Playfulness in adults: Its definition, basic structure and measurement issues

Summary / Zusammenfassung
Playfulness in adults is an understudied topic in psychology—most certainly in comparison with research in children. In the literature, there is no agreement about its definition and basic structure. The current project aims at (a) a thorough analysis of the basic components of playfulness; (b) the development and evaluation of new measurement instruments; and (c) the formulation of a new definition of the personality trait in adults. The first research aim has been addressed by means of a psycho-lexical approach (Proyer, 2012a, in press-a) and by a joint factor-analysis of seventeen measures for playfulness (Proyer & Jehle, in press). The latter analysis also showed that some of the derived components have considerable overlap with broader personality factors; especially, extraversion and emotional stability. For the second main aim, a short and economic 5-item questionnaire has been developed (Short Measure of Adult Playfulness, SMAP; Proyer, 2012b). This questionnaire assesses an easy onset and high intensity of playful experiences along with a frequent display of playful activities. Further studies will be conducted to support the validity of the SMAP (Proyer, in press; 2012c; 2013ab; Proyer, & Rodden, 2013). Current research focuses on the development and evaluation of a new multidimensional measure of playfulness. Its predictive power in several areas (e.g., subjective well-being, stress-coping, partnership satisfaction, etc.) will be tested. This will be embedded in work to derive a new definition of the trait that focuses on its broader functions (see Proyer, 2011, 2013b) but less so on its relatedness with humor, having fun, or entertainment.

Publications / Publikationen


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Adult Playfulness; Humor; Playfulness; Positive Psychology

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