Archival Report

Internal Consistency of Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging and Electroencephalography Measures of Reward in Late Childhood and Early Adolescence

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Abnormal neural response to reward is increasingly thought to function as a biological correlate of emerging psychopathology during adolescence. However, this view assumes that such responses have good psychometric properties, especially internal consistency—an assumption that is rarely tested.

METHODS: Internal consistency (i.e., split-half reliability) was calculated for event-related potential (ERP) and blood oxygen level–dependent (BOLD) responses to monetary gain and loss feedback from the same sample of 8- to 14-year-old girls ($N = 177$). Internal consistency for ERP (i.e., feedback negativity) and BOLD responses within the ventral striatum and medial and/or lateral prefrontal cortex to gain, loss, difference scores (gain − loss), and residual scores (gain controlling for loss) was compared. Moderation analyses were conducted to investigate whether internal consistency differed by age.

RESULTS: ERP and BOLD responses to gain and loss feedback showed high internal consistency in all regions (Spearman-Brown coefficients $\geq$ .70). When considering difference and residual scores, however, responses showed lower internal consistency (Spearman-Brown coefficients $\leq$ .50), with particularly low internal consistency for subtraction-based scores (Spearman-Brown coefficients $\leq$ .36). Age was not a significant moderator of split-half relationships, indicating similar internal consistency across late childhood to early adolescence.

CONCLUSIONS: Within the same subjects, high internal consistency was observed for both ERP and BOLD responses to gains and losses, which did not vary as a function of age. Moreover, excellent psychometric properties were evident even within the first half of the experiment. Difference scores were characterized by lower internal consistency, although regression-based approaches outperformed subtraction-based difference scores.

Keywords: Adolescence, Childhood, ERP, fMRI, Internal consistency, Reward

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In the past decade, efforts to leverage neuroscience-based measures to shed light on psychopathology have increased. For example, the National Institute of Mental Health Research Domain Criteria initiative aims to move psychiatric research toward investigating neurobiological mechanisms of specific domains of function [1]. Such biologically oriented approaches to understanding psychopathology and individual differences require neural measures with good psychometric properties [2]. No measure can be valid if it is not reliable [3,4]. Yet few studies have considered measurement properties of neural metrics. In this article, we focus on internal consistency reliability (referred to as internal consistency throughout) of the neural response to reward feedback (both reward gains and losses) given its central role in the "positive valence systems" of the Research Domain Criteria matrix and considering that

abnormal response to reward is a promising biomarker of risk for multiple types of psychopathology [5,6].

Establishing whether neural response to reward feedback shows adequate internal consistency is a critical first step in determining the utility of such individual difference measures. Neural responses to gains and losses show dramatic changes over the course of adolescence [7–9] with abnormal responses to reward prospectively predicting increases in depressive symptoms and substance use during adolescence [5,6,10,11]. Such findings have led to the idea that abnormal neural response to reward may confer vulnerability to depression and other disorders during development, when patterns of normative reward response are in flux [7]. As such, investigating internal consistency of neural reward response during emerging adolescence, a time of increasing onset of reward-related

psychopathology particularly for female subjects (12), is the aim of the current study.

Several studies have examined test-retest reliability of neural measures of reward response [e.g., (13–18)]. Test-retest reliability refers to the consistency of individuals' scores assessed at different points in time. To assess test-retest reliability of blood oxygen level–dependent (BOLD) responses and event-related potentials (ERPs), participants complete an identical task in two sessions separated by weeks or months. Neural responses are then correlated across sessions. High test-retest reliability indicates relative stability of scores over time and suggests that a measure has trait-like properties. In the domain of reward, ventral striatal (VS) response to reward feedback has been found to have relatively low test-retest reliability in some studies (13), whereas other studies report moderate test-retest reliability (14,15). ERPs indexing reward response, including feedback negativity and reward positivity (19,20), tend to show higher test-retest reliability (16–18)—although these measures have never been directly compared in the same subjects. It is important to note that test-retest reliability is sensitive to between-session variations in methodological noise (e.g., thermal and system noise and motion artifacts in functional magnetic resonance imaging [fMRI]) and participant state (e.g., time of day, fatigue, or stress level) (21). Test-retest reliability does not address whether a measure is internally consistent. It is possible for a measure to be internally consistent despite low test-retest reliability (i.e., if a measure was highly sensitive to state-related variables); moreover, it is possible for a measure to be reliable over multiple administrations, despite having poor internal consistency (i.e., if a measure comprised multiple trait-like items that were themselves unrelated to one another).

Internal consistency refers to the similarity of items on a measure. A relatively simple method of calculating internal consistency is the split-half method, which involves correlating two separate scores for each subject that are derived from the same measure at the same testing session. Most frequently, scores on odd and even trials are used. Because splitting the data artificially reduces the number of trials by half, Pearson coefficients (r) are corrected using the Spearman-Brown coefficient (SB) prediction formula: $SB = 2r/(1 + r)$.

Internal consistency is a fundamental measurement property that places an upper limit on how well a measure can index individual differences. A measure cannot correlate better with another measure than it correlates with itself; thus, poor internal consistency will limit the ability of a measure to relate to other individual difference variables. This point has been central to several debates regarding the reproducibility and implications of studies linking BOLD response to individual differences (21–25). However, the internal consistency of the BOLD response to reward has not been examined to date; in fact, internal consistency of fMRI measures is hardly ever examined and reported in fMRI studies. This is surprising given the increasing focus on how VS reward response relates to individual differences in symptom severity and risk factors for psychopathology in both adults [e.g., (26,27)] and adolescents [e.g., (28–32)]. However, reward-related ERPs are characterized by high split-half internal consistency even during late childhood and early adolescence (17,18,33), although it is unclear whether internal consistency changes as a function of age during adolescence. Moreover, no studies have directly compared psychometric properties of ERP and fMRI measures of reward in the same subjects.

We assessed internal consistency of both ERP and BOLD responses to reward gain and loss feedback in a large unselected sample of girls during emerging adolescence. Furthermore, we tested the hypothesis that internal consistency will be comparable across age during emerging adolescence despite the normative increases in response to reward feedback observed during these ages [e.g., (8)]. This knowledge is critical not only for determining the utility of VS and/or ERP response to reward as an early biomarker of risk but also for interpreting developmental changes in reward-related responses. That is, presumed "developmental" differences in reward-related neural responses could be attributed to variation in internal consistency as a function of age. We also compare the internal consistency of BOLD and ERP responses to reward within the same subjects to examine potential methodological differences in assessing reward-related neural activity. Finally, as internal consistency may differ as a function of task length, particularly when a limited number of stimuli are repeated many times over a longer task, we report internal consistency of early and late components of the task. Investigating these properties of internal consistency during emerging adolescence will provide a critical baseline for future inquiries regarding relationships between neural reward response and psychopathology risk during this time of increasing vulnerability to psychopathology.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Participants

fMRI scanning was performed in 198 girls and their parents, from a parent study [described in (34)]. This study focused on neural response to reward in girls during emerging adolescence, as studies in the literature on depression risk are increasingly focusing on female subjects, given the increased incidence of depression in women, a sex difference that emerges over adolescence (35). Of 198 girls, 177 provided sufficient quality data from both fMRI and electroencephalography (EEG) versions of the doors guessing task and were included in the current study (5 were excluded for excessive motion, and 16 were excluded for scanner sequence or other mechanical error). Girls were 8 to 14 years old (mean, 12.56 years; SD 1.80); 77.4% were Caucasian, 16.9% were African American, 2.3% were Hispanic, and 3.4% were identified as "other." Informed assent and consent were obtained from the participants and their parents, respectively, before participation. The Stony Brook University Institutional Review Board approved the research protocol.

Measures

The doors task was similar to versions used in previous studies (36). Participants were presented with two identical doors and instructed to select the left or right door via mouse click. They were told that they would gain $0.50 or lose $0.25 on each trial depending on whether the "correct" door was selected. The order of gain and loss feedback events was predetermined such that all participants experienced 30 gain feedback events and 30 loss feedback events presented in a pseudorandom order.

Task components were identical in fMRI and EEG task versions; only the timing of some task components differed slightly. First, the image of the doors was presented (fMRI, 3000 ms; EEG, until the participant made a selection). After stimulus offset, a fixation cross (+) was presented (fMRI, 600 ms; EEG, 1000 ms), followed by feedback (fMRI, 1000 ms; EEG, 2000 ms). A green arrow pointing upward (↑) represented gain feedback, and a red arrow pointing downward (↓) represented loss feedback. In the EEG version, a final fixation cross (1500 ms) was displayed followed by instructions to "click a button" for the next round. In the fMRI version, the postfeedback intertrial interval (mean 3200 ms, minimum 1100 ms, maximum 11,600 ms) was followed by fixation (600 ms) signaling the next trial.

fMRI Data Acquisition and Processing

fMRI data were acquired using a Siemens Magnetom Trio 3T MRI whole-body scanner (Siemens, Erlangen, Germany). T2-weighted whole-brain volumes with an echo planar image sequence sensitive to BOLD signal were acquired (repetition time = 2100 ms, echo time = 22 ms, flip angle = 83°, matrix dimensions = 96 × 96, field of view = 224 × 224 mm, slices = 40, slice thickness = 3.5 mm, and gap = 0 mm). Statistical parametric mapping (SPM8; Wellcome Department of Cognitive Neurology, Institute of Neurology, London, United Kingdom) was used to perform standard preprocessing procedures with default parameters, including image realignment corrections for head movements, slice timing corrections for acquisition order, normalization to standard 2 × 2 × 2 mm Montreal Neurological Institute space, and spatial smoothing with a Gaussian full width at half maximum 8-mm filter. A block of fixation (21 seconds) preceded and followed the doors task for most participants ($n = 152$; 260 whole-brain volumes). The remaining participants ($n = 25$) experienced the same order of trials during the doors task but without the two fixation blocks (242 whole–brain volumes). Results were qualitatively similar when data from subjects without the additional fixation were excluded. ArtRepair software version 4 (37) was used to identify and repair (interpolate) frames where frame-to-frame motion exceeded 2 mm (1 voxel) or global signal deviations >2%. Participants were excluded if >20% of frames were interpolated ($n = 5$).

Event-related fixed-effects general linear models (GLMs) were created for each participant. Door cue, gain feedback, and loss feedback were modeled separately along with a regressor for interpolated frames and regressors for each of the six rigid body motion parameters estimated during realignment; the implicit baseline comprised unmodeled fixation. Two GLMs were created for each participant. In the first GLM, even and odd trials of each event type (door, gain, loss) were modeled separately with 15 trials of each feedback type included in each split half. In the second GLM, even and odd trials of each event type were modeled separately for the first and second halves of the task. To ensure equal numbers of events in each split half, the final gain and loss even and odd trials all were modeled as a separate event type in the second GLM. Thus, seven trials of each feedback type were modeled in each of the four split halves.

Contrasts were created to examine activation to gain feedback, loss feedback, and subtraction-based difference score (SCOREs = gain > loss) for each split half. Reward-related regions of interest (ROIs) were identified using a one-sample t test

for SCOREs (familywise error $p < .01$, cluster size >20). The mean response within resultant ROIs for each contrast was extracted for individual participants using the MarsBaR toolbox (38). Values were imported into SPSS version 23.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY) for use in split-half analyses and to create a residualized score using regression (unstandardized residual gain controlling for loss [SCOREr]). Internal consistency of residual scores were examined in addition to internal consistency of subtraction-based difference scores (SCOREs), as residual scores are commonly used in the ERP literature and tend to show better psychometric properties compared with difference scores (39).

EEG Recording and Processing

EEG was recorded using an elastic cap with 34 electrode sites placed according to the 10/20 system. Electro-oculography was recorded using two electrodes placed approximately 1 cm outside of the right and left eyes and two placed approximately 1 cm above and below the right eye. EEG and electro-oculography were recorded using the BioSemi ActiveTwo system (BioSemi, Amsterdam, Netherlands) and digitized with a sampling rate of 1024 Hz using a low-pass fifth-order sinc filter with a half-power cutoff of 204.8 Hz.
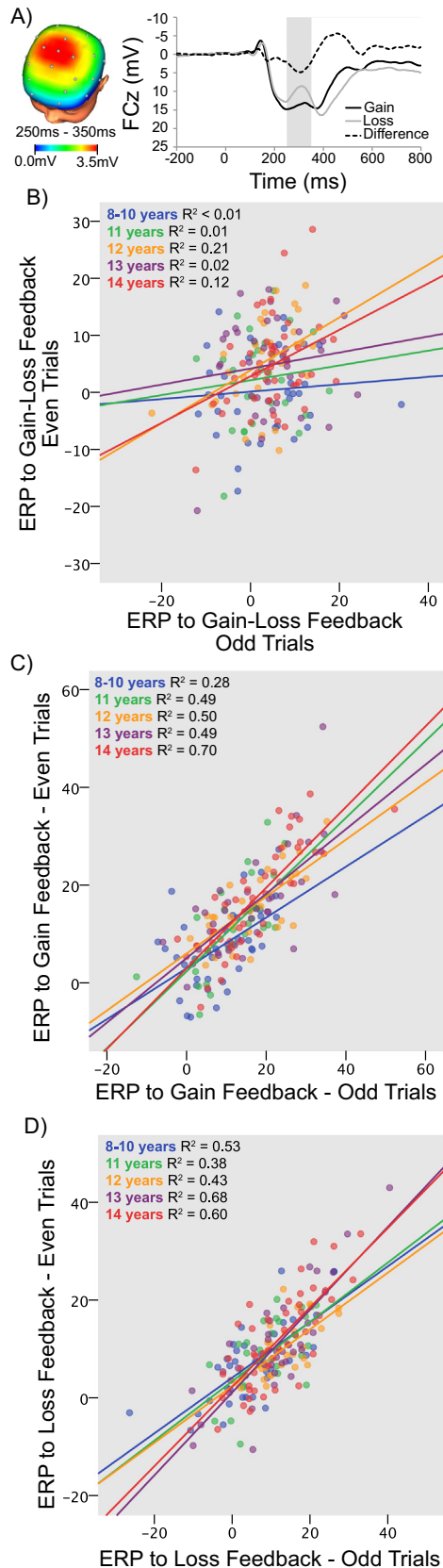
EEG data were analyzed using BrainVision Analyzer (Brain Products GmbH, Gilching, Germany). Data were referenced offline to the average of left and right mastoids, bandpass filtered (0.1–30 Hz), and corrected for eye movement artifacts (40). Feedback-locked epochs were extracted from 200 ms before to 800 ms after stimulus onset. The 200-ms prestimulus interval was used as the baseline.

Feedback-locked ERPs were averaged separately for gains and losses, which were then scored as the mean amplitude from 250 to 350 ms following feedback at FCz, where the difference between gains and losses was maximal. The difference between gain and loss trials was also quantified in two ways: first, by subtracting loss from gain trials (i.e., subtraction-based scores, SCOREs); second, by saving the unstandardized residual scores when predicting gain from loss trials using regression (i.e., regression-based residual scores, SCOREr) [see (39)]. All ERPs were scored separately for even and odd trials for use in split-half internal consistency analyses. See Supplemental Tables S1–S3 for the pattern of ERP deflections in each split half, paired t tests comparing ERPs from odd and even trials, and relationships between gain and loss ERPs. Figure 1A displays the ERP waveforms following gains, losses, and SCOREs (gain − loss) as well as the three-dimensional rendered scalp distribution of SCOREs.

Internal Consistency Analyses

Pearson correlation coefficients (r) comparing response to gain, loss, SCOREs, and SCOREr on odd and even trials were calculated for each ROI and ERP and then adjusted using the SB prediction formula SB = $2r/(1 + r)$ to correct for the data loss from splitting the number of trials in half. SB > .8 is considered "good/excellent," > .7 is "acceptable," and < .6 is "poor."

Moderation analyses, testing whether internal consistency varied by age, were conducted using the PROCESS version 2.13.2 macro for SPSS (41). Age was entered as a continuous moderator of the relationship between even and odd responses for each ROI and ERP. Given that six sets of

Figure 1. Electroencephalography split-half relationships. **(A)** Head map of the gain feedback, loss feedback, and subtraction-based difference score and waveforms of the event-related potentials (ERPs) to gain, loss, and difference at FCz. Internal consistency was weak for the **(B)** subtraction-based score (gain minus loss) but strong for the ERPs to **(C)** gain and **(D)** loss. Split-half reliabilities did not differ with age.

moderation analyses were conducted, one for each ROI and one for ERP, moderation was considered significant when $p < .008$ for the age interaction. Exploratory internal consistency and age moderation analyses were also conducted separately for the first and second halves of the data using the same methods.

The cocor package (42), implemented in R (43), was used to compare split-half internal consistency across imaging modalities and halves of the task. Silver *et al.*'s (44) modification of Dunn and Clark's *z* (45) using a back transformed average Fisher's *Z* procedure is reported.

RESULTS

BOLD Response to Feedback

Response to gain feedback was greater than response to loss feedback within ventral striatum (-13, 7, -8; 13, 7, -8), medial prefrontal cortex (PFC) (6, 63, 3), and lateral PFC (-43, 54, 3; 29, 58, -5) Montreal Neurological Institute coordinates (Supplemental Figure S1). See Supplemental Tables S1–S3 for activation patterns across odd and even averages, comparison of odd and even trials, and relationships between gain and loss response. Portions of the bilateral parietal cortex and cerebellum also showed differential response to gain versus loss but are not discussed. The subtraction-based score (SCOREs) for ERPs and BOLD signal within the right ventral striatum were positively correlated ($r_{175} = .15$, $p = .046$); BOLD response in other regions and for other contrasts did not significantly relate to ERPs (all $p > .10$).

Split-Half Reliabilities of ERP and BOLD Response to Feedback

Although ERPs to gains and losses showed high internal consistency, SBs $> .85$, SCOREs and SCOREr showed poorer internal consistency, with the lowest internal consistency for SCOREs, SB $\leq .36$ (Table 1 and Figure 1B–D; see Supplemental Table S4 for intraclass correlation coefficients). Across ROIs, BOLD responses showed patterns of internal consistency similar to ERPs. BOLD response to both gain and loss showed moderate to high internal consistency, SB $> .66$, and both SCOREs and SCOREr were characterized by lower internal consistency, SB $\leq .48$. SCOREs consistently showed lower internal consistency than SCOREr (Table 1 and Figure 2).

Age Moderation

Age did not significantly moderate internal consistency of BOLD or ERP responses to gains, losses, or SCOREs. However, after multiple-comparisons correction, there was a trend toward increasing internal consistency of VS SCOREr with age (Table 2), but this should be interpreted with caution given the low internal consistency of VS SCOREr.

Table 1. Spearman-Brown Coefficients for fMRI and EEG Split-Half Internal Consistency

Region	Gain	Loss	SCOREs	SCORErr
Left Ventral Striatum	.78	.73	.35	.48
Right Ventral Striatum	.75	.70	.33	.48
Medial PFC	.69	.66	.02	.27
Left LPFC	.76	.72	.20	.36
Right LPFC	.80	.75	.04	.26
ERPs	.85	.86	.36	.50

EEG, electroencephalography; ERP, event-related potentials; fMRI, functional magnetic resonance imaging; LPFC, lateral prefrontal cortex; PFC, prefrontal cortex; SCORErr, unstandardized residual gain controlling for loss; SCOREs, subtraction-based score (gain minus loss).

Internal Consistency of ERP Versus VS BOLD Responses to Feedback

Although both ERP and fMRI measures showed high internal consistency, internal consistency of ERP responses to gain and loss were significantly higher than internal consistency for VS BOLD responses (gain $z = -1.97$, $p = .025$; loss $z = -3.40$, $p < .001$). Internal consistency of SCOREs and SCORErr were similar for VS and ERP responses (SCOREs $z = -0.11$, $p = .458$; SCORErr $z = -0.25$, $p = .403$).

Internal Consistency of ERP and BOLD Responses to Feedback in the First and Second Halves of Trials

ERP and BOLD responses to gain and loss were characterized by high internal consistency, even during the first half of the task (Table 3; see Supplemental Table S5 for intraclass correlation coefficients). VS and ERP responses continued to show high internal consistency in the second half of the task, although internal consistency of PFC responses weakened in the second half of the task, particularly for gains (Table 3). Again, subtraction and residual scores had worse internal consistency during both halves of the task (Table 3).

Split-half relationships in both the first half and the second half of the task were not significantly moderated by age for ERP and BOLD response in most ROI (Supplemental Table S6). However, internal consistency of responses to gain and differences scores within the left PFC tended to decrease with age during the second half of the task.

DISCUSSION

The current study is the first to demonstrate that both ERP and fMRI measures of response to reward gain and loss during a simple gambling task have high internal consis-
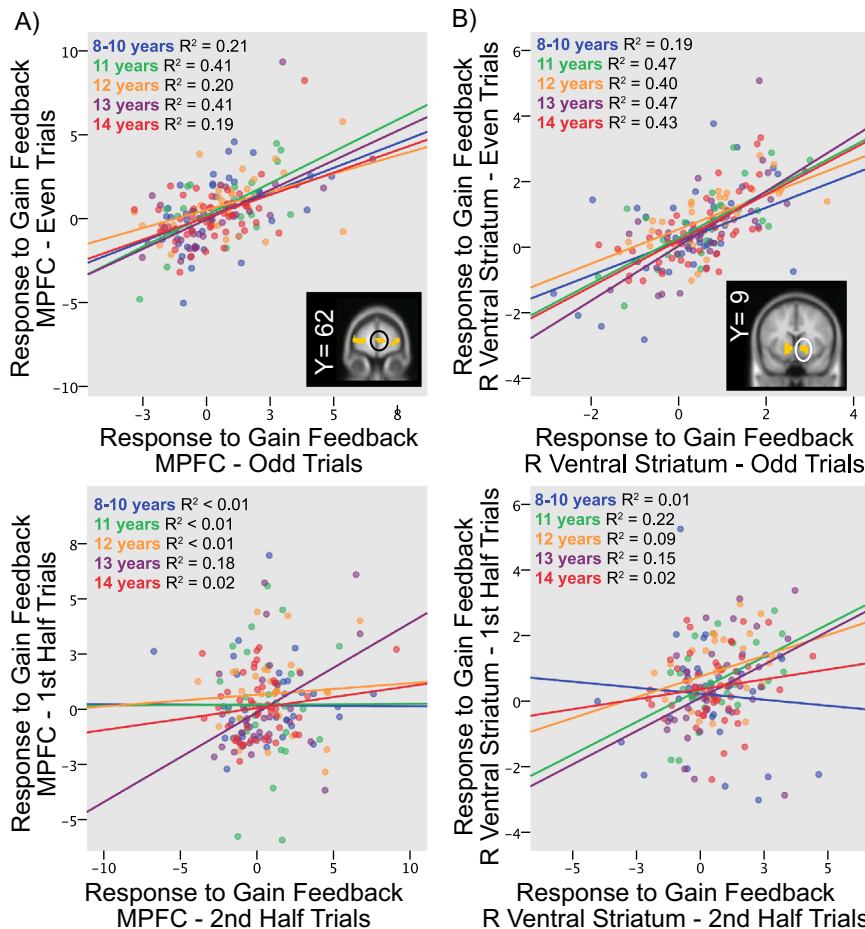
Figure 2. Functional magnetic resonance imaging split-half relationships by age. For both the **(A)** medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC [6,63,3]; black circle) and the **(B)** right (R) ventral striatum ([13,7,−8]; white circle), high internal consistency was observed for the response to gain feedback (top panels), but not for the difference in responses to gain vs. loss feedback (gain minus loss; bottom panels). Internal consistency did not differ with age for either region.

Table 2. Age Moderation of Split-Half Internal Consistency

Region	Gain × Age Interaction Coeff.	t	p	Loss × Age Interaction Coeff.	t	p	SCOREs × Age Interaction Coeff.	t	p	SCOREr × Age Interaction Coeff.	t	p
Left Ventral Striatum	.08	2.16	.03	<.01	0.13	.90	−.02	−0.36	.72	.05	2.05	.04
Right Ventral Striatum	.04	1.02	.31	.01	0.21	.83	.07	1.61	.11	.07	2.52	.01
Medial PFC	−.02	−0.47	.64	.02	0.71	.48	−.04	−1.13	.26	−.04	−0.88	.38
Left LPFC	−.04	−1.19	.23	<.01	0.12	.90	−.05	−1.36	.17	−.03	−0.66	.51
Right LPFC	−.01	−0.17	.87	−.01	−0.44	.66	−.05	−1.21	.23	−.01	−0.19	.85
ERPs	.04	1.43	.15	−.04	−1.34	.18	.02	0.49	.63	−.03	−0.77	.44

Correction for multiple comparisons, $p < .008$.
Coeff., coefficient; ERP, event-related potentials; LPFC, lateral prefrontal cortex; PFC, prefrontal cortex; SCOREr, unstandardized residual gain controlling for loss; SCOREs, subtraction-based score (gain minus loss).

tency in the same female subjects during late childhood and early adolescence. These findings add to a growing literature reporting similar internal consistency for ERP responses to gain and loss feedback during this age (17). Although no other studies have investigated internal consistency of fMRI response to gain and loss feedback, it should be noted that the internal consistency of the VS response to gain reported here is higher than the poor to moderate test-retest reliability for VS responses to gain feedback reported in adult studies (13,15). This pattern would be unsurprising for a measure with high internal consistency that is also sensitive to potential state-related changes across testing sessions.

Although other studies have demonstrated that feedback-related ERPs are internally consistent during late childhood and early adolescence (17), it was not clear whether internal consistency of neural response to gains and losses differ with age during this developmental stage. The current results suggest that ERP and BOLD responses to gain and loss feedback are similar in their true score from age 8 to 14 years. This is particularly important to establish, as studies investigating relationships between reward-related neural activity and individual differences are increasingly being conducted in pediatric subjects (30,46). The current results suggest that age-related differences in striatal response to reward during adolescence may not simply reflect variability in psychometric properties. Future studies, including participants of a wider age range as well as male participants, are needed to replicate and extend the current findings.

Although the receipt of monetary gains versus losses elicits robust responses within the ventral striatum at the group level (47), it is possible that there is high trial-to-trial variability within subjects in the magnitude of those responses within subject, i.e., poor internal consistency. This is crucial insofar as internal consistency places an upper limit on validity, or the degree to which measures can correlate with one another. Poor internal consistency will weaken the ability of a measure to relate to other individual difference measures. In fact, this pattern was observed by Bress et al. (17), where ERPs to gains had better psychometric properties and had a more consistent relationship with depressive symptoms across two testing sessions than difference-based measures of reward.

After establishing that response to gain and loss showed high internal consistency, we investigated whether these responses also showed sufficient internal consistency when

the first and second halves of trials were analyzed separately. Both ERP and BOLD responses to gain and loss all had high internal consistency during both the first half and second half of the task—indicating that an internally consistent measure of response to gain and loss in 8- to 14-year-old girls can be obtained using just 14 gain and 14 loss trials. This has important practical implications, as a task with fewer trials would require less time in the scanner. Although ERP and VS responses showed similar internal consistency across the task, it is important to note that there was a marked decrease in the internal consistency of PFC responses, particularly for gains, from the first to the second half of the task. It is possible that decreases in PFC internal consistency reflect a decrease in general task engagement over time. However, another interesting hypothesis is that decreasing internal consistency within the PFC reflects changes in the type of task engagement over time. Future work is needed to investigate this hypothesis and to further titrate the doors and other reward tasks and identify the fewest number of trials needed to provide neural measures of response to gain and loss with good psychometric properties, while also maximizing relationships with individual differences. Furthermore, as scanning parameters, e.g., repetition time length, may influence psychometric properties, future studies should also investigate internal consistency across a variety of scanning parameters.

In the current study, residual and subtraction-based scores also had lower internal consistency across methodologies despite the relatively high internal consistency for responses to gain and loss. The lower internal consistency of difference scores has been discussed elsewhere and reflects accumulating measurement error [e.g., (48)]. Internal consistency of subtraction-based scores is a particular concern when the constituent components show equal variance and are highly correlated (48,49). For example, although responses to gain and loss were significantly correlated in this sample for all ROIs and ERPs, and subtraction and residual scores were universally lower in their internal consistency, the lowest internal consistencies of the difference between gain and loss were observed for ROIs where the correlation between response to gain and loss was the highest (e.g., PFC). Residualized difference scores uniformly outperformed subtracted-based difference scores in terms of internal consistency in the current study, suggesting that this may be a more attractive option in

Table 3. Split-Half Relationships for the First and Second Half of Trials

	Gain			Loss			SCOREs			SCOREr		
	First Half	Second Half	Z (p)	First Half	Second Half	Z (p)	First Half	Second Half	Z (p)	First Half	Second Half	Z (p)
Left Ventral Striatum	0.77	0.67	1.95 (.051)	0.71	0.64	1.20 (.229)	0.37	0.44	−0.78 (.434)	0.55	0.54	0.14 (.894)
Right Ventral Striatum	0.72	0.67	0.90 (.363)	0.64	0.66	−0.32 (.747)	0.27	0.42	−1.59 (.111)	0.50	0.52	−0.25 (.801)
MPFC	0.71	0.53	2.77 (.006)	0.71	0.59	1.95 (.051)	0.44	0.13	3.19 (.001)	0.55	0.37	2.14 (.032)
LPFC	0.79	0.57	3.95 (<.001)	0.70	0.64	1.02 (.309)	0.32	0.27	0.51 (.609)	0.55	0.44	1.36 (.173)
Right PFC	0.82	0.49	5.79 (<.001)	0.74	0.66	1.47 (.141)	0.38	0.13	2.51 (.012)	0.58	0.24	3.90 (<.001)
ERPs	0.79	0.74	1.13 (.259)	0.75	0.76	−0.22 (.828)	0.21	0.35	−1.42 (.156)	0.46	0.49	−0.36 (.718)

Split-half relationships within the first and second half of trials were compared using corco.
ERP, event-related potentials; LPFC, lateral prefrontal cortex; MPFC, medial prefrontal cortex; PFC, prefrontal cortex; SCOREr, unstandardized residual gain controlling for loss; SCOREs, gain feedback, loss feedback, and subtraction-based difference score.

individual differences research ([39]). Finally, we would note that despite lower internal consistency, difference scores can still isolate variance related to individual differences; this would be the case as long as the difference score captures the relevant individual differences variance.

Although the current study focused on internal consistency, another key issue is the construct validity of neural response to reward—the degree to which these measures relate to other constructs of interest. Although ERPs and fMRI provide much different information on brain activity, in terms of both time scale and mechanism, we previously found that the reward positivity correlated moderately with striatal response to reward in adults ($r = .52$ and $r = .28$ for left and right striatum, respectively) ([20]). However, in the current study, comparable correlations were much weaker (i.e., $r = .15$). One possibility is that large contextual differences in which ERP and fMRI data are acquired (i.e., supine body position; loud, anxiolytic environment in fMRI) may have a larger impact on the convergence of measures among adolescents relative to adults. That is, convergent validity between these measures may increase with age; if neural response to reward becomes less variable across contexts (i.e., trait-like) with age, this hypothesis should be investigated in the future. Future studies should also examine associations between both ERP and fMRI measures of reward in relation to development, self-report measures, and emerging symptoms of psychopathology and risk—all of which will add to our understanding of construct validity of these neural measures.

Conclusions

Both ERP-based and fMRI-based measures of response to gain and loss during the doors task have high internal consistency that is invariant with respect to age; these measures are well suited for studying individual differences during emerging adolescence. Indeed, internal consistency was high for both ERP and fMRI measurements within the first half of the task. Both subtraction-based and regression-based scores were characterized by lower internal consistency across ERP and fMRI methods. Regression-based residuals performed better, suggesting that this approach may be a preferable "difference-score" method for individual differences research using this paradigm.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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