

## Honors Capstone: Written Critique

For my honors capstone project, my mentor and I decided that I would write a manuscript on the research collected from a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) project I conducted in the Summer of 2023. This SURF project extended work completed by a former Radford student for a master's thesis. My SURF project investigated pluralistic ignorance (PI) in attitudes toward transgender people, and social desirability was tested as a potential alternative explanation for the effect. Results from the SURF study showed that PI was found in that participants rated themselves as having less prejudiced attitudes than the average American, social desirability was ruled out as an alternative explanation

Because my capstone project was writing the manuscript and not conducting the research, this reflection will focus on the additional analysis run, as well as the actual writing process. All original statistical analyses that were conducted for the SURF project were run again. Additionally, an in depth literature review and an analysis investigating sexual identity as a potential moderator were completed before writing the manuscript. A 2 (queer vs. heterosexual) x 2 (self vs. average American) mixed model factorial ANOVA found that sexual identity did moderate PI in transgender attitudes. Further, heterosexual participants rated themselves as more prejudice compared to queer participants, but also rated the average American as more prejudice compared to queer participants. Queer participants showed a greater magnitude of PI because they had a larger discrepancy between their own attitudes and the average American attitude, however, they did have more accurate perceptions of the average American attitude.

This manuscript fills a gap in current social psychology research where there is a severe lack of data on pluralistic ignorance in attitudes on transgender individuals. The current study did find evidence of PI in transgender attitudes. Future directions could focus on how the PI found in

these attitudes impacts behavioral intentions and behaviors toward transgender individuals. This research is very important to the field because it is the groundwork for developing effective interventions that could reduce the prejudice that transgender individuals face.