



Bringing Young People Into the LSE Behavioural Research Lab: BRL-Junior Research Day

I recently invited young people into our lab for the first time, as part of a combined research and public engagement event. This wouldn't have been possible without the wonderful help of a team of volunteer student research assistants. These students shared their knowledge about the ins and outs of LSE as well as about behavioural science with our young visitors and their families—and, I hope, learned a little themselves in the process. In the spirit of sharing responsibility and passing on knowledge, one of these student research assistants has written about the event. Her piece is below, accompanied by photos from another member of the team. –Dr. Heather Kappes

By Anjida Sripongworakul (BRL Volunteer Research Assistant)

On Saturdays June 10 and 17, LSE's Behavioural Research Lab (BRL) welcomed young minds ages 10-16 to learn from current PhD students, take part in the BRL's research studies and explore the BRL and LSE for themselves.

The Junior Research day started as part of Professor Heather Barry Kappes' ongoing research with children, to investigate the beginnings of consumer research behaviour displayed in adults, particularly whether a person becomes a spendthrift or a tightwad. (A spendthrift is one who does not feel much pain from spending money, while tightwad is the opposite.) About two years ago, Professor Kappes started the research with children by attending science fairs and set up a table at the [Museum of Childhood](#) to perform mini research studies with youths, such as measuring heart-rate variability (HRV), building on a small but growing body of literature focused on HRV's relations to decision making.

The BRL Junior Research Day was a challenge in balancing conducting research studies with providing an educational and entertaining experience for youths. Along with parents and guardians, those signed up listened to talks by PhD students [Laura Zimmerman](#) and [Kari Koskinen](#) centred around decision-making and software applications, before going on a tour around the LSE campus led by BRL volunteer research assistants to learn fascinating facts and trivia on the school's mascot, the New Academic Building's red central piece, and the Library, and ending at the BRL itself, where they took part in two research studies and were given a behind-the-scenes tour of the lab.

Two research studies were conducted during the Junior Research Day. The first concerned HRV's correlation with decisions about taking risks. The second examined differences in youths' deliberations and decisions on spending money when randomly allocated to shops,

one of which sold practical items such as bars of soap, pens, and socks, and another that sold 'fun' items such as yo-yos (which proved to be the most popular for the younger age group, 10-13 year-olds) and glowsticks.

Professor Kappes is so far pleased with the turnout and the opportunity to have talented LSE students dedicating their time to volunteer as research assistants to ensure smooth running of both Saturdays' operations and coordination with youths and their families, who were supportive and open to the experience. BRL volunteer research assistants were Department of Management students from various programs, such as Management Science (Decision Sciences), Management: Organisations and Governance, and International Relations: Political Economy programs.

While the BRL Junior Research Day was a pilot in conducting research with youths in the lab at LSE, Professor Kappes hopes to develop the idea into a week or two-week long event for teachers as well as parents to bring students into the BRL, possibly incorporating the idea as an

undergraduate elective course to expose LSE students to experimental designs and experiences in consumer research with youths.

We hope that the BRL Junior Research Day was as much fun and educational for our bright young minds as it was for the team hosting the day, and that we would be able to continue introducing youths to the world of Behavioural Science in the future.

See below for pictures of the sessions and to hear more about what our young visitors thought, watch the video summary [here](#).

Photos taken by Viola Tram (BRL Volunteer Research Assistant)





By [Kate Laffan](#) | July 17th, 2017 | [Events](#)

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