

The hindsight bias in temporal predictions of animated automobile accidents

Dustin Calvillo

California State University San Marcos

Dayna Gomes

California State University, Los Angeles

Abstract: The hindsight bias occurs when people judge the outcome of an event as more predictable than it actually was before it occurred. The current experiment examined the hindsight bias in animations of automobile accidents. Participants viewed eight animations in one of two conditions. Those in the foresight condition were told that some animations contained accidents and were instructed to stop the animation when they were certain that an accident would occur. Those in the hindsight condition were told that all animations contained accidents and viewed each animation twice. They viewed the entire animation first. On the second viewing, they stopped the animation when they thought a naïve viewer would be certain an accident would occur. Those in the hindsight condition stopped the animations closer to when the accident actually occurred than those in the foresight condition, demonstrating a hindsight bias.