

Simone Zasso

PHD STUDENT · PERSONALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Sapienza University of Rome, Department of Psychology

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Education

Sapienza University of Rome, Department of Psychology

PHD STUDENT - PERSONALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY - XLI CYCLE

- Advisor: Prof. Antonio Zuffianò

Rome, Italy

Nov 2025 - Present

Scuola Italiana di Cognitivismo Clinico (SICC)

SPECIALIZING IN PSYCHOTHERAPY, COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

Rome, Italy

Jan 2026 - Present

Studi Cognitivi, Bolzano

SPECIALIZING IN PSYCHOTHERAPY, COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

Bolzano, Italy

Jan 2024 - Dic 2025

University of Trento, Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science

MS PSYCHOLOGY

- Advisor: Prof. Laura Franchin
- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

Rovereto, Italy

Sep 2019 - Jul 2022

University of Trento, Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science

BS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

Rovereto, Italy

Sep 2015 - Jul 2018

Research Experience

University of Trento

SUPERVISOR: PROF. ENRICO PERINELLI, PROF. STEFANIA SETTE

- Project title: 'Loneliness, Non-Cognitive Skills, and Academic Achievement in Junior High School: Assessment and Intervention based on Big Data, Longitudinal, and Intensive Methods'
- Role: Development of a test battery for middle school students; management of ethical and privacy-related procedures; data analysis using R (SEM, Dynamic SEM) and Python (machine learning).
- Area: Psychometrics (PSIC-01/C); Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

Rovereto, Italy

Feb. 2024 - Oct. 2025

University of Trento, and ManyBabies Project

SUPERVISOR: PROF. LAURA FRANCHIN

- Project title: 'Many Babies 3L - Rule Learning and Language Development', follow-up study within the Many Babies initiative
- Role: Coordination of follow-up data collection; administration of CDI questionnaires; parent communication
- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

Rovereto, Italy

Jan. 2023 - Current

University of Trento, and ManyBabies Project

SUPERVISOR: PROF. LAURA FRANCHIN

- Project title: 'Many Babies 4 - Emotions and Prosocial Behavior', international multi-site collaboration
- Role: Facial behavior analysis using FaceReader; methodological testing and software validation
- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

Rovereto, Italy

Jan. 2022 - Dec. 2022

University of Trento, and ManyBabies Project

SUPERVISOR: PROF. LAURA FRANCHIN

- Project title: 'Many Babies 2 - Theory of Mind', international multi-site collaboration
- Role: Preparation and adaptation of remote infant eye-tracking protocols; collaboration with international teams
- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

Rovereto, Italy

Apr. 2021 - Sep. 2022

University of Trento

SUPERVISOR: PROF. LAURA FRANCHIN

Rovereto, Italy

Oct. 2021 – Sep. 2022

- Project title: 'Moral Transgressions and Emotional Expressions in Autism', Master's thesis research
- Role: Data collection and analysis (FACS, BIOPAC); implementation of Python scripts for physiological data
- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

University of Trento

SUPERVISOR: PROF. LAURA FRANCHIN

Rovereto, Italy

Jan. 2021 – Jul. 2021

- Project title: 'Sport Psychology – Figure Skating and Tennis'
- Role: Design and coordination of experimental protocols; participant recruitment and task administration
- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

University of Trento, University of Padua and Marconi Institute for Creativity

SUPERVISOR: PROF. LAURA FRANCHIN

Rovereto, Italy

Feb. 2020 – Jun. 2020

- Project title: 'Creativity Training in Primary Schools'
- Role: Administration of creativity tasks and questionnaires; scoring and data handling
- Area: Developmental Psychology (PSIC-02/A)

Publications

PEER REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL JOURNALS

Zasso, S., De Marco, L., Sette, S., Stella, M., & Perinelli, E. (2025). Predictors of loneliness at school: An Explainable Artificial Intelligence approach on a large-scale cross-cultural assessment. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 246, 113346. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2025.113346>

Decarli, G., **Zasso, S.**, & Franchin, L. (2025). Could the impact of emotional states on learning in children vary with task difficulty? *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 251, 106122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2024.106122>

Decarli, G., Vitali, F., **Zasso, S.**, & Franchin, L. (2024). The power of coaches' emotions: A case study on how coaches' facial expressions impact performance of female synchronized ice-skaters. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 73, 102651. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2024.102651>

NATIONAL JOURNALS

Zasso, S., Decarli, G., Vitali, F., & Franchin, L. (2023). L'influenza delle emozioni positive e negative degli allenatori sullo stato emotivo e sulla prestazione di giovani tennisti. *Giornale italiano di psicologia*, 50(2), 321-336.

MANUSCRIPTS SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION

Manfredi, L., Sailis, G., De Marco, L., Gaggero, G., **Zasso, S.**, Perinelli, E., & Sette, S. (2025). *Relations between feeling isolated and self-efficacy in regulating negative emotions: A daily study among preadolescents*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Zasso, S., Gaggero, G., De Marco, L., Manfredi, L., Sailis, G., Sette, S., & Perinelli, E. (2025). *The mediational role of teacher-student relationship in the link between loneliness and academic achievement: A longitudinal study in junior high school students*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Visser, I., Geambasu, A., Kachergis, G., Oliveira, C. M., Rocha-Hidalgo, J., Zettersten, M., ... **Zasso, S.**, Zhou, J. G., Soderstrom, M., & Levelt, C. C. (2025). *ManyBabies 3: A Multi-Lab Study of Infant Algebraic Rule Learning*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Zasso, S., Sette, S., Pisanu, F., Fraccaroli, F., & Perinelli, E. (2024). *Links between loneliness, math anxiety, and academic achievement in 15-year-old adolescents: A cross-national latent variable analysis using PISA 2022*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Presentations

INTERNATIONAL PEER-REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Zasso, S.**, Di Brango, N., Sette, S., Zuffianò, A., Gerbino, M., & Pastorelli, C. (2026, June 21–25). Links Between Loneliness and Prosocial Behavior from Adolescence to Young Adulthood: A Ten-Year Longitudinal Study [Accepted poster presentation]. “28th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD)”, Incheon, South Korea.
- Zasso, S.**, Gaggero, G., De Marco, L., Manfredi, L., Sailis, G., Sette, S., & Perinelli, E. (2026, June 21–25). Loneliness, Teacher-Student Closeness, and Academic Achievement: A Longitudinal Study in Early Adolescence [Accepted poster presentation]. “28th Biennial Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development (ISSBD)”, Incheon, South Korea.
- Zasso, S.**, Gaggero, G., De Marco, L., Manfredi, L., Sailis, G., Sette, S., & Perinelli, E. (2025, November 27–28). The Role of Teacher-Student Closeness in the Relationship Between Prosocial Behavior and Academic Achievement: A Longitudinal Study in Lower Secondary Schools [Poster presentation]. International conference “The human and scientific legacy of Albert Bandura at his centenary.”, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy.
- Zasso, S.**, De Marco, L., Sette, S., Stella, M., & Perinelli, E. (2025, June 11–13). Predictors of loneliness at school: An Explainable Artificial Intelligence approach on a large-scale cross-cultural assessment [Poster presentation]. Theme Week on Loneliness, Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover, Germany.
- Gaggero, G., **Zasso, S.**, Manfredi, L., De Marco, L., Perinelli, E., & Sette, S. (2025, May 9–10). Exploring the link between the quality of parental relationships and loneliness in adolescents with a migrant-origin background [Oral presentation]. Workshop Parenting and Culture, Chieti, Italy.
- Zasso, S.**, Sette, S., Pisanu, F., Fraccaroli, F., & Perinelli, E. (2024, September 25–28). Links between loneliness, math anxiety, and academic achievement in 15-year-old adolescents: A cross-national latent variable analysis using PISA 2022 [Oral presentation]. XIX EARA Conference 2024 – European Association for Research on Adolescence, Limassol, Cyprus.
- Zasso, S.**, Sette, S., Pisanu, F., Fraccaroli, F., & Perinelli, E. (2024, June 3–6). The mediational role of math anxiety in the link between loneliness and math achievement: An analysis using PISA 2022 [Oral presentation]. Third International Conference of the Journal Scuola Democratica, Education and/for Social Justice, Cagliari, Italy.
- Zasso, S.**, Franchin, L., Corazza, G. E., & Agnoli, S. (2023, September 11–13). Distracted by words: The roles of irrelevance processing and openness on creative performance [Oral presentation]. The 7th Marconi Institute for Creativity (MIC) Conference 2023, Trieste, Italy.

NATIONAL PEER REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Zasso, S.**, De Marco, L., Stella, M., & Perinelli, E. (2025, September 15–17). Predittori della solitudine a scuola: Un approccio di Explainable Artificial Intelligence a un’analisi cross-culturale su larga scala [Oral presentation]. XXXVII National Conference AIP Developmental and Educational Psychology Section, Udine, Italy.
- Gaggero, G., **Zasso, S.**, Manfredi, L., & Perinelli, E. (2025, September 15–17). Il rapporto tra qualità delle relazioni parentali e solitudine in un gruppo di pre-adolescenti e adolescenti con background migratorio [Oral presentation]. XXXVII National Conference AIP Developmental and Educational Psychology Section, Udine, Italy.
- Decarli, G., **Zasso, S.**, & Franchin, L. (2024, September 19–21). The impact of emotions on learning processes in preschool children [Oral presentation]. XXXVI National Conference AIP Developmental and Educational Psychology Section, Cagliari, Italy.

Symposia & Panels Organized

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

- Zasso, S.**, Comitale, C., Contreras, C., Fu, Y., & Virzì, A. T. (2026, September 1–4). *Building Inclusive and Democratic Schools Through Students’ Psychological Resources* [Pannel organized]. Fourth International Conference of the journal “Scuola Democratica”, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, Italy.

Awards & Grants

May 2025	Grant (travel, conference fee, and accommodation) Theme Week on Loneliness, Volkswagen Foundation, Hannover, Germany	~€1000
2023	Study Award (for Master's thesis) Cassa Rurale Dolomiti – Credito Cooperativo Italiano	€650

Teaching Experience

Sep 2025 Oct 2025	BSc Mathematical Methods for Cognitive Science (Lecturer: Massimo Stella) (PSIC-01/C) Teaching Assistant - Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of Trento	21 hr
Sep 2024 Dec 2024	BSc Mathematical Methods for Cognitive Science (Lecturer: Massimo Stella)(PSIC-01/C) Teaching Assistant - Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of Trento	21 hr
Sep 2023 Dec 2023	BSc Mathematical Methods for Cognitive Science (Lecturer: Massimo Stella)(PSIC-01/C) Teaching Assistant - Department of Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of Trento	21 hr

Outreach & Professional Development

THIRD MISSION

Jun 6, 2025	Webinar leader , Loneliness in Adolescents: Between Theoretical Models and Empirical Research; Association Européenne de Psychopathologie de l'Enfant et de l'Adolescent (AEPEA)
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RESEARCH SEMINARS & COURSES

Mar 4,11,18, 2026	Factorial Invariance in Mplus: Multi-group and Longitudinal Approach Prof. Claudio Barbaranelli, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	12 hr
Mar 4, 2026	The Origin and Development of the HEXACO Model of Personality Prof. Kibeom Lee, University of Calgary, Canada – Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	2 hr
Feb 25 & Mar 3, 2026	Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Processes Prof. Guido Alessandri, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	8 hr
Feb 18–19, 2026	Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling with Mplus Prof. Michele Vecchione, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	12 hr
Feb 17, 2026	Dal pilot allo scaling-up e alla politica pubblica: ricerca applicata e innovazione in un intervento prosociale (ProCiviCo) Visiting Prof. Paula Luengo Kanacri, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	3 hr
Feb 17, 2026	Introduzione all'analisi longitudinale delle traiettorie latenti di sviluppo: alcune applicazioni e potenzialità Visiting Prof. Paula Luengo Kanacri, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	3 hr
Feb 18, 2026	Tra prosocialità e ultrasocialità: nuove sfide per la prevenzione universale Visiting Prof. Paula Luengo Kanacri, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	3 hr
Oct–Dec 2025	Sapienza Training on Soft Skills for Young Researchers Sapienza University of Rome, Italy	49 hr
Sep 25, 2024	Introduction to Longitudinal Data Modelling with R Prof. Stefanos Mastrotheodoros – EARA 2024	5 hr

PSYCHOTHERAPY SEMINARS & COURSES

May 3–4, 2025	Introduction to Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) Studi Cognitivi	16 hr
May 4–5, 2024	Assessment and Initial Management of Eating Disorders (ED) Studi Cognitivi	16 hr
Apr 14, 2024	Guidelines for Therapy with LGBTQIA+ People Studi Cognitivi	8 hr
Apr 4, 2024	Communication in Psycho-Oncological Contexts Società Italiana di Psico-Oncologia	8 hr

AD-HOC REVIEWER

Behavior Research Methods (1 review in 2026)
PLoS ONE (1 review in 2025)
Journal of applied developmental psychology (2 review in 2025)
Journal of Affective Disorders (1 review in 2025)

AD-HOC REVIEWER FOR CONGRESSES

31st International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP) Florence (2026)
Fourth International Conference of the journal “Scuola Democratica”, Sapienza University of Rome (2026)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

2025 – present **ISSBD [The International Society for the Study of Behavioural Development]** ,
2025 – present **AIP [Italian Association of Psychology]**, section of Developmental Psychology
2023 – present **Register of Psychologists in Trento, Italy**, N° 1342 dated 19/07/2023

Skills

DIGITAL SKILLS

Office tools: Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, especially Excel for data handling and visualization.
Programming & analysis: Working knowledge of Python, R, Rmarkdown, *Mplus*, and \LaTeX .
Research software: Experienced with Tobii Studio and Tobii Pro Lab; basic knowledge of FaceReader.
Certification: European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICAL METHODS

Statistical modeling: Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Dynamic SEM (DSEM), Linear Mixed Models.
Machine Learning: Implementation of supervised learning algorithms such as Random Forest, XGBoost, and Elastic Net in Python and R for predictive modeling and classification tasks.
Explainable AI (XAI): Application of interpretable machine learning techniques (e.g., SHAP) to increase transparency in model outputs and support decision-making in psychological research.
Data processing and visualization: Data cleaning, transformation, and visualization using R (*tidyverse*, *ggplot2*) and Python (*pandas*, *matplotlib*, *seaborn*).