

# Ashwini Ashokkumar

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Department of Psychology  
The University of Texas at Austin  
108 E. Dean Keeton A8000  
Austin, TX 78712-0187

## EDUCATION

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- 2016 - present **Doctoral student, Social Psychology**  
The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas  
Advisors: Dr. William Swann Jr. and Dr. James Pennebaker
- 2014 - 2016 **Masters of Liberal Studies, Specialization in Experimental Psychology**  
Ashoka University, India  
Advisors: Dr. Kai Qin Chan and Dr. Neil Lutsky
- 2008 - 2012 **Bachelor of Technology: Computer Science & Engineering**  
Amrita School of Engineering, India  
Advisor: Dr. Vidhya Balasubramaniam

## PUBLICATIONS

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† indicates undergraduate student author


### JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. W., (submitted). “Unquestioning Affiliation” – a new language-based metric of strength of group identity.
- Martel, F., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Swann Jr, W. B. (under review). Fear of robots foments fascism among strongly fused Trump supporters.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J., W. (revise & resubmit at PNAS). The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 outbreak: Shifts in emotions, cognitions, and social connections.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Talaifar, S., Fraser, W. T., Landabur, R., Buhrmester, M., Gómez, Á., Paredes, B., & Swann Jr, W. B. (2020). Censoring political opposition online: Who does it and why. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *91*, 104031.  [\[OSF\]](#)
- Talaifar, S.\*, **Ashokkumar, A.\***, Pennebaker, J. W., Medrano, F. N., Yeager, D. S., & Swann Jr, W. B. (2020). A New Pathway to University Retention? Identity Fusion With University Predicts Retention Independently of Grades. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 1948550619894995. \*shared first authorship  [\[OSF\]](#)
- Ashokkumar, A.**, Galaif, M., † & Swann Jr, W. B. (2019). Tribalism can corrupt: Why people denounce or protect immoral group members. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *85*, 103874.  [\[OSF\]](#)
- Bastian, B., Vauclair, C. M., Loughnan, S., Bain, P., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Becker, M., ... & Swann, W. B. (2019). Explaining illness with evil: pathogen prevalence fosters moral vitalism. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *286*(1914), 20191576. 
- Sparks, A. M., Fessler D. M.T., Chan, K. Q., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Holbrook, C. (2018). Disgust as a Mechanism of Decision Making Under Risk. *Emotion*. 

## MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

- Ashokkumar, A.**, Carvalho, C., Horn, A., Jung, H., Meier, T., Ozdemir, F., Pizarro, J., Paez, D., Petters, N., Strojny, P., Vergani, L., Yogo, M., ... Pennebaker, J. W. (in prep). A longitudinal exploration of social life during COVID-19 in 25 countries.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Swann Jr, W. B. (in prep). Transcending dishonour via slapping: Exploring an identity-based theory of honor violence.
- Ashokkumar, A.** Ozdemir, F., & Swann, W.B. Jr. (in prep). When Conservatives are as welcoming of refugees as Liberals: The case of Turkey
- Seraj, S., Weyland, A.,<sup>†</sup> **Ashokkumar, A.**, Mihalcea, R., Pennebaker, J. W. (in prep). Linguistic Signatures of Social Unrest in the Age of COVID-19
- Blackburn, K., Olivarez, O.,<sup>†</sup> Brody, N., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Pennebaker, J. W. (in prep). We win some, they lose some: A replication and conceptual extension of Cialdini's BIRG.
- Castillo, V., Cross, S. E., McCauley, T., **Ashokkumar, A.**, & Perez, M. A. (in prep). A cultural perspective on forgiveness among Latinx and Northern European Americans.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

- Kennedy, B., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Boyd, R., & Dehghani, M. (forthcoming). Text-analysis methods for research in Psychology. In Boyd, R., & Dehghani, M. (Ed.), *The Atlas of Language Analysis in Psychology*. Guilford Press.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2020). How self-verification strivings can sabotage the effects of praise. In Brummelman, E. (Ed.) (2020), *Psychological perspectives on praise*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. 
- Lutsky, N., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2017). Internationalizing the Personality Psychology Course. In G. Rich, U. P. Gielen, and H. Takooshian (Eds.), *Internationalizing the Teaching of Psychology*.

## HONORS & FUNDING

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|-------------|---|
| 2017 – 2020 | Graduate School Professional Development Award, UT Austin (\$500)       |
| 2018 – 2019 | PEO International Peace Scholarship (\$8500)                            |
| 2018 – 2019 | Graduate Dean's Prestigious Fellowship Supplement Award (\$1000)        |
| 2018        | Pennebaker Social Psychology Fellowship (\$5000)                        |
| 2016        | SPSP Graduate Student Travel Award (\$500)                              |
| 2015        | Nominated for the best research project award, Ashoka University, India |
| 2014 – 2015 | Young India Fellowship, Ashoka University (\$1650)                      |
| 2012        | Nominated for the Best Capstone Project Award, Amrita University, India |

## TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

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<sup>†</sup> indicates undergraduate student presenter

### CHAired SYMPOSIA

- Ashokkumar, A.** & Talaifar, S. (2021, accepted). *Crises Through New Lenses: Studying COVID with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology*. Symposium to be chaired at the Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), Virtual.

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2021, accepted). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 outbreak: Shifts in Emotions, Cognitions, and Social Connections*. Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), Virtual. [Symposium Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2020). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 outbreak: Shifts in Emotions, Cognitions, and Social Connections*. Social Bridges E-Conference, Virtual. [Presentation]
- Pennebaker, J.W. & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2020). *Emotions and Language in the Real World*. UbiCOMP, Virtual. [Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** Ozdemir, F., & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2019). *When Conservatives are as Tolerant as Liberals*. International Convention of Psychological Science, Paris. [Symposium Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2019). *Rethinking Groups: The Interplay between the Individual and the Group*. Language preconference, Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), Portland. [Presentation]
- Pennebaker, J.W., **Ashokkumar, A.** Seraj., S., & Boyd, R. *Identity and Social Dynamics*. (2019). 11th Triennial Invitational Choice Symposium. [Presentation]
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2018). *Restoring Honor by Slapping the Daughter*. Cultural Psychology preconference, Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), Atlanta. [Data-bluetooth]
- Talaifar, S., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Sarma, S.†, & Swann, W.B., Jr (2018). *Identity fusion, Wellbeing, and Academic Performance among International & Domestic Students*. Happiness & Wellbeing Preconference, Society for Social Personality Psychology convention, Atlanta. [Data-bluetooth]

### INVITED TALKS

- Ashokkumar, A.** (2020, forthcoming). *How Group Identities are Constructed and Maintained*. University of California Davis.
- Pennebaker, J.W. & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2020). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 outbreak*. UT Austin COVID-19 Modeling Consortium, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2020). *The Psychological Unfolding of the COVID-19 outbreak*. Liberal Arts and Science Academy, Austin ISD.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J.W. (2020). *Life During a Pandemic: Exploring the Social-Psychological Impacts of COVID*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.** Ozdemir, F., Swann, W.B. Jr. (2019). *When are Conservatives as Tolerant of Refugees as Liberals?* Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin
- Ashokkumar, A.** Swann, W.B. Jr. (2018). *Restoring Honor by Slapping or Disowning Your Daughter: Towards a Theory of Honor-Based Violence*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin
- Talaifar, S. & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2018). *Identity Fusion with University: Predicting Student Well-being & Retention*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.** Swann, W.B. Jr. (2017). *Transcending Dishonor by Slapping or Ostracizing the Daughter*. Social-Personality Psychology Area Meeting, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.\***, Viraj, V\*, Ghai, S.\*, Maheshwari, N.\*, & Jaffrelot, C. (2016). *Shared sacred spaces between Hindus and Muslims in India*. Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities (CSH).  
\*shared first authors

### POSTER PRESENTATIONS

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† indicates undergraduate student presenter

- Ashokkumar, A.** & Pennebaker, J. (2020). *Do Traumatic Events Really Bring People Together?* Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), New Orleans.
- Talaifar, S., **Ashokkumar, A.**, Pennebaker, J., Yeager, D.S., Medrano, F., & Swann, W.B., Jr. (2020). *A New Pathway to College Retention? Identity Fusion with University Predicts Retention Independently of Grades.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), New Orleans.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2019). *Tribalism can Corrupt: Why People Denounce or Protect Immoral Group Members.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), Portland.
- Weixi, W.†, & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2019). *Gender Differences During Early Adolescence: Exploring Language from an Online Literary Magazine.* Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), Portland.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Swann, W.B. Jr. (2018). *Transcending Dishonor by Slapping or Ostracizing the Daughter: Lowering Self-threat Through Violence.* Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), Atlanta.
- Sarma, S.†, Swann, W.B., Jr., Talaifar, S., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2017). *Effects of Fusion with UT and Fusion with Home Country Among International Students.* Psychology Departmental Honors Poster Session, University of Texas, Austin.
- Ashokkumar, A.** & Chan, K. Q. (2017). *Collective Experiences of Negative Emotion.* Emotion preconference, Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), San Antonio.
- Ashokkumar, A.**, & Chan, K. Q. (2016) *Meaningful Variations in the Better-Than-Average Effect.* Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), San Diego.
- Chan, K. Q. & **Ashokkumar, A.**, (2016) *Gender Differences in Disgust is not Universal, but Sure is Robust.* Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), San Diego.
- Lutsky, N., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2016) *Better Than Average: Self-evaluations in an Indian Sample.* Society for Social Personality Psychology (SPSP), San Diego.
- Lutsky, N., Hayward, S., & **Ashokkumar, A.** (2016) *What Frames the Better than Average Effect: Personality, Culture, or Language?* Association of Psychological Science convention (APS), Chicago.

## TEACHING

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### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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|--------------|---|
| Spring 2020* | Co-instructor, Rhetoric (*Course cancelled midway due to COVID)<br>Texas Prison Education Initiative, Lockhart Prison, Austin |
| Spring 2019  | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Development of Attachment Relationships<br>The University of Texas at Austin                     |
| Fall 2017    | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Social Cognition<br>The University of Texas at Austin  |
| Spring 2016  | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Statistics and Research Methods II<br>Ashoka University, India                                   |
| Fall 2015    | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Statistics and Research Methods I<br>Ashoka University, India                                    |
| Spring 2015  | Graduate Teaching Assistant, Critical Thinking Seminar in Psychology<br>Ashoka University                                     |

### INVITED GUEST LECTURES

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|----------------|---|
| Fall 2017      | “Extreme pro-social behaviors in groups” as part of the Social Psychology course<br>University of Texas at Austin |
| Summer<br>2016 | “Introduction to Psychology” to high school students in the Young Scholars Programme.<br>Ashoka University, India |

## NON-ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

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| 2019 – 2020 | <b>Research Consultant, Department of Sociology, University of Texas Austin</b><br>Analyzed email communications with Texas municipal courts to determine biases in responses to requests for public data   |
| 2012 – 2014 | <b>Software Development Engineer, Microsoft R&amp;D</b><br>Designed algorithms to improve accuracy in triggering of <i>BING Shopping</i><br>Developed an application to publish images to the <i>BING</i> repository for <i>BING</i> 's new experience<br>Designed and developed a data-processing framework for Microsoft product data |

## OUTREACH AND SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

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† indicates undergraduate student author

Editor and Author, The Pandemic Project blog: <https://trackingsocial.life/>

“Xenophobia, Conspiracy Theories, and COVID-19”: Kellogg<sup>†</sup>, Ashokkumar, & Pennebaker

“Locked indoors: What we do daily is related to mental health”: Ashokkumar & Pennebaker

“The Unfolding of the COVID Outbreak: The shifts in thinking and feeling”: Ashokkumar & Pennebaker

“Turning inward during crises: How COVID is changing our social ties?” Ashokkumar & Pennebaker

“What Does the Future Hold?": Pennebaker & Ashokkumar

“A Crisis within a Crisis: BlackLivesMatter, COVID-19, and a New Sense of Purpose”: Mihalcea, Ashokkumar, & Pennebaker

Interview featured on the *Yours Mindfully* podcast

Interview featured on *Decibel* program of Austin PBS: [“How the pandemic is affecting mental health”](#)

Interview featured on *Good Day Austin* program of Fox Austin: “Social life changes after COVID-19 and effects on mental health”

## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

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Member, Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Member, Association for Psychological Science

## SERVICE

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### Ad-hoc reviewer

Behavior Research Methods

Self and Identity

PLOS One

Psychological Reports

Journal of Open Psychology Data

APS Student Grant Competition

**Undergraduate Mentorship**

Maria Rivera, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2020)  
Gabriella Leyva-Montiel, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2020)  
Alex Kelloggs, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2020)  
Grace Jumonville, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2020)  
Darby Edmondson, Undergraduate Summer Research Assistant (2020)  
Alex Contreas, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2019)  
Aafreen Chunara, Undergraduate Summer Intern (2018)  
Weixi Wang, Undergraduate Summer Intern (2017-18)  
Meredith Galaif, Undergraduate Research Assistant (2018)  
Shalini Sarma, Honors Student (2017)  
Andres Umana, Undergraduate SURE Summer Intern (2017)

**Other Service**

Graduate Diversity Committee Member (2019 – 2020)  
International Graduate Student Assembly Member (2018 – 2020)