

BLAME IT ON THE BYSTANDER: THE EFFECTS OF GROUP MEMBERSHIP
AND HINDSIGHT BIAS ON BYSTANDER CULPABILITY

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dog, Charlotte, my twin, Sarah, and my cold brew maker.

ABSTRACT

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Nearly one-third of sexual assaults take place with a bystander present, but research has shown that bystanders only intervene 36% of the time (Planty, 2002). Despite recent literature investigating bystander intervention in instances of sexual assault, very little research has been done on how others perceive bystanders when they fail to act. The current study examines hindsight bias (through outcome information) and group membership's effects on perceptions of bystanders in a sexual assault situation. Participants read a vignette describing a potential sexual assault scenario where a bystander fails to intervene. Importantly, some participants received outcome information, which either explicitly confirmed an assault did or did not occur. Alternatively, some participants did not receive any outcome information. Participants indicated the extent to which they believed the bystander should have intervened as well as provided additional characteristic and situational judgments. While I saw no effect of group membership, outcome information impacted judgments made about the bystander. Participants believed that intervention was necessary when told a sexual assault occurred, but they blamed the bystander more when not given any outcome information.

KEY WORDS: Bystander culpability, Sexual assault, Group membership, Hindsight bias

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

An estimated 734,630 people were sexually assaulted or raped (threatened, attempted, or completed) in the United States in 2018, which is double the amount reported in previous years (Morgan & Oudekerk, 2019). The #MeToo movement promotes holding perpetrators of sexual assault accountable for their actions (Mendes et al., 2018), but traditionally, victims have been viewed as responsible for their assault and believed to have been able to prevent the attack (Labhardt et al., 2017). Bystanders, who are third party witnesses to sexual assaults, are also held responsible for the action of potentially preventing an assault (Latané & Darley, 1970). Twenty-nine percent of sexual assault instances occur with bystanders present; however, bystanders have been shown to intervene only a little more than a third of the time (36%; Planty, 2002).

Intervention can happen at any point before, during, or after the sexual assault occurs (Labhardt et al., 2017; McMahon et al., 2014), and has been shown to lead to arrests and convictions. For example, in the case of Brock Turner, two bystanders successfully intervened while Turner was assaulting an incapacitated girl (King, 2016). This intervention led to Turner's conviction and jail sentence. Increasing intervention rates is one way to reduce instances of sexual assault (McMahon & Farmer, 2009; Senn & Forrest, 2016). However, there are many factors that influence the likelihood of bystanders attempting to intervene in these situations, such as perceptions of the victim, the group membership of the bystander, or relevant outcome information about the potential sexual assault.

Bystander Intervention and Blame Attribution

Bystanders can prevent sexual assault when they are willing and able to intervene. The intervention process is captured by a situational-model proposed by Latané & Darley (1970) which describes the bystander's decision-making process that must occur before intervening in general emergency situations. This model can also be applied to bystander intervention in instances of sexual assault (Burn, 2009). Importantly, there are barriers that can occur at each stage that may prevent an individual from intervening. First, the bystander must notice that an event is happening. They must then identify the situation as needing intervention and the victim in danger of being sexually assaulted. Upon recognizing the risk, the bystander must then assume responsibility for intervening. This assumption of responsibility is particularly important because when a bystander believes that others will act in their stead, individual pressure or responsibility to act is alleviated and the likelihood of bystander intervention decreases (diffusion of responsibility; Latané & Nida, 1981). Once deciding to help, the bystander must choose how: directly or indirectly. Direct intervention involves interrupting the situation, while indirect intervention involves either getting someone else to help or distracting the perpetrator from the potential victim (Palmer et al., 2018). The last stage of the model dictates that the bystander carries out their intentions to act. It is here that audience inhibition can occur, in which the presence of others and social cues hinder or even prevent intervention (Latané & Nida, 1981). These steps are crucial to bystander intervention, and the factors that influence involvement vary across situations (Banyard, 2011).

As previously stated, intervention depends on bystanders successfully progressing through the stages described in the situational model. However, intervention can be

inhibited at any of those five stages by a number of issues. One of the most studied barriers is the *bystander effect* (Latané & Darley, 1968). The bystander effect occurs when a group of individuals witness a situation in which someone needs help yet they fail to intervene. Individuals in groups are less likely to intervene than if they witnessed the event alone due to diffusion of responsibility. Darley and Latane (1968) found that 85% of participants who were alone when they encountered the event intervened compared to 31% of bystanders who thought four others were nearby, and 62% when in a group of six participants. Other factors that inhibit intervention include sexist attitudes (Yule et al., 2020), alcohol involvement (Ham et al., 2019; Pugh et al., 2016), negative views of the victim (Labhardt et al., 2017), or the type of relationship between the bystander and perpetrator (Katz et al., 2015; Bennett et al., 2017).

Barriers to intervention can also vary by gender. In general, men have been shown to be less likely to intervene than women (Burn, 2009). Specifically, men reported that they would be less likely to help a victim due to a perceived personal lack of responsibility (Yule & Grych, 2020). Additionally, whether the bystanders know the perpetrator has been shown to impact intervention rates. However, the data regarding how this impacts intervention rates have been mixed. For example, some research has shown that men are more likely to intervene if they know the perpetrator (Bennett et al., 2017; Burn, 2009). This could be due to a sense of personal responsibility the men feel for their shared group of gender. Others have found that men are more willing to confront the perpetrator if they are strangers (Casey & Ohler, 2012). Furthermore, additional research has suggested men may be less likely to intervene because they justify bystander inaction as the male bystander not wanting to impede a potential sexual encounter

(Holtzman, 2020a). In contrast, women are more likely to intervene compared to men (Bennett et al., 2015; Brown et al., 2014; Burn, 2009), and are equally likely to help a victim regardless of their relationship to the perpetrator (Bennett et al., 2017). When women fail to intervene, it is typically due to believing themselves to be lacking the efficacy or skills necessary for intervention (Yule & Grych, 2020). These studies demonstrate that not all barriers to intervention are situationally based, but they can also be specific to the bystander.

While there are barriers to intervention, there are also factors that increase the likelihood of bystander intervention. According to Banyard (2011), environmental aspects in different cultures, communities, or groups can influence the bystander intervention process. Other research has demonstrated that bystanders are more likely to help if the situation is deemed highly dangerous (Fischer et al., 2011). Additionally, bystanders have been shown to be more likely to intervene when the victim is a friend of the bystander compared to when the victim is a stranger (Katz et al., 2015; Bennett et al., 2014; Bennett et al., 2017). Overall, a bystander's willingness to intervene is affected by their environment, the situation, and the dynamics of the relationships between those involved.

There is extensive literature examining both bystander intervention and perceptions of victims and perpetrators in sexual assault situations (see van der Bruggen & Grubb, 2014 for victim blame review; Strömwall et al., 2013), but there is limited research on how bystanders to these situations are perceived. Holtzman (2020a) found that relationships between the bystander and the perpetrator and/or the victim influenced how much blame was attributed to the bystander for non-intervention. Specifically,

bystanders were blamed less for their inaction when they had a relationship with either the perpetrator, the victim, or both parties. This finding suggests that participants understand the importance and influence of social factors and relationships, and they recognize that it affects decision-making in sexual assault scenarios. In addition to bystander relationships, it is also evident that similarities between the participant and bystander are influential in attributing blame, such as gender or sexuality (Holtzman, 2020b). Participants judged bystanders' inaction in scenarios that manipulated the gender and sexuality of the bystander, victim, and perpetrator. Holtzman (2020b) also manipulated whether the bystander was aware of the perpetrator's intent or not. Importantly, when participants shared similarities with bystanders who were unaware of the perpetrator's intent, they rationalized the bystanders' inactions and blamed them less compared to bystanders who did not share similarities with the participants and were aware of the perpetrator's intent. These findings highlight how identifying with the bystander impacts perceptions of inaction and levels of sympathy for the bystander.

Group Membership's Effect on Bystander Intervention

People are more sympathetic to those perceived as similar, and this can influence judgments regarding people or situations and assigning responsibility. This idea can be explained by Social Identity Theory (SIT), which suggests that people respond more favorably to members of the same social group (i.e., ingroup members) than those who belong to different social groups (i.e., outgroup members; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). An individual is ultimately defined by their group membership, making their ingroup highly important and self-relevant (Tajfel, 1978). Individuals can be biased and seek negative attributes in an outgroup to bolster their own group and, consequently, their own self-

image. For example, when an assault is defined at the group level (e.g., a hate crime), the victim is blamed less than when the assault is against one individual in the ingroup (e.g., personal assault; Droogendyk & Wright, 2014). Outgroup perpetrators are also seen as more culpable when the victim is an ingroup member (Halabi et al., 2015). These studies show that group identity is a powerful influence, and that membership can dictate perceptions of victims and perpetrators. Given the substantial impact group membership has on perceptions of victims and perpetrators, it is reasonable to expect this finding to extend to perceptions of bystanders. However, this factor has largely remained unexplored within the literature.

Although SIT suggests that people tend to favor ingroup members over outgroup members, research has shown that this may not always be the case. Research by Marques and colleagues (1988) has also demonstrated instances where ingroup members are more harshly criticized compared to outgroup members. This finding is referred to as the Black Sheep Effect (BSE; Marques et al., 1988) which posits that people tend to evaluate ingroup members more severely than outgroup members. In other words, when an ingroup member behaves in a manner that reflects negatively on the group, judgments are more severe than if they were an outgroup member. The BSE is argued to preserve the group's overall positive image and identity (Marques et al., 1988). An ingroup member who fails to intervene in a sexual assault situation may be judged more harshly by group members as their inaction could be seen as controversial and reflect poorly on the group. Thus, the BSE and SIT predict differential outcomes in terms of the blame that will be attributed to a bystander who fails to intervene.

How group membership affects the likelihood for bystander intervention depends on the situation. Many studies have found that bystanders are more likely to intervene when the victim is an ingroup rather than outgroup member (Gottlieb & Carver, 1980; Howard & Crano, 1974; Levine et al., 2002). These data are in accordance with SIT wherein individuals are more positively biased toward those in their ingroup and act accordingly. However, this leniency toward the ingroup is not always observed. Researchers (Bennett, 2017; Burn, 2009; Katz et al., 2015) found that men are more likely to confront the perpetrator in a sexual assault situation when they are friends (i.e., their ingroup) than when they are strangers. Simultaneously, they felt a lower intent to help the outgroup member victim. Researchers posit that these men were more motivated to intervene and confront the ingroup perpetrator for the betterment of their shared ingroup as opposed to helping someone from their outgroup. This opposition toward their ingroup member (and lack of help toward the outgroup member) supports the predictions made by the BSE. Specifically, that perceptions of bystanders are influenced by how the bystanders' actions affect the group's overall image.

Regarding group membership on bystander blame, research (Holtzman, 2020b) found perceptions of bystanders to be more positive, despite their inaction, when the bystander was the participants' ingroup member. However, this favoring of the ingroup member could drastically change if the inaction in question was seen as harmful to the shared group. Specifically, knowing there was a negative situational outcome due to a bystander failing to intervene might influence perceptions of the bystander.

Bystander Intervention and Hindsight Bias

Outcome information can heavily influence retroactive judgments made about a scenario. When made aware of the situational outcome, people are likely to believe that they would have easily predicted the outcome, even though research has shown this not to be the case (Roese & Olson, 2012). This is referred to as *hindsight bias* (Fischhoff, 1975). A specific type of hindsight is called foreseeability, in which people believe they always knew a given outcome would happen (Roese & Olson, 2012). When people believe that the outcome was foreseeable, especially when it was a negative or harmful outcome, it makes the outcome seem more predictable and avoidable than it was before the outcome information was revealed (Fischhoff, 1975). This can lead to more blame placed on the victim of these negative outcomes, as they are seen to have been able to prevent a foreseeable event from occurring. While hindsight bias is observed in everyday interactions (Guilbault et al., 2004), it also has substantial implications in how people form judgments and perceptions of others.

Hindsight bias has been observed in instances of child sexual assault, specifically in the likelihood of recognizing child grooming behaviors. Winters and Jeglic (2016) examined how outcome information impacted perceptions of potential sexual grooming behaviors. Grooming behaviors are used by sex offenders to gain access to and sexually abuse children. Participants were more likely to think they would have recognized the grooming behaviors and identified the child molester when given outcome information (i.e., being explicitly told the child was sexually assaulted) than when not given outcome information due to hindsight bias. While hindsight bias neither impairs nor improves grooming detection in children, it can impact the blame attributed to bystanders who fail

to recognize grooming behavior. Thus, hindsight bias can result in more blame being placed on bystanders who did not prevent the child from being abused (Winters & Jeglic, 2016).

Hindsight bias is not only seen in sexual grooming situations but has also been linked to an increased amount of victim blaming in rape scenarios (Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985). Being aware of the situational outcome makes a rape seem easily avoidable and foreseeable; therefore, people viewed the victim as more responsible for failing to prevent the rape (Felson & Palmore, 2018; Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985). Hindsight bias has also been linked to increased victim belittlement or derogation (Carli & Leonard, 1989).

Perceived responsibility of an inactive bystander can depend on information that preceded the assault (Levy & Ben-David, 2015). After learning that a scenario had a negative outcome, many people engage in contemplations about alternative outcomes that could have happened if other choices had been made instead. This is known as counterfactual thinking. In a sexual assault scenario, participants were found to blame an inactive bystander more when the preceding events were easier to alter through counterfactual thinking than events that were harder to mentally change (Levy & Ben-David, 2015). This aligns with existing studies that show counterfactual thinking increased the amount of blame attributed to victims (Alicke et al., 2008, Branscombe & Weir, 1992; Goldinger et al., 2003). This is another example, similar to hindsight bias, wherein outcome information is highly influential in how people interpret and perceive situations.

The availability of outcome information could impact participants' perceptions of bystanders depending on their group membership. If a negative outcome is perceived as foreseeable, it is reasonable to expect that bystanders will be judged more harshly for failing to intervene. Currently, most literature focuses on blame attribution for victims and perpetrators, but there is a need for an equally strong understanding of blame attribution for bystanders. This study will add to the current understanding regarding perceptions of bystander inaction.

Current Study

Although research demonstrates a clear impact of hindsight bias on victim blaming, no research has yet examined how hindsight bias might affect perceptions of bystander responsibility when the bystander chooses to not intervene. Given the lack of information regarding perceptions of bystanders, the primary aim of this study was to better understand how group membership and outcome information impacts perceptions of the bystander in a sexual assault scenario. Based on the literature, I hypothesized that when participants were explicitly told that there was a negative outcome (i.e., a sexual assault), they would blame the bystander more for their inaction when the bystander was a member of the participants' ingroup than when they were a part of the outgroup. This hypothesis supports the BSE in that the ingroup bystander would be blamed more for inaction (Marques et al., 1988). Alternatively, should participants assign less blame to ingroup bystanders, more negative perceptions of outgroup bystanders would be in line with what is posited by SIT.

Conversely, when outcome information is absent, the increased ambiguity of the situation was predicted to impact rates of bystander blame. Specifically, I hypothesized

that participants would judge bystanders in their ingroup less harshly for their inaction than those in their outgroup, as this is in accordance with the SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Therefore, I expected participants to hold the bystander less accountable for preventing the potential rape. This trend would mirror the victim blaming literature in that the ingroup members are naturally preferred to outgroup members.

Lastly, I hypothesized that when participants were explicitly told that a sexual assault did not occur, bystander blame would not significantly differ as a function of group membership. I also predicted lower rates of bystander blame than the other outcome information conditions, as participants would interpret the situation as not having required bystander intervention. The findings from this study have implications for both social, everyday settings and legal settings, such as in jury decision making for sexual assault cases. This study expands on the scarce literature focusing on bystander-blaming and contribute to a foundation for future studies to build upon.

CHAPTER II

Methods

Participants

A sample of 131 undergraduate participants were recruited from a midsize southern public university using the SONA system in exchange for course credit. A power analysis using MorePower (Campbell & Thompson, 2012) indicated that an N of 108 was needed to detect a medium-sized effect ($\eta_p^2 = .09$) with 80% power using a between-subjects ANOVA with alpha at .05. One-hundred and ten participants were analyzed. However, 21 subjects were removed due to failing the manipulation check, not finishing the study, or for having spent ten seconds or less on the vignette survey page. The average age of participants was 21.99 years ($SD = 8.17$). Seventy percent of the participants identified as female, 24.5% as male, and .05% as non-Binary. Of the participants, 49% of participants identified as Caucasian, 26.4% as Hispanic, 18% as Black, .05% as Asian, and .01% listed "Other."

Design

A 3 (Outcome Information: sexual assault, no sexual assault, no information) x 2 (Group Membership: ingroup, outgroup) between-subjects design was used. Both variables were between subjects, resulting in a total of six conditions. The dependent variables being evaluated were perceived need of intervention, outcome likelihood ratings, and blame attributed to the bystander. This study was approved by the IRB (see Appendix A).

Vignettes

Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of the six vignettes, which were adapted from Katz et al. (2015). The vignettes depict a male bystander at a college party, celebrating the win of his college football team. At the party, he witnesses an intoxicated girl being led into a private bedroom by a sober guy. A male bystander was chosen to account for perceived efficacy issues, as a female bystander could be perceived as being potentially overpowered by a male perpetrator. Outcome information was manipulated such that it was either included in the vignette (and a sexual assault either did or did not occur) or absent. When the outcome information was present, the girl was either raped (sexual assault condition) or allowed to take a nap before being helped safely home (no sexual assault condition). Group membership was manipulated using school affiliation (Sam Houston State University for ingroup, University of Dayton for outgroup). I chose to use the University of Dayton because it is an out-of-state, private university that participants should not be strongly affiliated with, unlike other schools in the Texas area. Vignettes can be seen in Appendix B.

Measures

Perceived Need for Intervention. The extent to which participants perceive the situation to need intervention was assessed through a general question. Responses were provided on an 11-point Likert scale of 0-100, with “0” representing no need to intervene, and “100” representing that the bystander definitely should have intervened.

Hindsight Bias. Hindsight bias was assessed using an item from Janoff-Bulman et al. (1985). Participants were asked to make judgments regarding the likelihood of possible scenario outcomes. The responses of interest are those depicted in the vignettes

(i.e., the man raping the woman or the man taking the woman safely home). For participants who received outcome information (both the sexual assault occurring and not occurring), their instructions told them to “assume that you did not know the outcome of the scenario you have read. Given your knowledge of the events that occurred, what do you think is the likelihood that the scenario had each of the following endings: (a) the drunk girl seduced the sober guy, (b) the drunk girl was raped by the sober guy, (c) the drunk girl was beaten by the sober guy, or (d) the drunk girl took a nap and then was taken home by the sober guy.” For the condition absent of outcome information, this sentence was not included. Responses were provided using percentages from 0-100% for the likelihood of each outcome.

Blame Attribution. The extent to which participants blame the bystander was assessed through two different measures. A 14-item measure, termed the Pazos Bystander Culpability Questionnaire (PBCQ), was adapted from a victim blame measure by Dexter et al. (1997) to apply to bystanders. It was created to further examine the extent of bystander culpability in the scenario that either occurred or could have occurred. The PBCQ is comprised of two categories that assess: 1) the categorical blame attributed to the bystander, and 2) perceptions of the situation. The full measure can be viewed in Appendix C. The responses were provided on a scale of 0-100, with higher scores indicating greater blame attributed to the bystander. These values were combined to create two composite scores, one for each category.

Blame attribution was also be assessed using an item from Katz et al. (2015). Participants were then asked “How responsible do you think each of these people are for the incident that *occurred/could have occurred?*” For the conditions in which a rape did

not explicitly occur, participants were asked to imagine that the assault occurred in the provided scenario. Percentages of responsibility were assigned for the bystander, potential victim, and potential perpetrator. The percent assigned, between 0-100%, indicated the level of blame attributed.

Manipulation Check. Participants were asked what school the bystander attends in the vignette as a manipulation check: “What school does [the bystander] attend?” Potential choices were the following: “Sam Houston State University,” “University of Dayton,” “Louisiana State University,” or “Florida Southern College.” Participants who failed the manipulation check were not included in the final analyses.

Demographics. Participants were asked for general demographic information, such as their age, race and ethnicity, and gender identity. They were also asked the extent to which being a Sam Houston State University student is an important part of their social identity, with responses ranging from 0-100% (0% = not at all important, 100% = extremely important).

Procedure

Undergraduate students were recruited using the Psychology Research Participation (PeRP) system in exchange for course credit. The study was presented online through Qualtrics. Upon providing informed consent, participants were asked to name the school they attend (all participants were students at Sam Houston State University) to prime them for the group manipulation. Following this question, participants were randomly assigned to read one of the six vignette conditions. They then read their assigned vignette and provided responses for the perceived need for intervention question, hindsight bias assessment, PBCQ, blame attribution measures,

manipulation check, and demographic questions. Participants were then thanked and debriefed after completing the study.

CHAPTER III

Results

The goal of the current study was to examine how group membership and outcome information influenced perceptions of bystander culpability when the bystander failed to intervene in a potential sexual assault situation. To that end, participants reported their perceptions of bystander culpability through a perceived need for intervention question, hindsight likelihood questions, the PBCQ, and individual questions identifying levels of blame specifically attributed to the bystander, victim, and perpetrator. All statistical tests had an alpha level of .05, and effect sizes are reported. Bonferroni corrections were used for any post-hoc analyses.

Perceived Need for Intervention

To assess perceived intervention necessity, I conducted a 3 (Outcome Information: sexual assault, no sexual assault, no information) x 2 (Group Membership; ingroup, outgroup) between-subjects ANOVA on participants' reported need for intervention ratings. For this rating, participants were specifically asked the extent to which they believe the bystander should have intervened. A main effect of outcome information was observed, $F(2,104) = 6.48, p = .002, \eta^2 = .11$. Specifically, participants were most likely to attribute blame to the inactive bystander when a sexual assault occurred ($M = 94.35, SE = 3.20$) compared to when they were told the woman got home safely ($M = 78.39, SE = 3.08$), $p = .001$. Pairwise comparisons between the outcome absent and either of the outcome conditions were not significant, as well as the main effect for group membership and the interaction, $ps > .05$. The means and standard errors for the main effect of outcome information can be seen in Table 1, with the means and

standard errors for all conditions in Appendix D. In sum, these data are in line with what would be predicted by the hindsight bias, as participants' perceptions of whether intervention was necessary were influenced by the knowledge of whether a sexual assault occurred.

Table 1

Average Perceived Need for Intervention Ratings and Standard Errors

Outcome Information	Perceived Need for Intervention
Sexual Assault	94.35 (3.20) ^a
No Sexual Assault	78.39 (3.08) ^b
No Outcome Given	85.30 (3.11) ^{ab}

Note. Significance between columns is denoted by differing letters.

Hindsight Bias Likelihood Ratings

In addition to perceived necessity for intervention scores, participants were also instructed to rate the likelihood of different outcomes for the scenario described in the vignette. Participants provided likelihood ratings for four potential scenario outcomes that involved the sober man: 1) being seduced, 2) being a rapist, 3) being physically abusive, and 4) taking the woman home safely. However, I only analyzed the responses concerning likelihood of the woman being raped or taken home safely, given that they were the items pertinent to my research question. Two 3(Outcome information: sexual assault, no sexual assault, no information) x 2(Group membership; ingroup, outgroup) between-subjects ANOVAs were conducted using participants' likelihood responses for these items.

Regarding participants' likelihood ratings for the sexual assault, neither the main effects of group membership, outcome information, nor the interaction were significant, $ps > .05$. Despite failing to reach the conventional level of significance, it is worth noting that the pattern of the data in reference to outcome information were as predicted. Specifically, participants provided higher likelihood ratings that a sexual assault would occur when they were told a sexual assault occurred ($M = 87.4$, $SE = 3.58$), compared to when participants were explicitly told a sexual assault did not occur ($M = 77.6$, $SE = 3.44$) or those who were not given any outcome information ($M = 81.1$, $SE = 3.48$). Similarly, participants who were not given an outcome reported that the vignettes were more likely to result in sexual assault compared to participants who were specifically told that a sexual assault did not occur. The lack of significant findings might be the product of the current study being underpowered rather than indicative of a true null effect. Despite my power analysis suggesting a sample of 108, post hoc power analyses suggest that these comparisons were underpowered, as my initial power analysis was conducted with a beta of .8, but post hoc analyses revealed that my power was only at .39. While it is worth noting that these data were numerically following the predicted direction, I cannot draw any firm conclusions based on these data.

I observed a similar pattern for the likelihood that the woman returned home safely, neither the main effects nor the interaction reached the conventional standard for significance, $ps > .05$. However, the pattern of the data also mirrors what would be predicted by the hindsight bias. Specifically, participants who were told the girl returned home safely ($M = 38.3$, $SE = 4.27$) provided higher likelihood ratings of the girl getting safely home than those who did not receive an outcome at all ($M = 29.1$, $SE = 4.33$) or

those who were told a sexual assault occurred ($M = 26.3$, $SE = 4.45$). Similar to previous analysis, this analysis might have also suffered a lack of power, as the power was only .42 compared to the .80 criteria that is typically required. While these patterns are in line with what would be predicted by the hindsight bias, the overall analyses were not significant. Hindsight bias likelihood means and standard errors can be seen in Table 2 for a main effect of outcome information, and the means and standard errors for all conditions can be viewed in Appendix E.

Table 2

Average Likelihood Ratings and Standard Errors for Scenario Outcome

Outcome Information	Drunk Woman was Raped (SE)	Drunk Woman got Safely Home (SE)
Sexual Assault	87.4 (3.59)	26.3 (4.45)
No Sexual Assault	77.6 (3.45)	38.3 (4.27)
No Outcome Given	81.1 (3.48)	29.1 (4.33)

PBCQ Ratings for Bystander and Situational Characteristics

Participants were also asked to provide perceptions of the bystander's character and perceptions regarding the potential sexual assault scenario. To that end, the PBCQ was split into two categories, separating perceptions of the bystander's character from perceptions of the crime that occurred or could have occurred at the end of the vignette. Within these categories, scores were combined to create two separate composite averages. Higher character scores indicated a more positive impression of the bystander, while higher situation scores indicated harsher perceptions of the situation. I used 3 (Outcome Information: sexual assault, no sexual assault, no information) x 2 (Group

Membership; ingroup, outgroup) between-subjects ANOVAs to analyze participants' characteristic and situation responses.

The first category of the PBCQ examined perceptions of the bystander's character, and asked participants to indicate the extent to which they identified with the bystander, believed the bystander was intelligent, their opinion of the bystander was positive, how likeable the bystander is, and how kind the bystander is. Both main effects and the interaction failed to achieve statistical significance, $ps > .05$. Similar to prior analyses, post hoc analyses revealed power to be at .54, when I was aiming for .8. This low power level warrants caution in terms of drawing any conclusions about these data.

The second half of the PBCQ analyzed perceptions of the situation (e.g., participants were to indicate the extent to which they thought the situation was severe, how much the bystander could have behaved differently). A main effect of outcome information was found, $F(2,104) = 3.46, p = .035, \eta^2 = .062$, such that more responsibility was attributed to the inactive bystander for the situation when outcome information was absent ($M = 70.63, SE = 2.79$) compared to when outcome information was given and a sexual assault occurred ($M = 61.69, SE = 2.87$) or when a sexual assault did not occur ($M = 61.56, SE = 2.75$). Despite having achieved statistical significance, the follow up pairwise comparisons were not significant, $ps > .05$, therefore further conclusions made about these data are limited. Means for both PBCQ categories can be seen in Table 3 for the main effect of outcome information, while means for both PBCQ categories for all conditions can be seen in Appendix F.

Table 3

PBCQ Average Ratings and Standard Errors for Perceptions of the Bystander's Character and the Situation

Outcome Information	Character Ratings	Situation Ratings
Sexual Assault	35.9 (3.73)	61.7 (2.87)
No Sexual Assault	48.1 (3.58)	61.6 (2.75)
No Outcome Given	40.6 (3.63)	70.6 (2.79)

Blame Attribution for Bystander, Victim, Perpetrator

Finally, participants indicated how responsible they believed the individuals described in the vignette to be for the assault or potential assault. The blame ratings attributed specifically to the bystander, the victim, and the perpetrator were analyzed using three separate 3 (Outcome Information: sexual assault, no sexual assault, no information) x 2 (Group Membership; ingroup, outgroup) between-subjects ANOVAs. Concerning bystander blame, I observed a main effect of outcome information, $F(2,104) = 9.44, p < .001, \eta^2 = .15$, such that participants who were given no outcome information ($M = 62.74, SE = 4.6$) were more likely to provide higher blame ratings to the inactive bystander compared to when they were given an outcome depicting no assault ($M = 47.79, SE = 4.58, p < .001$), or sexual assault ($M = 33.88, SE = 4.76, p < .001$). These scores differ than predicted, as I hypothesized that the bystander would be blamed the most when a sexual assault did occur. Comparisons between the latter two conditions were not significant, $ps > .05$. There were no effects of group membership, nor an interaction observed, $ps > .05$.

I also examined blame attributed to the victim. I observed a main effect of outcome information, $F(1,104) = 3.44, p = .036, \eta^2 = .06$. Similar to ratings for bystander blame, participants were more likely to blame the victim when they were unaware of the outcome ($M = 30.69, SE = 5.11$), than when a sexual assault occurred ($M = 11.44, SE = 5.26$) $p = .030$. Other pairwise comparisons were not significant, $ps > .05$. Neither the main effect of group membership nor an interaction between factors were found, $ps > .05$.

Finally, analyses examining the blame ratings for the perpetrator did not reveal any significant differences for either variable or their interaction, $ps > .05$. Overall, perpetrator blame was quite high, which might have produced a ceiling effect, preventing me from observing any differences. Outcome information blame attribution means and standard errors for bystanders, victims, and perpetrators can be viewed in Table 4, while the means and standard errors for all conditions can be seen in Appendices G through I.

Overall, blame attribution was affected by outcome information in that participants were more likely to blame both the bystander and victim more when they were unaware of the outcome compared to the other outcome information conditions. Similar to other analyses, group membership did not appear to factor into decisions made about blame attribution.

Table 4

Average Blame and Responsibility Attribution Ratings and Standard Errors for the Bystander, Victim, and Perpetrator

Outcome Information	Bystander Blame	Victim Blame	Perpetrator Blame
Sexual Assault	33.9 (4.76) ^a	11.4 (5.26) ^a	98.0 (3.27)
No Sexual Assault	47.8 (4.58) ^{ab}	21.8 (5.05) ^{ab}	89.4 (3.14)
No Outcome Given	62.7 (4.63) ^b	30.7 (5.12) ^b	94.5 (3.18)

Note. Significance between columns is denoted by differing letters.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into how hindsight bias and group membership impacts perceptions of a bystander in a potential sexual assault scenario. Despite the copious amount of literature on bystander intervention, only two studies have examined the perceptions of inactive bystander culpability in these situations. While prior work shows that group membership affects the likelihood of intervention, the current study did not see an influence of group membership on bystander culpability. Alternatively, outcome information affected perceived necessity to intervene, showing evidence of hindsight bias. While outcome information also influenced blame attribution and perceptions of the situation, these findings were not in line with what was initially predicted. Participants blamed bystanders more in situations in which outcome information was not given, despite reporting that intervention was more necessary when participants were made aware that a sexual assault occurred.

In line with the hindsight bias literature (Carli & Leonard, 1989; Fischhoff, 1975; Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985; Winters & Jeglic, 2016), participants' perceptions of whether intervention was needed varied as a function of the outcome information they received. Participants provided higher ratings for intervention necessity when they were told a sexual assault occurred and lower ratings when they were told the woman got home safely. Importantly, these vignettes were identical but outcome information, yet perceptions vastly differed due to different outcomes. It is worth noting that participants who were not told an outcome did not differ from either of the outcome scenarios, which might be suggestive that lacking outcome information, the situation described in the

vignette was very ambiguous in nature with regard to whether intervention was necessary. These data posit that participants were potentially being more punitive in their blame than warranted, as what might appear obvious in hindsight is more ambiguous in absence of that information.

In contrast with my predictions, the comparisons regarding participants' likelihood ratings did not achieve the traditional threshold for statistical significance. While it is impossible to draw any firm conclusions, the pattern of the data was in line with what I had initially predicted. Specifically, participants gave higher likelihood ratings to the outcome that they read in their assigned vignette. Participants who did not receive specific outcome information provided ratings that numerically fell in the middle of the other outcome information conditions. As noted earlier, these data might not be indicative of a true null finding given that post-hoc analyses revealed that these comparisons were underpowered. This is something that future work should examine to provide a more concrete explanation regarding these data. Another noteworthy point is that participants indicated that they believed sexual assault was a more likely outcome (82%) with averages compared to the likelihood of the woman being taken safely home (31%), suggesting a bias toward the negative outcome. Again, conclusions cannot be firmly drawn from these findings, as they were not significant, but the pattern was in line with what would be predicted by the hindsight bias.

In contrast, an alternative pattern was observed when bystander blame was further examined through the PBCQ. I did not see differences in bystander culpability judgments concerning the bystander's character due to outcome information or group membership. However, I did see differences in judgments when they were made about the potential

sexual assault. Bystanders were attributed more culpability surrounding their involvement in the situation when participants were not given any outcome information, compared to being given outcome information detailing a sexual assault or the woman getting home safely. These culpability results differ from my initial predictions, as the bystander was attributed less situational blame in situations of sexual assault than situations in which no outcomes were given. The fact that bystanders were perceived as more responsible in the absence of outcome information is a departure from the current literature where participants assigned more responsibility to the victim when aware that a sexual assault occurred (Janoff-Bulman et al., 1985). I expected this to mirror the victim blame literature in which blame is more attributed to victims after a sexual assault occurs (see van der Bruggen & Grubbs, 2014 for review).

While outcome information affected blame attribution for both victims and bystanders, it was not in the way I initially predicted. Despite participants reporting that it was necessary for the bystander to intervene when a sexual assault occurred, blame attribution was lowest for the bystander in this condition. Interestingly, participants blamed the bystander more for their inaction when they were unaware of the outcome. Similarly, victims were also assigned the most blame when participants were not given an outcome, with the lowest attribution of blame being reported when participants were aware a sexual assault occurred. While not significantly different, perpetrators were attributed the most blame when a sexual assault occurred. Numerically, these data aligned with prior literature in that perpetrators are blamed for sexual assaults occurring (van der Bruggen & Grubbs, 2014). However, these data were not significant, and therefore did not match hindsight bias literature (Carli, 1999). While bystander and victim blame

attributions contradict predictions, perpetrator blame attribution ratings numerically reflect those seen in prior literature (van der Bruggen & Grubbs, 2014, Carli, 1999).

There are some potential explanations for why bystander and victim blame attributions differ from the current hindsight bias literature. When not given a specific outcome, participants might have inferred how the vignettes ended. Thus, participants could have imagined the scenario outcome to be more severe than sexual assault (e.g., murder). If participants were extrapolating other, more severe potential outcomes, this might be an explanation regarding the departure from the literature. However, this hypothesis was not explicitly tested. These differences may have also occurred due to varying methodological procedures. I asked participants about likelihoods regarding outcome information following a question about perceived need to intervene. This might have primed participants to believe that intervention was needed even in situations in which the outcome was not explicitly stated.

Unexpectedly, group membership did not impact perceptions of the bystander. This is in contrast with prior literature; however, there are a couple explanations that might explain the current data. One potential explanation is that my findings could have been underpowered as supported by post hoc power analyses. A second explanation may be that the type of group manipulation was not salient enough to evoke a bias toward group members. In line with prior work (Wilder & Shapiro, 1984; Wilder & Thompson, 1980), I used school affiliation to induce either an in-group or an out-group membership to the potential victim. However, it is possible that school identification was not as salient for participants in the current study compared to prior research. This notion is supported by participants' responses to a question explicitly asking participants to indicate the

extent to which being a Sam Houston State University student is an important part of their social identity. Answers were provided on a 0-100% scale, with higher scores representing identifying more as a student. The average response for participants was 51.5% ($SD = 31.8$), suggesting that this group membership was not particularly salient. In future studies, group membership could be manipulated using other factors, such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, or political affiliation (Cairns et al., 2010; Chen & Kendrick, 2002; Conover, 1984; Koch, 1993).

One limitation of the current study lies in the way the scenario was presented. Specifically, I presented vignettes through an online survey. People do not truly know what they would do if presented with the given situation in real life. Therefore, participants may have answered the survey differently than they would have if they encountered this situation in person. Social desirability, or the tendency to answer questions in ways that are viewed favorably by others (Edwards, 1953), might have also been a factor. Particularly for participants' responses, they might have not been as punitive in their blame for inactive bystanders, despite the various consequences resulting from their lack of intervention. The lower rates of victim blame observed in the current study also support this notion.

While this work provides new insight, there is still more research to be explored regarding how bystanders are perceived. One future avenue of exploration would be to compare judgments toward active and inactive bystanders in sexual assault scenarios. Intervention might not always be seen as helpful, even possibly being viewed as harmful in some situations (e.g., intervening in a situation where the interaction is consensual). This avenue of research would examine the boundary conditions when intervention is

viewed as necessary and when it is not. This research would provide further understanding into how these people are judged during or after the event. Another direction could be to explore how the relationships between victims, bystanders, and perpetrators might impact whether a situation is perceived as needing intervention. The dynamics accompanying these relationships might lead to differential interpretations regarding perceived need for intervention. For example, bystander relationships with the victim can increase the likelihood of intervention (Bennett et al., 2017; Levine et al., 2002), while relationships with the perpetrator lower intent for intervention (Nicksa, 2014). Prior research has shown that bystanders are inclined to help their friends compared to strangers (Katz et al., 2015), but, while morally right, acting against their friends might result in more blame being attributed to the bystander (Berry et al., 2021). Therefore, participants may hold more negative perceptions toward an inactive bystander in a potential sexual assault when they are friends with the victim, or, inversely, hold these negative perceptions toward an active bystander when friends with the perpetrator.

The present research adds to the limited literature in how bystanders are perceived in situations of sexual assault. In sexual assault research, blame tends to be attributed to both the perpetrator and the victim (see van der Bruggen & Grubbs, 2014, for review). However, sexual assaults can involve more than a victim and perpetrator. Bystanders witness these situations roughly one-third of the time and can prevent assault through intervention. This study focused on perceptions and blame attribution of these individuals when they choose to not act. Despite the expectation that group membership would influence blame attribution and necessity for intervention, these perceptions of bystanders were unaffected by group membership. In contrast, participants reported that intervention

was necessary in situations that resulted in sexual assault, despite blaming bystanders more when participants were unaware of the scenario's ending. These data can provide more insight into how situations are interpreted as needing intervention and how blame is assigned in instances of potential sexual assault and can inform future work that will hopefully lead to more effective intervention. This and future work can serve to help explain how bystanders are perceived in potential sexual assault situations when they choose to remain inactive.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL



Date: Sep 21, 2021 11:46:21 AM CDT

TO: Laura Pazos Daniella Cash

FROM: SHSU IRB

PROJECT TITLE: Assessing Party Situations

PROTOCOL #: IRB-2021-257

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial

ACTION: Exempt

DECISION DATE: September 21, 2021

EXEMPT REVIEW CATEGORY: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK: To access the survey, click [here](#). It only takes 10 minutes of your time and is voluntary. The results will be used internally to make improvements to the IRB application and/or process. Thank you for your time.

Greetings,

Thank you for your submission of Initial Review materials for this project. The Sam Houston State University (SHSU) IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

Since Cayuse IRB does not currently possess the ability to provide a "stamp of approval" on any recruitment or consent documentation, it is the strong recommendation of this office to please include the following approval language in the footer of those recruitment and consent documents: IRB-2021-257/September 21, 2021.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

*** What should investigators do when considering changes to an exempt study that could make it nonexempt?**

It is the PI's responsibility to consult with the IRB whenever questions arise about whether planned changes to an exempt study might make that study nonexempt human subjects research.

In this case, please make available sufficient information to the IRB so it can make a correct determination.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your project title and protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Chase Young, Ph.D.

Chair, IRB

Hannah R. Gerber, Ph.D.

Co-Chair, IRB

APPENDIX B

Bystander Vignette (All Conditions)

It is a typical Saturday night. Nicholas, a student at Sam Houston State University/ University of Dayton student, is invited to a party that one of his friends is throwing after a football game. He expects to run into some friends there. When Nicholas first arrives, he realizes that all of the beer is gone. He is sober because he didn't have anything to drink before the party, either. Nicholas walks to the back of the house looking for people they know. As he looks around, Nicholas sees empty beer bottles on a beer pong table, some people dancing, and an empty keg by a staircase leading up to some rooms. As Nicholas is standing, he looks around and does not recognize anyone in the crowd. Everyone is wearing the Sam Houston orange and blue/ Dayton red and blue, chanting "Go Bearkats!"/"Go Flyers!", and celebrating the football team's win. Just as Nicholas is considering leaving, he sees a seemingly sober guy, about his size, approach a seemingly intoxicated girl who just spilt her drink on herself. Nicholas realizes she is in one of his classes. The guy takes a tissue from his pocket and starts to wipe the spilt drink from the girl's sleeve. The guy seems to have no problem with coordination as he leans over the girl and starts to whisper into her ear. The sober guy then points the way to the stairs and leads the girl, who is swaying back and forth, up the stairs with his hand low on her back. Nicholas sees him open the first door, and he notices that there is a dresser, lamp, and bed in the corner of the room. The door closes behind the guy and girl/**The door closes behind the guy and the girl. The guy rapes the girl while she is unconscious./***The door closes behind the guy and girl. The guy lets her take a nap before helping the girl get home safely.*

Note. Bolding depicts wording in the sexual assault condition, and italics depict the no sexual assault condition

APPENDIX C

Pazos Bystander Culpability Questionnaire

This questionnaire examines the extent to which participants characterologically blame the bystander, and the extent to which the bystander is blamed for the situation that either occurred or could have occurred.

1. Please indicate the extent to which you identify (feel like you share similarities) with the bystander
2. Please indicate how intelligently you believe the bystander behaved in the scenario.
3. Please indicate how positive your opinion of the bystander is.
4. Please indicate how respectable you feel the bystander is.
5. Please indicate how likable the bystander is.
6. Please indicate how kind the bystander is.
7. Please indicate how severe the situation was that the bystander witnessed.
8. Please indicate the extent to which you believe the bystander should have behaved differently.
9. Please indicate the extent to which you feel the bystander should have called the police.
10. Please indicate the extent to which you believe you think that the bystander could have done otherwise in this situation.
11. Please indicate the extent to which you believe *the rape/a rape was due/could have been due* to the bystander's actions.

12. Please indicate the extent to which the bystander *is/would be* to blame for *the rape/a rape* having occurred.
13. Please indicate the extent to which the bystander could have foreseen *the rape/a rape potentially occurring*.
14. Please indicate the extent to which you believe *the rape was/a potential rape could have been due* to a character flaw of the bystander.

Responses will be provided on a scale from 0-100. Questions 1-6 are bystander character questions, while questions 7-14 pertain to the situation. These questions will be presented randomly.

APPENDIX D

Perceived Need for Intervention Table

Average Perceived Need for Intervention Ratings and Standard Errors

Outcome Information	Ingroup	Outgroup
Sexual Assault	96.5 (4.59)	92.2 (4.46)
No Sexual Assault	79.0 (4.23)	77.8 (4.46)
No Outcome Given	79.5 (4.34)	91.1 (4.46)

APPENDIX E

Scenario Outcome Table

Average Likelihood Ratings and Standard Errors for Scenario Outcome

Outcome Information	Drunk Woman was Raped (SE)		Drunk Woman got Safely Home (SE)	
	Ingroup	Outgroup	Ingroup	Outgroup
Sexual Assault	85.9 (5.14)	88.9 (5.00)	28.2 (6.38)	24.4 (6.20)
No Sexual Assault	77.7 (4.74)	77.8 (5.00)	35.0 (5.88)	41.7 (6.20)
No Outcome Given	80.0 (4.87)	82.2 (5.00)	22.1 (6.04)	36.1 (6.20)

APPENDIX F

PBCQ Table

PBCQ Average Ratings and Standard Errors for Perceptions of the Bystander's

Character and the Situation

Outcome Information	Character Ratings		Situation Ratings	
	Ingroup	Outgroup	Ingroup	Outgroup
Sexual Assault	36.2 (5.35)	35.6 (5.20)	62.0 (4.11)	61.3 (4.11)
No Sexual Assault	50.5 (4.93)	45.6 (5.20)	60.7 (3.79)	60.7 (3.79)
No Outcome Given	35.2 (5.06)	46.1 (5.20)	69.9 (3.89)	69.9 (3.89)

APPENDIX G

Bystander Blame Table

Average Blame and Responsibility Attribution Ratings and Standard Errors for the Bystander

Outcome Information	Ingroup	Outgroup
Sexual Assault	33.8 (6.83)	34.0 (6.64)
No Sexual Assault	50.7 (6.30)	44.9 (6.64)
No Outcome Given	60.5 (6.46)	65.0 (6.64)

APPENDIX H

Victim Blame Table

Average Blame and Responsibility Attribution Ratings and Standard Errors for the Victim

Outcome Information	Ingroup	Outgroup
Sexual Assault	7.06 (7.54)	15.8 (7.33)
No Sexual Assault	20.5 (6.96)	23.2 (7.33)
No Outcome Given	31.1 (7.14)	30.3 (7.33)

APPENDIX I

Perpetrator Blame Table

Average Blame and Responsibility Attribution Ratings and Standard Errors for the Perpetrator

Outcome Information	Ingroup	Outgroup
Sexual Assault	98.2 (4.69)	97.9 (4.56)
No Sexual Assault	92.0 (4.32)	86.8 (4.56)
No Outcome Given	93.2 (4.44)	97.9 (4.56)

VITA

Laura A. Pazos

EDUCATION

- M. A. in **General Psychology** at Sam Houston State University, August 2020-present
 Thesis title: “Blame it on the bystander: The effects of hindsight bias and group membership on bystander culpability”
- B.S. in **General Biology** at The University of Southern Mississippi, May 2019
 Thesis title: “The effects of disease contamination on memory for word lists”

PUBLICATIONS

- Smith, K. A., Huff, M. J., **Pazos, L. A.**, Smith, J. L., & Cosentino, K. (2021). Item-specific encoding reduces false recognition of homograph and implicit mediated critical lures. *Memory*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2021.2010762>
- Pazos, L. A.**, & Huff, M. J. (2020). Contagious or not contagious: Is that the question? Evaluating the effects of disease contagion on memory for word lists. *Undergraduate Research Journal of Psychology at UCLA*. 7, 101-110.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

- Cash, D. K., & **Pazos, L. A.** Masking the truth: The impact of face masks on deception detection.

PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS *undergraduate author

- Spenard, K. D., **Pazos, L. A.**, & Cash, D. K. (2022, June). The effect of victim age on the detection of grooming behaviors in child sexual abuse. Paper submitted to the 29th Colloquium of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, New Orleans, Louisiana.
- *Lopez, A., **Pazos, L. A.**, & Cash, D. K. (2022, April). Masking deception in the COVID-19 pandemic. Poster to be presented at Undergraduate Research Symposium at Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX.
- Pazos, L. A.**, *Johnson, K., Cash, D. K. (2022, March). Masking deception in the time of COVID-19. Poster presented at Southeastern Psychological Association conference, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.

- Pazos, L. A., *Lopez, A., Cash, D. K.** (2022, March). The effects of race on bystander intervention in sexual assaults. Poster presented at Southeastern Psychological Association conference, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina.
- Pazos, L. A., Cash, D. K.** (2022, March). Hispanic bystander attitudes toward potential sexual assault victims. Data-blitz presented at American Psychology-Law Society conference, Denver, CO.
- Pazos, L. A., Cash, D. K.** (2022, March). The masked deceiver: Face coverings impact perceptions, but not accuracy of deception detection. Data-blitz presented at American Psychology–Law Society conference, Denver, CO.
- Spenard, K. D., **Pazos, L. A., & Cash, D. K.** (2022, March). The effect of victim age on the detection of grooming behaviors in child sexual abuse. Talk presented at American Psychology-Law Society conference, Denver, CO.
- Pazos, L. A., Spenard, K. D., Trink, M. E., Cash, D. K.** (2022, February). Dressed for the occasion: The effect of clothing and location on bystander intervention in a sexual assault. Presented at Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference, San Francisco, CA.
- Spenard, K. D., **Pazos, L. A., Trink, M. E., & Cash, D. K.** (2022, February). Grooming in retrospect: The effects of hindsight bias on the detection of grooming behaviors in cases of same-sex versus opposite-sex child sexual abuse. Poster presented at the *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, San Francisco, CA.
- Trinka, M. E., **Pazos, L. A., Spenard, K. D., & Cash, D. K.** (2022, February). They Should Have Seen It Coming? The Role of Hindsight Bias in Instances of Potential Infidelity. Presented at the *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*, San Francisco, CA.
- Pazos, L. A., Cash, D. K.** (2021, October). The masked deceiver: The impact of face masks on deception detection. Poster presented at the Society of Southeastern Social Psychologists conference, virtually.
- Smith, K. A., **Pazos, L. A., Smith, J. L., & Huff, M. J.** (2020, November). Item-specific processing reduces associative false memory by restricting associative activation, not gist extraction: Evidence from homograph and mediated lists. Poster presented at the annual Psychonomic Society meeting, Austin, TX.
- Pazos, L.A., Smith, K.A., & Huff, M.J.** (2020, February). Item-Specific Study Tasks Reduce False Recognition for Homograph and Mediated Critical Lures. Poster presented at the Mississippi Academy of Sciences annual meeting, Biloxi, MS.

Pazos, L. A., Gretz, M. R., & Huff, M. J. (2019, April). The Effects of Disease Contamination on Memory for Word Lists. Talk presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium at The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

McGrew, S., Keefer, L., Brown, M, & **Pazos, L. A.** (2018, Nov). Meaning Detection Processes Influence Receptivity to Bullshit. Poster presented at the annual Psychonomic Society meeting, New Orleans, LA.

Pazos, L. A., Gretz, M. R., & Huff, M. J. (2018, April). The Effects of Disease Contamination on Memory for Word Lists. Poster presented at the Undergraduate Research Symposium at The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

FUNDING & AWARDS

Fall 2021 **Graduate School General Scholarship, Sam Houston State University**

Summer 2021 **College of Humanities & Social Sciences Graduate Student Scholarship, Sam Houston State University**

Summer 2021 **University Bookstore In-Kind Textbook Scholarship, Sam Houston State University**

2021-2022 **College of Humanities & Social Sciences Graduate Student Scholarship, Sam Houston State University**

Spring 2020 **Honorable Mention** in Millsaps Undergraduate Scholars Symposium at the annual Mississippi Academy of Sciences meeting

Spring 2018 **Eagle Scholar Program for Undergraduate Research (Eagle SPUR) Award, The University of Southern Mississippi**

2017-2018 **Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award, The University of Southern Mississippi**

2016-2017 **Olliphant Scholar, The University of Southern Mississippi**

2014-2018 **Presidential Scholar, The University of Southern Mississippi**

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Psychonomic Society

Mississippi Academy of Sciences

American Psychology–Law Society

Society for Personality and Social Psychology