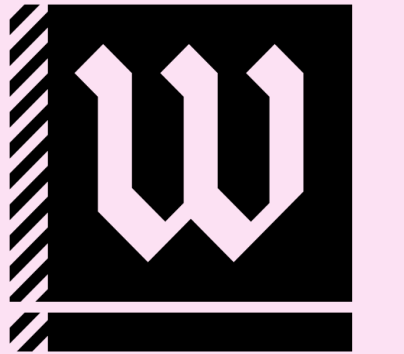


The Monster Within: The Effects of Stress and Motive Framing on Eyewitness Memory and Judgments of Innocence

By Mackenzie Robertson & Advised by Dr. Nathaniel Foster
Department of Psychology, The College of Wooster



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INTRODUCTION

- **Eyewitness Memory:**
 - Eyewitness memory plays a crucial role in legal decisions
 - Memory is reconstructive and prone to distortion
 - Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932; Wagoner, 2013)
 - Misinformation effect, Inattention blindness (Simon & Chabris, 1999; Loftus & Palmer, 1974)
 - Errors can contribute to wrongful convictions
- **Stress:**
 - Stress can influence how events are encoded and remembered
 - Moderate stress may enhance attention and memory while high stress impairs it
 - Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908) & Easterbrook Cue-Utilization Hypothesis (1959)
- **Motive Framing:**
 - Contextual information about a perpetrator can shape how their actions are interpreted (Hellman & Memon, 2016)
 - Attribution Theory (Kelley, 1973; Weiner, 1985)
 - Internal (dispositional) vs. External (situational) influences interpretation of behavior
- **Current Study:**
 - Sought to replicate and extend the findings of Hellmann & Memon (2016)
 - Examine how stress and motive framing jointly and independently influence eyewitness memory and judgments of innocence

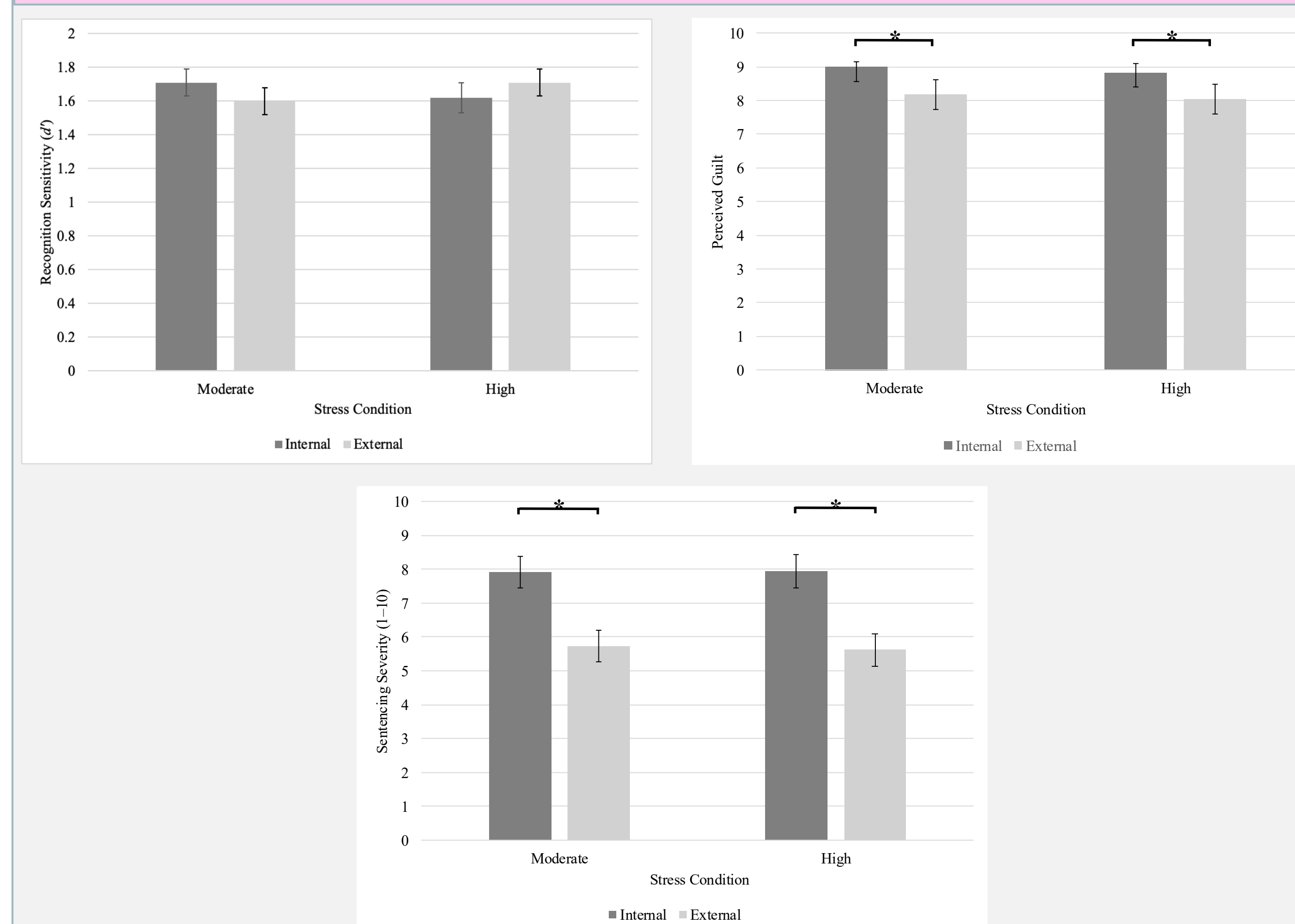
HYPOTHESES

- H1:** High stress (vs moderate) will lead to lower recognition accuracy and judgments of innocence
- H2:** Internal motive framing (vs external) will lead to lower recognition accuracy and judgments of innocence
- H3:** Stress will moderate the effect of motive framing, with internal motive framing leading to lower recognition accuracy and judgments of innocence under high stress (vs moderate)

METHOD

- **Participants:**
 - $N = 128$ College of Wooster students
- **Design:**
 - 2 x 2 between-subjects
 - Stress (moderate vs. high)
 - Motive frame (internal vs. external)
- **Materials:**
 - 6-minute crime video (*Monster*, 2003)
 - 40-item scene recognition test
- **Procedure:**
 - Qualtrics survey
 - Read manipulated stress condition
 - Viewed film compilation
 - Read manipulated motive frame condition
 - Completed judgment measures
 - Completed memory measures
- **Measures:**
 - Recognition accuracy (d')
 - Perceived guilt (guilt decision & confidence)
 - Sentencing severity

RESULTS



Stress	Motive Frame	d' M (SD)	Guilt M (SD)	Sentence M (SD)
Moderate	Internal	1.71 (0.50)	9.00 (0.94)	7.91 (2.57)
Moderate	External	1.60 (0.44)	8.18 (2.54)	5.73 (3.03)
High	Internal	1.62 (0.51)	8.83 (1.56)	7.93 (2.59)
High	External	1.71 (0.44)	8.03 (2.51)	5.62 (2.58)

DISCUSSION

- **Key Findings:**
 - Motive framing influenced perceived guilt and sentencing decisions
 - Internal framing led to higher perceived guilt and longer sentences
- Stress did not significantly affect memory or judgments
- No interaction between stress and motive framing
- **Explanation:**
 - Framing influenced interpretation and judgment, not memory accuracy
 - Supports attribution theory and the fundamental attribution error
 - Individuals may rely on internal (dispositional) information when evaluating a suspect

IMPLICATIONS

- Framing can bias legal judgments
- Bias may occur even when memory is accurate
- Emphasizes risk of post-event information in eyewitness testimony

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Stress manipulation may not have been strong or realistic enough
- Public speaking may not induce stress equally across participants
- Future research should use more standardized stress methods
- Consider using a single crime event as stimulus

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