

# RAUNAK M. PILLAI

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## APPOINTMENTS

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- 2026- **Assistant Professor (Incoming)**  
Stony Brook University  
Department of Psychology, Cognitive Science Area
- 2024-Present **Postdoctoral Associate**  
New York University  
Department of Psychology, Social Psychology Program  
Advisor: Jay Van Bavel

## EDUCATION

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- 2024 **Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN**  
Ph.D. in Psychology & Human Development  
Area: Cognition in Context  
Minor: Quantitative Methods  
Advisor: Lisa Fazio
- 2019 **Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN**  
B.A. in Neuroscience, *magna cum laude*  
Minor: Communication of Science & Technology

## TRAINING

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- 2025 Trainee, Disinformation Summer Institute, University of California San Diego
- 2023 Trainee, Summer Institute for Social and Personality Psychology, The Psychology of Intergroup Relations Course, Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Columbus, OH
- 2023 Trainee, Summer Institute on Bounded Rationality, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany
- 2022 Trainee, Sixth European Summer School on Computational and Mathematical Modeling of Cognition, Szklarska Poręba, Poland

## HONORS & AWARDS

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- 2024 Finalist, Cognitive Science Society Mind Challenge
- 2023 1<sup>st</sup> place, 3 Minute Research Talk Competition, Department of Psychology and Human Development, Vanderbilt University \$300

2022	Honorary Social Science Award, 3 Minute Thesis, Graduate Student Council, Vanderbilt University, \$500
2020	NSF Graduate Research Fellowship
2019	APA PsycShorts Video Contest Winner, \$1,000
2019	Russell G. Hamilton Scholar, Vanderbilt University
2017	Travel Fellow, National Association of Science Writers, \$800

## RESEARCH FUNDING

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Co-PI (PI: Madeline Jalbert), University of Washington Center for an Informed Public, Beyond truth: Testing the effects of misinformation interventions on perceptions of consensus. \$13,785 direct costs; 2024.

Co-PI (PI: Lisa Fazio), Reboot Foundation, *Improving retention of misinformation debunks with retrieval practice*. \$5,000 direct costs; 2021.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

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\* indicates equal contribution among authors

**Pillai, R. M., & Fazio, L. K.** (2025). Repeated by many versus repeated by one: Examining the role of social consensus in the relationship between repetition and belief. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 14(2), 154–166.

Jalbert, M. & **Pillai, R. M.** (2024) An illusory consensus effect: The mere repetition of information increases estimates that others would believe or already know it. *Collabra: Psychology*, 10(1).

**Pillai, R. M., Kim, E., & Fazio, L. K.** (2023). All the President's lies: Repeated false claims and public opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 87(3), 764-802.

**Pillai, R. M., & Fazio, L. K.** (2023). Explaining why headlines are true or false reduces intentions to share false information. *Collabra: Psychology*, 9(1).

Fazio, L. K., Hong, M. K., & **Pillai, R. M.** (2023). Combatting rumors around the French election: The memorability and effectiveness of fact-checking articles. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 8(1), 44.

\*Collier, J., \***Pillai, R. M., & Fazio, L. K.** (2023). Multiple-choice quizzes make fact checks more memorable but not more effective. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 8(1), 37.

**Pillai, R. M., Fazio, L. K., & Effron, D. A.** (2023). Repeatedly encountered descriptions of wrongdoing seem more true but less unethical: Evidence in a naturalistic setting. *Psychological Science*, 34(8), 863-874.

**Pillai, R. M., Brown-Schmidt, S., & Fazio, L. K.** (2022). Does wording matter? Examining the effect of phrasing on memory for negated political fact checks. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 12(1), 48-58.

- Fazio, L. K., Pillai, R. M., & Patel, D. (2022). The effects of repetition on belief in naturalistic settings. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 151(10), 2604–2613.
- Pillai, R. M., & Fazio, L. K. (2021). The effects of repeating false and misleading information on belief. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science*, 12(6), e1573.
- Pillai, R. M., Loehr, A. M., Yeo, D. J., Hong, M. K., & Fazio, L. K. (2020). Are there costs to using incorrect worked examples in mathematics education? *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 9, 519-531.

## ARTICLES IN THE PEER-REVIEW PROCESS

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† indicates undergraduate co-author

- Pillai, R. M., Globig, L. K., Rathje, S., Sternisko, A., Thériault, R., Van Bavel, J. J. (invited submission under review) An identity-based approach to polarization and public health. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*
- Pillai, R. M., Elmessiry, M.†, Brown-Schmidt, S., & Fazio, L. K. (invited revision in prep). Is that true? Examining the effects of question wording on memory for political fact checks
- Pillai, R. M., Arshad, S.† & Fazio, L. K. (invited revision of Stage 2 Registered Report in prep). How prior knowledge and statement truth affect retrieval experiences over time. *Memory*. Registered report.
- Pillai, R. M., Yang, S.†, Jiang, Q.†, & Fazio, L. K. (revision in prep). Repetition increases belief more for trivia statements than news headlines.
- Pillai, R. M., Karakkattu, S.†, Fazio, R. H., & Fazio, L. K. (revision in prep). Does repetition increase belief even when you hear it from Pinocchio?: Examining the effects of source trustworthiness on the illusory truth effect.
- Pillai, R. M., & Fazio, L. K. (revision in prep) Perceptual and semantic novelty does not enhance the effects of repetition on belief

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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\* indicates presenting author

† indicates undergraduate co-author

- \*Pillai, R. M. & Fazio, L. K. (2025, June) *Examining the role of social consensus in the effects of repetition on belief*. Talk to be presented at the biannual meeting of the Society for Research on Applied Memory and Cognition, Kildare, Ireland.
- \*Jalbert, M. & Pillai, R. M. (2025, June) *An “illusory consensus effect”: Exploring when repetition increases perceptions of consensus*. Talk to be presented at the biannual meeting of the Society for Research on Applied Memory and Cognition, Kildare, Ireland.

- \*Pillai, R. M., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2025, Feb).** *Novel social identities shape belief in (mis)information.* Flash talk presented at the Misinformation & Belief Science preconference at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Denver, CO.
- \*Jalbert, M., & Pillai, R. M. (2025, February).** *An illusory consensus effect: The mere repetition of information increases estimates that others would believe or already know it.* Poster presented at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology annual meeting, Denver, CO.
- \*Pillai, R. M., & Fazio, L. K. (2024, Nov).** *Perceptual and semantic novelty does not enhance the effects of repetition on belief.* Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, New York, NY.
- \*Pillai, R. M., Fazio, R. H., & Fazio, L. K. (2024, Apr).** *Does source trustworthiness moderate the effects of repetition on belief?* Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- \*<sup>†</sup>Wang, Z., Pillai, R. M., & Fazio, L. K. (2024, Apr).** *An automated approach to analyzing explanations for news belief.* Poster presented at the Psi Chi program of the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- \*Pillai, R. M. & Fazio, L. K. (2024, Feb).** *Does repetition increase belief even when you hear it from Pinocchio?: Examining the effects of source trustworthiness on the illusory truth effect.* Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.
- \*Pillai, R. M. & Fazio, L. K. (2024, Feb).** *Explaining why headlines are true or false reduces intentions to share false headlines,* Poster presented at the Misinformation & Belief Science preconference at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, CA.
- \*Pillai, R. M., Fazio, R. H., & Fazio, L. K. (2023, Nov).** *Does repetition increase belief even when you hear it from Pinocchio?: Examining the effects of source trustworthiness on the illusory truth effect.* Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, San Francisco, CA.
- Pillai, R. M. & Fazio, L. K. (2023, Aug).** *The role of memory processes in acquiring and revising beliefs.* Symposium organized for the biannual meeting of the Society for Research on Applied Memory and Cognition, Nagoya, Japan.
- \*Pillai, R. M., Collier, J., & Fazio, L. K. (2023, Aug)** *Multiple-choice quizzes make fact checks more memorable but not more effective.* Talk presented in the symposium “The role of memory processes in acquiring and revising beliefs” at the biannual meeting of the Society for Research on Applied Memory and Cognition, Nagoya, Japan.
- Pillai, R. M., Fazio, R. H., & \*Fazio, L. K. (2023, Aug).** *Examining the effects of source trustworthiness on the relationship between repetition and belief.* Talk presented in the symposium “Disrupting

assumptions of truth: Implications for believing and sharing misinformation” at the biannual meeting of the Society for Research on Applied Memory and Cognition, Nagoya, Japan.

\***Pillai, R. M.** & Fazio, L. K. (2023, Apr). *How repetition affects belief: The role of variability in sources and in wording*. Talk presented in the symposium “Political Polarization, Misinformation, and Conspiracy Theories” at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

\*<sup>†</sup>Elmessiry, M., **Pillai, R. M.**, Brown-Schmidt, S., & Fazio, L. K. (2023, Feb). *Examining the effect of question phrasing on belief revision*. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, GA.

\***Pillai, R. M.**, Fazio, R. H., & Fazio, L. K. (2023, Feb). *Examining the effects of source trustworthiness on the relationship between repetition and belief*, Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, GA.

\***Pillai, R. M.** & Fazio, L. K. (2023, Feb). *How repetition affects belief: The role of variability in sources and wording*, Poster presented at the Misinformation & Belief Science pre-conference of the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, GA.

\***Pillai, R. M.** & Fazio, L. K. (2022, Nov). *Fluent processing or convergent validity: Comparing two explanations for why repetition increases belief*. Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Boston, MA.

\***Pillai, R. M.**, <sup>†</sup>Elmessiry, M., Brown-Schmidt, S., & Fazio, L. K. (2022, Oct). *The effects of fact-check wording on belief revision*. Talk presented at the 4th Multidisciplinary International Symposium on Disinformation in Open Online Media, virtual meeting.

\***Pillai, R. M.**, Collier, J., & Fazio, L. K. (2022, Aug) *Multiple-choice quizzes make fact checks more memorable but not more effective*. Talk presented in the symposium “Taking Actions Against Science Denial: What Are Effective Approaches?” at the Division 15 program of the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Minnesota, MN.

**Pillai, R. M.**, Kim, E., & \*Fazio, L. K. (2022, Jul) *All the President’s lies: Repeated false claims and public opinion*. Talk presented at the annual meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Athens, Greece.

\***Pillai, R. M.** & Fazio, L. K. (2022, Apr). *Repetition increases belief more for trivia than for news headlines*. Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

\*<sup>†</sup>Elmessiry, M., **Pillai, R. M.**, Brown-Schmidt, S., & Fazio, L. K. (2022, Apr). *Examining the effect of question phrasing on memory for fact-checks*. Poster presented at the Psi Chi program of the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

- Pillai, R. M., Kim, E., & \*Fazio, L. K. (2022, Feb).** *Examining belief in falsehoods repeated during Trump's presidency.* Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Francisco, CA.
- \*Pillai, R. M., Fazio, L. K., & Effron, D. A. (2022, Feb).** *Repeatedly encountered descriptions of wrongdoing seem more true but less unethical.* Poster presented at the Justice & Morality pre-conference of the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Francisco, CA.
- \*Pillai, R. M. & Fazio, L. K. (2021, Nov).** *Repetition does not increase belief in bizarre, health-related headlines.* Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, virtual meeting.
- \*Pillai, R. M., Brown-Schmidt, S., & Fazio, L. K. (2021, July).** *Does phrasing affect memory for negated messages?* Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Research on Memory and Cognition, virtual meeting.
- \*Fazio, L. K., Pillai, R. M. & Patel, D. (2021, July).** *The effects of repetition on belief in naturalistic settings.* Talk presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Research on Applied Memory and Cognition, virtual meeting.
- \*Pillai, R. M., Brown-Schmidt, S., & Fazio, L. K. (2020, Nov).** *Examining the effect of phrasing on memory for negated messages.* Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, virtual meeting.
- \*Collier, J. R., Fazio, L. K., & Pillai, R. (2020, June).** *Testing knowledge to battle misinformation: How quizzes can improve people's memory of fact checks.* Talk presented at the Seventh Global Fact-Checking Summit, virtual meeting.
- \*Pillai, R., Loehr, A. M., Yeo, D. J., Fazio, L. K. (2019, Nov).** *Does presentation style matter when learning from incorrect worked examples?* Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society, Montreal, Canada.
- Bingham, B., Szentirmai E., Foxx, A.; **\*Pillai, R.,** Spickard, A. (2016, Dec). *MedTalks: A video database to increase medical student knowledge about institutional research.* Poster presented at the annual Gerald S. Gotterer Health Professions Education Research Day at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

## TEACHING

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2022                      Certificate in College Teaching, Center for Teaching, Vanderbilt University

### Teaching Assistantships

Fall, 2019 PSY-PC 1250, Developmental Psychology, Vanderbilt University, TA  
Fall, 2018 BSCI 1510L, Intro to Biological Sciences (Lab), Vanderbilt University, TA  
Fall, 2017 BSCI 1510L, Intro to Biological Sciences (Lab), Vanderbilt University, TA

### Guest Lectures

Spring, 2024 PSY-PC 3650, Cognition in the Real World, Vanderbilt University  
Fall, 2023 PSYC 160, Effective Learning Across the Lifespan, Claremont McKenna College  
Spring, 2023 HONS 1850W, Delusions, Forms of Belief and Theories, Vanderbilt University  
Fall, 2022 HONS 1830W, The Science of Misinformation: Why We Believe False Information,  
Vanderbilt University  
Spring, 2022 PSY-PC 3650, Cognition in the Real World, Vanderbilt University

### **SERVICE**

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2025-27 Committee Member, Community Building and Outreach Committee, Department of Psychology, NYU  
2024-25 Committee Member, Graduate Student and Postdoc Committee, Psychonomic Society  
2023-24 Graduate Student Representative, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee, Department of Psychology & Human Development, Vanderbilt University  
2023 Panelist, Encouraging Future Scientists: Supporting Undergraduates at Psychonomics Lunchtime Workshop, Psychonomic Society Annual Meeting  
2020-21 Treasurer, Graduate Student Council, Vanderbilt University

### **AD-HOC REVIEWING**

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Applied Cognitive Psychology  
Consciousness & Cognition  
Cognition  
Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications  
Educational Psychology Review  
Group Dynamics: Theory, Research & Practice  
Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review  
Humanities and Social Science Communications  
Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition  
Journal of Behavioral Decision-Making  
Journal of Experimental Psychology: General  
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology  
Journal of Personality & Social Psychology: Attitudes & Social Cognition  
Memory & Cognition  
npj Climate Action  
Psychological Reports  
Psychology & Aging

Psychonomic Bulletin & Review  
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin  
Scientific Reports

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

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American Psychological Association Division 15  
Psychonomic Society  
Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition  
Society for Personality and Social Psychology

## **SCIENCE COMMUNICATION**

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- Pillai, R. M. (2023) Strategies children use to learn about cause-and-effect. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://featuredcontent.psychonomic.org/strategies-children-use-to-learn-about-cause-and-effect/>
- Pillai, R. M. & Cotton, K. (2023) Why you should check—not just test—your statistical assumptions. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://featuredcontent.psychonomic.org/why-you-should-check-not-just-test-your-statistical-assumptions/>
- Cotton, K. & Pillai, R. M. (2023) Cognitive spendthrifts: How human biases may stem from more complicated—not simple—processing. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://featuredcontent.psychonomic.org/cognitive-spendthrifts-how-human-biases-may-stem-from-more-complicated-not-simple-processing/>
- Pillai, R. M. (2023) How rats reason: A demonstration of the conjunction fallacy in a nonhuman species. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://featuredcontent.psychonomic.org/how-rats-reason-a-demonstration-of-the-conjunction-fallacy-in-a-nonhuman-species/>
- Pillai, R. M. (2023) A reconsideration of reconsolidation: Theoretical concerns for applying memory research to clinical practice. [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://featuredcontent.psychonomic.org/a-reconsideration-of-reconsolidation-theoretical-concerns-for-applying-memory-research-to-clinical-practice/>
- Psychonomic Society Science Communication Intern (Spring 2023)
- Pillai, R. M., Sherry, C. L., & Fazio, L. K. (2021). How Repetition Affects What Kids and Adults Believe. *Frontiers for Young Minds*, 9(582203), 1-7.
- Twittername, Psychonomic Society (2019, 2020, 2022, 2023)
- QHat, Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/qhat>
- Guest lecture on human memory presented during Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Vanderbilt course “Our Brains: An Operator’s Manual” (May 2018).



Pillai, R. (2017). What students get wrong about studying [Blog post]. Retrieved from <https://www.nasw.org/article/what-students-get-wrong-about-studying>