

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., 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).

Levari, D.E. & Norton, M.I. (2026). Collective streaks motivate prosocial behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 126, 104941.

- 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.**, 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?

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>
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>
2010	BUSE 38103: Strategies & Processes of Negotiation, Booth School of Business, <i>Teaching Assistant</i>

Mentorship and Advising

2026-	Society for Personality and Social Psychology, <i>Student Mentor</i>
2025-	Brown University, Behavioral Decision Sciences, <i>Head Concentration Advisor</i>
2025-	Society for Judgment and Decision Making, SJDM Mentor Matching Program, <i>Mentor</i>
2025-	Brown University, Annual Rhode Island High School Expo, <i>Presenter</i>
2024-25	Brown University, Behavioral Decision Sciences, <i>Concentration Advisor</i>
2024-	Brown University, Undergraduate Concentration Committee, <i>Member</i>
2024	Brown University, Orientation First-Year Advising
2023	Harvard University, Prospective Ph.D. & RA Event in Psychology (PPREP), <i>Mentor</i>
2021-23	Project SHORT, <i>Mentor</i>
2016-17	Harvard Bok Center, <i>Pedagogy Fellow</i>
2013-17	Harvard Department of Psychology, <i>Concentration Advisor</i>

Graduate Dissertation Committees

2026	Alice Xia, Brown University (PhD Dissertation)
2026	Almos Molnar, Brown University (PhD Dissertation)

Undergraduate Thesis Committees

2026	“Deciding Under Duress: Forced Migration Decision-Making and the Breakdown of U.S. Deterrence Policy”, Honors Thesis by Adelaida del Valle, Brown University
2026	“Behavioral Correlates of Worry Disengagement Among Individuals with Varying Levels of Anxiety and Meditation Experience”, Honors Thesis by Vanessa Vu, Brown University
2022	“ <i>The Effects of Race and Gender on Standards of Professionalism</i> ”, Honors Thesis by Jacqueline Feffer, Harvard University <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winner of the Gordon W. Allport Prize
2021	“ <i>Choice Amnesia: When Difficult Product Choices are Harder to Remember</i> ”, Honors Thesis by Julia Friedman, Harvard University <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winner of the Psychology Faculty Prize

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., Johnson, E.R., & **Levari, D.E.** (2026). *How Job Perception Shapes Identity, Status, and Welfare in the Workplace*. Co-chaired symposium at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA (forthcoming).
- 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	Nelson Center for Entrepreneurship Breakthrough Lab, <i>Brown University</i>
2026	School of Professional Studies, <i>Brown University</i>

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

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.
- 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 Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, 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 Annual Meeting of the International Association for Conflict Management, 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 Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, 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 Annual Meeting of the Society for Judgment and Decision-Making, 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 Society for Personality and Social Psychology Judgment and Decision-Making Pre-Conference, Long Beach, CA.

Conference Poster Presentations

- Zhang, X., & **Levari, D.E.** (February, 2026). People impose a tradeoff between mental and physical skills needed for task performance. Society for Personality and Social Psychology JDM Pre-Conference, Chicago, IL
- 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 JDM 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 JDM Pre-Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Levari, D.E.** & Norton, M.I., (2022, February). *Interpersonal streaks as effective social norms*. Society for Judgment and Decision-Making Annual Meeting (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 Annual Meeting, 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 JDM 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 JDM 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 JDM 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 Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV.

Service

Professional Service	SPSP Judgment and Decision-Making (JDM) Pre-Conference Organizer, 2026- Departmental Website and Communications Committee, Brown University, 2025- Eimas Award Committee, Brown University, 2025- Departmental Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, Brown University, 2024-
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	Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Association for Psychological Science	Society of Experimental Social Psychology
Society for Judgment and Decision-Making	

References

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