

David Levari

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Current position

2024 – Brown University, Providence, RI
Lawrence A. Rand and Tiina Smith Assistant Professor of Cognitive and Psychological Sciences and Entrepreneurship
Department of Cognitive and Psychological Sciences
Nelson Center for Entrepreneurship

Education and Previous Roles

2018 – 2024 Harvard Business School, Boston, MA
Postdoctoral Researcher, *Negotiation, Organizations & Markets* (Advisor: Michael Norton)

2012 – 2018 Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Ph.D. in Psychology
Dissertation: “Prevalence-Induced Concept Change in Human Judgment”
Committee: Daniel Gilbert (chair), Joshua Greene, Samuel Gershman, Jeremy Wolfe

2006 – 2010 The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL
B.A. in Psychology & Public Policy (Advisor: Penny Visser)

Research Interests

My research investigates how people try to assess and improve the performance of themselves and others, and why those efforts sometimes go astray. I use behavioral laboratory experiments, field studies, and formal computational models to study this topic through several interconnected research questions, including why people often take over tasks when they shouldn't, why top performers don't always give better advice, and why performance evaluations can get less accurate as poor performance becomes rare.

Publications and Working Papers

Published/Forthcoming/Under Review or Revision

Levari, D.E. & Norton, M.I. (Under revision). Collective streaks motivate prosocial behavior.

Levari, D.E., Mastroianni, A.M., Verrey, J.J., Gim, I., Devine, S., & Gilbert, D.T. (Under review). Counterfactual performance reveals the hidden impact of task takeovers.

Levari, D.E., Hagerty, S., & Norton, M.I. (Under review). (Still) Building a Better America: A Replication of Norton & Ariely (2011).

Fišar, M., Greiner, B., Huber, C., Katok, E., Ozkes, A., and **the Management Science Reproducibility Collaboration** (2024). Reproducibility in Management Science. *Management Science*.

Jones, P. J., **Levari, D. E.**, Bellet, B. W., & McNally, R. J. (2023). Exposure to descriptions of traumatic events narrows one's concept of trauma. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 29(1), 179–187.

Devine, S., Neumann, C., **Levari, D.E.**, & Eppinger, B. (2023). Human Ageing is Associated with More Rigid Concept Spaces. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. 30, 722–730.

Levari, D.E., Gilbert, D.T. & Wilson, T.D. (2022). Tips from the top: Do the best performers really give the best advice? *Psychological Science*, 33(5), 685-698.

Levari, D.E. (2022). Range-frequency effects can explain and eliminate prevalence-induced concept change. *Cognition*, 226.

Goldenberg, A., Schöne, J, Huang, Z., Ong, D.C., Brady, T.F., Robinson, M.M., **Levari, D.E.**, Zaki, J., Gross, J.J. (2022). Amplification in the Evaluation of Emotional Expressions Over Time. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6(10), 1408-1416.

Rasmussen, R., **Levari, D. E.**, Akhtar, M., Crittle, C. S., Gately, M., Pagan, J., Brennen, A., Cashman, D., Wulff, A. N., Norton, M. I., Sommers, S. R., & Urry, H. L. (2022). White (but Not Black) Americans continue to see racism as a zero-sum game; White conservatives (but not liberals) see themselves as losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 17(6), 1800–1810

Jones, P.J., Bellet, B.W., **Levari, D.E.**, & McNally, R.J. (2021). Psychological Response Data on the Traumatic Nature of 600 Written Events. *Journal of Open Psychology Data*, 9(1), 3.

Lyu, W., **Levari, D.E.**, Nartker, M.S., Little, D.S., & Wolfe, J.M. (2021). Feedback moderates the effect of prevalence on perceptual decisions. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 28(6), 1906-1914.

Levari, D.E., Gilbert, D.T., Wilson, T.D., Sievers, B., Amodio, D.M., & Wheatley, T. (2018). Prevalence-induced concept change in human judgment. *Science*, 360(6396), 1465–1467.

Working papers and manuscripts in preparation

Levari, D. E., Martel, C., Orchinik, R., Bhui, R., Seli, P., Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (Working paper). Blatantly false news increases belief in news that is merely implausible.

Levari, D.E. & Feffer, J. (Working paper). Advisor performance distorts perceived advice quality and utilization.

Levari, D.E., Feffer, J., & Norton, M.I. (Working paper). Reducing prevalence-based bias in employee and consumer evaluations.

Levari, D.E., Gim, I., & Zhang, T. (In prep). Task takeovers under high stakes: Consequences for performance and relations.

Levari, D.E., Chance, Z., Friedman, J., & Norton, M.I. (In prep). Choice Amnesia: When difficult choices are harder to remember.

Levari, D.E. (In prep). What do people think effective coaching looks like?

Levari, D.E. (In prep). “It looks like you could use some help”: The challenges of taking over tasks from autonomous agents.

Teaching Experience

2026	CPSY 0220: Making Decisions, Brown University, <i>Instructor</i>
2025	CLPS 1255: Improving Human Performance, Brown University, <i>Instructor</i>
2024	CLPS 1960: Senior Seminar in Behavioral Decision Sciences, Brown University, <i>Instructor</i>
2021	MGMT E-6200: Organizational and Consumer Behavior, Harvard Extension School, <i>Instructor</i>
2017	Harvard Bok Teaching Certificate: Higher Education Pedagogy, <i>Course Developer</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wrote and developed an online course for Harvard on using behavioral science research to inform teaching higher education. The course has been offered continuously since 2017, with over 3,000 students enrolled to date. (Most recent Net Promoter Score: 76.5)
2016	Psy 3555: Instructional Styles in Psychology, Harvard University, <i>Instructor</i>
2016	Psy 15: Social Psychology, Harvard University, <i>Teaching Fellow</i>
2015	Psy 15: Social Psychology, Harvard University, <i>Teaching Fellow</i>
2015	SLS 20: Psychological Science, Harvard University, <i>Teaching Fellow</i>
2014	Psy 15: Social Psychology, Harvard University, <i>Teaching Fellow</i>
2011	BUSE 38103: Strategies & Processes of Negotiation, Booth School of Business, <i>Teaching Assistant</i>

Mentorship and Advising

- 2025- Brown University, Behavioral Decision Sciences, *Head Concentration Advisor*
2025- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, SJDM Mentor Matching Program, *Mentor*
2024-25 Brown University, Behavioral Decision Sciences, *Concentration Advisor*
2024- Brown University, Undergraduate Concentration Committee, *Member*
2024 Brown University, Orientation First-Year Advising
2023- Prospective Ph.D. & RA Event in Psychology (PPREP), *Mentor*
2021-23 Project SHORT, *Mentor*
- Pro bono mentoring for applicants to behavioral science doctoral programs
- 2022 “*The Effects of Race and Gender on Standards of Professionalism*”, Honors Thesis by Jacqueline Feffer, Harvard
- Winner of the Gordon W. Allport Prize
- 2021 “*Choice Amnesia: When Difficult Product Choices are Harder to Remember*”, Honors Thesis by Julia Friedman, Harvard
- Winner of the Psychology Faculty Prize
- 2016-17 Harvard Bok Center, *Pedagogy Fellow*
- Worked with faculty, staff, and students across Harvard on programming to teach effectively
- 2013-17 Harvard Department of Psychology, *Concentration Advisor*
- Advised undergraduates on course selection and careers related to behavioral science.

Honors & Awards

- 2024 Fellow, Society for Experimental Social Psychology
2024 Academy of Management, OB Division Best Reviewer Award
2019 Society of Experimental Social Psychology, Dissertation Award Finalist
2019 Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Family Travel Grant (\$250)
2018 Derek Bok Teaching Certificate, Harvard University
2017 Harvard University Department of Psychology, Large Research Grant (\$3,500)
2017 Harvard University Department of Psychology, Small Travel Grant (\$500)
2016 Harvard University Department of Psychology, Large Research Grant (\$3,500)
2016 Harvard University Department of Psychology, Small Travel Grant (\$500)
2016 Derek Bok Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University
2015 Derek Bok Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard University
2015 Harvard Initiative for Learning & Teaching (HILT), Spark Grant (\$15,000)
2015 Harvard University Department of Psychology, Small Travel Grant (\$500)
2010 University of Chicago, Conference Travel Award (\$500)
2009 University of Chicago, Earl R. Franklin Undergraduate Research Fellowship (\$3000)

Other Professional Experience

- 2010-12 University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Lab Manager for Jane Risen & Eugene Caruso
2010 Carnegie Mellon University, Research Assistant at the Center for Behavioral Decision Research
2008-10 University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Research Assistant for George Wu
2008-10 University of Chicago Department of Psychology, Research Assistant for Penny Visser

Chaired Symposia

Zhang, X. & Levari, D.E. (2026). *Evaluating and predicting performance and learning: New Insights and Directions*. Co-chaired symposium at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Chicago, IL.

Levari, D.E. & Zhang, T. (2022). *The Promise and Perils of Collaboration for Performance and Learning*. Co-chaired symposium at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA.

Levari, D.E. & Yang, A.X. (2022). *Promoting Social Behavior via Social Influence: New Tools and Discoveries*. Co-chaired symposium at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Francisco, CA.

Levari, D.E. & Huang, S.C. (2020). *Competition and Cooperation: Novel Methods, New Discoveries*. Co-Chaired symposium at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, New Orleans, LA.

Invited Talks

2026	Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, <i>Boston College</i>
2026	School of Professional Studies, <i>Brown University</i>
2025	Nelson Center for Entrepreneurship Breakthrough Lab, <i>Brown University</i>
2025	Division of Athletics and Recreation, <i>Brown University</i>
2025	SPSP Judgment and Decision-Making Preconference
2025	Consortium for Interacting Minds, <i>Dartmouth College</i>
2024	Department of Computer Science, <i>Brown University</i>
2024	Cognitive and Psychological Sciences Departmental Kickoff, <i>Brown University</i>
2024	Department of Psychology, <i>Bielefeld University</i>
2024	Women in Psychology Family Planning Workshop Panel, <i>Harvard University</i>
2024	Goldenberg Lab, <i>Harvard Business School</i>
2024	Department of Cognitive, Linguistic & Psychological Sciences, <i>Brown University</i>
2023	Computational Cognitive Neuroscience Lab, <i>Harvard University</i>
2023	Marketing Seminar, <i>UCSD Rady School of Management</i>
2023	Research Seminar, <i>Boston University Questrom School of Business</i>
2022	Organizational Behavior Seminar, <i>Stanford Graduate School of Business</i>
2021	Organizational Behavior Lab, <i>Harvard Business School</i>
2021	Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
2020	Otto Lab, <i>McGill University</i>
2019	Minson Conflict and Collaboration Lab, <i>Harvard Kennedy School</i>
2019	Interdisciplinary Workshop on Security and Human Behavior (SHB), <i>Harvard Law School</i>
2018	Program on Negotiation Research Lab, <i>Harvard Law School</i>
2017	Computational Social Cognition Bootcamp, <i>Harvard University</i>
2017	Workshop on Conversation Research, <i>Harvard Business School</i>
2017	Visual Attention Lab, <i>Harvard Medical School</i>
2017	Cognition Brain & Behavior Seminar, <i>Harvard Department of Psychology</i>
2016	Moral Psychology Research Lab, <i>Harvard Department of Psychology</i>
2015	Harvest Day, <i>Harvard Department of Psychology</i>
2013	Social Psychology Research Seminar, <i>Harvard Department of Psychology</i>

Conference Oral Presentations

- Levari, D.E.**, Mastroianni, A.M., Verrey, J.J., Gim, I., Devine, S., & Gilbert, D.T., (2026, February). *Counterfactual performance reveals the hidden impact of task takeovers*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Chicago, IL (forthcoming).
- Levari, D.E.** & Feffer, J., (2025, February). *Advisor performance distorts perceived advice quality and utilization*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Denver, CO.
- Levari, D.E.**, Mastroianni, A.M., Verrey, J.J., Gim, I., Devine, S., & Gilbert, D.T., (2024, August). *Costly task takeovers in human performance*. Presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL.
- Levari, D.E.**, Feffer, J., & Norton, M.I., (2023, September). *Detecting and managing prevalence-based bias in employee evaluations*. Presented at the Diversity in Management & Organizations conference (virtual).

- Levari, D.E.** & Feffer, J., (2023, August). *Advisor performance distorts perceived advice quality and utilization*. Presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Boston, MA.
- Levari, D.E.** & Norton, M.I., (2022, November). *Collective streaks motivate prosocial behavior*. Presented at the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making conference, San Diego, CA.
- Levari, D.E.**, Mastroianni, A.M., Verrey, J.J., & Gilbert, D.T., (2022, August). *The Takeover Toll: Taking over for teammates hurts task performance*. Presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA.
- Levari, D.E.**, Gilbert, D.T., & Wilson, T.D., (2022, August). *Tips from the top: Do the best performers really give the best advice?* Presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA.
- Levari, D.E.**, Gilbert, D.T., & Wilson, T.D., (2022, July). *Tips from the top: Do the best performers really give the best advice?* Presented at the International Association for Conflict Management Annual Meeting, Ottawa, CA.
- Levari, D.E.** & Norton, M.I., (2022, February). *Interpersonal streaks as effective social norms*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Francisco, CA and virtual.
- Levari, D.E.** & Norton, M.I., (2021, July). *Using streaks to promote prosocial behavior within groups*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Association for Conflict Management, virtual.
- Levari, D.E.**, Mastroianni, A.M., Verrey, J.J., & Gilbert, D.T., (2020, February). *The Takeover Toll: Taking over for teammates hurts task performance*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, New Orleans, LA.
- Levari, D.E.**, Mastroianni, A.M., Verrey, J.J., & Gilbert, D.T., (2019, November). *The Takeover Toll: Taking over for teammates hurts task performance*. Presented at the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making conference, Montreal, Canada.
- Levari, D.E.** & Gilbert, D.T., (2019, October). *The Takeover Toll: Taking over for teammates hurts task performance*. Presented at the Boston JDM Day conference, Harvard Kennedy School, Cambridge, MA.
- Levari, D.E.** & Gilbert, D.T., (2019, February). *Advice from top performers feels (but is not) more helpful*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Portland, OR.
- Levari, D.E.** & Gilbert, D.T., (2018, November). *Advice from top performers feels (but is not) more helpful*. Presented at the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making conference, New Orleans, LA.
- Levari, D.E.** & Gilbert, D.T., (2018, June). *Advice from top performers feels (but is not) more helpful*. Presented at the Behavioral Decision Research Management conference, Cambridge, MA.
- Levari, D.E.** & Gilbert, D.T., (2017, February). *Those who can't do, teach just fine: Advice seekers overvalue advice from top performers*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Antonio, TX.
- Levari, D.E.** & Gilbert, D.T., (2015, February). *Moving the goalposts: Prevalence reductions expand target definitions*. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Pre-Conference, Long Beach, CA.

Conference Poster Presentations

- Levari, D.E.** & Norton, M.I. (2025, December). *Collective streaks motivate prosocial behavior*. MIT Workshop on the Directions of Polarization, Social Norms & Trust in Societies, Cambridge, MA.

Levari, D.E. & Feffer, J., (2025, November). *Do people know when they use performance advice?* Society for Judgment and Decision-Making Annual Meeting, Denver, CO.

Levari, D.E. & Feffer, J., (2024, November). *Advisor performance distorts perceived advice quality and utilization.* Society for Judgment and Decision-Making Annual Meeting, New York, NY.

Levari, D.E. & Feffer, J., (2024, February). *Advisor performance distorts perceived advice quality and utilization.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Pre-Conference, San Diego, CA.

Levari, D.E. & Feffer, J., (2023, November). *Advisor performance distorts perceived advice quality and utilization.* Society for Judgment and Decision-Making Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA.

Levari, D.E., Mastroianni, A.M., Verrey, J.J., & Gilbert, D.T. (2023, February). *The Takeover Toll: When taking over for teammates hurts task performance.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Pre-Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Levari, D.E. & Norton, M.I., (2022, February). *Interpersonal streaks as effective social norms.* Society for Judgment and Decision-Making conference (virtual).

Verrey, J., **Levari, D.E.,** Mastroianni, A., & Gilbert, D.T., (2019, February). *Do People Know When to Switch Roles? On the Phenomenon of Switch Dilemmas.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Portland, OR.

Levari, D.E., & Gilbert, D.T., (2016, January). *Frequency-broadened target expansion in research ethics: As unethical studies become less common, the definition of an unethical study expands.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Pre-Conference, San Diego, CA.

Levari, D.E., & Gilbert, D.T., (2015, February). *Once the goalposts move, they don't move back: Frequency-broadened target definitions resist conscious control.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Pre-Conference, Long Beach, CA.

Levari, D.E., & Gilbert, D.T., (2014, February). *Gradually decreasing signal frequency broadens definitions of search targets.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Pre-Conference, Austin, TX.

Zhou, H., Majka, E.A., **Levari, D.E.,** Meng, R., & Epley, N. (2012, January). *Little Mind in a Face: Egocentric projection increases mind reading accuracy compared to nonverbal detection.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology Mind Perception Pre-Conference, San Diego, CA.

Majka, E.A., **Levari, D.E.,** & Visser, P.S. (2010, January). *(Dys)functional attitudes? Social rejection, loneliness, and advertisement preferences.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Las Vegas, NV.

Professional Service

Ad-hoc reviewer Academy of Management (AOM) Annual Meeting
Behavioral Decision Research in Management (BDRM) Conference
Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications
Cognitive Science Society (CogSci) Annual Meeting
European Review of Social Psychology
European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience
International Association for Conflict Management Annual Meeting
Journal of Experimental Psychology: General
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
Management Science
National Science Foundation
Nature
Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes

Organization Science
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin
PLOS ONE
PNAS
PNAS Nexus
Psychological Science
Psychonomic Bulletin & Review
Social Science & Medicine – Mental Health
Society for Judgment and Decision-Making (SJDM) Conference
Social Psychological and Personality Science
Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Conference
Swiss National Science Foundation

Professional Affiliations

Academy of Management
Association for Psychological Science
Society for Judgment and Decision-Making

Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Society of Experimental Social Psychology

References

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