

Effect of Experience on Alibi Generation and Expectation

Heidi V. Abbott

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Grenfell Campus
Memorial University of Newfoundland
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Approval

The undersigned recommend the acceptance of the thesis entitled

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submitted by Heidi V. Abbott

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Dr. Kelly Warren

Thesis Supervisor

Kelly Brown

Second Reader

Grenfell Campus

Memorial University of Newfoundland

April 2016

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Abstract

Members of the general population have high expectations of people who are asked to corroborate an alibi for the suspect of a crime. The general belief is that it is easy to provide an alibi if a person is innocent, and therefore guilt should be assumed when an alibi cannot be provided. The possibility that having to generate an alibi oneself could influence expectations was examined. Additionally, potential changes in opinion after being provided with positive or negative feedback were explored. Results showed a significant difference in expectations based on whether participants were correct or incorrect in identifying the suspect, that is, whether participants were able to provide an alibi. Those who were incorrect had lower expectations of themselves and of others than those who were correct. Making jurors aware of the difficulty in providing an alibi may lead to fairer treatment of suspects who have difficulty providing one.

Effect of Experience on Alibi Generation and Expectation

The justice system is a structure put in place to both protect the public and to penalize those who break the law. Members of the general public rely quite heavily on the efficiency and success of the justice system, as flaws or errors in judgment may directly affect them. For example, a person who is guilty of murder, but is released based on some judicial error, poses a threat to the public. This type of error is severe, and law enforcement and justice system personnel tend to take the utmost caution that such an error does not occur (Pozzulo, Bennell, & Forth, 2015). That being said, there are many cases in which the suspect on trial is innocent, but has no form of hard evidence to prove that he/she is innocent (Pozzulo et al., 2015). In these cases, the suspect often relies on alibi witnesses (people who provide a suspect with an alibi) to corroborate his or her whereabouts during the time of the crime, which should offer strong enough evidence that guilt is disproven. Unfortunately, there is a deficit in research and a clear bias among the general public in regards to the believability of evidence that an alibi witness provides.

There is a common misconception that if a person is innocent, providing a strong alibi should be fairly simple; however, this is not the case. In a review of 333 cases of DNA exonerations in the United States, it was found that many, if not most of the innocent suspects had provided some form of an alibi (innocenceproject.org, 2016). This is evidence that either suspects were unable to provide a strong alibi, or that the expectations that people have about alibi strength are flawed. For example, research shows that discussions of an event are seen as more believable if the person providing recall is consistent in retelling the event on multiple occasions (Dysart & Strange, 2012).

Yet, a study conducted by Strange, Dysart, and Loftus (2015) showed that it was far more common for an alibi to be inconsistent than consistent upon repetition; that is to say, it is likely that even an alibi generated by an innocent person about an event that did in fact happen will be told differently each time. Results showed that over the course of the study, which consisted of multiple interviews pertaining to the alibi, no more than 50% of the participants were consistent across the span of the study (Strange et al., 2015). It is safe to assume the lack in consistency will have a negative effect on believability and thus on verdicts.

There are two main forms of alibi corroboration, each with varying levels of perceived strength or believability. The two forms are physical corroboration and person corroboration, both of which have multiple categories that influence believability. The strongest perceived form of alibi corroboration is physical (Olson & Wells, 2012). This refers to any irrefutable, concrete evidence that proves the suspect could not have been present at the crime scene when the crime took place (Olsen & Wells, 2004). Receipts, security cameras, or any time-stamped document are considered physical corroboration of an alibi. Of these, video surveillance is seen as the strongest form of physical corroboration, followed by time-stamped documents and receipts, respectively (Olsen & Wells, 2004). Unfortunately, it is uncommon for suspects of a crime to find physical proof of their whereabouts at the time. The second form of alibi corroboration is person corroboration, which is perceived as a weaker form of evidence amongst alibi evaluators. A person corroborated alibi is divided into three categories: motivated familiar other, non-motivated familiar other, or non-motivated stranger (Olsen & Wells, 2004). Motivated familiar other refers to a person who has any sort of relationship with the

suspect to the extent that it is plausible that he/she would lie for the suspect. This can include family members or friends. Non-motivated familiar other refers to a person who knows who the suspect is, but has no emotional relationship with him or her, and thus would have no motivation to lie for the suspect. This could be a bartender of the bar at which the suspect frequents. Finally, a non-motivated stranger alibi refers to a person who does not know the suspect at all, and thus would gain or lose nothing by corroborating a story for the suspect. This could be any person who has encountered the suspect. Data shows that, of person corroboration, motivated familiar other, non-motivated familiar other, and non-motivated stranger are least believable to most believable, respectively (Strange et al., 2014). Although physical corroboration is seen as the strongest form of alibi evidence, studies show that there is still a significant level of skepticism among the general public in relationship to the believability of alibi witnesses in the justice system (Olson & Wells, 2012).

Errors in memory have been shown to be a major factor in the ability of both a suspect to find an alibi, and for said alibi to corroborate the suspect's story (Lew, Pashler, & Vul, 2015). Research suggests that it is quite difficult to generate an alibi, especially if the event took place an extended amount of time prior to the trial (Lew et al., 2015). There are vast amounts of errors in memory such as imprecise estimates, misassociations, or complete forgetting (Lew et al., 2015).

What people fail to consider is that alibi witnesses, especially strangers, are not expecting to be asked to provide an alibi, and thus are not likely to remember details about certain times or individuals with whom they have no relationship. A suspect may claim to have been at a bar at the time of the crime, but the bartender may have no

recollection of seeing the person, and if he/she does remember, it may be to a very small extent with minimal detail. This is the issue with the idea that alibi generation is simple. Alibi evaluators and the general public tend to disbelieve alibi witnesses who are friends or family of the suspect due to the belief that relationship closeness will cause people to lie to protect the accused (Marion & Burke, 2013). However, a friend or family member is more likely to have been with the suspect at the time of the crime, and is also more likely to remember specific details. A stranger may not remember seeing the person because there is no recognition cue upon interaction with the suspect, or may lack the attention to detail that one needs to pay in order to remember a stranger. That being said, it appears to be an impossible situation for a suspect who is trying to provide a strong alibi to disprove guilt.

Supporting this, a recent study looked at the ability of an innocent person to corroborate an alibi for a certain date at a certain time (Olson & Charman, 2012). The participants were asked to generate an alibi for an event, and to then corroborate their alibi after 48 hours (Olson & Charman, 2012). For example, participants may have gone shopping by themselves and spent an hour at a particular store, and then went back to ask someone who was present to verify their being at that location at a certain point in time. Results showed that, although all events were verified, the participants had difficulty corroborating their alibis with any evidence, and those alibis that were corroborated were weak (Olson & Charman, 2012). Even strong alibis yield skepticism, so it is safe to assume that weak alibi witnesses will provide little to no help to suspects, regardless of innocence or guilt.

This was highlighted in Olson and Wells' (2012) study which looked at believability of an alibi based on two types of corroboration: person or physical. Although physical corroboration such as video recordings or receipts at the time of the crime was seen as more believable than person corroboration, results showed that on a believability scale of 0-10, a suspect with security camera physical corroboration combined with a stranger's person corroboration only resulted in a believability rating of 7.4. This points to a clear prejudice among members of the general population regarding the perceived believability of alibi witnesses. The general population seems to lean toward disbelief of suspects when alibi witnesses are the only form of evidence (i.e., there is no physical evidence) which is indicative of a flaw in perceptions versus a flaw in alibi witnesses themselves.

In the previously mentioned Olson and Wells (2012) study, the believability of alibis based on whether or not a person had been asked to generate an alibi was examined. The study consisted of three conditions: participants either generated an alibi themselves, heard an alibi from a suspect, or read about the difficulty of generating an alibi. The results showed that the participants who generated their own alibi found the suspect's alibi more believable. This is important because there is an obvious lack of knowledge of the difficulty that most people have in generating an alibi. Thirty-six percent of the participants who were asked to generate and corroborate an alibi had to re-evaluate after the 48 hours they were given to provide evidence; some had mistaken their whereabouts at the time of the event, and others were unable to find any evidence to support their original story (Olsen & Wells, 2012). A downfall of this study is that the expectations of the alibi witnesses themselves were not investigated. The expectations of

the suspect in corroborating an alibi were noted, however the expectations of what an alibi should provide in order to be seen as believable was left unaddressed.

Not only has it been shown that the justice system holds high expectations for suspects in their ability to provide an alibi, it has been shown that the justice system frequently dismisses corroborated alibis once they have been provided (Culhane et al., 2013). This was demonstrated in the case of Stephen Avery, a man who was accused of a crime who provided 16 corroborated alibis, and was still convicted for the crime for which he was eventually proven to be innocent (Strange et al., 2015). Considering a person who had 16 alibi witnesses was unable to prove his innocence, it is of great concern for those who are unable to generate an alibi at all, whether they are innocent or not. Even the cases in which there are alibi witnesses who are able and willing to corroborate a suspect's story, research shows that the label of 'alibi' raises skepticism in the eyes of the general public (Olsen, 2013). This points to the aforementioned prejudice against alibis that the members of the general population hold. Since it is such a new area of research, it is imperative that more studies be conducted to enhance the knowledge and understanding of alibi witnesses and the reasons for the prejudice against them. In particular, expectations of what an alibi witness should be able to provide, and the perceived ease of an innocent person generating an alibi appear to be large factors that affect alibi believability.

The current study was designed to investigate what people expect an alibi to remember and whether or not it would be beneficial for the public to gain experience in alibi generation in order to be more understanding of the difficulty in finding and corroborating an alibi. In addition, the possibility of differences in expectations of alibi

witnesses across gender was examined. It is a common belief that females tend to have more accurate autobiographical and detail-oriented memory than do men; this includes autobiographical information, attention to detail about others and events, and vivid memories of events (Gryzman & Hudson, 2013). With this taken into consideration, it was thought that it would be beneficial to investigate whether or not the general public has assumptions that a female alibi would be more inclined to remember more details about the 'suspect' than would a male alibi. If this is the case, a jury may be less likely to believe a female alibi who insists she does not remember details than a male alibi who insists he does not remember details.

There were three main hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that the participants would be more likely to disbelieve the suspect before they had the opportunity to generate an alibi themselves. This would be shown both through general disbelief and a high expectation of him being able to remember specific details of his location and the people he met. Based on previous literature, specifically by Olsen and Wells (2012), it was hypothesized that the majority of participants would be more inclined to disbelieve the suspect than to believe the suspect.

The second hypothesis was that the participants would have varying expectations of what a witness should be expected to remember about the suspect, what a bartender should be expected to remember about the suspect, and what the participant him or herself should be expected to remember about the suspect had they been at the scene of the alibi the suspect was claiming at the time of the crime. Based on previous research, it was hypothesized that people would expect more from others (witness and bartender) than themselves.

The third hypothesis was that there would be a difference in participants' perception of their own ability to provide an alibi based on whether they correctly or incorrectly identified the suspect in the lineup provided, thus having received either positive or negative feedback. Based on previous research, it was hypothesized that the participants who were incorrect in identifying the suspect in the lineup would rate their own ability to provide an alibi as lower than people who were correct in identifying the suspect and those who correctly recognized the suspect was not in the lineup. This hypothesis parallels results found by Olsen and Wells (2012) in which people who were asked to generate an alibi for themselves, had difficulty doing so, and thus changed their opinion on the ease of generating alibis.

The current study was also designed to take gender of the witness, gender of the bartender, and the participants' own gender into consideration. Since there was no current literature available that investigated differences in expectations of alibis based on gender, no hypotheses with respect to gender differences were generated at this time.

Method

Participants

A convenience sample of 314 participants volunteered to take part in the study. Fifty-two were men ($M_{\text{age}} = 27.29$, $SD = 9.90$), 225 were women ($M_{\text{age}} = 23.85$, $SD = 11.32$), 3 identified as a gender other than male or female, and 34 did not indicate a gender. All participants were over the age of 19 unless they were university students, in which case they were considered mature minors. Consent was obtained prior to participation (See Appendix A).

Materials

Photos. A photograph of 17 men standing in a bar was used (see Appendix B). The photograph was taken in an Irish bar at night, with moderate lighting, with the 17 men separated into small groups, drinking and talking to each other. The photograph was a candid shot, with the men being told to not actively look at the camera, and to act as they normally would at a bar.

Two six-person lineups were constructed (See Appendix C), which showed a front on image and a profile image of each of the men. The photographs show the men from the chest region upwards. Each photograph was taken on a neutral-coloured background. As there was no need to match the men to the suspect, the photos are of random men that one might expect to see at a bar on a typical evening. One lineup, the suspect present lineup, showed one of the men who was in the original bar photo. The man in the original photograph was wearing different clothing than he was wearing in the bar. In the second lineup, the suspect absent lineup, the ‘suspect’s’ photo was replaced with photos of a man who was not present in the original bar photo.

Scenario. The scenario described a fictitious crime that took place close to the bar where the photo was taken. The scenario stated that a woman was robbed by an unknown man close to the bar. The suspect claimed he was at the bar during the time of the crime (See Appendix D).

Questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on the bar photo and scenario described above (See Appendix E). It included questions rated on a 7-point Likert scale (e.g., where 1 is *'not at all'* or *'not likely'* and 7 is *'very much'* or *'very likely'*). To assess overall believability, the four questions of interest were as follows: 'What is the likelihood that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime?'; 'How believable is the suspect when he says he cannot remember any information about the bar?'; 'How reasonable is it that the suspect said he cannot remember what time he was drinking at the bar?'; and 'If the suspect truly did not know people from the bar, what is the likelihood that he would remember the people that he met?'.

To assess whether or not participants had different expectations of what a witness should be expected to remember of the suspect, what a bartender should be expected to remember of the suspect, and what the participant him or herself should be expected to remember of the suspect (before vs. after the lineup), the following questions were asked: 'What is the likelihood that the (witness/bartender/participant) can vouch for the suspect being at the bar at the time of the crime?'; 'What is the likelihood that the (witness/bartender/participant) can describe the suspect?'; 'What is the likelihood that the (witness/bartender/participant) can remember the suspect's eye colour?'; 'What is the likelihood that the (witness/bartender/participant) can remember the suspect's height?',

and ‘What is the likelihood that the (witness/bartender/participant) can remember the suspect’s clothing?’.

Procedure

The survey described was posted online. Participants were recruited through social media sites, email, and through introductory psychology courses at Grenfell Campus. People who were interested in participating were given a link to the survey, at which point they saw the informed consent screen. As participants were informed, clicking next on this screen meant consent was assumed, and participants were presented with the survey. Participants were first told to observe the photograph of some men who were at a local bar. The participants were asked to count the number of individuals that they saw in the photograph to ensure that they had looked at the photograph.

The first question asked the participants whether or not they recognized/knew any of the men in the photograph. If they answered ‘yes’, they were directed to a screen where they were thanked for their participation and given reasoning as to why they were unable to complete the survey. The participants who did not recognize anyone in the original photograph were then presented with the scenario described above, and were asked to answer questions pertaining to the believability of the suspect based on his alibi. Next, the participants were shown photographs of six men, half of the participants received the suspect present lineup and half of the participants received the suspect absent lineup (See Appendix C).

Participants could choose one of the photos or say that none of the individuals were at the bar at the time. If the participants correctly identified the suspect, they were provided feedback indicating that they were able to provide an alibi. If the participants

chose a person as being in the group photo who was not, they were given feedback saying that they potentially provided a guilty person with an alibi. If the participants claimed the person was not in the group photo and he was, they were informed that they were unable to provide an alibi for the suspect. Finally, if the participants did not choose anyone, and the ‘suspect’ was not in the lineup, they were told they were correct in their decision.

Following the lineup task, additional questions were presented for the participants to answer in order to determine whether their perceptions of the ease in generating an alibi changed. Finally, the participants were thanked for their participation and were directed to a page that contained a short debriefing about the study and contact information for the researchers (See Appendix F).

Results

As noted in the introduction, this study was conducted to see whether there would be a difference in expectations among participants before having to generate an alibi, and after having to generate an alibi. The results are organized by area of interest, of which there were three: overall believability of the suspect, perceived ability to describe the suspect from the perspective of a witness, a bartender, and the participant him or herself, and the effect of the message received (accuracy/inaccuracy of the participant when asked to identify the suspect's presence or absence in a lineup) on expectations of a witness, a bartender, and the participant him or herself. Gender differences were also investigated.

Believability of Suspects

The overall believability of a suspect accused of a crime was first assessed. Figure 1 shows participants' responses to the questions assessing perceptions of the suspects' believability. On a scale of 1-7 (where 1 is *'not at all'* or *'not likely'* and 7 is *'very much'* or *'very likely'*), average believability was 4.18 ($SD = 1.46$). A MANOVA was completed with gender and accuracy of decision as between subjects variables and the questions about suspect believability as dependent variables. It should be noted that the purpose of using the accuracy of the participants' decision as a between subjects variable was to identify any potential differences in the decision making process. Participants were asked about believability before they knew whether or not they were accurate, so comparisons were made to investigate possible differences in the decision making process for participants who eventually learned they were accurate versus those who learned they were inaccurate. Results showed that there was a main effect of

accuracy of decision, $F(4, 272) = 4.48, p = .002$; Wilk's $\lambda = 0.94, \eta_p^2 = .06$, and an interaction between gender and accuracy of decision, $F(4, 272) = 3.14, p = .015$, Wilk's $\lambda = 0.96, \eta_p^2 = .04$. There was no main effect of gender for believability responses. Follow-up ANOVAs with accuracy of decision as the between subjects variable and the different questions as dependent variables were conducted to see where differences in believability existed.

There was a significant effect of accuracy of decision for two questions. First, 'What is the likelihood that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime?', $F(1, 275) = 5.35, p = .021, \eta_p^2 = .02$. People who were accurate in identifying the suspect ($M = 4.41, SD = 1.51$) were more likely to believe that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime than those who were inaccurate ($M = 3.90, SD = 1.42$; mean difference = 0.52, $p = .021, 95\% CI [0.07, 0.96]$). There was also a significant effect for the question 'If the suspect truly did not know people from the bar, what is the likelihood that he would remember the people that he met?', $F(1, 275) = 5.67, p = .018, \eta_p^2 = .02$. People who were inaccurate ($M = 3.80, SD = 1.54$) were more likely to believe that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime than those who were accurate ($M = 3.24, SD = 1.50$; mean difference = 0.56, $p = .018, 95\% CI [0.10, 1.0]$). The results for the main effect of accuracy of decision for the likelihood of the suspect being at the bar at the time of the crime must be viewed with caution, as there was a significant interaction.

There was a significant interaction between gender and accuracy of decision, $F(1, 275) = 6.68, p = .010, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Follow-up ANOVAs showed for men there was a significant effect for the question 'What is the likelihood that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime?', $F(1, 52) = 7.0, p = .011, \eta_p^2 = .12$. Men who answered

accurately ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 1.78$) were more likely to believe that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime than males who answered inaccurately ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.26$; mean difference = 1.10, $p = .011$, 95% CI [0.26, 1.90]). For women, there was no significant difference across accuracy for the question ‘What is the likelihood that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime?’, $F(1, 224) = 0.12$, $p = .740$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Females who were accurate ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.47$) did not answer significantly differently than females who were inaccurate ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 1.42$).

Witness/Bartender/Personal Ability to Describe

Perceived differences in the ability of the witness, the bartender, and the participant him or herself to describe the suspect based on gender and accuracy of decision were assessed. Figure 2 shows the participants’ perceptions of the likelihood that these individuals would remember specific information about the suspect. A series of MANOVAs were completed with gender and accuracy of decision as between subjects variables and questions about the perceived accuracy of description of the witness, bartender, and the participant, respectively, as dependent variables. There were no significant gender or accuracy of decision differences pertaining to the abilities of the witness, therefore discussion of just the results for the bartender and participant follow.

Bartender. Results showed that there was a main effect of gender for the bartender’s perceived ability to describe the suspect, $F(6, 266) = 2.95$, $p = .008$; Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.94$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Follow-up ANOVAs showed that there were significant effects for the questions ‘What is the likelihood that the bartender could provide a description of the suspect if the bartender spoke to him at the bar?’, $F(1, 271) = 4.98$, $p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$; ‘How likely is it that the bartender would remember the colour of the suspect’s eyes?’,

$F(1, 271) = 4.24, p = .040, \eta_p^2 = .02$; and ‘How likely is it that the bartender would remember what the suspect was wearing?’, $F(1, 271) = 9.78, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .04$.

Pairwise comparisons showed that males ($M = 5.04, SD = 1.41$) were more likely to believe that the bartender could provide a description of the suspect if the bartender spoke to him at the bar than would females ($M = 4.56, SD = 1.43$; mean difference = 0.48, $p = .026, 95\% CI [0.06, 0.90]$). Males ($M = 3.13, SD = 1.60$) were more likely to believe that the bartender would remember the colour of the suspect’s eyes than females ($M = 2.67, SD = 1.42$; mean difference = 4.59, $p = .040, 95\% CI [0.02, 0.90]$). Finally, males ($M = 4.44, SD = 1.50$) were more likely to believe that the bartender would remember what the suspect was wearing than females ($M = 3.73, SD = 1.50$; mean difference = 0.72, $p = .002, 95\% CI [0.27, 1.17]$).

Participant. There was a main effect of accuracy of decision for the participants’ own ability to describe the suspect, $F(5, 272) = 4.84, p < .001$; Wilk’s $\lambda = 0.92, \eta_p^2 = .08$. Follow-up ANOVAs showed that for accuracy of decision, there were significant effects for the questions ‘What is the likelihood that you could provide a description of the suspect if you spoke to him at the bar?’, $F(1, 276) = 17.48, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$; ‘How likely is it that you would remember how tall the suspect was?’ $F(1, 276) = 6.74, p = .010, \eta_p^2 = .02$; and ‘How likely is it that you would remember what the suspect was wearing?’, $F(1, 276) = 4.65, p = .032, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the participants who accurately identified the suspect ($M = 4.29, SD = 1.60$) were more likely to believe that they could provide a description of the suspect at the bar than those who did not accurately identify the suspect ($M = 3.28, SD = 1.61$; mean difference = 1.01, $p < .001, 95\% CI [0.54, 1.49]$). Participants who accurately identified the suspect ($M = 3.85, SD =$

1.58) were more likely to believe that they could remember how tall the suspect was than those who did not accurately identify the suspect ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.62$; mean difference = 0.63, $p = .010$, 96% CI [0.15, 1.11]). Finally, participants who accurately identified the suspect ($M = 3.7$, $SD = 1.56$) were more likely to believe that they could remember what the suspect was wearing than those who did not accurately identify the suspect ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.57$; mean difference = 0.51, $p = .032$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.97]).

There was also a significant main effect of gender for participants' perceived ability to describe the suspect, $F(5, 272) = 2.32$, $p = .044$; Wilk's $\lambda = .96$, $\eta_p^2 = .041$. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed that for gender, there were significant effects for the questions 'What is the likelihood that you could provide a description of the suspect if you spoke to him at the bar?', $F(1, 276) = 10.02$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$; 'How likely is it that you would remember the colour of the suspect's hair?', $F(1, 276) = 10.06$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$; 'How likely is it that you would remember how tall the suspect was?', $F(1, 276) = 6.13$, $p = .014$, $\eta_p^2 = .022$, and 'How likely is it that you would remember what the suspect was wearing?', $F(1, 276) = 6.20$, $p = .013$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Pairwise comparisons showed that men ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.66$) were more likely to believe that they could provide a description of the suspect than women ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.67$; mean difference = 0.77, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.29, 1.24]). Men ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.72$) were more likely to believe they could remember the colour of the suspect's hair than women ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.69$; mean difference = 0.80, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.30, 1.29]). Men ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 1.63$) were more likely to believe they could remember how tall the suspect was than women ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.62$; mean difference = 0.60, $p = .014$, 95% CI [0.12, 1.07]), and men ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.46$) were more likely to believe that they would remember

what the suspect was wearing than women ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.61$; mean difference = 0.59, $p = .013$, 95% CI [0.12, 1.05]).

Comparison of Witness, Bartender, and Participant

Perceived differences in the ability to provide an alibi based on who was providing the alibi: a witness, a bartender, or the participant him or herself were also examined. The following represent perceived differences in the ability to describe the suspect across the individual described as the alibi (witness, bartender, and participant).

Ability to vouch. There was a significant effect of perceived ability to vouch for the suspect being at the bar based on whether the person who was vouching was the witness, the bartender, or the participant him/herself. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 18.41$, $p < .001$, therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .94$), $F(1.88, 526.38) = 89.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .24$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants believed that the bartender ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.52$) would be better able to vouch for the suspect being at the bar than both the witness ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.38$; mean difference = 0.93, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.63, 1.22]) and the participants themselves ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.56$; mean difference = 1.86, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.49, 2.23]), and that the witness would be better able to vouch for the suspect being at the bar than the participants themselves (mean difference = 0.94, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.60, 1.27]).

Ability to describe. There was a significant effect of perceived ability to provide a description based on whether the person providing the description was the witness, the bartender, or the participant him/herself. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated $\chi^2(2) = 13.11$, $p = .001$, therefore degrees of freedom were

corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .96$), $F(1.91, 535.43) = 36.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants believed that the bartender ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.45$) would be better able to provide a description of the suspect than both the witness ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.35$; mean difference = 0.31, $p = .024$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.59]) and the participant themselves ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.68$; mean difference = 1.07, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.73, 1.41]), and that the witness would be better able to provide a description of the suspect than the participants themselves (mean difference = 0.76, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.45, 1.06]). The main effect of gender should be viewed with caution as there was a significant interaction.

The significant interaction was between the person providing the description and gender of the participant, $F(1.91, 535.43) = 3.92$, $p = .022$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Follow-up ANOVAs revealed that for men, there was a significant difference in perceived ability to describe the suspect based on the person providing the description, $F(2, 108) = 7.78$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that male participants ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 1.66$) believed that the bartender ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.41$) should be better able to provide a description of the suspect than they themselves should be (mean difference = 0.91, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.29, 1.53]). For women, there was a significant difference in perceived ability to describe the suspect based on person providing the description. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated $\chi^2(2) = 11.09$, $p = .004$, therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .95$), $F(1.91, 431.26) = 72.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .24$, but pairwise comparisons revealed that women ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.67$) believed that the bartender ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.43$) should be better able to provide a description of the suspect than both

they themselves should be (mean difference = 1.23, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.93, 1.53]), and that the witness should be ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.31$; mean difference = 1.115, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.85, 1.38]).

Suspect's hair colour. There was a significant effect of perceived ability to remember the colour of the suspect's hair based on whether the person providing the description was the witness, the bartender, or the participant him/herself. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 7.38$, $p = .030$, therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .97$), $F(1.95, 541.76) = 9.183$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants believed that the witness ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.47$) should be better able to remember the suspect's hair colour than the participants themselves ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.73$; mean difference = 0.33, $p = .028$, 95% CI [0.03, 0.62]), and that the bartender should be better able to remember the suspect's hair colour than the participants themselves ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 1.54$; mean difference = 0.52, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.21, 0.84]).

Suspect's eye colour. There was a significant effect of perceived ability to remember the colour of the suspect's eyes based on whether the person providing the description was the witness, the bartender, or the participant him/herself. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 9.08$, $p = .01$, therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .97$), $F(1.94, 540.63) = 29.99$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants believed that the bartender ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.44$) would be better able remember the suspect's eye colour than both the witness ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.23$; mean difference = 0.44, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.22, 0.66]) and the participants

themselves ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.26$) (mean difference = 0.75, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.49, 1.00]), and that the witness would be better able to remember the suspect's eye colour than the participants themselves (mean difference = 0.31, $p = .004$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.54]).

Suspect's height. There was a significant effect of perceived ability to remember the suspect's height based on whether the person providing the description was the witness, the bartender, or the participant him/herself. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 11.88$, $p = .003$, therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .96$), $F(1.92, 533.60) = 9.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants believed the witness ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.41$) would be better able to remember the suspect's height than the participants themselves ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.64$; mean difference = 0.30, $p = .020$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.57]), and that the bartender ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.57$) would be better able to remember the suspect's height than the participants themselves (mean difference = 0.48, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.18, 0.79]).

Suspect's clothing. There was a significant effect of perceived ability to remember the suspect's clothing based on whether the person providing the description was the witness, the bartender, or the participant him/herself. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated, $\chi^2(2) = 11.73$, $p = .003$, therefore degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity ($\epsilon = .96$), $F(1.92, 535.85) = 17.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. Pairwise comparisons revealed that participants believed that the bartender ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.53$) would be better able to remember the suspect's clothing than both the witness ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.40$) (mean difference = 0.35, $p = .002$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.59]) and the participants themselves ($M =$

3.40, $SD = 1.60$; mean difference = 0.67, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.39, 0.96]), and that the witness would be better able to remember the suspect's clothing than the participants themselves (mean difference = 0.32, $p = .021$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.61]).

Effects of Message Received

The final area of interest was whether or not the message received by the participant after identifying the suspect would have an effect on the answers that the participants provided about their own ability to provide an alibi. Gender was also a subject of interest for this section. To assess differences, a MANOVA was completed with gender and message received as between subjects variables and the various questions about ability to describe the suspect as dependent variables.

Results showed that there was a main effect of message received, $F(24, 925.69) = 3.36$, $p < .001$, Wilk's $\lambda = .75$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Follow-up ANOVAs showed that for message received, there were significant effects for the questions 'After being asked to generate an alibi yourself, what is the likelihood that you would be able to vouch for the suspect being at the bar?', $F(4, 270) = 14.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .18$, and 'What is the likelihood that you could provide a description of the suspect if you spoke to him at the bar?', $F(4, 270) = 6.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .084$. Pairwise comparisons for the first question 'After being asked to generate an alibi yourself, what is the likelihood that you would be able to vouch for the suspect being at the bar?' revealed that participants who received the message saying they had correctly identified the suspect in the lineup ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.78$) were more likely to believe that they could vouch for the suspect being at the bar than those who received the message that they picked the wrong person in the lineup ($M = 2.36$, $SD = 1.30$; mean difference = 1.99, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.27, 2.71]), those who received the

message that the suspect was in the lineup and they failed to choose anyone ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.07$; mean difference = 2.26, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.55, 2.96]), those who received the message that they were correct, the suspect was not in the lineup ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.51$; mean difference = 0.99, $p = .003$, 95% CI [0.34, 1.65]), and those who received the message that the suspect was not there but they incorrectly picked someone ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.22$; mean difference = 1.99, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.35, 2.64]). Those who received the message that they were correct that the suspect was not in the lineup were more likely to believe they could vouch for the suspect being at the bar than those who received the message that they picked the wrong person in the lineup (mean difference = 0.99, $p = .004$, 95% CI [0.32, 1.68]), those who received the message that the suspect was in the lineup and they failed to choose anyone (mean difference = 1.27, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.60, 1.93]), and those who received the message that the suspect was not there but they incorrectly picked someone (mean difference = 1.01, $p = .001$, 95% CI [0.41, 1.60]).

Pairwise comparisons for the second question, ‘What is the likelihood that you could provide a description of the suspect if you spoke to him at the bar?’ revealed that the participants who received the message saying that they had correctly identified the suspect in the lineup were more likely to believe that they could provide a description of the suspect ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.59$) than those who received the message that they picked the wrong person in the lineup ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.56$; mean difference = 1.52, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.70, 2.33]), those who received the message that the suspect was in the lineup and they failed to choose anyone ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.63$; mean difference = 1.47, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.67, 2.27]), those who received the message that they were correct, the suspect was not in the lineup ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.51$; mean difference = 0.91, $p = .016$, 95% CI

[0.17, 1.65]), and those who received the message that the suspect was not there but they incorrectly picked someone ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.64$; mean difference = 1.66, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.93, 2.38]). Those who received the message that they were correct that the suspect was not in the lineup were more likely to believe they could provide a description of the suspect than those who received the message that the suspect was not in the lineup but they incorrectly picked someone (mean difference = 0.75, $p = .030$, 95% CI [0.07, 1.42]).

Discussion

The current study was designed to identify specific areas of alibi generation that the public tended to distrust, and whether or not having to generate an alibi oneself would affect expectations of both suspects and of different types of alibi witnesses. The study was structured around an online survey that contained both questions about expectations of alibi witnesses, and an exercise in which the participants were required to generate an alibi themselves. This was followed by a set of questions to identify any differences in expectations based on the participants' own accuracy and feedback. As seen in Figure 2, participants appear to have relatively high expectations of what an alibi would be expected to remember. When asked to indicate their perceptions of ability to vouch for the suspect, provide a description of the suspect, and to remember the suspect's hair colour, height, and clothing, participants indicated moderate likelihood in alibi witness' abilities to remember this information. Only eye colour was seen as a descriptor that alibis would have a low likelihood of remembering. It should come as no surprise then that people are hesitant to believe weak alibis often provided by individuals who are suspected of committing a crime (Olsen & Wells, 2012).

In order to address differences in perceptions of alibis, three main hypotheses were proposed: it was hypothesized that participants would show a general disbelief of the suspect and have high expectations of the suspect's ability to generate an alibi before having to generate an alibi themselves; it was also hypothesized that the participants would have varying expectations of different people (witness, bartender, participant him/herself); and finally, that there would be significant differences in expectations of the participants' own ability to provide an alibi if they were correct compared to if they were

incorrect when they were asked to generate an alibi themselves. Gender differences were also looked at in each section. Results of this study showed support for two of the three preceding hypotheses.

Believability of Suspects

The hypothesis for the believability portion of the study was that there would be a general skepticism of the suspect, and high expectations of what details he should remember about his location of alibi which was a bar. This hypothesis was not supported, since on a scale from *'not at all believable'* to *'completely believable'*, participants reported believability scores that were near the middle of the scale. This finding is contradictory to several studies previously conducted such as Olsen and Wells' (2012) study which highlighted the blatant skepticism people have of alibis as a form of evidence in the courtroom, even alibis corroborated with physical proof. Research has shown that people tend to associate the word 'alibi' itself with guilt (Olsen, 2013). It has been well-documented in previous literature that there is a skepticism among the general population about alibi believability (Culhane et al., 2013; Olsen & Charman, 2012; Olsen & Wells, 2012; Strange et al., 2015), thus this portion of the study was expected to yield results that paralleled previous research. As such, the lack of significant findings in the current study is surprising.

Although there were no significant findings in overall believability of the suspect, when 'accuracy' was used as an independent variable, results reflected a significant difference in believability between those who were later found to be accurate versus inaccurate. Since the believability portion of the survey was completed prior to the participants' knowledge of whether or not they were accurate, this analysis was not

conducted to see if knowledge of accuracy affected believability of the suspect, but to see if there were any differences in participants' decision-making process. It was found that there was a significant difference for two questions: 'What is the likelihood that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime?' and 'If the suspect truly did not know people from the bar, what is the likelihood that he would remember the people that he met?'. It was found that people who were later accurate in identifying the suspect were more likely to believe the suspect was at the bar than those who were inaccurate. This is interesting because the participants did not know at the time that they answered questions about believability whether or not they would be able to generate an alibi themselves. There was no past research that highlighted this finding, thus it would be interesting for future research to elaborate on possible reasons for this outcome.

The second hypothesis of this study was that there would be differences in expectations depending on who was providing the alibi. The questions in this section of the survey were divided into the participants' expectations of alibi provision from a witness, who was a patron at the bar; the bartender working on the night of the crime; and of the participant him or herself. The results of this portion of the study partially supported the hypothesis in that expectations of what should be remembered varied depending on who was providing the alibi; specifically in the case of the bartender and the participant him or herself. Direct comparisons of the witness, bartender, and participant showed that participants thought both the bartender and the witness would be better able to vouch for the suspect, describe the suspect, and remember his hair colour, eye colour, height, and clothing than the participants themselves. Similarly, participants

thought the bartender would be better able to vouch for the suspect, describe the suspect, and remember his eye colour, height, and clothing than the witness.

It was found that there was a main effect of gender for the perceived ability of the bartender to describe the suspect. Males believed that the bartender should be best able to provide a description and remember details about the suspect, such as his eye colour and what he was wearing, in comparison to what the participant should remember himself. Not only is it a common stereotype that women are able to remember specific details about events better than men, research has shown that women do in fact tend to have a more detail-oriented autobiographical memory than do men (Gryzman & Hudson, 2013). Due to this finding, it is not surprising that the men believed the bartender would be better able to remember small details about the suspect than they themselves would be. This is an important discovery because in the court of law, it is possible to encounter bias if the jury is made up of mostly or all male members, and the suspect or witness on trial is a female; expectations could be heightened or lessened depending on both juror gender and witness gender.

It was found that there was an effect of accuracy of decision on expectations of what the participant him or herself should be able to remember about the suspect. Participants who were accurate believed they would be better able to vouch for and describe the suspect than those who were inaccurate. This finding could be related to an inflated sense of self, due to the fact that the participant was correct. Often, people tend to discredit the difficulty of a task if they succeed at said task, regardless of whether or not the success was due to chance or skill (Mamassian, 2008). In this case, it is reflected in the current results that those who were successful had inflated expectations of

themselves and others in the ability to generate alibis, in comparison to those who were unsuccessful in accurately identifying the suspect. Those who were unsuccessful in identifying the suspect had significantly lower expectations of themselves and of others in the perceived ability to generate an alibi, likely due to the realization of the difficulty of alibi generation. Olsen and Wells (2012) looked at whether or not alibi generation would have an effect on expectations of alibi evaluators, and they found significant results that showed people who were required to generate an alibi themselves lowered their unrealistic expectations of the ease of generating an alibi. The results of the present study suggest this may not always be the case and in fact, if participants are successful in completing an alibi generating task they may have an inflated sense of ability.

The third hypothesis was that there would be a significant difference in participants' expectations of themselves after receiving feedback as to whether or not they were accurate. Results supported the hypothesis in that those who received a positive message that reflected accuracy in choosing the suspect in the lineup believed that they could provide an alibi for the suspect better than those who received a negative message that they were incorrect. As humans, we tend to lean toward self-preservation in many ways, including morality (Cheng & Hsu, 2012). It is instinctual to defend oneself against the possibility of grave error in judgment which results in a severe negative consequence. For example, someone who aids in condemning a suspect of a crime to a lifetime in prison, later to find out that the suspect is innocent, will feel partly responsible for the fate of the suspect. Upon realization of the error made, the person will naturally try to justify the decision that was made to maintain his/her positive self-regard (Cheng & Hsu, 2012). Based on this knowledge, it was hypothesized that those who received a negative

message, such as the failure to provide an alibi to an innocent person, would react negatively to the error and would lower expectations of others and themselves in the ability to provide an alibi. This is in line with the cognitive dissonance theory, which suggests that people are more inclined to attempt to justify their decisions or actions that resulted in negative consequences to ease their guilt (Cheng & Hsu, 2012). This is particularly important when the person who made the choice acted alone, and was personally responsible for the outcome, which is shown to have a more severe effect on the person's sense of self-regard (Cheng & Hsu, 2012). In this case, it is plausible to believe that the participants who received negative feedback tended to discredit the ability for anyone to provide an alibi for a suspect, as they were incorrect and thus felt responsible for the consequences (Cheng & Hsu, 2012).

Limitations

The current study provided insight into several facets of alibi expectations and effect of experience, however there were limitations. One limitation is whether or not the suspect in the scenario had been under the influence of alcohol at the time he was said to be at the bar was not specified. This may have influenced perceptions of the suspect's believability, as the questions were along the lines of how believable the suspect is when he says he cannot remember specific events about the bar and the people in the bar. It is possible that expectations of the suspect in this section were skewed depending on whether the participant believed the suspect was intoxicated or sober. This flaw was not identified until the data had been collected, at which point nothing could be done. This could be the reason the results for the believability section did not meet expectations based on previous research; people may have been more likely to believe that the suspect

could not remember due to the fact that the scene of the alibi was at a bar, and it is likely that the suspect was intoxicated.

A second limitation was that the questions asked about believability were only asked at the beginning of the survey, and not asked again after the participant completed the lineup section of the survey. Similarly, questions about the witness' and bartenders' ability were only asked before the lineup task and questions about the participants' ability were only asked after the lineup task. Since the questions were not asked before and after, there is no comparison data to see if there was an effect on overall believability of the suspect after the participant was asked to generate an alibi him or herself. This was a significant limitation to this study, as it would be very interesting to see the overall effect on believability that alibi generation has.

The final limitation was the large gender split. There were approximately four times as many female participants as male participants. Since there was an effect of gender in the results, those results should be viewed with caution as the variance in the gender split is large enough to possibly skew results.

Future Research

There is a vast amount of research left to do in the area of alibi perceptions. Future research that pertains specifically to the current study could include studies that look at why people tend to disbelieve alibi witnesses with no conceivable basis. This is important because if the source of skepticism can be identified, it will be easier to generate ways to end the stigma surrounding alibis.

Another area of research that should be looked at further would be gender related. Although the current study did address gender differences, the sample size was not quite

representative of the general population. Therefore, a larger study with a more representative number of males and females could prove to be an asset to this area. Also, pertaining to gender differences, it would be interesting to see if there are any gender differences in the perceptions of the suspect. For example, would a male jury member be more skeptical of a male suspect or a female suspect? Would a female jury member be more skeptical of a male suspect or a female suspect? This is important because choosing a jury for a case could be largely impacted by gender if there appears to be a gender difference in skepticism.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate why participants tended to have higher expectations of other witnesses versus themselves. The current study showed that participants tended to believe that a bartender and a patron at the bar, both of whom were strangers to the suspect, would be better able to provide an alibi for the suspect than themselves. Admittedly, this may have been impeded by the failure to complete a pre/post lineup design. However, it would be interesting to see if that changes based on the type of witness (e.g., bartender vs. patron), or the relationship between the witness and the suspect (i.e., motivated other, non-motivated other).

Conclusion

A major implication of the current study is the need to educate the general population about the difficulty with alibi generation. Since members of the general population are often responsible for crucial decision-making in the court of law through the use of a jury, it is imperative to educate those required to serve on the topic of alibi generation. The lack of knowledge in this area is frightening, especially considering the exceptionally high number of wrongful conviction cases in which the accused provided

alibis (innocenceproject.org, 2016). Fortunately, many cases have since been reopened as the use of DNA evidence has become standard practice; however, in cases that do not meet the DNA requirement, the only defense many suspects have is an alibi. If a jury tends to disbelieve a suspect based on the sole fact that the word 'alibi' itself appears to carry a stigma of suspicion, or the belief that those who are innocent should have no trouble generating an alibi, the continuation of wrongful conviction is inevitable.

Along with education, it is important to put alibi generation tasks to practical use. This can be done as preparation for jury members before a trial. For example, members of the jury should be required to complete a short alibi generation task themselves before being permitted to serve. This relates to the current study because it is clear that the general public has high expectations of what a suspect should remember about a specific time and scenario, and also what a witness should remember (Strange et al., 2014). Having to complete an alibi-generating exercise proved to be an effective tool in helping some people realize the difficulty of such a task, and thus created a better understanding of what realistic expectations they should have for court cases. As highlighted in this study as compared to other similar studies, making the task difficult enough that only a minority of people, if any, could complete it successfully should illustrate the realism to potential jurors.

In conclusion, the results of this study can be used practically in the justice system to prepare the general public for trial. It is important to recognize the difficulty that generating an alibi entails, and that many people who provide an alibi are looked upon with suspicion from the beginning. If the results of this study can be incorporated into educating those responsible for making life-changing decisions on the behalf of others,

then the study will have served its purpose. Education in the area of alibis is crucial at this point, as trial by jury is practiced in many cases and with many degrees of severity. With the fate of potentially innocent people on the line, it is necessary to exhaust all options in educating the public on the importance of fair judgment, and this can only be accomplished if the jury realizes what is and is not fair. Inflated expectations of the suspect and of alibi witnesses prove to be detrimental in the court of law, and it is imperative to avoid wrongful conviction at all costs. The results of this study show a clear need for more exposure to the difficulty of alibi generation within the general population so that those accused of a crime are able to receive a fair and just trial.

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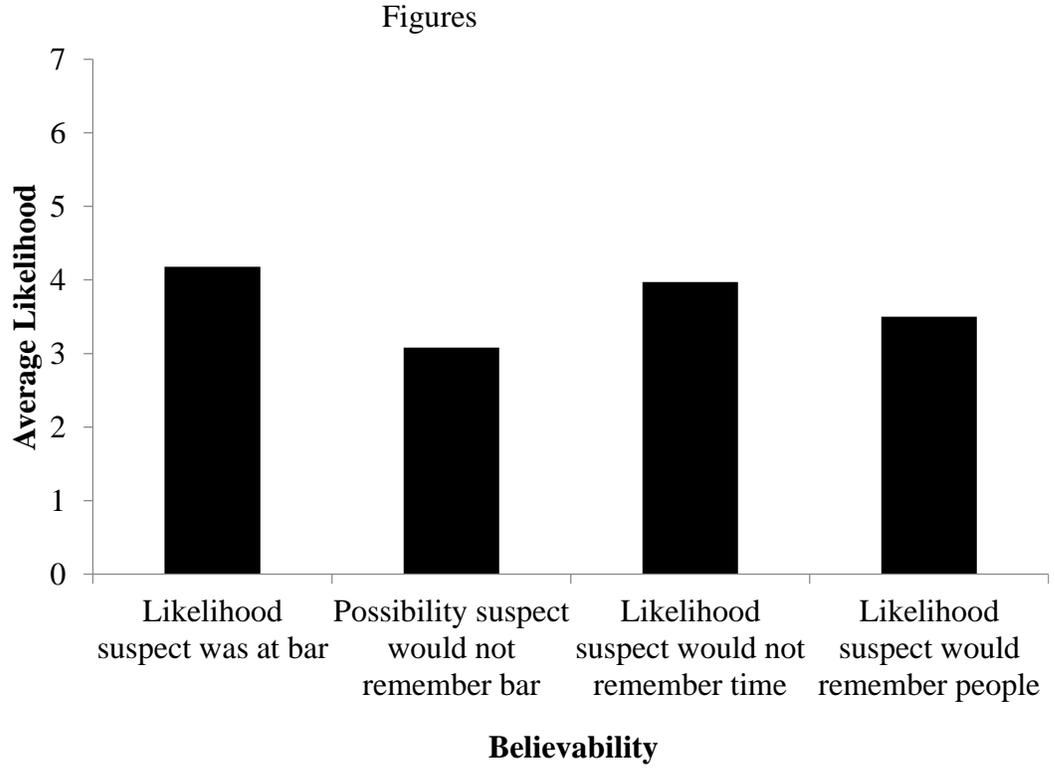


Figure 1. Participants' perceptions of overall believability of the suspect.

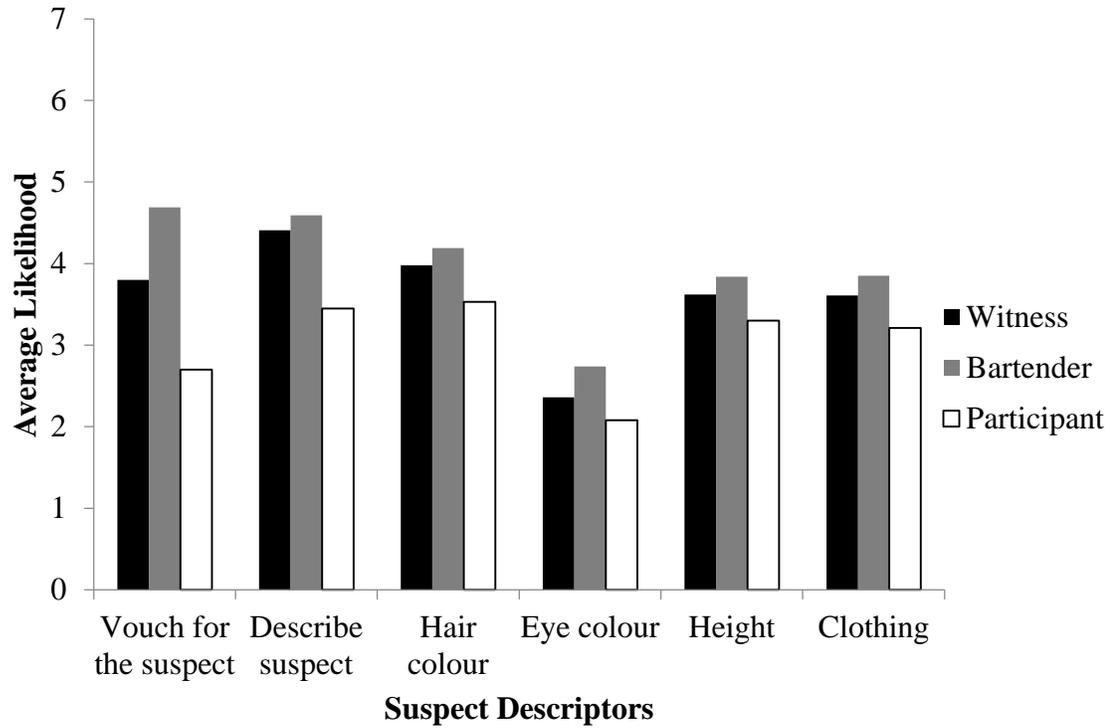


Figure 2. Participants' perceptions of the ability to remember a suspect as a function of the person providing the alibi.

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

The purpose of this informed consent form is to ensure you understand the nature of this study and your involvement in it. This consent form will provide information about the study, giving you the opportunity to decide if you want to participate.

Researchers: This study is being conducted by Heidi Abbott as part of the course requirements for Psychology 4951. I am under the supervision of Dr. Kelly Warren.

Purpose: The study is designed to investigate people's perceptions of crime. The results will be used to write a lab report as part of the course requirements. The study may also be used in a larger research project and may be published in the future.

Task Requirements: You will be asked to complete a short survey assessing your perceptions of a crime. You may omit any questions you do not wish to answer.

Duration: The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: Your responses are anonymous and confidential. Please do not put any identifying marks on any of the pages. IP addresses will not be collected. All information will be analyzed and reported on a group basis. Thus, individual responses cannot be identified.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation in this research is totally voluntary and you are free to stop participating at any time. However, once you complete this survey and click submit, your data cannot be removed because we are not collecting any identifying information and therefore we cannot link individuals to their responses. Although I am not collecting any identifying information, The online survey company, Survey Monkey, hosting this survey is located in the United States and as such is subject to U.S. laws. The U.S Patriot Act allows authorities access to the records of internet service providers. Therefore anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If you choose to participate in this survey, you understand that your responses to the survey questions will be stored and may be access in the ISA. The security and privacy policy for the web survey company can be found at the following link:

http://www.SurveyMonkey.com/monkey_privacy.aspx.

Contact Information: If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact me at habbott@grenfell.mun.ca, or my supervisor, Dr. Kelly Warren, at kwarren@grenfell.mun.ca. As well, if you are interested in knowing the results of the study, please contact me or Dr. Warren after May 2016.

This study has been approved by an ethics review process in the psychology program at Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland has found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy.

By proceeding to the next page, consent is implied.

Appendix B

Bar Photo



Appendix C

Lineups

Suspect Present

A



B



C



D



E



F



Suspect Absent

A



B



C



D



E



F



Appendix D

Scenario

At 2:15am on a quiet side street located close to a local bar, a woman was assaulted, and her purse was stolen. The woman gave police a detailed description, and said that there was \$65.00 in her wallet. A suspect who fit the description was arrested near the location of the crime shortly after with \$80 in his wallet. The suspect claims that he was drinking at the local bar that was on the same street where he was arrested. Police asked the suspect if he had anyone who could corroborate his story, and he said that he was drinking alone and didn't know anyone at the bar. He said he had socialized with a few people, but did not learn their names and did not give out his name. When asked what time he was at the bar, he said sometime between 1am-2:30am, that he was not really sure. He was unable to answer any questions about details of the bar, or of the people he supposedly befriended.

Appendix E

Questionnaire**Pre-Lineup Believability Questions**

1. What is the likelihood that the suspect was at the bar at the time of the crime?
Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very likely
2. How believable is the suspect when he says he cannot remember any information about the bar?
Not at all believable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very believable
3. How reasonable is it that the suspect said he cannot remember what time he was at the bar drinking?
Not at all reasonable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very reasonable
4. If the suspect truly did not know people from the bar, what is the likelihood that he would remember the people that he met?
Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

Pre-Lineup Questions (Bartender, Witness, Gender Randomly Assigned)

5. A (witness/bartender) who was at the bar at the time of the crime, was brought into the police station for questioning. What is the likelihood that the (witness/bartender) can vouch for the suspect being at the bar?
Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely
6. What is the likelihood that the (witness/bartender) could provide a description of the suspect if he spoke to him at the bar?
Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely
7. How likely is it that the (witness/bartender) would remember the colour of the suspect's hair?
Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely
8. How likely is it that the (witness/bartender) would remember the colour of the suspect's eyes?
Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

9. How likely is it that the (witness/bartender) would remember how tall the suspect was?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

10. How likely is it that the (witness/bartender) would remember what the suspect was wearing?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

11. What is the likelihood that the suspect did in fact commit the crime?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

Post-Lineup Questions (Participant)

1. After being asked to generate an alibi yourself, what is the likelihood that you would be able to vouch for the suspect being at the bar?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

2. What is the likelihood that you could provide a description of the suspect if you spoke to him at the bar?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

3. How likely is it that you would remember the colour of the suspect's hair?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

4. How likely is it that you would remember the colour of the suspect's eyes?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

5. How likely is it that you would remember how tall the suspect was?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

6. How likely is it that you would remember what the suspect was wearing?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7Very Likely

Demographics

1. How old are you? (open-ended)

2. What is your gender? (male; female; other)

3. What is your nationality/ethnicity? (open-ended)

Appendix F
Debriefing

Thank you for your participation in this study. The study is being conducted to determine what people believe alibis should remember. The people in the photos presented are members of the general public and were not involved in any crime. These individuals simply agreed to have their photos included in the study as I was interested in whether having to fabricate an alibi changes people's perceptions of alibis. Please feel free to share the link for this study with people who might be willing to participate. If you have any questions or concerns or if you are interested in learning more about this study, please feel free to contact myself or my supervisor at habbott@grenfell.mun.ca or kwarren@grenfell.mun.ca. If you are interested in learning the results of this study, please attend the Psychology Undergraduate Student Research Conference later this semester or contact my supervisor after May 2016.

Thank you for your participation.