

## BENCE SZASZKÓ

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### Research Interests

My research focuses on the **influence of stress on health, cognition, and emotion**, exploring both its positive and negative impacts. I am particularly interested in identifying **nonpharmacological interventions** to mitigate the adverse effects of stress and increase wellbeing. These interventions include traditional methods such as yoga, meditation, and breathwork, as well as innovative approaches like cold exposure and digital solutions. Here, my primary methods of choice are endocrine assessments, electrophysiology, and behavioral experiments. Currently, I am conducting an RCT to assess the efficacy of a **suicide prevention program** in pre-adolescents, where I work with diagnostic tools, self-reported measures, and qualitative methodology.

### Education

03/2024-	<b>Psychotherapeutic Propaedeutic Programme, ARGE Vienna</b>
10/2021-08/2024	<b>Doctoral Degree in Psychology, University of Vienna, Austria.</b> Thesis: "The influence of hatha yoga on stress, anxiety, and executive functioning"
03/2020-08/2021	<b>Master of Science in Psychology (with honors), University of Vienna, Austria.</b> Thesis: "Attentional capture by abrupt onsets during visual-dynamic tracking"
09/2018-09/2020	<b>Master of Business, University of Applied Sciences Vienna, Austria.</b> Thesis: "Perspectives and limitations of neuromarketing in E-Commerce customer approach"
09/2014-07/2018	<b>Bachelor of Science, University of Vienna, Austria.</b> Thesis: "Effects of smartphone use on productivity at work and emotional exhaustion"

### Academic Experience

01/2025-	<b>Research Assistant (post doc), Public Mental Health Research Unit, Department for Social and Preventive Medicine, Medical University Vienna</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Design and implementation of a randomized controlled trial to evaluate a suicide prevention program integrated into the curriculum for 10-13 year old adolescents</i></li><li>• <i>Conducting focus groups, deriving practical recommendations and transferring the results into everyday school life</i></li></ul>
11/2024-12/2024	<b>Senior Scientist, Department of Clinical and Health Psychology, University of Vienna, Austria</b> <p><i>Collaboration on various projects on stress and mindfulness, including a review on the negative effects of meditation and a systematic review and meta-analysis on the effects of breathing techniques on depression, anxiety disorders, and PTSD</i></p>

- 03/2022- **Lecturer, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna, Austria**  
*Teaching various BSc and MSc courses including Bachelor's Seminar, Experimental Design (MSc) and General Psychology (BSc)*
- 03/2021-10-2024 **Research Assistant (prae doc), Department of Cognition, Emotion, and Methods, University of Vienna, Austria**
- *Investigating the effects of hatha yoga on stress and cognitive performance, using a combination of electrophysiology, stress biomarkers, behavioral experiments, and questionnaires*
  - *Examining the facets of visual attention within the project "Evaluation of Dynamic Light Elements Through Attention and Development of Adaptive Car Headlights" with the goal of safer driving, working on lab and field experiments addressing attentional capture, light dynamics and neural oscillations / entrainment*
- 10/2020-02/2021 **Research Intern fMRI, Clinical Social Neuroscience Unit, University of Vienna**  
*Investigating the role of wanting and liking in the processing of food and touch and their neural correlates in autistic and healthy subjects using fMRI*
- 09/2020-02/2021 **Student Assistant, Department of Cognition, Emotion, and Methods, University of Vienna, Austria**  
*Research support, teaching assistance, exam revision, and correction*
- 06/2020-08/2020 **Research Intern, Department of Cognition, Emotion, and Methods in Psychology, University of Vienna, Austria**  
*Preparation and execution of multiple experiments using eye-tracking and behavioral experiments, support of the application process for funding and proofreading of numerous research manuscripts*

### Selected Publications

1. Szaszko, B., Tschenett, H., Ansorge, U., & Nater, U. M. (2025). Hatha yoga reduces momentary stress but does not impact diurnal profiles of salivary cortisol and alpha-amylase: A randomized controlled trial. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, *171*, 107191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2024.107191>
2. Grigoreva, D., & Szaszko, B. (2024). Minority stress and psychological well-being in queer populations. *Scientific Reports*, *14*(1), 27084. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-78545-6>
3. Szaszko, B., Schmid, R. R., Pomper, U., Maiworm, M., Laiber, S., Lange, M. J., & Ansorge, U. (2024). Testing the impact of hatha yoga on task switching: A randomized controlled trial. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *18*, 1438017. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2024.1438017>
4. Szaszko, B., Schmid, R. R., Pomper, U., Maiworm, M., Laiber, S., Tschenett, H., Nater, U. M., & Ansorge, U. (2023). The influence of hatha yoga on stress, anxiety, and suppression: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Acta Psychologica*, *241*, 104075. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2023.104075>
5. Pomper, U.\*, Szaszko, B.\*, Pfister, S., & Ansorge, U. (2023). Cross-modal attentional effects of rhythmic sensory stimulation. *Attention, Perception & Psychophysics*, *85*(3), 863–878. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13414-022-02611-2>

\*: Shared first authorship.

## Grants and Scholarships

- Seed Grant (2023), Vienna Doctoral School for Cognition, Behavior, and Neuroscience: 2.000 EUR
- Merit Scholarship of the University of Vienna (2020, 2021, 2024): 2,250 EUR total

## Organizational Responsibilities

- Founding Member “Research Network Health in Society”, University of Vienna
- Organizer of the DGPs/ÖGP Congress 2024
- Organizer of the CoBeNe PhD Academy 2024 and 2025
- PhD Representative Vienna Doctoral School for Cognition, Behavior, and Neuroscience (2023-2024)
- Member of the Study Conference Vienna Doctoral School for Cognition, Behavior, and Neuroscience (2024)

## Teaching Responsibilities

### Winter Term 2024:

- Scientific Reading (6 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna

### Summer Term 2024:

- Bachelor’s Thesis (10 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna
- Proseminar General Psychology: Selected Topics from Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience (6 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna

### Winter Term 2023:

- Scientific Reading (6 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna
- Proseminar General Psychology: Selected Topics from Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience (6 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna

### Summer Term 2023:

- Seminar in Applied Psychology: Creation and Analysis of Psychophysical Experiments (4 ECTS), Master’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna
- Proseminar General Psychology: Selected Topics from Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience (6 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna

### Winter Term 2022:

- Proseminar General Psychology: Selected Topics from Cognitive Psychology and Neuroscience (6 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna

### Summer Term 2022:

- Introductory Seminar: Cognitive Foundations of Experience and Behaviour (6 ECTS), Bachelor’s Curriculum Psychology, University of Vienna

## Supervision of Diploma, Master’s and Bachelor’s Theses

### Supervision of Bachelor’s Theses:

- 1) 2023-2024: Marina Agayby: Positive Mental Imagery - The role of positive mental imagery in reducing stress in students. Bachelor’s Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 2) 2023-2024: Marion Aigner: Effects of poverty-related psychosocial stress on the self-efficacy of adolescents and young adults. Bachelor’s Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 3) 2023-2024: Manuel Althaler: Media Multitasking and Cognitive Flexibility: An investigation of a non-linear correlation. Bachelor’s Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.

- 4) 2023-2024: Magdalena-Sophia Bachmayr: How distractible are you while watching videos? A study on the suppression of sudden visual distractors. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 5) 2023-2024: Philip Bastian Laurin Brucker: Exploring the Relationship between Chronic Stress and Cognitive Empathy. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 6) 2023-2024: Rabiya Demir: Mindfulness, resilience and the PERMA model: a scientific exploration to promote mental wellbeing. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 7) 2023-2024: Anna Katharina Eggel: Sport and its effect on stress, depression and sports addiction. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 8) 2023-2024: Jonas Feichtenschlager: Facing The Fear: The role of mindfulness in dealing with one's own death. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 9) 2023-2024: Hanna Carmina Figueroa Cotorea: Facing The Fear: The role of mindfulness in dealing with one's own death. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 10) 2023-2024: Selina Gamberger: The influence of the social environment on athletes' perceived emotions regarding a competitive situation in volleyball. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 11) 2023-2024: Leonie Elisabeth Gombotz: "Beyond Perfection": Examining the Intersection of Adult Attachment, Perfectionism and Mindfulness. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 12) 2023-2024: Darja Grigoreva: The Weight of Difference: Minority Stress and Psychological Well-being in Queer Populations. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 13) 2023-2024: Sophia Grollmuss: Interrelationship between the Big Five Personality Trait Model and Mindfulness. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 14) 2023-2024: Sarah Elisabeth Hannah: The Influence of Mindfulness as a Personality Trait on Stress Levels and Wellbeing of Business Students in Austria. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 15) 2023-2024: Alexander Hartl: The Influence of Mindfulness as a Personality Trait on Stress Levels and Wellbeing of Business Students in Austria. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 16) 2023-2024: Leon Laurin Kirsch: Effects of Short-form Social Media Content on Perception and Attention. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 17) 2023-2024: Lena Krizmanich: The influence of positive mental imagery induced by picture-word cues on the subjective well-being of students. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 18) 2023-2024: Mark Andrej Loebus: The influence of visual context on the interpretation of facial expressions. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 19) 2023-2024: Charlotte Müller: The Influence of Acute Social Stress on Risk-Taking Behavior in Decision-Making. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 20) 2023-2024: Luca Daniel Neumann: Impact of Attention-Guiding Titles on Interactive Bar Chart Creation. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 21) 2023-2024: Rieke Osterkamp: Anxious Minds in Stressful Times: The Influence of Acute Social Stress and Trait Anxiety on Risk-Taking Behaviour in Human Decision-Making Processes. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 22) 2023-2024: Olivia Pencik: Anxious Minds in Stressful Times: The Influence of Acute Social Stress and Trait Anxiety on Risk-Taking Behaviour in Human Decision-Making Processes. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 23) 2023-2024: Merlind Pilz: The influence of mindfulness and rumination on mental health. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 24) 2023-2024: Johanna Rath: Impact of Social Environment on Perceived Emotions Regarding Running. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 25) 2023-2024: Sarah Riegler: "Perfectly Attached": Examining the Intersection of Adult Attachment,

- Perfectionism and Mindfulness. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 26) 2023-2024: Antonia Tomke Therese Timmer: Association Between Mindfulness Meditation and Stress: Is the Effect Mediated by Self-Efficacy? Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 27) 2023-2024: Hanna Weber: Yoga and mental health during pregnancy. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 28) Since 2024: Carolin Böcker & Raphael Pilz: The influence of 4-7-8 breathing on attention. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 29) Since 2024: Laura Gillen & Angelika Virag: The effects of mental activation of pets on stress perception. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 30) Since 2024: Nathalie Grumeth & Sina Müller: The role of music preferences, emotion regulation, and resilience in the reduction of social anxiety. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 31) Since 2024: Luca Marie Heigl & Lena Susanne Werner: Travel content and fear of missing out. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 32) Since 2024: Karoline Krannich: The Connection between the Honesty-Humility Personality Trait and Food Waste. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 33) Since 2024: Mira Einsidler: Diabetes Mellitus Type 1 and Chronic Stress. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 34) Since 2024: Sebastian Mackrell & Luis Hoffmann: The effects of exercise-induced acute fatigue on cognitive functioning. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 35) Since 2024: Antonia Hufnagl: Mindfulness and Populism. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 36) Since 2024: Emma Naomi Koch & Kerstin Neißl: The Influence of Sivananda Yoga on selective attention and cognitive flexibility. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 37) Since 2024: Florian Langs: Cognitive coping methods in fistball. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 38) Since 2024: Lena Lucia Linz: The influence of music and sport fandoms on stress perception. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 39) Since 2024: Franziska Maier & Ina Luttenberger: Hand on the heart: Pilot study on the effects of self-care touch on feelings of stress and exhaustion. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 40) Since 2024: Riccardo Muresan: The influence of procrastination on stress eating. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 41) Since 2024: Cristina-Adriana Neureiter: Risk and protection factors for parental stress. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 42) Since 2024: Livia Reithmaier und Martina-Theresa Reinmann: The influence of regular team sports on stress levels. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 43) Since 2024: Tatjana Rohatscheck: The influence of social interactive movement on stress. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 44) Since 2024: Johannes Schimpf: The relationship between sexuality-related minority stress, sense of coherence, depressivity, and willingness of coming out. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 45) Since 2024: Clara Schmid: The effect of relaxation exercises on astigmatism. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
  - 46) Since 2024: Leoni Thomas & Maria Tschank: Academic stress of fist-generation students. Bachelor's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.

**Co-Supervision of Master's Theses:**

- 1) 2021-2022: Martin Lukas Habeler: Entrainment of Alpha Activity and Its Impact on the Suppression of Visual Stimuli. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 2) 2021-2022: Mira Maiworm: The effects of hatha yoga on stress and anxiety. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 3) 2021-2022: Sophia Laiber: The influence of Hatha Yoga on visual attention. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 4) 2023-2024: Max Josef Lange: The effect of hatha yoga on the shifting of attention. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.
- 5) Since 2023: Manuel Scheftner: The effects of rhythmic visual stimulation on suppression. Master's Thesis, Faculty of Psychology, University of Vienna.