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An Evaluation of Police Interviewing Methods: A Psychological Perspective

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Running head: EFFECTIVE POLICE INTERVIEWS

AN EVALUATION OF POLICE INTERVIEWING METHODS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This paper discusses false confessions and memory's fallibility and how they can decrease the reliability of an investigative interview. In an effort to remedy this issue, the three most popular interview techniques utilized by police officers during an investigation were examined to decipher which one elicits the most reliable testimony. In order to determine which of the three methods out of the Reid Technique, Cognitive Interview, and PEACE Method is the most reliable, literature on the different techniques was examined to see which method resulted in the most accurate information, free from false statements. As a result of this evaluation, the PEACE Method was found to be the most reliable of the interview methods, enabling police officers to gather testimonies with a great amount of detail, without having to diminish the statement's accuracy. However, the PEACE Method is not perfect, so recommendations for ways to improve the method were also made.

Key Words: psychology, false confession, memory, Reid Technique, Cognitive Interview, PEACE Method.

An Evaluation of Police Interviewing Methods: A Psychological Perspective

Each year, people are exonerated for crimes to which they were wrongfully convicted and according to recent trends that number continues to rise, with a record 149 individuals exonerated in 2015 (Ferner, 2016). These exonerations are especially troubling in that some of these individuals had confessed to the crime for which they were wrongfully charged (Kassin, 2008). But why would someone confess to a crime to which they were innocent? So far, researchers have come up with several possible answers to this phenomenon with research suggesting three different types of false confessions: voluntary, coerced-compliant, and coerced-internalized.

Voluntary confessions are those in which people confess to a crime they did not commit seemingly without any outside influence. Coerced-compliant confessions occur when someone wishes to end the current interrogation and they believe the best way to do so is by confessing. These are typically the cases in which a suspect was interrogated for hours under harsh conditions and confessed in order to end the interrogation. Research has also shown that another explanation for this type of confession might be a tendency for people to think in terms of their present situation instead of the future. Because of this, an individual under stress might make a false confession to satisfy their immediate need of escaping their current situation, instead of thinking about how the confession might harm them in the long term (Kassin, 2017). Lastly, and perhaps most perplexing, coerced-internalized confessions are those in which an individual actually believes that they committed the crime in question and in some cases, they might even develop a false memory of the crime (Ost, Costall, & Bull, 2001).

While it may seem unbelievable that someone could possess a memory for an incident that never actually occurred, this phenomenon is far less outlandish than it seems. Most people believe confessions and testimonies to be reliable sources of information, with them typically carrying great weight in a juror's decision as to whether or not a defendant is guilty (Kassin, 2008). However, confessions and testimonies can be inaccurate. Because our memories are fairly malleable and easily contaminated, leading them to be much less reliable than what is typically believed, confessions and testimonies are also fallible as they rely on memory (Lacy & Stark, 2013).

There are several mechanisms at work contributing to memory's fallibility. One mechanism is susceptibility to misinformation, oftentimes referred to as the misinformation effect. Typical misinformation effect studies consist of study participants witnessing some sort of original visual event. Then, in one condition, participants receive postevent misinformation about what occurred in the original event, whereas no misinformation is presented in the other control condition. Lastly, the participants are asked to recall or recognize what occurred in the original event. Results demonstrate that participants in the condition exposed to misinformation were less likely to accurately remember the event than those in the control condition (Chan, Thomas, & Bulevich, 2009; Loftus & Palmer, 1974; Loftus, 1992). This scenario is translatable to what a witness or suspect may experience in the real world. For example, a witness sees a crime occur, they are then interviewed by a police officer who at some point during the interview might expose the witness to some sort of misinformation either by using suggestive language or inaccurate facts. Then, when the witness testifies in court they might falsely recall the memory of the misinformation, instead of their original memory. While there remains to be some debate as

to the underlying factors responsible for the misinformation information, it is agreed that exposure to misinformation does negatively impact an individual's ability to remember a specific event (Lindsay, 1993).

One possible explanation for how misinformation affects memory involves the source monitoring framework. This framework has to do with how memories are encoded and retrieved. The source monitoring framework focuses on the concept that our memories are not categorized by the source that they come from. Instead, when an individual retrieves a memory, they have to make a judgment about the source of the memory, in other words, where that memory came from (Leding, 2012). However, oftentimes we falter when trying to decide the source of a memory and might misattribute a memory to the wrong source. Some psychologists (Henkel & Coffman, 2004; Johnson, Hashtroudi, & Lindsay, 1993) postulate that source monitoring failures are responsible for the misinformation effect. They hypothesize that after the individual has been exposed to misinformation about the event they witnessed, they might remember the misinformation instead of the actual event when asked to recall what occurred because the individual has misattributed the misinformation's source as being from the event itself and not misleading information from a later source, such as a police officer (Henkel & Coffman, 2004).

Another mechanism believed to be responsible for false memories is the activation monitoring theory or the concept that when an individual retrieves an event, related events are also retrieved. A classic example of this mechanism has occurred during word association tasks in which participants are exposed to a list of words and then later asked to recall which words were or were not on the list. Due to the semantic similarity of the words, a participant might falsely state that the word honey was on the list when really the word honey was primed by

actual list words that were similar in meaning. Another real-world example of how activation monitoring could contribute to a false memory is that when asked to recall a crime, a witness accidentally recalls part of an episode of a crime show that they watched due to the similarity between the two cases (Leding, 2012).

Another theory relating to memories and their fallibility is the fuzzy trace theory. Basically, whenever we experience an event two different memories are formed: a verbatim memory and a gist memory. The verbatim memory is very detailed, an exact memory of what occurred. The gist memory is more of a general idea of what occurred without much detail. Verbatim memories do not last as long as gist memories and start to decay quickly after they are formed (Leding, 2012). Fuzzy trace theory provides an explanation as to why our memories fade with time, because instead of possessing a detailed memory of the event over time, what lingers is only a general idea of what occurred.

Thus far in this paper, I have discussed the fallibility of memory without many applications towards interrogations and how an individual's memory might be impacted during a suggestive interrogation. While I have already discussed the misinformation effect and the notion that when individuals are exposed to misinformation, it oftentimes negatively affects their memory for original event information, what I have yet to discuss is how this misinformation effect is generally greater when the inaccurate information comes from a credible source like a police officer (Leding, 2012). Thus, when officers interrogate suspects or question witnesses, they should be extra careful to not introduce ideas or facts about that case that could potentially adversely impact an individual's memory.

A related concept is called interrogative suggestibility, which has to do with how during an interrogation or witness questioning, an individual might come to believe the ideas the officer is presenting (Mastroberardino & Marucci, 2013). Interrogative suggestibility appears related to the misinformation effect and that the impact of misinformation is stronger when coming from an authoritative source such as a police officer. In addition, people generally want to be liked and those who are interrogated might say what they believe the interviewer wants them to say. This tendency for people to say what they think others want to hear has been shown to be more likely with a credible source or individual with authority, like a police officer (Kassin, 2017).

Another subject that deserves discussion is how false confessions are thought to be coerced during interrogations. Previously in this paper, I have discussed the possible mechanisms at work causing memories to be altered or false memories to be formed, but I have yet to discuss the mechanisms by which interrogators might actually cause suspects to confess to a crime they did not commit. Some have hypothesized that gathering a false confession from a suspect occurs in two steps. First, the interrogator must convince the suspect that they could have committed the crime, despite having no memory of the event. Maybe the officer will tell the suspect that several people witnessed them committing the crime or that they have other evidence placing them at the crime scene. Next, the officer will convince the suspect of a potential reason for why they have no memory of committing the crime. Perhaps, the suspect forgot the memory or blocked it out because it was too painful (Ost, Costall, & Bull, 2001). Whatever the case, it is important for researchers to look at the possible ways in which memory can be altered or individuals can be coerced, so that this research can be used to decide what is the best possible interrogation method

to ensure that the people actually responsible for the crimes are the ones who are convicted and that more innocent people are not incarcerated or executed.

Reid Technique

This method is one of the oldest and remains to be one of the most widely utilized interrogation or investigative interview methods. Despite controversy regarding the Reid Technique's potential to elicit false memories, the method is still popular and the people who support the use of the method claim that the method does not have an issue with contributing to false confessions (Hirsch, 2012). However, before garnishing an opinion as to whether or not the Reid Technique does lead to false confessions we must first know more about the technique.

Essentially, the Reid Technique has two parts: first, an interview that will determine whether phase two or the interrogation stage will be implemented. During this initial stage in the technique, the interviewer will try to determine whether they deem the interviewee to be a suspect in the crime, generally by trying to detect if the interviewee is being deceitful in their initial interview. Determining if the interviewee should be a suspect is accomplished by examining both the interviewee's nonverbal and verbal reactions to interviewer's questions (Kassin, 2014). If the interviewer deems the interviewee's responses to be suspicious only then they will enter into the next stage in the Reid Technique, which consists of an interrogation (Kassin, Appleby, & Torkildson Perillo, 2010).

The interrogation phase of the Reid Technique consists of nine steps, however, before the interrogation even begins the investigator will isolate the suspect in order to cause the suspect to feel uneasy in the hope that such isolation will help to lead to a confession (Hirsch, 2012). Next, the interrogation officially begins with step one, in which the interrogator accuses the suspect of

committing the crime and will often offer up some sort of evidence for this assertion. This evidence is sometimes real, and sometimes not, as interrogators are allowed to lie to suspects. After this first step, in step two, the interrogator will underrate the seriousness of the crime, urging the suspect to tell them the truth and to confess. In doing so, the interrogator will often offer up some sort of rationale for why the suspect committed the crime. Stage three dictates that any time the suspect tries to deny their guilt, the interrogator should interrupt them. In stage four the interrogator is instructed to diminish any reasons the suspect offers for why they could not have committed the act in question. Stage five then necessitates that the interrogator continues to hold the suspect's concentration throughout the entire interrogation. During stage six two different scenarios of the crime are mentioned with one being less severe than the other. If the suspect takes the bait and admits to the less severe account of the crime then in step eight the interrogator will try to pry for more details about the event. Lastly, the interrogator draws up the suspect's written confession in the ninth and final step (Kassin, Appleby, & Torkildson Perillo, 2010).

Now that we have looked at and understand the process of the Reid Technique, we will examine its flaws. The greatest issue with this method is its propensity to elicit false confessions. This propensity is especially troubling since research has shown that juries are likely to believe confessions and that they are considered a strong deciding factor in deciding an individual's guilt, even if they are false or coerced (Kassin, 2008). In an attempt to understand how the Reid Technique contributes to false confessions, I am going to look more closely at some of the technique's more suggestive components and examine them using some aforementioned research on false confessions.

The first issue with the Reid Technique has to do with the first phase of the method, the interview. While the interview itself is not deemed to be coercive, the purpose of the interview is to determine whether or not the interviewee should be considered a possible suspect in the case and should thus be interrogated (Kassin, Appleby, & Torkildson Perillo, 2010). The process by which interviewers discern if the interviewee should be considered a suspect is by seeking to detect if the individual being interviewed is being deceitful. The problem with this phase is that there is a lack of data to support the notion that by paying attention to nonverbal and verbal cues the interviewer will be able to detect if the interviewee is lying (Hirsch, 2012). Studies have found that detectives trained in detecting when a suspect is lying only had a 55.8% success rate in correctly identifying when they were being lied to, which is only marginally better than a lay person's success rate of catching when someone is lying 52.8% of the time (Merryman, 2010).

The next concerning aspect of the Reid Technique occurs between the interview and the interrogation phase when the investigator will decide if the interviewee should be considered a suspect in the case and thus be interrogated (Kassin, 2014). By making this determination, the interrogator will often already have determined whether or not they believe the suspect to be guilty (Merryman, 2010). Research has shown that if an interrogator already believes the person they are interrogating to be guilty, then they are likely to unintentionally seek out information that will corroborate their belief. This concept is known as confirmation bias. In order to extract the information needed to confirm the belief of guilt, the interrogator must subconsciously utilize more coercive tactics than they otherwise would have used. Data has shown that interrogators who already believe the suspect to be guilty are likely to use more aggressive methods than those who have yet to make a determination of guilt (Kassin, Appleby, & Torkildson Perillo, 2010).

Another flaw of the Reid Technique is the unofficial first step of the interrogation phase, in which the suspect is placed alone in an interrogation room. The purpose of this isolation is to cause suspects to feel so uncomfortable that they will desire to get out of their situation by any means necessary, even if that entails confessing to a crime to which they are innocent (Hirsch, 2012). Isolating suspects is likely to elicit coerced-compliant false confessions in which suspects confess in order for the interrogation to end (Kassin, 2017). Additionally, this unofficial step ties into one of the flawed tenets of the Reid Technique. This tenet holds that innocent people do not confess to crimes, thus if the interrogators are able to extract a confession it must be truthful. This denial of false confessions can lead interrogators to believe that no matter how coercive their tactics, as long as they lead to a confession then it is justified because false confessions do not exist and any confession is considered as proof that they have caught their perpetrator. Since proponents of the Reid Technique do not believe that false confessions actually occur, this means that they are not trained to know the possible signs of and contributors to a false confession and will thus not be able to safeguard against extracting a false confession (Merryman, 2010).

Another type of false confession is a coerced-internalized confession in which throughout the interrogation the suspect begins to falsely believe that they did commit the crime in question and in some cases even develop a false memory of committing the crime. The two steps that have been identified as how these false memories are formed are fairly similar to the first two steps in the interrogation phase of the Reid Technique. The first step in developing a false memory is to convince the suspect that despite having no memory of the crime, they are in fact guilty. In the first step of the interrogation, the interrogator alleges the suspect is guilty and offers up putative evidence to back this allegation, although often this evidence is contrived. By doing

so, the suspect could potentially start to believe in their guilt because there is evidence to show that they are in fact guilty and might not realize that investigators are allowed to be deceitful during interrogations. The second step by which false memories are formed is to offer reasoning for why the suspect might not be able to recollect the crime. Again, this method complements the second step in the Reid interrogation. During this step, the interrogator will downplay the crime while offering up some rationale for the crime. While offering up reasons for a suspect to not have any memory of the crime is not necessarily the same as giving the suspect some rationale for the crime, interrogators have often combined the two to the effect of stating something along the lines that the suspect is normally a moral person but the crime is so traumatic and out of character, that the suspect blocked out the memory or repressed it (Ost, Costall, & Bull, 2001; Hirsch, 2012). The idea of interrogative suggestibility or a person's tendency to believe everything an interviewer tells them during an interview helps to explain why a suspect might believe contrived evidence an interrogator presents them as being true (Mastroberardino & Marucci, 2013). Additionally, interviewer suggestibility can be compounded by the fact that people are more likely to believe individuals whom they see as authority figures. Since police officers are often perceived to possess a great deal of authority, it makes sense that a suspect would be likely to believe the information provided by an officer during an interview (Kassin, 2017). While everyone is fairly suggestible and likely to regard what interviewers say as being truthful, some people are especially susceptible such as individuals with psychological disorders, young people, and individuals with intellectual disabilities. Because of their increased vulnerability, special care should be taken when interviewing these groups; special care the Reid Technique fails to accommodate (Kassin, 2014).

Not only can the Reid Technique induce false confessions, but it can also cause suspects to make unfactual statements during an interrogation. In a study consisting of 59 college students from the Greater Toronto Area, it was found that coercive interviews were likely to elicit false testimonies. During the study, each participant was placed in a room with one confederate and the experimenter. The experimenter had the participant and confederate complete problem-solving tasks while the experimenter was not in the room. Afterward, the experimenter claimed to be separating the confederate and participant for the purpose of debriefing them each separately. During the putative debriefing, the experimenter told the participant that before the participant and confederate had entered the room in which they completed the problem-solving task, another researcher had accidentally left their phone in the room and that it was now missing. The experimenter then interviewed the participant about whether they had taken the phone, if the confederate had taken the phone, and asked the participant to recount all that had taken place while the experimenter was not in the room. Half of the participants were interviewed using a coercive interview method modeled after the Reid Technique, while the other half were in the control group and interviewed using a standard interview method. The results of the study showed that those in the coercive interview group were more likely to make false statements than those in the control group (Loney & Cutler, 2016).

Cognitive Interview

Primarily designed for interviewing witnesses, not suspects, the Cognitive Interview is an investigative interview technique developed in the 1980s (Sooniste, Granhag, Stromwall, & Vrij, 2015). The interview method consists of four parts: report everything, mental reinstatement of context, change order, and lastly change perspective. Each part is thought to serve as an

important and necessary tool in aiding the individual being interviewed in remembering the event clearly and accurately. During the report everything aspect of the interview, witnesses are asked to tell the interviewer everything that they remember about the crime, even if they think that certain parts of their memory are unnecessary in solving the case. The reasoning for this is two-fold. For one, by stating everything that they remember no matter how inconsequential the details may be, an investigator might uncover information that aids in solving the case or reveal new aspects of the crime. Often, officers will not know which facts are necessary and important to solving a case until after the case has been solved. Even minor details can be paramount and could possibly lead to a break in a case. Second, recalling every detail might cause the witness to remember other, more important details of the case. Many of our memories are associated with each other, so it is possible that a minor detail that is unnecessary to the case will trigger another memory that is, in fact, necessary to the case (Tulving, 1991). Next, the mental reinstatement of context is thought to aid in the memory recall process by recreating the state and environment of the witness when the event occurred. The idea is that individuals will be better able to remember events clearly if they recreate what occurred. The change order phase has to do with the concept that having witnesses recall memory in reverse chronological order, instead of just recalling the forward chronological order of how the events occurred might actually increase individual's recall of event details. Additionally, the change perspective aspect of the Cognitive Interview calls for a witness to visualize event from a perspective other than their own also with the intent that this will increase witness's recollection of the event (Paulo, Albuquerque, Saraiva, & Bull, 2015).

Several studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness of the Cognitive Interview in increasing a witness's recall of an event. One such study consisted of 125 participants who were instructed to plan either a noncriminal event or a mock crime. The study wanted to see how the participants would respond to anticipated and unanticipated questions and the effect, if any, the Cognitive Interview might have on participants' responses. Research on the unanticipated questions approach has shown that liars will come up with answers to anticipated questions and practice their responses (Sooniste, Granhag, Knieps, & Vrij, 2013). So, a criminal would get ready for an interview by coming up with nonincriminating answers to questions that they anticipate to be asked during an interview. For the purpose of this study, participants who were instructed to plan a mock crime were asked to come up with lies to anticipated questions they thought would be asked during an interview. Individuals who planned a noncriminal event were also asked to come up with responses to questions they believed might be asked during an interview, but were told to give truthful answers. Then both the groups were interviewed using either a standard interview procedure or using the Cognitive Interview method. Participants were asked both anticipated and unanticipated questions during their interviews. The notion behind this method is that practiced responses to anticipated questions are difficult to decipher from a truthful answer to anticipated questions, however, a liar's response to unanticipated questions might be easily distinguished from a truthful response to an unanticipated question since the liar has not had time to practice their response. Since liars have not practiced answers to unanticipated questions, they will presumably be caught off guard and their answers will be less detailed than their responses to anticipated questions and the truthful group's answers to unanticipated questions. Because of these differences, it is believed that unanticipated questions

will help to reveal when a person is lying in an interview. Results of the study showed that participants who responded truthfully to unanticipated questions had much more comprehensive responses than those who lied. Additionally, this effect was found to be even greater in the Cognitive Interview condition than in the standard interview condition. In fact, participants interviewed using the Cognitive Interview method were shown to have more descriptive memories overall (Sooniste, Granhag, Stromwall, & Vrij, 2015). This study has replicated what many other studies have already discovered, that the Cognitive Interview increases a witness's ability to accurately remember an event. Additionally, research has shown that the Cognitive Interview is able to do so without increasing amount of false statements made by witnesses (Paulo, Albuquerque, Saraiva, & Bull, 2015).

As previously discussed, people can be influenced by what an interviewer says to them during an interview and certain groups of people are especially at risk when it comes to being influenced (Mastroberardino & Marucci, 2013; Kassin, 2014). With this in mind, I will look at the Cognitive Interview's effectiveness in interviewing these groups. First, I will examine the Cognitive Interview's effectiveness on adults with mild intellectual disabilities. In a study consisting of 21 adults with mild intellectual disabilities and 21 adults from the general population, the Cognitive Interview's ability to perform when used on those with mild intellectual disabilities was tested. In this study, 42 participants watched a video of a nonviolent crime. participants were then interviewed about the event either using a standard interview procedure or Cognitive Interview method. Results of the study showed that the Cognitive Interview method increased the amount of accurately reported aspects of the crime by 40% in a group of adults with minor intellectual disabilities and by 11% in a group of general population

adults when compared to those interviewed using the standard interview method. These results demonstrate that the Cognitive Interview not only increases the amount of accurate information reported by the general population, but that the Cognitive Interview is an effective tool when interviewing those with minor intellectual disabilities (Clarke, Prescott, & Milne, 2012).

Since its initial development, the Cognitive Interview has been updated to include another important aspect, rapport building between interviewer and witness. This updated version is known as the Enhanced Cognitive Interview (Paulo, Albuquerque, Saraiva, & Bull, 2015). Another vulnerable group when it comes to interviews are children. However, research on children's ability to recall events accurately has shown that they are able to recall events when asked simple, nonleading questions. Additionally, has been shown that young children were able to remember more accurate information when interviewed with the Enhanced Cognitive Interview than with a standard interview method. Another group requiring special consideration in interviews are older adults since the ability to remember events decreases with age (Park & Festini, 2016). However, research has shown the Enhanced Cognitive Interviews also helped to counteract this detriment among older persons (Wheatcroft, Wagstaff, & Russell, 2014).

While the Cognitive Interview has been shown to significantly increase an individual's ability to recall events with great detail while not diminishing the accuracy of the recollection, there are also some issues with the Cognitive Interview. One issue is that some police officers do not favor this method because of the time it takes to train on the method and the amount of time the interviews take. Another issue is that the Cognitive Interview was not designed for interviewing suspects, so the method is not as versatile as some other interview methods (Sooniste, Granhag, Stromwall, & Vrij, 2015). It would be beneficial if a Cognitive Interview

based method could be used as a way to increase the accuracy of statements made by suspects as well as witnesses.

As of yet, there has not been a modification made to the Cognitive Interview that improves its ability to interview suspects, but there has been an update that is meant to help combat the issue of the time-consuming nature of the interview. The Modified Cognitive Interview seeks to increase the usage of the method by not only reducing the amount of training needed to grasp the method but also by decreasing the length of interviews. The Modified Cognitive Interview accomplishes these efficiencies by eliminating two of the aspects of the Cognitive Interview: the change order and change perception aspects. This removal was done not only because officers thought the method was time-consuming, but also because officers had issues understanding how to implement these parts of the Cognitive Interview. In order to test whether or not emitting these aspects diminished the Cognitive Interview's effectiveness in eliciting correct, detailed event recall a study was conducted consisting of 27 military police officers. Half of the participants were interviewed about an event using the standard interview method and the other half were interviewed using the Modified Cognitive Interview method. The results of the study showed that there were similar to what one would expect during a traditional Cognitive Interview, with 50% more accurate details remembered in the Modified Cognitive Interview group than in the structured interview group (Colomb, Ginet, Wright, Demarch, & Sadler, 2013). These results demonstrate that the order change and perception change aspects of the Cognitive Interview appear to be obsolete in helping to improve an individual's event recall either because they are in themselves not successful in improving an individual's memory recall or due to issues in the training of officers and their subsequent ability to utilize the aspects.

Whatever the case, the Modified Cognitive Interview has been shown to be just as effective, if not more so, than the standard Cognitive Interview.

PEACE Method

The last interview method I will be discussing is the PEACE method. This method was developed by police officers in collaboration with lawyers and psychologists (Schollum, 2017). The method was developed in reaction to citizens' lack of trust in the interviewing techniques used at the time in the United Kingdom. The method was then enforced throughout the United States and all of their investigative interviewers were trained in the procedure (Scott, Tudor-Owen, Pedretti, & Bull, 2014). Since then this interview method has been implemented in other countries worldwide.

PEACE is an acronym that enables its users to easily remember the steps in the interview method. The steps are to plan and prepare, engage and explain, account, closure, and evaluation. During the planning and preparation stage, the officer conducting the interview researches the case and the person to be interviewed in an effort to prepare for the interview. In the engage and explain stage the interviewer will try to build a rapport and take the interviewee through the layout of the interview. The account stage is the most flexible part of the interview in which the investigator asks the interviewee to recall everything that happened during the event in question. Interviewers will utilize different techniques to enhance the interviewee's memory and they possibly may elicit a confession from guilty individuals. In the PEACE method, the Enhanced Cognitive Interview method and free recall method are used for witness and victim interviews, while a conversation management method will be used for suspect interviews. Next, in the closure stage, the interviewer will explain what happens after the interview and corroborates with

interviewees that all the statements that were made are true and that interviewees can add to this statement at a later date if desired. Finally, in the evaluation stage, the case will be reexamined based upon any useful information that might have been stated during the interview. Interviewers are also expected to examine how the interview went and brainstorm how they can improve future interviews (Schollum, 2017).

The PEACE method is very versatile and has improved upon the Cognitive Interview's ability to extract the amount of information recalled while not diminishing accuracy. The PEACE method is also more versatile as this method can also be used to interview suspects (Paulo, Albuquerque, Saraiva, & Bull, 2015; Schollum, 2017). The PEACE method has been shown to elicit confessions, but these confessions are much more likely to be accurate as opposed to confessions gathered from traditional interrogation methods (Schollum, 2017).

Several studies have looked at the effectiveness of the PEACE interview technique. One study evaluated 27 interview transcripts and 115 taped interviews of the PEACE method. The purpose of the study to determine how the interviewer's skill at understanding the steps of the method and conducting interview affected the outcome of the interview. In order to determine the interviewer's expertise, a five-point Likert scale was implemented in which 1 denoted that the interviewer could benefit from additional training to 5 indicating that the interviewer was excellent. Walsh and Bull's study (2010) found that there was a positive relationship between the outcome of the interview and how good interviewers were at conducting interviews. So, the more competent the administration of the PEACE method, the increased likelihood of obtaining a confession or other valuable information. This study also discovered that it was particularly important for interviewers to be good at the planning and preparation step as well as the account

step. These two steps were found to be the most important in predicting a positive outcome from an interview (Walsh & Bull, 2010).

Understanding the importance of sufficient training on the PEACE method and how this affects the outcome of the interview, Scott, Tudor-Owen, Pedretti, and Bull (2014) designed a study to determine which parts of the method were most and least intuitive for officers undergoing training. to help assess what areas effective training occurs and what areas officers are in need of additional training. Results revealed the account stage to be the most intuitive, which is a positive development since this stage has been found to be one of the most important stages in determining interview outcome (Walsh & Bull, 2010). This study also showed engage and explain as well as closure to be the least intuitive areas, suggesting that further training on these two stages should be developed (Scott, Tudor-Owen, Pedretti, & Bull, 2014).

While the PEACE interview method is highly effective and versatile, it does still have some deficiencies. One major issue with this method is the overall lack of research on its effectiveness. Despite its rapidly growing popularity, there still seems to be a major deficit in the amount of research that has been performed. Additionally, while the PEACE method builds on other research techniques found to be effective when working with vulnerable groups such as youth, older adults, and individuals with intellectual disabilities, and it would logically follow that this method would be similarly effective, there is a lack of research showing the method's effectiveness with these groups (Schollum, 2017; Clarke, Prescott, & Milne, 2012; Wheatcroft, Wagstaff, & Russell, 2014). Lastly, the PEACE method requires copious amounts of training that will discourage police officers to adopt this new method (Walsh & Bull, 2010; Wheatcroft, Wagstaff, & Russell, 2014; Colomb, Ginet, Wright, Demarch, & Sadler, 2013).

Recommendations

Now that we have examined three of the most popular interview techniques, I will make a recommendation as to which interview method or combination of methods is best. However, before even considering which interview method is most effective I must discuss other changes that should be made in regards to how interviews are conducted and the evidence is thus presented in court proceedings. First, I recommend a change in policy when it comes to which party in a court case is responsible for proving the reliability of interviews presented in court. In case of *State v. Lawson* (2012), the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that the defense is no longer responsible for proving or disproving reliability of interviews and instead the prosecution is now expected to prove the reliability of interviews in order for their outcomes to be admissible in court (Loney & Cutler, 2016). This procedure would make it more difficult for coercive interrogations and false confessions to be entered as evidence in court cases, thus protecting citizens from this miscarriage of justice and helping to prevent other innocent individuals from being convicted.

Another recommendation is for all interviews—victim interviews, witness interviews, and suspect interviews—to be fully recorded. Accordingly, if there is an issue in how the interrogation was carried out, there will have evidence beyond hearsay to support the claim (Loney & Cutler, 2016). Additionally, requiring the recording of all interviews will hopefully decrease the number of coercive interviews and false confessions, because interrogators will be more easily held accountable for the way in which interviews are conducted. Not only should all interviews be recorded but they should be recorded from a neutral “equal focus” since having the camera on only the interviewer or the interviewee can alter the perception of what is occurring.

However, a neutral camera angle allows for viewers to form a more factual and less biased appraisal of the situation (Kassin, 2014).

Of the three interview methods discussed in this paper, the method I would recommend with modifications is the PEACE method. My recommendation is based on the technique's efficiency and its versatility. Since the method has been developed by police officers, lawyers, and psychologists who really understand the necessity for interviews to gather accurate information without compromising the information's integrity, it is far more effective than its rival, the Reid Technique, which is prone to get confessions through coercion with an increased likelihood of being false (Schollum, 2017). Additionally, unlike the Cognitive Interview, the PEACE method can be used for all types of interviews and not just witness interviews (Sooniste, Granhag, Stromwall, & Vrij, 2015). Also, the PEACE method's flexibility allows the interview to be tailored to fit the specific needs of the situation. Despite the lack of data, I am hopeful that the PEACE method would be effective in interviewing groups that are known to be more susceptible to interrogative suggestibility (Mastroberardino & Marucci, 2013; Schollum, 2017).

While the PEACE method appears to be the most effective interview method currently developed, there are some changes I would recommend. First, the method uses the Enhanced Cognitive Interview as part of its account stage (Schollum, 2017). I advise that instead, they utilize the Modified Cognitive Interview (Colomb, Ginet, Wright, Demarch, & Sadler, 2013). As one issue of the PEACE method is its length and difficulty to train, adjusting to the Modified Cognitive Interview will reduce the interview length while also improving the ease to which the method can be learned since there are two fewer steps for an interviewer to be trained on. Since research on the Modified Cognitive Interview has shown that the final two steps, change order

and change perception, of both the original Cognitive Interview and Enhanced Cognitive Interview are obsolete in helping to improve an individual's event recall, switching to the shorter method should not have any negative effects on the interview (Colomb, Ginet, Wright, Demarch, & Sadler, 2013). Another suggestion for improving the PEACE method would be to have someone from outside of the investigation actually administer the interview, especially when interviewing suspects. The reasoning underlying this recommendation is that officers associated with the investigation will likely have already established some belief as to a suspect's guilt or innocence. Research has shown that once a belief is formed, due to confirmation bias an individual will likely unknowingly seek out information that corroborates the belief (Kassin, Appleby, & Torkildson Perillo, 2010). Instead, if you have an investigator working on the case only perform the plan and preparation stage of the PEACE method and then from there plan out the interview for an outside investigator to conduct, there will be less likelihood for interviewer's biases to affect interview (Schollum, 2017).

Another recommendation is that a specific, comprehensive training model be developed for the PEACE method. Perhaps, such comprehensive training could be a form of certification that has to either be renewed regularly or whenever the method has been updated. As research previously examined in this paper has shown, an interview result is only as good as the person conducting the interview (Walsh & Bull, 2010). Special care should be taken to make certain that the engage and explain stage and closure stage are taught effectively since these are the most difficult steps for new trainees to grasp (Scott, Tudor-Owen, Pedretti, & Bull, 2014). The training should only certify officers with the ability to conduct interviews by demonstrating a sound understanding of all aspects.

Perhaps the most important recommendation I can offer is that effort needs to be taken to change the way officers view interviews. While prior studies have not compared the three most commonly used interview techniques as to their effectiveness, none of the research discussed in this paper is necessarily new. This research is and has been out for a while and yet many officers and jurisdictions have failed to make alterations to the way interviews are conducted Why is this so? Perhaps police officers do not trust the validity of the research or believe that they are exceptions to the data. Whatever the case, there is too much research showing that coercive interviews can lead to false confessions, and coercive interviews are still being conducted. Too many innocent people are being convicted for us to not be utilizing the research available and failure to change to a better method is a dereliction of duty. Police academies need to be taught the importance of research and adopt interviewing methods that research demonstrates lead to the most accurate outcomes. They need to be taught that proper interview techniques are extremely important in deciphering what actually occurred and that even though training and interviewing may be time-consuming, in the end, the benefits of sound interviewing will best serve the interests of the communities that they serve.

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