFICATIONS & TECHNICAL SKILLS

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Research Ethics Training

- Human Research – Social & Behavioral Research Investigators

College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) Training and Evaluation

- Level 2 advanced tutor certification – established professional standards for peer education services.

Data Collection & Analysis

- SPSS
- R
- Jamovi
- Qualtrics
- Excel
- MPlus
- Prolific

Programming Languages

- Python
- JavaScript
- HTML
- CSS

Languages

- Fluent in English
- Conversant in Turkish

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Psychology

Methods and Tools of Psychology; Abnormal Psychology; Design and Statistical Analysis; Personality Theory and Research; Development Across the Lifespan; Research Seminar: Alcohol Studies; Sexual & Gender Minority Mental Health; Psychology of Women; Senior Honors Thesis I; Independent Research; Senior Independent Research; Collaborative Research

Other

Human Form and Function; Ethical Theory; Educational Equity & Social Justice in Documentary; Disease and Health in American Society; Issues in Philosophy; History of Modern Philosophy; Conflict & Collaboration; Existentialism; Eco-feminism; Self, God, & Free Will