

## The Impact of the Cross Race Effect on Eyewitness Identification

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**Abstract :** Eyewitness identification is arguably one of the most utilized practices within our legal system; however, exoneration cases indicate that this practice may lead to accuracy and conviction errors. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the cross-race effect, the phenomena in which people are able to more easily and accurately identify faces from within their racial category, on the accuracy of eyewitness identification. Participants watched three separate videos of a perpetrator trying to steal a bicycle. In each video, the perpetrator was of a different race and gender. Participants watched a video where the perpetrator was a Black male, a White male, and a White female. Following the completion of watching each video, participants were asked to recall everything they could about the perpetrator they witnessed. The initial results of the study did not find the expected cross-race effect impacted the eyewitness identification accuracy. These surprising results are discussed in terms of cross-race bias and recognition theory as well as applied implications.

**Keywords :** cross race effect, eyewitness identification, own-race bias, racial profiling

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