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Research interests

My main research interest lies in understanding how motivations and emotions influence action control on the subpersonal (mechanistic) level, particularly focusing on the approach-avoidance distinction and aggressive behaviour. You can access a list of selected research topics [here](#).

Proposals

1.1. Comparison of Approach-Avoidance Measures (together with Ulkar Husenynzade)

Research has developed several reaction-time based methods for the measurement of spontaneous action inclinations to approach or avoid. However, established methods vary in the type of implicated movements, investigating manual keypress reactions on a computer keyboard, swiping movements on a computer tablet, or whole-body movements in a virtual environment. In line with modern embodiment theories, we plan to assess the potential contribution of embodied processes to these measures by conducting a systematic comparison.

Key reading:

- Eder, A. B., Krishna, A., Sebald, A., & Kunde, W. (2021). Embodiment of approach-avoidance behavior: Motivational priming of whole-body movements in a virtual world. *Motivation Science*, 7(2), 133–144. DOI: [10.1037/mot0000205](https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000205) (you can access the article at my personal website ([Publications](#))).

1.2. Avoidance of Imagery-based Fear Stimuli (together with Ulkar Husenynzade)

Previous research has shown that aversive mental images systematically paired with a conditioned stimulus can cause de novo fear learning in the absence of any external aversive stimulation. In a research project, we plan to investigate whether people avoid these conditioned stimuli.

Key reading:

- Kryptos, A.-M., Mertens, G., Leer, A., & Engelhard, I. M. (2020). Induction of conditioned avoidance via mental imagery. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 132, 103652. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2020.103652> (open-access)

1.3. Research on the Peak-End Rule

The 'peak-end' rule states that recollection of an experience is most influenced by the peak (the most intense moment) and end of the experience. In this research project, we plan to replicate central findings of previous research and to extend the rule in meaningful ways to new experiences. (Alaybek et al., 2022)

Key reading:

- Alaybek, B., Dalal, R. S., Fyffe, S., Aitken, J. A., Zhou, Y., Qu, X., Roman, A., & Baines, J. I. (2022). All's well that ends (and peaks) well? A meta-analysis of the peak-end rule and duration neglect. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 170, 104149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2022.104149>

1.4. Response Facilitation by Approach-Related Action Effects

This research project investigated the hypothesis that, ceteris paribus, actions producing approach-related action effects are more readily performed than actions producing avoidance-related action effects. (Eder & Rothermund, 2008)

Key reading:

- Eder, A. B., & Rothermund, K. (2008). When do motor behaviors (mis)match affective stimuli? An evaluative coding view of approach and avoidance reactions. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 137(2), 262–281. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.137.2.262> (you can access the article at my personal website ([Publications](#))).

1.5. Kinesthetic Approach-Avoidance Training (together with Anand Krishna)

Approach-avoidance training (AAT) procedures were developed with the prospect of modifying action impulses to approach or avoid specific stimuli. However, the processes underlying AAT effects are underresearched. In a small research project, our aim is to investigate whether kinesthetic perceptions arising from effortful behaviors can influence evaluative judgments of neutral stimuli paired with them.

Key reading:

- Van Dessel, P., Eder, A. B., & Hughes, S. (2018). Mechanisms underlying effects of approach-avoidance training on stimulus evaluation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 44(8), 1224–1241. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/xlm0000514> (you can access the article at my personal website ([Publications](#))).

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