Bachelor and Master projects 2022

Bachelor or Master thesis projects are usually **empirical** (quantitative and/ or qualitative). They thus require students to be involved in study planning and data collection as well as to analyse the collected data semi-autonomously. Although previous experience in conducting behavioural studies is desirable, it is not a prerequisite. However, students should be willing to acquire the necessary skills. They will be supported in the necessary steps by the supervisor and the group. The thesis can be **written in English or German**.

Please note that the thesis will also involve preparatory work (e.g., pre-registration of the study plan, obtaining ethical approval). It is thus advised to get in touch at least **eight months before the projected submission date** to ensure that the project can be completed in time.

If you are interested in one of the following topics, please fill in the application form and email it to Jun.-Prof. Dr. Laura M. König.

Applications close on 14 July 2022. A decision will be made after an interview. The interview will take place within 2 weeks after the application deadline.

If you have no experience in analysing quantitative data, it is recommended that you attend the one of the statistics modules that we offer in the B.Sc. Food and Health Sciences (German) or M.Sc. Food Quality and Safety/ M.Sc. Global Food, Nutrition and Health (English), which are offered in the winter semester.

Topic A: The impact of Ramadan fasting on eating behaviour

Description: Ramadan is a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community observed by Muslims worldwide. During Ramadan, Muslims refrain from eating and drinking from dusk until dawn. The fast is usually broken after sunset with a shared meal called *iftar*. Ramadan thus constitutes a deliberate major disruption in people's daily routines, including but not limited to eating behaviour, that is supposed to have far-reaching consequences for people's emotional well-being. This project aims to investigate changes in eating behaviour regarding food intake and eating-related well-being during Ramadan compared to non-fasting before and after Ramadan using smartphone-based Ecological Momentary Assessment. Furthermore, eating behaviour of participants who fast will be compared to the eating behaviour of participants from similar and dissimilar cultural backgrounds who do not fast during Ramadan. In addition, eating experiences during Ramadan, especially regarding common meals, will be explored in qualitative interviews. Three theses will contribute to this project: Two will focus on the quantitative assessment of changes in food intake (topic A1) and eating-related well-being (topic A2).

Methods: Smartphone-based Ecological Momentary Assessment across several time points in the first half of 2022 and descriptive analysis of the data

We are looking for: 2 students to assist with data collection and data analysis.

Project start date: December 2022

Language: The study will be conducted in English; study team meetings will be held in English; knowledge of Arabic, Turkish or other languages that are spoken in countries with a predominantly Muslim population are a bonus, but not required.

Additional information: This is a long-term group project with assessments spanning the first half of 2023. The project is suitable for students who want to submit their thesis in summer/ autumn 2023 or later.

Suggested readings:

Ahmad, S., Goel, K., Maroof, K. A., Goel, P., Arif, M., Amir, M., & Abid, M. (2012). Psycho-social behaviour and health benefits of Islamic fasting during the month of Ramadan. *Journal of Community Medicine and Health Education, 2*(9), 1-4.

Alghafli, Z., Hatch, T. G., Rose, A. H., Abo-Zena, M. M., Marks, L. D., & Dollahite, D. C. (2019). A qualitative study of ramadan: a month of fasting, family, and faith. *Religions, 10*(2), 123.

Hoddy, K. K., Marlatt, K. L., Çetinkaya, H., & Ravussin, E. (2020). Intermittent Fasting and Metabolic Health: From Religious Fast to Time-Restricted Feeding. *Obesity, 28*, S29-S37.

Topic B: The impact of "no added sugars" labelling on sugar content estimation and healthiness perception of foods

Description: According to the World Health Organization, adults should not consume more than 50 grams of sugar per day. However, the majority of the population exceeds this recommendation and thus is at risk of becoming overweight and subsequently develop chronic conditions. To reduce sugar consumption, a better understand of consumers' knowledge about sugar consumption, their accuracy in estimating the sugar content of foods, and sugar-related perceptions of healthiness of food products is needed. Specifically, this project will investigate the impact of the label "no added sugars" on sugar content estimation and healthiness perceptions of foods. This study will be an extension of an earlier study comparing perceptions across food groups (e.g., dairy products, sweets); the main purpose of this study will be to compare perceptions within food groups (e.g., different dairy products).

Methods: online study, quantitative

We are looking for: up to 2 students to assist with study planning, developing materials, data collection. Data analysis and writing will be performed separately.

Projected start date: flexible

Suggested readings:

Chien, T. Y., Chien, Y. W., Chang, J. S., & Chen, Y. C. (2018). Influence of mothers' nutrition knowledge and attitudes on their purchase intention for infant cereal with no added sugar claim. *Nutrients, 10*(4), 435.

König, L. M., Ziesemer, K., & Renner, B. (2019). Quantifying actual and perceived inaccuracy when estimating the sugar, energy content and portion size of foods. *Nutrients, 11*(10), 2425. doi: 10.3390/nu11102425

Topic C: Trust in science and populism in low- and middle-income countries

Description: Trust in science has been related to the adherence to protective measures during the COVID-19 pandemic; it may thus be an important lever to promote health and well-being in the population. Until now, the vast majority of evidence on these relationships stem from high income countries. As part of a Many Labs Study (i.e., a study conducted by many research teams around the world following the same standardised procedures to allow for pooling the data), these theses will contribute to making research less WEIRD (WEstern, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic) by extending the study to low- and middle-income countries.

Methods: online study, quantitative

We are looking for: students from low- and middle-income countries to assist with translating questionnaires into their native language, data collection, data analysis

Projected start date: September 2022

Suggested readings:

Dohle, S., Wingen, T., & Schreiber, M. (2020). Acceptance and adoption of protective measures during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of trust in politics and trust in science. *Social Psychological Bulletin, 15*(4), 1-23.

Roberts, M. R., Reid, G., Schroeder, M., & Norris, S. P. (2013). Causal or spurious? The relationship of knowledge and attitudes to trust in science and technology. *Public Understanding of Science, 22*(5), 624-641.

Contact:

Jun.-Prof. Dr. Laura M. König
Junior Professor of Public Health Nutrition
Campus Kulmbach
Fritz-Hornschuch-Straße 13
95326 Kulmbach
laura.koenig@uni-bayreuth.de
https://phn.uni-bayreuth.de