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School of Applied
Psychology

Psychological Institute

**Study Programmes.
And Research**

www.zhaw.ch/psychology

Strategic Areas of Specialisation of the Psychological Institute

Mental health and well-being

We study the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic approaches and counselling methods, the quality of diagnostic procedures and aspects of psychiatric and psychosocial care, and examine new ways of promoting health.

A deficit-oriented approach is complemented by a resource-oriented perspective. Research into therapies, treatment and prevention is mutually enriching.

Our findings are used by clinical institutions, psychotherapists, public-health authorities, corporate health management and advisors in prevention.

Experience and behaviour in the context of social and technological innovation

We analyse the effects of the mediatisation, digitalisation and flexibilisation of all spheres of life, explore the conditions underlying social innovation, develop methods and processes to analyse and shape these conditions, and assess best practice methods.

For example, we provide analyses in the field of new technologies and media in remote counselling, as well as in helping children and teenagers to develop the skills to deal with new media. Furthermore, we investigate how the basic conditions within an organisation can be shaped by human resource management so as to enable social sustainability.

Our findings are useful for advisors, media professionals, public authorities responsible for youth media protection and managers, as well as technology providers and regulators.

Risk management and decision-making processes

The goal of our research is to identify and reduce risks or make them more manageable, as well as to render decision-making processes safer.

The perception of risks and decision-making processes in various domains of life is subject to diverse, psychologically explicable distortions. In complex situations, people often judge and take decisions in a way that is neither rational nor sustainable. Bad decisions can have serious repercussions for individuals as well as organisations, and even for society as a whole, for example, on the economic, environmental or political level.

Thanks to our expertise in information visualisation and decision aids (nudging), we offer an approach to finding solutions for responsible risk management and avoiding harmful decisions.

The diversity of human development and forms of work and life

We contribute to the social recognition of diversity and promote the integration of individuals into society.

We explore new models and forms of work that incorporate conceptions of leadership from a variety of cultures. Through our analyses, we contribute to a nuanced understanding of intergenerational dialogue and the characteristics of old age, as seen from the perspective of developmental psychology.

Our findings are useful for specialists of paediatric and youth psychology, psychological life counselling, geriatric psychology and intercultural collaboration in everyday life and work contexts.

Interweaving teaching and research

The School of Applied Psychology brings together two institutions under a single roof. The Psychological Institute is responsible for research and teaching, while the IAP Institute of Applied Psychology focuses on continuing education and the provision of services.

In the interplay between research and teaching, continuing education and services, the latest research findings and our extensive practical experience are mutually enriching.



“We are passionate about research, answering questions that are simultaneously scientific and practical.”

Prof Dr Daniel Süss
Director, Psychological Institute

Centre for Education

The organisation of study programmes at both levels (Bachelor and Master) is the responsibility of the Centre for Education. It is supported by the Administration Office team. It also provides study programme information and advising and handles admissions procedures and quality assurance of study programmes. In close collaboration with the seven sections of the Psychological Institute, the curricula for the Bachelor's and Master's programmes, as well as the basic conditions and pedagogical forms, are continuously developed further. In doing so, we place the emphasis on creating a sustainable programme of studies, enabling a generalist approach at the Bachelor's level, and a specialisation at the Master's level, shaped in part by the students. In addition to fostering students' methodological skills and subject-matter knowledge, we devote particular attention to self-competence and social skills.

Studying applied psychology prepares students for a wide range of careers, in fields such as health care, social services, education, business and administration, not to mention culture and communication.



“The education of up-and-coming psychologists in all specialisations stands at the centre of our work.”

Prof Dr Barbara Schmugge
Director of Studies

Sections

Applied Cognitive Psychology

Head: Prof Dr Ester Reijnen

Pike-perch fillet or cordon bleu? It often happens that people choose the option that is less beneficial for them, in this case the unhealthy cordon bleu. The objective of this research group is to explore the foundations of human decisions (in fields such as nutrition, sustainability, medicine, etc.), with a view to developing interventions that help people to take better decisions. For instance, the finding that items placed toward the centre of the menu are ordered more frequently can be exploited by placing healthier and more sustainable dishes there.

Diagnostics and Counselling

Head: Prof Hansjörg Künzli

This research group investigates the possibilities, impact factors and effects of counselling sessions. Of particular interest is the use of new media in counselling. How can chats, email, video transmissions, shared working surfaces and virtual worlds be meaningfully and effectively employed in counselling? The group develops work documents and diagnostic instruments for occupational, academic and career counselling.

Developmental and Family Psychology

Head: Prof Dr Beate Schwarz

This group covers developmental psychology throughout the human lifespan, but the focus of the research is on adolescence and adulthood. The perspective of family psychology is frequently adopted, along with a culturally sensitive research approach. The group's current research bears primarily on the development of individuals with a migrant background.

Clinical Psychology and Health Psychology

Head: Prof Dr Agnes von Wyl

In collaboration with external partners, the research group is investigating the demonstrated potential, suitability, and effectiveness of a range of therapeutic and diagnostic concepts, as well as interventions and practical conditions. Criteria such as the efficiency and effectiveness of clinical psychotherapeutic interventions are increasingly taking centre stage. One of the main aims of the group's research is to make the discourse more rational by appealing to facts. The group also develops and implements projects aimed at promoting mental health.

Media Psychology

Head: Prof Dr Daniel Süss and Gregor Waller, MSc

This research group's focus lies on the question of how people use media and what influence this contact with media has on attitudes, motives, and behaviour. On the one hand, the group studies the conditions for the productive use of media and the media literacy that builds on this. On the other hand, it also addresses the problematic aspects of media use, such as cyberbullying and addiction. Additional areas of research include brand and advertising psychology, as well as consumer behaviour.

Organisation Development and Consulting

Head: Prof Dr Michael Zirkler

This research group studies psychological and social factors and processes that enable transformations of social systems and organisations to be described and shaped. The focus of the group's research is on "new" leadership, socially sustainable changes and the cultivation and maintenance of productive relationships of cooperation. It usually carries out its projects in close dialogue and intensive collaboration with partners in the field.

Human Factors Psychology

Head: Prof Dr Markus Hackenfort

This group studies the causes of unsafe, illegal or environmentally harmful behaviour in the context of (autonomous) driving. It explains how misjudgements are connected to actual circumstances and how these findings can be used for effective and efficient prevention. The group's methodological strengths include carrying out analyses in the 3D/180° driving simulator lab using scientifically grounded diagnostic processes for traffic psychology, as well as the integration of mobile eye-tracking systems.

Applied Psychology

Psychological Institute
Pfungstweidstrasse 96
Postfach
CH-8037 Zürich

Telephone +41 58 934 83 10
Email info.psychologie@zhaw.ch
Website zhaw.ch/psychologie/pi