Communication Errors in Investigative Interviews: The Impact of Judgment, Factual and Contextual Errors on Trust, Rapport, and Willingness to Provide Information

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Abstract

Effective communication is crucial in investigative interviews to gather reliable information during criminal investigations. This study explores the impact of communication errors - factual, judgment, and contextual - on suspects' trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information. Building on previous research by Oostinga et al. (2018b), we introduce contextual errors to the existing framework of factual and judgment errors. A between-groups experimental design was employed, with participants assigned to one of four conditions: Judgment Error, Factual Error, Contextual Error, or Control. Results show that while overall trust was not significantly affected by errors, benevolence-based trust (affective trust) was notably reduced by judgment errors. Both judgment and factual errors negatively impacted rapport, with judgment errors having a particularly pronounced effect. However, contextual errors had a subtle influence on rapport when noticed, but did not significantly affect any other outcomes, including willingness to provide information. The study also highlights the importance of error detection, showing that participants' awareness of errors generally led to lower levels of trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information, especially when judgment and factual errors were detected. Limitations, including the low error detection rate and the online setting, point to the need for more immersive research methods. The results emphasize the importance of avoiding judgment errors to foster affective trust in investigative interviews. Recommendations for practice and future research are discussed to further examine communication errors and their implications for investigative interviews and other high-stakes interactions.

Keywords: investigative interviewing, communication errors, trust, rapport, willingness to provide information.

Introduction

Investigative interviewing is a fundamental aspect of criminal investigation and plays a crucial role in gathering reliable information from victims, witnesses, and suspects (Vrij et al., 2014; Yarbrough et al., 2013). Researchers and practitioners in forensic psychology and law enforcement emphasize its importance, as the information obtained not only generates valuable leads but can also determine the outcome of a case (Hill & Moston, 2011; Milne & Bull, 1999; Snook et al., 2010; Walsh et al., 2017). Therefore, sound interviewing skills are considered the "cornerstone of effective law enforcement" (Einspahr, 2000, p. 20), and evidence-based protocols have been developed to improve accuracy and reliability (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Milne & Bull, 1999). Interviewers must balance strategic questioning with rapport building. At the same time, they need to manage the interviewee's emotional state, consider contextual factors, and remain aware of potential biases (Powell et al., 2005). Given that police interviews take place almost daily and often provide key evidence, effective communication during the interview is crucial to the successful resolution of a case.

However, as with day-to-day conversations, communication errors can occur. Even the most skilled interviewers are not immune to making these errors. In fact, the complexity, stress and difficulty of an investigative interview often increase the likelihood of making errors, especially communication errors (Cigularov et al., 2010; Halverson et al., 2011; Lingard, 2004; Oostinga et al., 2018a, 2018b, 2019). These communication errors - ranging from factual inaccuracies to misjudgments about the interviewee's emotional state or context - can disrupt the interview process, weaken trust, and undermine rapport (Cigularov et al., 2010; Oostinga et al., 2018b). Oostinga et al. (2018b) classify these errors into three main types: Factual errors, which involve factual inaccuracies such as incorrect names or dates; Judgment errors, which are misinterpretations of the suspect's thoughts or feelings; and Contextual errors, which involve deviations from established practices or norms.

While there has been extensive research on investigative interviewing, there has been limited focus on the impact of interviewer communication errors. Oostinga and colleagues have been at the forefront of identifying and investigating these errors, an area of research that is still in its early stages (Oostinga et al., 2018a, 2018b, 2019). Thus, this study primarily builds on the work of Oostinga et al. (2018b), who explored how errors affect trust, rapport, and the quantity and quality of information shared in law enforcement interactions. Their research focused on two main types of errors: Factual and Judgment errors. Similarly, much recent postgraduate research has focused on these two types of errors. Contextual errors have often been left out, as researchers have tended to focus on errors that directly affect the people involved in the interaction, rather than those that are related to procedure or environment. This omission creates a gap in our understanding of how contextual errors affect investigative interviews.

This study seeks to address this gap by including contextual errors and providing a broader perspective on the types of communication errors in interviews. Although contextual errors may seem less personally directed than factual or judgment errors, they can still influence interview outcomes. For example, misaligned communication regarding procedural elements, such as inappropriate interview settings or deviations from expected protocols, can hinder rapport and reduce cooperation. Importantly, because contextual errors arise from aspects such as interview settings and procedural choices - elements that can be relatively easy to adjust and change - understanding their impact is particularly valuable. This study also aims to replicate the findings of Oostinga et al. (2018b) on factual and judgment errors. This replication not only strengthens the existing knowledge on these error types but also expands the scope of the study by incorporating an “new” error. By examining all three error types together, this study strives to provide a comprehensive understanding of how different communication errors affect trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information in investigative interviews. Among these errors, judgment errors are expected to have the most

impact on these variables, as they are the most personally salient and directly affect the interviewee's perception of being understood and treated fairly.

Beyond investigative interviews, the effects of such communication errors could provide insights for other high-stakes contexts, such as crisis negotiations, legal proceedings, and healthcare interactions. In these settings, even minor communication errors can have serious consequences, impacting decision-making, eroding public trust, and, in extreme cases, have life-or-death consequences. Therefore, there is the potential for broader application of the insights gained from studying communication errors in an investigative setting. Additionally, by identifying and confirming the types of communication errors that have the most significant impact, resources can be allocated more strategically to address the most pressing ones. This can support the development of targeted interventions and training programs to reduce the occurrence and effects of communication errors in practice. This is particularly important as challenges such as political and public health crises or environmental disasters become more urgent and frequent, where rapid and effective communication is essential (Eldridge et al., 2020; Gollust et al., 2020).

This thesis is structured as follows: It starts with an overview of the investigative interview approach, followed by a detailed examination of the key variables: rapport, trust, and willingness to provide information. It then analyzes the impact of communication errors on these factors. The methods section outlines the research design, and the thesis concludes with the research findings, discussion, and limitations.

Approaches to Police Interviews

Interviewing victims, witnesses, or suspects can be challenging, especially if they are reluctant to talk (Vrij et al., 2014). To address this difficulty, different ways of conducting an interview have been developed over time. This study focuses on investigative interviews, which follow an information-gathering approach. Unlike interrogation, which has negative

connotations due to its association with coercive tactics and false confessions, investigative interviewing emphasizes ethical techniques to obtain complete, accurate, and reliable information. This approach has been found to elicit significantly more relevant information than other interview styles (Vrij et al., 2014). Instead of putting pressure on the interviewee, the emphasis is on obtaining detailed accounts and verifying the suspect's statements against the evidence (Meissner et al., 2014). To achieve this, the method emphasizes building rapport with the suspect, as well as the use of open-ended questions that encourage suspects to provide more detailed answers (Vrij et al., 2006).

A widely recognized framework for investigative interviewing is the PEACE model - an acronym for Preparation and Planning, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, and Evaluation. This model addresses false confessions and promotes ethical interviewing, seeking a detailed account rather than a confession (Milne et al., 2008; Schollum & New Zealand Police, 2005; Soukara et al., 2009). However, the effectiveness of such models, and therefore the success of the interview, is significantly influenced by interpersonal dynamics like rapport and trust (Oostinga et al., 2018b). These factors have a significant impact on how much information a suspect discloses and, ultimately, on the outcome of the interview. Therefore, understanding and effectively managing these dynamics is critical to conducting successful investigative interviews. We will explore the role of rapport, trust, and willingness to provide information in more detail in the following sections.

Rapport

One of the most critical factors in successful investigative interviews is rapport, which has a significant impact on both the accuracy of recall and a suspect's willingness to cooperate (Abbe & Brandon, 2012; Walsh & Bull, 2011). Despite its acknowledged importance, the definition of rapport varies across studies. For the purposes of this study, rapport is defined as “the quality of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee” (Neequaye & Mac

Giolla, 2022, p. 8), in accordance with the model of Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990). Their framework is one of the few theoretical models available for understanding rapport (Abbe & Brandon, 2012) and identifies mutual attention, positivity, and coordination as key elements.

Mutual attention includes behaviors such as maintaining eye contact, actively listening, and leaning forward (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). Effective mutual attention promotes the suspect's perception that the interviewer is engaged and receptive, which can enhance rapport. *Positivity* includes both warmth (perceived friendliness) and competence (respect and ability to act on intentions), which can be conveyed through empathy and reassuring language during the interview (Abbe & Brandon, 2012; Fiske et al., 2007). *Coordination*, which includes mirroring gestures and speech patterns, promotes harmony and responsiveness (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990).

Building rapport is particularly important during the Engage and Explain phase of the PEACE model, as it sets the tone for the interview. However, rapport building should not be seen as a one-off effort but as a dynamic, ongoing process throughout the interview to improve quality and outcomes (Walsh & Bull, 2011). Research by Walsh and Bull (2011) emphasizes that maintaining rapport throughout the interview is crucial to obtaining accurate information and highlights the need for interviewers to remain alert and adaptable. However, while rapport fosters a cooperative interview environment, it is not sufficient on its own. An additional and equally important factor is trust, which plays a more direct role in determining whether a suspect will engage truthfully in the interview.

Trust

As mentioned, trust is another important factor in investigative interviews, as it increases the likelihood of obtaining truthful information (Oleszkiewicz et al., 2023; Vrij et al., 2014). Unlike rapport, which is centered on the quality of interaction, trust is about the

suspect's willingness to be vulnerable and their expectation that the interviewer will act fairly and ethically. When trust is low, the suspect's willingness to share information may decrease (Vallano & Compo, 2015). Therefore, establishing and maintaining trust between the interviewer and the interviewee is crucial to encourage truthful disclosure, which is essential for the success of the interview and overall investigation (St-Yves, 2006; St-Yves & Deslauriers-Varin, 2009). While rapport and trust are related, they serve different functions in investigative interviews. Rapport improves the flow of communication by fostering a positive and engaging interaction, while trust determines the suspect's belief that the interviewer will treat their disclosures fairly. A well-conducted interview requires both elements: rapport to create an open dialogue, and trust to encourage honesty and cooperation.

Although research has extensively explored the antecedents and outcomes of trust, the literature lacks a consistent framework for its conceptualization and measurement (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012; Legood et al., 2022). Some researchers view trust as a unidimensional construct (Mayer et al., 1995), while others argue that it is multidimensional, comprising distinct but interrelated elements such as cognitive and affective trust (McAllister, 1995). Legood et al. (2022) argue that existing theories and measures do not adequately address both the cognitive and affective dimensions and instead advocate Mayer et al.'s unidimensional model. Mayer et al. (1995) define trust as “the willingness of one party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform some action that is important to the trustor, regardless of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (p. 712). In investigative interviews, this means that the suspect (trustor) must believe that the interviewer (trustee) will handle information fairly, despite having no direct control over the interviewer's actions. Trust in this context depends on the interviewer’s transparency, fairness, and ethical conduct. Mayer et al.'s framework identifies three key components of trust: *ability*, *benevolence*, and *integrity*. Ability refers to the interviewer's expertise, which inspires confidence in the interviewer's effectiveness. Benevolence reflects genuine concern for the

suspect's welfare, which promotes comfort and openness. Integrity refers to the perceived ethical behavior of the interviewer, which reassures the interviewee and increases trust. High levels of benevolence and integrity are particularly important, as they shape the interviewee's perception of the interviewer's honesty, reducing suspicions of deception and ultimately increasing the effectiveness of the interview.

Willingness to Provide Information

Ultimately, the success of an interview depends on the suspect's willingness to provide information - a factor influenced by both rapport and trust. Research consistently highlights the critical role these elements play in fostering openness and cooperation (Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2004). As discussed, when rapport is strong, suspects are more likely to feel comfortable, understood, and willing to engage in an open dialogue. Trust, in turn, shapes their perception of the interviewer's competence, integrity, and fairness, increasing their confidence in sharing sensitive information. The dynamic interplay between these variables and the willingness to provide information is therefore central to the success of investigative interviews. In addition, beyond rapport and trust, other factors also influence a suspect's willingness to provide information, including personal characteristics, the nature of the crime, and the interviewer's approach (Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2004). However, even when interviewers make deliberate efforts to build rapport and trust, communication errors can still occur. These errors can disrupt the interview process, undermine rapport and trust, and ultimately reduce a suspect's willingness to provide information. The next section examines these communication errors in more detail.

Communication Errors and Their Impact on Trust, Rapport, and Willingness to Provide Information

We communicate with each other daily through various channels - spoken, written, and electronic. The term communication is mostly used for processes of sending and

receiving messages and information, as well as producing and reproducing meanings (Hansson et al., 2020). When communicating, there is always a risk of miscommunication or misunderstanding due to communication errors. In everyday interactions, such errors may lead to frustration or annoyance. However, in high-stakes investigative interviews, where the accuracy of information is critical, their impact can be far more serious. It is therefore essential to identify and mitigate these errors (Oostinga et al., 2018b).

Although studies on communication errors in high-stakes interactions use various terms, they generally describe similar underlying concepts. Broadly, these errors can be grouped into three main categories: errors related to factual accuracy, errors in judgment or interpretation, and errors influenced by contextual factors (Douglas et al., 2021; Halverson et al., 2011; Lingard, 2004; Oostinga et al., 2018a, 2018b, 2019). For example, a study by Lingard (2004) categorized communication errors in medical settings as occasional, content, purpose, and audience errors, while Oostinga et al. (2018b) identified factual, judgment, and contextual errors in crisis negotiations and suspect interviews. Given its relevance and proven application in both negotiation and suspect interview contexts, this paper adopts Oostinga et al.'s framework to examine the impact of these errors in investigative settings.

Factual errors occur when there are inaccuracies in the content of the message, such as incorrect statements about the suspect's actions. These errors can damage trust and rapport by making suspects question the competence and integrity of the interviewer (Oostinga et al., 2018b). Regardless of how an interviewer responds after the error, it disrupts the interpersonal dynamics and may lead the suspect to perceive them as unprofessional or unreliable (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). If this is the case, the suspect may become defensive or reluctant to provide information. Interestingly, however, research suggests that in certain contexts, errors can paradoxically lead to positive outcomes, as they can lead to more information being shared. In some cases, factual errors can prompt suspects to provide more information in an

attempt to correct inaccuracies - though the accuracy and reliability of such corrections remains uncertain, further complicating the investigative process (Milne & Bull, 1999).

Judgment errors, on the other hand, involve misinterpretation of a suspect's emotions, thoughts, or needs. These errors in particular, can make a suspect feel misunderstood or disrespected, which in turn can reduce their willingness to engage (Mayer et al., 1995; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). If an interviewer misinterprets a suspect's emotions - for example, mistaking anxiety for guilt - the suspect may withdraw, reducing the quality of the interaction. Similarly to factual errors, judgment errors can also lead suspects to provide additional information - but not necessarily more accurate information. Oostinga et al. (2018b) found that following a judgment error, suspects often provide excessive or even misleading details, which can complicate the investigation. This highlights the need to distinguish between a suspect's *willingness* to provide information and their *actual* information provision. A suspect may appear more forthcoming after a judgment error, but this does not necessarily mean that the information they provide is truthful or useful. Instead, they may feel compelled to assert their correctness and maintain their integrity, leading to over-explaining or even providing misleading details (Oostinga et al., 2018b). It is important to note that the study specifically examined the *willingness* to provide information, rather than the accuracy or usefulness of the actual information provided. Willingness to provide information reflects a suspect's willingness to engage in conversation and share details, regardless of whether the information is ultimately reliable. This distinction is crucial because an increase in willingness does not guarantee more accurate or relevant information - it simply indicates a greater willingness to talk. In addition, research suggests that judgment errors have a more detrimental effect on suspect trust and rapport than factual errors (Oostinga et al., 2018b), possibly because they are perceived as a personal affront, making suspects feel threatened and disrespected (Oostinga et al., 2018b; Ren & Gray, 2009).

Contextual errors, although less studied than factual or judgment errors, can significantly hinder communication by disrupting the interview environment (Lingard, 2004). These errors occur when deviations from expected communication norms - such as excessive use of police jargon or complex phrasing - impede understanding. While they do not directly challenge a suspect's integrity, they can still lead to miscommunication, incomplete statements, or even unintentionally misleading responses. Research shows that people struggle to simplify language in legal contexts. Hanna and Henderson (2018) found that lawyers often used overly complex language with child witnesses and failed to recognize when questions needed to be simplified, leading to misunderstandings. Although intermediaries were able to rephrase difficult questions, lawyers themselves struggled to do so. Similarly, McCardle (2018) found that police officers simplified language for youth witnesses but not for youth suspects, often using legal jargon that hindered understanding. This imbalance suggests that unclear language may not only reduce the reliability of responses but also disadvantage certain individuals in the justice process. Comparable issues arise in medical settings, where poorly phrased or ill-timed statements lead to inefficiency, tension and stress, reinforcing the broader risks of unclear communication in high-stakes environments (Lingard, 2004). In an investigative context, the consequences can be even more severe - not only is communication disrupted, but there is a risk that evidence will be distorted, ultimately undermining the integrity of the interview process.

Hypotheses

Based on these findings, this study proposes the following hypotheses regarding judgment, factual and contextual errors, and their impact on rapport, trust and willingness to provide information:

1. General Impact of Errors:

H1.1: Errors made by an interviewer during an investigative interview - whether factual, judgment, or contextual - will decrease the suspect's trust compared to interviews where no errors occurred.

H1.2: Errors made by an interviewer during an investigative interview - whether factual, judgment, or contextual - will decrease the suspect's rapport compared to interviews where no errors occurred.

H1.3: Errors made by an interviewer during an investigative interview - whether factual, judgment, or contextual - will increase the suspect's willingness to provide information compared to interviews where no errors occurred.

2. Specific Impact of Judgment Errors:

H2.1: Judgment errors made by an interviewer during an investigative interview will decrease the suspect's trust more than factual or contextual errors.

H2.2: Judgment errors made by an interviewer during an investigative interview will decrease the rapport between the suspect and the interviewer more than factual or contextual errors.

H2.3: Judgment errors made by an interviewer during an investigative interview will increase the suspect's willingness to provide information more than factual or contextual errors.

Methods

Study Design

This study employed a between-groups experimental design using quantitative vignettes to test the hypotheses. Vignette methodology is widely used for examining how specific variables influence attitudes and behaviors (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Atzmüller &

Steiner, 2010). In this study, participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental groups: Judgment Error, Factual Error, Contextual Error, or Control. Each group received a different vignette that manipulated the type of error presented during an investigative interview. Participants were asked to imagine they had been accused of exam fraud and were undergoing an investigative interview, which they then read as part of the study. Following the vignette, they completed a survey measuring three dependent variables: perceived trust in the interviewer, perceived rapport with the interviewer, and willingness to provide information. The between-groups design enabled a comparison of how the different types of errors affected participants' perceptions and responses during the interaction.

Participants

Data was collected from 226 participants via the Qualtrics survey platform using a combination of online recruitment, convenience sampling, and the University of Twente's SONA system, which provides students with course credits for research participation. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the BMS Ethics Committee at the University of Twente (Application number: 240689).

The inclusion criteria required participants to (1) be at least 18 years old, (2) have access to a digital device, and (3) have a high self-assessed level of English. Participants were excluded if they provided incomplete responses. To ensure balanced group sizes, a stratified sampling approach was employed during random assignment. This approach facilitated equal representation across the four experimental groups, resulting in 52 participants per group and a final sample size of 208. The sample consisted of 138 females (66.3%), 68 males (32.7%), and 2 non-binary/other participants. Age ranged from 18 to 96 years (M = 30.9, SD = 13.8), and participants represented 24 nationalities. The largest groups were German (65.9%), American (8.2%), Spanish (4.3%), and Dutch (3.9%). Most participants had completed a bachelor's degree (44.2%) or high school (25%), followed by a master's degree (18.3%).

Materials and Measures

The Background Story

Participants were provided with a detailed background story, positioning them as *Alex Jansen*, a 21-year-old university student accused of exam fraud. Alex is a student assistant in the IT department, that grants them access to the university's secure exam database. On the night of a serious exam fraud incident, Alex stayed late at the university, supposedly to study. However, stressed about failing and struggling financially, Alex misused their access to copy exam answers with the intent to sell them. After erasing any digital evidence, Alex left the IT office around 6:30 pm and went to a study room, briefly talking with a classmate, Mike. The building was mostly quiet, with only a few students and staff around. Alex stayed until 10:30 pm before leaving the building. The next day, the discovery of the fraud led to a university-wide investigation. Due to Alex's access and late-night presence, they were questioned as part of the effort to find the person responsible for the exam fraud. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in Alex's role, facing an investigative interview as part of the university's inquiry. The entire Qualtrics study, including a more detailed version of the background story, can be seen in Appendix A.

The Interview Scripts

The interview transcripts were designed to simulate a chat-based investigative interview in which participants imagine themselves as the interviewee. To facilitate identification with the interviewee, they are presented in a gender-neutral format. The interview follows a structured format in which the interviewer asks the participant about their activities leading up to the alleged exam fraud. It is designed to simulate a realistic investigative setting in which the interviewer gathers information while maintaining a neutral tone.

To examine the impact of interviewer error, different versions of the transcript were created. Each version was identical in structure and content, except for a specific error made by the interviewer and the two answer options presented to the participants. These response options were labeled as “confrontational” and “non-confrontational” to clarify their intended distinction. Participants could choose between the two to make the task more interactive. Although response selection could theoretically serve as a dependent variable, it was not analyzed as such due to its categorical nature and the limited statistical power associated with binary or ordinal outcomes. As the primary focus of the study was on interviewer error rather than response tendencies, response selection was treated as an interactive element rather than a primary outcome measure. However, future research could examine it as a dependent variable using logistic regression or multinomial modelling to explore its relationship with experimental conditions.

In the Judgment Error transcript, the interviewer makes a judgment error by questioning why the participant studied alone all evening and implying that they have no friends to study with. The interviewer specifically asks, “You were studying alone the entire evening? Don’t you have friends to study with?”. The participant can respond in a non-confrontational manner by saying, “I mean, I was focused on my studies. It’s possible I didn’t notice everything, but I wasn’t ignoring anything on purpose.”. Alternatively, they can choose a confrontational response: “Wait what? Why are you suggesting I was blind to what was happening?”. The confrontational response is intended to challenge the interviewer's implication rather than to suggest prior knowledge of events. The interviewer then continues with “Okay. Mike mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30 pm. Was that the last time you interacted with him?”

In the Factual Error transcript, the interviewer makes a factual mistake by incorrectly referring to the participant's classmate by the wrong name. Instead of using the correct name, *Mike*, the interviewer says, “Martin mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30

pm.”. The participant can respond in a non-confrontational way by saying, “I’m a bit confused. Did you mean Mike instead of Martin?” or take a confrontational approach by replying, “Wait what? Martin? I thought we were talking about Mike?”. The interviewer then responds with: “Yes, I meant Mike.”.

In the Contextual Error transcript, the interviewer uses a police-specific term that the interviewee is unfamiliar with. This occurs when the interviewer says, “According to our preliminary RMS data, Mike mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30 pm.”. The participant can respond in a non-confrontational manner by asking, “I’m not sure what RMS stands for. Could you please clarify that?” or choose a confrontational response by saying, “RMS? What are you talking about?”. The Interviewer then answers: “Oh, RMS stands for Record Management System, where we keep our reports and data. Anyway, was that the last time you interacted with him?”.

Finally, the No Error transcript serves as a baseline in which the interviewer conducts the interview without any errors. The interview proceeds as expected and provides a standard for comparison with the other versions. However, the participant can still choose two answers. After the interviewer asks “Okay. Mike mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30 pm. Was that the last time you interacted with him?”, the participant can respond in a non-confrontational manner by saying, “Yes, we talked around 6:30. After that, I was alone working on my studies.”. Alternatively, they can take a more confrontational approach by saying, “I suppose so. After that, I just studied on my own.”. The interviewer then continues with “Alright. You also mentioned that you saw the cleaning staff in the building around 9:00 pm. Did they appear to be doing their routine work?”.

Online Questionnaire

An online questionnaire was created using the Qualtrics survey software to assess participants' perceptions of the interview. It began with demographic questions, including age,

gender, and nationality. Participants then answered questions to assess perceived trust and rapport and willingness to provide information. The following sections provide a detailed explanation of the different measures used.

Rapport. To assess participants' perceptions of rapport, the Rapport Scales for Investigative Interviews and Interrogations, Interviewee Version (RS3i) was used (Duke et al., 2018). The RS3i is an 18-item, multidimensional, self-report questionnaire created to measure different aspects of rapport in intelligence and forensic interviews (Duke et al., 2018). It comprises five subscales, each capturing a different dimension of rapport: *Attentiveness*, which measures the degree to which the interviewer appeared attentive to the interviewee; *Trust/Respect*, which assesses the level of trust and respect the interviewee felt from the interviewer; *Expertise*, which evaluates the interviewer's perceived competence and expertise in conducting the interview; *Cultural Similarity*, which gauges the perceived cultural similarity between the interviewer and interviewee; *Connected Flow*, which reflects the smoothness and naturalness of the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. Additionally, Duke identified a sixth scale called *Commitment to Communication*. The three items comprising this scale were excluded from the analysis because this scale measures the intended effect of rapport rather than rapport itself.

The scale was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), where higher scores indicated a stronger level of rapport. Participants read each questionnaire item and indicated their level of agreement. To create an overall scale score for the RS3i, mean scores were calculated for each of the five subscales, and the total rapport score was obtained by averaging these subscale means. This approach ensures a comprehensive measure of rapport across multiple dimensions as defined by the RS3i.

Some items were modified to ensure clarity and relevance to the study context. For example, items that used “we” were made more specific by changing them to “the interviewer and I”. Thus, “We share our culture” was changed to “The interviewer and I share our

culture". In addition, items were clarified, e.g. "Communication went smoothly" was changed to "Communication between the interviewer and me went smoothly". The scale did not include any reverse-scored items

Trust. To assess participants perceptions of trust, a 16-item scale based on Mayer and Davis's (1999) trust framework, focusing on Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity was used. During a suspect interview, the suspect, acting as the trustor, evaluates the interviewer's trustworthiness. The scale is composed of seven subscales, of which we used Ability (6 items), Benevolence (4 items), and Integrity (6 items). It was assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicated higher levels of trust. Participants read each questionnaire item and indicated their level of agreement. Mean scores were calculated for each of the three subscales (Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity), and the overall trust score was obtained by averaging these subscale means. This approach ensures a comprehensive measure of trust across the three dimensions as defined by the framework.

For clarity and relevance to suspect interviews, some items were modified. For instance, references to "Top management" were changed to "The Interviewer," so the item "Top management is very capable of performing its job" was changed to "The interviewer seemed capable of performing its job". The integrity item "The interviewer's actions and behaviors did not seem to be very consistent" was reverse-coded.

Willingness to provide information. To assess the willingness to provide information, the study utilized a scale adapted from Beune et al. (2011). Participants were asked to think about a follow-up interview regarding committed exam fraud and consider how they would respond in that situation. They were then asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the following statements regarding their responses in this follow-up interview: "I would tell the interviewer everything"; "I would provide a lot of information to the interviewer"; "I would give truthful information to the interviewer". Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale. Some of the items were modified to fit the study's specific

investigative interview scenario. Similarly to Oostinga et al. (2018b), a score for the willingness to provide information was created by averaging the scores on these three items. A high score indicated that the participant was more willing to provide information to the interviewer.

Manipulation Check

A manipulation check was conducted at the end of the survey to determine whether participants detected the errors in the interview. Participants were first asked "Did anything about the interview or the interviewer seem unusual or stand out to you? (This could be something related to the questions, the interviewer, or any other detail you noticed)" with a "yes" or "no" response. If they answered "yes", they were asked to describe what stood out. Regardless of their response to the first question, all participants were then specifically asked, "Did the interviewer make an error or mistake during the interview? (An error in this context refers to any misalignment in communication between the interviewer and the suspect, such as a misjudgment, mix-up of facts, or any other miscommunication).". Again, responses were limited to "yes" or "no", and if they chose "yes", they were asked to describe the nature of the error they had noticed. These questions helped to establish whether participants had identified the intentional error in the experimental conditions and allowed them to explain what they had observed.

Procedure

Upon accessing the survey, participants were presented with an introduction that provided a brief overview of the content and purpose of the study, as well as the estimated time required to complete the survey (approximately 20 minutes). To maintain the integrity of the study and to avoid bias, participants were given a cover story, describing the study as an investigation into perceptions of interview strategies. Participants were told that by analyzing their responses to a simulated interview scenario, the researchers hoped to identify which

strategies were perceived to be the most effective. They were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw and the confidentiality of their responses. The survey then asked participants to agree to the consent statements in order to proceed. Those who did not agree were directed to the end of the survey and thanked for their time.

Participants who consented first answered demographic questions, including age, gender and nationality, before being randomly assigned to one of four groups: Judgment Error, Factual Error, Contextual Error, or Control. They were not informed of their group assignment or of the existence of other groups. Each participant was then presented with a background story introducing them as *Alex*, a student accused of stealing exam answers. The background story described Alex's involvement and the circumstances leading to their questioning, as previously outlined in the background story. Following this, participants engaged with an interactive interview transcript in which the interviewer questioned Alex about their actions, allowing them to choose a response after the error. The transcripts were identical except for the type of error made by the interviewer, as mentioned before in the interview scripts.

The interviewer begins by asking Alex to give a detailed account of their activities after leaving the university late at night. Alex recounts working late, briefly speaking with a classmate named Mike, and then studying alone. The interviewer asks whether Alex noticed anything unusual in the building during that time and whether Mike was the last person Alex interacted with. They also ask if the cleaning staff were carrying out their usual duties. The interviewer also brings up a report from the cleaning staff that Alex seemed nervous, which Alex attributes to exam stress. Finally, the interviewer asks Alex if they have any additional information to share.

After reading this transcript, participants completed a post-interview questionnaire assessing rapport, trust and willingness to provide information using a 5-point Likert scale. After completing the questionnaires, participants were debriefed. The debriefing explained the

true purpose of the study, including the types of errors being investigated, and can be found in Appendix A. This step is crucial to ensure ethical transparency and to provide participants with a full understanding of the study. The survey ended with an acknowledgement of participation and provided the researcher's contact email for any further questions or comments.

Data Analysis

The statistical software R Studio (version 4.3.1) was used to analyze the collected data. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the main effects of error type (factual, judgment, contextual, and control) on trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information, with Welch's ANOVA and Welch's t-tests used where homogeneity of variance was violated. A 2x3 factorial ANOVA was performed to assess the interaction between error type and error detection (noticed vs. not noticed), followed by tests of simple effects using independent samples t-tests with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of trust subscales (ability, benevolence, and integrity), and post-hoc analyses were conducted to explore whether different types of interviewer errors differentially influenced participants' perceptions of these trust subconstructs.

Results

Manipulation Check

The manipulation check assessed whether participants noticed the errors embedded in the interview scripts. As described in the *Methods section*, participants were first asked whether they noticed anything unusual about the interview or interviewer, followed by a direct question about whether the interviewer made an error. Responses were binary, with participants describing errors they identified in an open text field.

In total, 31.2% of all participants reported detecting an error. As expected, the control group, in which no error was embedded, had a low false detection rate (3.8%), suggesting that participants generally did not perceive errors where none were present. Among those who incorrectly reported an error, open-ended responses suggested that factors such as miscommunication or subjective interpretation of the interviewer's style may have led them to misidentify errors. In the experimental group, the overall detection rate was 40.4%, with factual errors being the most frequently identified, followed by judgment errors and contextual errors (see Table 1).

Table 1

Error Detection Rates by Group and Error Type

Group	Participants (*N*)	Participants Reporting Error (*N*)	Error Detection Rate
Control	52	2	3.8%
Factual	52	33	63.5%
Judgment	52	16	30.8%
Contextual	52	14	26.9%
Experimental	156	63	40.4%
Overall	208	65	31.2%

To better understand these patterns, we used a K-means clustering approach, a technique that groups similar responses together based on common characteristics. This approach helped identify recurring themes in the way participants described the errors they identified. Overall, most participants explicitly recognized the error assigned to their condition, confirming that the manipulations were noticeable. Across all error types, a common theme emerged: participants often took a stance on the interviewer's behavior, either criticizing it as unfair or expressing discomfort with how the error affected the conversation.

In the judgment error condition, participants frequently highlighted concerns about leading and suggestive questioning, perceiving the interviewer as having pre-existing opinions. Many responses also focused on unfair assumptions about the participant's awareness (e.g. "misjudged me and the situation", "error of thinking Alex was 'blind' to the situation"). For the factual error condition, participants commonly pointed out misremembered names and misattributions, with responses noting the repeated confusion of "Mike" and "Martin" (e.g. "he said Martin instead of Mike", "name mix-up", "switched names", "he used a wrong name"). Additionally, some participants criticized the structure of the interview, expressing discomfort with the way the interviewer narrated events before asking questions. In the contextual error condition, responses largely focused on the interviewer's use of unfamiliar words or jargon without explanation (e.g., "he used a word I didn't know and didn't explain what it meant", "miscommunication, used a word that the suspect did not know and did not explain it later"). A specific cluster of responses also addressed confusion around the abbreviation RMS, with participants noting that it was never clarified (e.g. "he never told me what an RMS was", "the RMS reference").

In summary, the different patterns of errors found in the experimental conditions aligned with the intended manipulation. However, as the results of the manipulation show, only a limited number of participants explicitly labeled these instances as errors, which was unexpected. Nevertheless, the open-ended responses indicated that while participants noticed deviations in the interviewer's performance, they may not have explicitly categorized them as "errors." Instead, their interpretation of "error" seemed to be more closely associated with factual inaccuracies than with judgment or contextual errors. Notably, some participants who responded "yes" to noticing something unusual (Q1) did not respond affirmatively when asked whether the interviewer made an error (Q2). This distinction suggests that while participants recognized the interviewer's behavior as suboptimal, they may not have labeled these instances as outright errors.

Despite this, all participants were retained in their respective conditions, and hypothesis testing proceeded with the full sample. This decision was based on the understanding that errors can shape participants' perceptions even when they are not consciously acknowledged or explicitly reported (Hassin, 2013; Oberai & Anand, 2018). Furthermore, participants' responses indicate that they were aware of interviewer errors even if they did not explicitly define them as such. We elaborate on this rationale in the Discussion section under *Barriers to Error Reporting*. Additionally, to provide a complementary perspective, we conducted further analyses comparing participants who identified errors with those who did not, to explore potential differences in their responses.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and zero-order correlations among the study variables. All measures demonstrated high internal consistency. Trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information were positively correlated, indicating that higher perceived trust and rapport are associated with a greater willingness to share information. Notably, trust had the strongest association with rapport, while its correlation with willingness to provide information was moderate. Rapport and willingness to provide information also showed a weaker but still significant positive relationship.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Inter-Correlations among Study Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*α*	1	2	3
1. Trust	3.17	.47	.85	—		
2. Rapport	3.56	.50	.88	**.56**	—	
3. Willingness	2.64	1.02	.83	**.46**	**.24**	—

Note. N = 208, **bold** for significance at the .01 level (2-tailed) and *italics* for significance at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis Testing

Effects of Interviewer Errors on Dependent Variables

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations for the dependent variables across the error groups. Trust scores remained relatively stable across groups, with the lowest mean in the Factual Error group and the highest in the Contextual Error group. Rapport scores were highest in the control group and lowest in the Judgment Error group. Willingness to provide information followed a similar pattern, with the lowest scores in the Judgment Error condition. To test our hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA was conducted, with the type of error as the independent variable and trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information as the dependent variables. Where significant effects were detected, post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test were performed to determine specific group differences.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Trust, Rapport, and Willingness to Provide Information Across Error Groups

	Error Groups							
	Control (N = 52)		Judgment (N = 52)		Factual (N = 52)		Contextual (N = 52)	
DV	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Trust	3.24	0.48	3.13	0.48	3.04	0.39	3.26	0.50
Rapport	3.74	0.45	3.41	0.63	3.46	0.38	3.61	0.46
Willingness	2.79	1.02	2.50	0.99	2.51	1.02	2.78	1.06

Note. Values represent means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) for each measure. DV = Dependent Variable.

Trust

H1.1 predicted that interviewer errors would decrease trust compared to interviews with no errors. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that error type had a small but significant effect on trust, $F(3, 204) = 2.69$, $p = .047$, $\eta^2 = .038$. Given this significance, Tukey's HSD post hoc comparisons were conducted but revealed no significant differences in trust between any of the error conditions ($p > .05$). This suggests that while error type overall influenced trust, individual group differences were not statistically significant. To better understand the magnitude of these effects, Cohen's d was calculated for each comparison. The Factual Error - Control contrast yielded a moderate effect size ($d = .51$, 95% CI [0.12, 0.90]), whereas the Judgment Error - Control ($d = .23$, 95% CI [-0.16, 0.61]) and Contextual Error - Control ($d = .002$, 95% CI [-0.38, 0.39]) comparisons showed smaller effects. These results suggest that while factual errors may meaningfully reduce trust, the practical significance of judgment and contextual errors is negligible. Thus, H1.1 was not supported.

H2.1 predicted that judgment errors would lead to a greater reduction in trust than factual or contextual errors. Given that the planned post hoc comparisons already assessed these relationships, additional t-tests were unnecessary. Instead, planned contrasts were conducted to compare each error group to the Control condition for increased statistical power. Linear regression contrasts showed that trust ratings in the Factual Error condition ($M = 3.04$, $SD = .47$) were significantly lower than in the Control condition ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .47$), $b = -0.22$, $t(204) = -2.43$, $p = .016$, 95% CI [-0.41, -0.04]. However, trust in the Judgment Error ($M = 3.15$, $SD = .49$) and Contextual Error ($M = 3.26$, $SD = .46$) groups did not significantly differ from the Control condition ($p = .22$ and $p = .99$, respectively). The effect sizes further support this, with the Judgment Error - Factual Error contrast showing only a small effect ($d = .25$, 95% CI [-0.14, 0.63]). Given that judgment errors did not produce a greater reduction in trust than factual errors, H2.1 was not supported. Levene's test for

homogeneity of variance was non-significant, $F(3, 204) = 1.63$, $p = .18$, confirming that variance assumptions were met.

Rapport

H1.2 predicted that interviewer errors would decrease rapport compared to interviews with no errors. A one-way ANOVA showed a significant effect of error type on rapport, $F(3, 204) = 5.20$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .071$. Due to a violation of homogeneity of variance (Levene's test: $p = .011$), Welch's t-tests were used for pairwise comparisons. In support of H1.2, the Judgment Error group reported significantly lower rapport than the Control group, $t(78.32) = -2.34$, $p = .021$, $d = -0.51$, 95% CI [-0.94, -0.08]. Similarly, the Factual Error group also demonstrated significantly lower rapport than the Control group, $t(78.32) = -2.34$, $p = .01$. However, no significant differences were found between the Contextual Error group and the Control group, $t(78.32) = -1.12$, $p = .73$. These results indicate that judgment and factual errors negatively impact rapport, whereas contextual errors do not have a measurable effect.

H2.2 predicted that judgment errors would have a stronger negative effect on rapport than factual or contextual errors. Supporting this prediction, the Judgment Error group reported significantly lower rapport than the combined Non-Judgment Error groups (Factual and Contextual), $t(91.46) = -2.02$, $p = .045$, $d = -0.42$, 95% CI [-0.84, -0.01]. These results support both H1.2 and H2.2, suggesting that interviewer errors, particularly judgment errors, negatively affect rapport.

Willingness to Provide Information

H1.3 predicted that interviewer errors would decrease willingness to provide information compared to the control condition. However, the one-way ANOVA revealed no significant effect of error type on willingness, $F(3, 204) = 1.44$, $p = .233$, $\eta^2 = .021$. Post hoc

comparisons confirmed that willingness to provide information did not significantly differ across any of the conditions (all *p*-values > .05). Thus, H1.3 was not supported.

Similarly, H2.3 predicted that judgment errors would decrease willingness to provide information more than factual or contextual errors. However, Welch's t-test found no significant difference between the judgment error group and the other error groups, $t(97.13) = -1.20$, $p = .23$, failing to support H2.3.

In summary, the results highlight that judgment, and factual errors significantly reduce rapport in interviews, while contextual errors have a less pronounced effect. Trust and willingness to provide information remain relatively stable across error conditions, suggesting that these variables are less affected by the types of errors examined in this study.

Additional Analysis

Effects of Error Detection and Error Type on Trust, Rapport, and Willingness to Provide Information

We examined how error detection (noticed vs. not noticed) and error type (factual, judgmental, and contextual) influenced trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information using a 2×3 factorial ANOVA. The analysis tested whether detected errors were associated with lower scores across the dependent variables and whether error type influenced these outcomes. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for the interaction effect of error detection and error type.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for Trust, Rapport, and Willingness to Provide Information by Error Detection and Error Type

	Error Type and Detection		
	Judgment	Factual	Contextual

	Error Noticed (N = 16)		Error Not Noticed (N = 36)		Error Noticed (N = 33)		Error Not Noticed (N = 19)		Error Noticed (N = 14)		Error Not Noticed (N = 38)	
DV	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Trust	2.85	0.48	3.28	0.45	2.96	0.39	3.18	0.35	3.00	0.33	3.36	0.52
Rapport	2.92	0.55	3.64	0.56	3.46	0.43	3.46	0.36	3.43	0.39	3.68	0.47
Willingness	2.27	0.88	2.55	1.01	2.40	0.90	2.86	1.00	2.45	0.59	2.89	1.17

Note. Values represent means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) for each measure. DV = Dependent Variable.

For trust, the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of error detection, $F(1, 150) = 24.415$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .14$, indicating that detected errors led to significantly lower trust scores compared to undetected errors, with a large effect size.

Specifically, when errors were detected, the mean trust score was 2.93 (*SD* = .43) across all error types, whereas when errors were not detected, the mean trust score was higher at 3.28 (*SD* = .45) across all error types. These results suggest that error detection negatively impacted trust. However, the main effect of error type, $F(2, 150) = .867$, $p = .422$, $\eta p^2 = .01$, and the interaction effect between error detection and error type, $F(2, 150) = .734$, $p = .482$, $\eta p^2 = .01$, were not significant, suggesting that error type did not influence trust scores and did not moderate the effect of error detection.

For rapport, the ANOVA showed a significant main effect of error detection, $F(1, 150) = 15.508$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = .09$, with detected errors leading to lower rapport scores compared to undetected errors and a small to moderate effect size. There was also a significant interaction effect between error detection and error type, $F(2, 150) = 6.932$, $p = .001$, $\eta p^2 = .08$, indicating that the impact of detected errors on rapport varied depending on the type of error. Post hoc t-tests, corrected for multiple comparisons, revealed that error detection had no significant impact on rapport for factual errors. For contextual errors, detecting errors

marginally decreased rapport ($p = .06$), while for judgment errors, detecting errors significantly decreased rapport ($p < .001$). The main effect of the error type was not significant: $F(2, 150) = 2.111$, $p = .125$, $\eta p^2 = .03$.

For willingness to provide information, the ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of error detection, $F(1, 150) = 5.315$, $p = .023$, $\eta p^2 = .03$, with detected errors leading to lower willingness scores compared to undetected errors, though the effect size was small. However, neither the main effect of error type, $F(2, 150) = 1.319$, $p = .271$, $\eta p^2 = .02$, nor the interaction effect, $F(2, 150) = .115$, $p = .891$, $\eta p^2 = .00$, was significant, suggesting that error type did not influence willingness to provide information and did not moderate the effect of error detection.

Follow-Up t-Tests. We conducted follow-up independent-sample t-tests to explore the effects of error detection within each error type subgroup. Results of the tests for trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information are summarized in Table 5. The analysis showed that for judgment errors, noticing the error significantly reduced both trust and rapport, with large effect sizes. For factual errors, noticing the error significantly reduced trust but had no significant effect on rapport or willingness. For contextual errors, noticing the error significantly reduced trust and showed a marginal reduction in rapport, but did not significantly affect willingness. These findings suggest that judgment errors had the most substantial impact on trust and rapport, while contextual errors had a moderate effect on trust and a marginal effect on rapport.

Table 5

Independent-Samples T-Test Results for Trust, Rapport, and Willingness by Error Type and Error Noticed vs. Error Not Noticed

Variable	Error Type	Error Not Noticed	Error Noticed	*t*	*df*	*p*	Cohen's *d*

		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*				
Trust	Judgment	3.28	0.45	2.85	0.48	3.12	27.20	**.004**	0.96
	Factual	3.18	0.35	2.96	0.39	2.12	41.06	*.040*	0.59
	Contextual	3.36	0.52	3.00	0.33	2.91	36.95	**.006**	0.74
Rapport	Judgment	3.64	0.56	2.92	0.55	4.37	29.30	**<.001**	1.30
	Factual	3.46	0.36	3.46	0.43	-0.04	43.67	.972	-0.01
	Contextual	3.68	0.47	3.43	0.39	1.96	27.54	.060	0.57
Willingness	Judgment	2.55	1.01	2.27	0.88	0.99	32.94	.327	0.28
	Factual	2.86	1.00	2.40	0.90	1.64	34.62	.109	0.49
	Contextual	2.89	1.17	2.45	0.59	1.79	44.70	.081	0.42

Note. Values represent means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) for each measure, **bold** for significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) and *italics* for significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Trust and Trust Sub-Constructs

In the study by Oostinga et al. (2018b), researchers differentiated between affective trust, defined as the perceived ability to care for another person without self-interest, and cognitive trust, defined as the perceived trustworthiness and reliability in performing a task. They found that in suspect interviews, affective trust had the strongest association with participants' willingness to provide information and the quality of information shared after an error occurred. These findings suggest that error making has its most significant impact through the formation of affective trust.

In our study, we examined trust through three subscales: ability, benevolence, and integrity. The benevolence subscale, which reflects the interviewer's concern for the suspect's welfare, aligns with the concept of affective trust described by Oostinga et al. (2018b). Given the potential importance of affective trust, we aimed to investigate whether this pattern held in

our study. Specifically, we explored how different types of interviewer errors might influence participants' perceptions of the interviewer's ability, benevolence, and integrity.

First, we assessed the reliability of the subscales using Cronbach's alpha. For the Ability subscale, Cronbach's alpha indicated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .83$). For the Benevolence subscale, Cronbach's alpha was acceptable but indicated a moderate level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .71$). For the Integrity subscale, Cronbach's alpha suggested a lower level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .65$). Removing individual items did not significantly improve the alpha values, so we retained the scales as they were.

Next, we examined whether different types of interviewer errors affected participants' ratings on the trust subscales. Table 6 presents the means and standard deviations for ability, benevolence, and integrity across the three error groups.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Trust Subscales (Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity) Across Error Groups.

	Error Groups					
	Judgment ($N = 52$)		Factual ($N = 52$)		Contextual ($N = 52$)	
DV	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Ability	3.57	0.71	3.41	0.62	3.67	0.64
Benevolence	2.87	0.69	2.77	0.48	3.07	0.69
Integrity	2.99	0.56	2.91	0.40	3.04	0.62

Note. Values represent means (*M*) and standard deviations (*SD*) for each measure. DV = Dependent Variable.

We used analyses of variance (ANOVA) to see if there were any important differences between the error groups in the mean ratings of each trust subscale. For the Ability subscale,

the ANOVA results showed no significant differences between the error groups, $F(2, 153) = 2.03$, $p = .135$, indicating that interviewer errors did not significantly affect ratings of ability-based trust. Similarly, for the Integrity subscale, no significant differences were observed, $F(2, 153) = .68$, $p = .507$, , indicating that interviewer errors did not significantly affect ratings of integrity-based trust. For the Benevolence subscale, however, a significant effect was found, $F(2, 153) = 3.11$, $p = .047$.

Post-hoc analyses revealed that participants in the Control group rated benevolence higher than those in the Judgment group. This suggests that the type of interviewer error may have a small but significant effect on ratings of benevolence-based trust. These findings suggest that the influence of interviewer errors on trust subscales differs based on the specific subconstruct under examination. While ability and integrity were not significantly affected by the type of interviewer error, benevolence showed a significant difference, particularly between the Contextual and Judgment error groups. Post-hoc analyses using Bonferroni-corrected t-tests revealed that participants in the Control group rated Benevolence significantly higher than those in the Factual group ($p = .040$). No other pairwise differences reached significance after Bonferroni correction. These findings suggest that the influence of interviewer errors on trust subscales differs based on the specific subconstruct under examination. While ability and integrity were not significantly affected by the type of interviewer error, benevolence showed a significant difference, particularly between the Control and Factual error groups.

Discussion

This study examined the impact of interviewer communication errors - factual, judgment and contextual - on suspects' trust, rapport and willingness to provide information during investigative interviews. By extending the work of Oostinga et al. (2018b) to include contextual errors, our findings provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different

types of errors influence interview dynamics. While not all hypotheses were supported, the results offer valuable insights into the nuanced ways in which communication errors shape trust and rapport, further refining theoretical models of interviewer-suspect interactions.

The Impact of Communication Errors on Trust, Rapport, and Willingness to Provide Information

Our findings support the idea that different error types affect relational dynamics in distinct ways. While we did not find a significant overall effect of error type on trust (H1.1 and H2.1), a closer examination revealed that benevolence-based trust (affective trust) was significantly reduced by judgment errors, consistent with previous research (Oostinga et al., 2018b). In terms of rapport, our results partially supported H1.2 and H2.2, showing that both judgment and factual errors had a significant negative impact, with judgment errors being particularly detrimental. Notably, contextual errors did not significantly affect rapport or willingness to provide information, suggesting they are less disruptive to interpersonal interactions. Contrary to our expectations, H1.3 and H2.3 were not supported, as communication errors did not significantly influence willingness to provide information, and judgment errors did not decrease willingness more than other error types.

The Role of Error Detection in Shaping Perceptions

Our findings indicate that when participants detected errors, trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information were generally lower. A significant interaction effect was found for rapport, with judgment and factual errors having a more pronounced negative effect when detected. However, no such interaction was observed for trust or willingness to provide information. This suggests that the mere awareness of an error (“something went wrong”) was sufficient to influence participants' perceptions.

One possible explanation for these results could be that our study approached error detection as a binary variable (noticed vs. not noticed). While this approach provides a simple

measure, it may be overly simplistic and fail to capture the complexity of participants' experiences. In reality, individuals likely varied not only in whether they recognized an error but also in their level of certainty or confidence in their recognition (Charles & Yeung, 2018; Steinhauser & Yeung, 2010). Some participants may have been highly confident in their detection, immediately categorizing an error as such, while others may have been uncertain or hesitant, questioning their initial judgment.

In our study, participants' open-text responses provided further insight into their reasoning and confidence levels when identifying errors. Some explicitly referenced parts of the cover story in their explanations, suggesting that the scenario itself influenced how they perceived and identified errors. This suggests that error detection may be shaped not only by the error itself, but also by contextual elements that guide participants' expectations and interpretations. Future research could further explore the role of cover stories in shaping error detection and whether they serve as a cognitive reference point for identifying inconsistencies. In addition, the inclusion of confidence rating scales alongside binary detection measures may help to capture more nuanced variations in how errors are perceived and processed.

Furthermore, the significant interaction effect found for rapport, but not for trust or willingness to provide information, suggests two possible interpretations. One possibility is that the measures used captured different levels of sensitivity to error types. For example, we measured trust using Mayer and Davis's (1999) framework, whereas Oostinga et al. (2018b) measured affective and cognitive trust separately using items from Colquitt et al. (2011). Mayer and Davis's broader conceptualization of trust - which includes competence, benevolence and integrity - may be less sensitive to specific error types than the affective and cognitive trust dimensions used in Oostinga et al. (2018b), where only affective trust was significantly affected by judgment errors. This difference in measurement approaches may explain why we did not observe a significant effect of error type on overall trust. Future research could examine whether trust should be conceptualized as a multidimensional

construct in investigative interviews to better capture the specific ways errors influence trust dynamics.

Alternatively, different psychological constructs may themselves be inherently more or less sensitive to errors. If all communication errors affect trust and willingness to provide information, but only certain error subtypes affect rapport, this distinction provides valuable insights into how errors shape investigative interviews. It may suggest that trust and willingness to provide information may be influenced by broader interpersonal factors - such as the overall credibility and reliability of the interviewer - whereas rapport is more sensitive to moment-to-moment social interactions and subtle interpersonal cues. This distinction has practical implications for interview strategies, as it highlights the need to carefully manage both broad trust perceptions and immediate relational dynamics during investigative interviews. Future research should further explore these differences in construct sensitivity to clarify how and why specific errors affect some relational outcomes more than others, potentially refining theoretical models of interviewer-suspect interaction.

Exploring the Multidimensional Nature of Trust

While all errors reduced trust, benevolence-based trust (affective trust) was particularly affected by judgment errors. This finding is consistent with psychological theories of trust formation, which suggest that benevolence-based trust is particularly sensitive to perceptions of care and concern (Johnson & Grayson, 2003). Unlike cognitive trust, which is based on rational assessments of competence and reliability, affective trust is deeply rooted in emotions and personal experiences with a partner (Johnson & Grayson, 2003). Judgment errors, by their very nature, involve evaluative statements that can make a suspect feel misunderstood, dismissed or unfairly judged, thereby disrupting the sense of care and concern that underpins benevolent trust (Akrout et al., 2016). Similarly, Oostinga et al. (2018b) highlighted the crucial role of affective trust in shaping the quality and quantity of

information provided by participants. These findings underscore the importance of interviewers demonstrating genuine concern for a suspect's well-being to maintain affective trust.

Naturally, interviewers should ideally avoid making judgments in the first place, especially as research suggests that once a judgment error has been made, it may be difficult to repair affective trust. Oostinga et al. (2018b) found that apologizing or taking responsibility for the error did not restore affective trust. However, more recent research by Oostinga et al. (2024) offers a more nuanced perspective, showing that while judgment errors significantly reduced trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information in interviews with sexual violence victims, apologies helped to restore trust and rapport. Nevertheless, they did not improve willingness to provide information. This suggests that while apologies can partially repair relational dynamics, they may not be sufficient to reverse all the negative consequences of judgment errors. Thus, although acknowledging an error may be beneficial, preventing judgment errors in the first place remains the most effective strategy for preserving trust and engagement in investigative interviews. Notably, while judgment errors undermine trust, accepting responsibility for an error appears to be more effective in repairing a suspect's willingness to provide information (Oostinga et al., 2018b).

Furthermore, while our study supports the idea that trust should be considered in multiple dimensions, we do not see strong evidence of a major discrepancy compared to previous research. Oostinga et al. (2018b) found that judgment errors primarily affected affective trust, which is consistent with our results. Rather than contradicting prior work, our study extends it by showing that while all errors reduce trust, judgment errors specifically harm benevolence-based trust. This highlights the need for future research to measure trust as a multidimensional construct, capturing both cognitive and affective dimensions separately. Doing so could provide a more precise understanding of how different errors shape trust and ultimately inform best practices for investigative interviewing.

Barriers to Error Reporting and Implicit Effects of Errors

One notable aspect of our findings was that relatively few participants explicitly identified errors during the interviews, suggesting that the embedded errors were not always consciously recognized. Nevertheless, it was decided to keep all participants in their respective conditions and to continue with the hypothesis. This decision was based on the rationale that errors could still have implicit effects on participants even if they were not consciously recognized or explicitly mentioned. This aligns with research in cognitive science showing that the human mind can make causal inferences automatically and often unconsciously (Hassin, 2013; Oberai & Anand, 2018). Research indicates that "an individual makes countless decisions in a day without even being aware of them", and these decisions are often influenced by unconscious biases (Oberai & Anand, 2018, p. 14). These biases are shaped by factors such as background, social environment, and personal experiences (Oberai & Anand, 2018). Thus, even if participants did not explicitly recognize an error, it may still have affected their responses.

This perspective is also supported by Kahneman's (2011) dual-process model of thinking, which differentiates between fast, intuitive, and automatic *System 1* processing and slower, deliberate *System 2* reasoning. System 1 is associated with implicit biases and involuntary mental processes (Payne et al., 2017; Suveren, 2022). The fact that participants did not explicitly identify errors - a task that typically involves System 2 - does not rule out the possibility that these errors influenced their responses through System 1 processes. We therefore argue that implicit effects may have subtly shaped participants' responses or decisions, even if they were not immediately apparent.

In addition, we can imagine that limited identification may be attributed to barriers in reporting, particularly due to the use of open-ended questions. While these questions have the advantage of capturing "rich and detailed information from respondents" (Schmidt et al., 2020, p. 4), they also present several challenges. Recent studies have raised concerns about

the use of open-ended questions, particularly their potential to increase survey break-off and item non-response, as well as increased backtracking and response changes (Hadler, 2023; Luebker, 2021). Research by Reja et al. (2003) indicates that closed-ended questions generally yield higher response rates and lower levels of missing data compared to open-ended questions. This is likely due to the increased cognitive effort required for open-ended responses (Holland & Christian, 2008), which can contribute to respondent fatigue (Gummer & Roßmann, 2014). Moreover, when open-ended questions are placed toward the end of a survey, the number of interpretable responses tends to decline (Schmidt et al., 2020). Given that our survey lasted approximately 20 minutes, it is possible that fatigue further reduced participants' willingness to engage with open-ended questions.

These factors may have contributed to the limited explicit error detection observed in our study, as some participants may have disengaged from the open-ended response or skipped the question altogether. It is also possible that participants initially answered “yes” to the error detection question but reconsidered once they saw that an open-ended explanation was required, leading them to change their response to “no.” Future research could address this by separating the error detection question from the open-ended response requirement or positioning open-ended questions earlier in the survey. Reducing the overall survey length may also help mitigate respondent fatigue and improve data quality.

Importantly, our findings suggest that errors can influence participants even when they are not explicitly recognized. However, when error recognition is included in the model, it emerges as a stronger predictor of responses, with error type remaining primarily relevant for rapport-related variables. This raises the possibility that explicit recognition enhances the effect of errors, although implicit influences may still play a role. Future research could further explore these dynamics by examining whether and how undetected errors shape participants' responses over time.

About Willingness to Provide Information

Our study did not find a significant effect of error type on willingness to provide information, contrasting with findings by Oostinga et al. (2018b). However, it should be noted that these findings were unexpected in their original study, as they originally hypothesized that suspects would provide less information when an error was made by the interviewer.

One possible explanation for the different results may be the methodological differences between the studies. Oostinga et al. (2018b) measured information provision by counting the number of words participants spoke immediately after the error. In contrast, the present study assessed willingness to provide information using a scale based on Beune et al. (2011). While willingness and actual information provision are related, they are distinct constructs. Our findings do not contradict Oostinga et al. (2018b); rather, they suggest that only noticed errors influenced willingness, but not the actual amount of information provided. Moreover, the reliability of our measure may have been affected by the limited number of items on our scale, as shorter scales tend to be less reliable than longer ones (DeVellis, 1991). Future research could enhance measurement validity by combining self-report scales with behavioral indicators, such as the actual amount of information disclosed.

Additionally, response bias may also have influenced our results. The study scenario involved asking participants about exam fraud, without the investigator knowing who was responsible. This scenario may have caused participants to feel detached from the consequences of providing information because they were not explicitly considered guilty. As a result, their responses may not accurately represent the behavior of individuals who truly fear accusation. This is discussed further in the limitations of this study. Future research could explore scenarios in which participants perceive a real risk of accusation, although this would raise ethical considerations.

The Role of Contextual Errors

By including contextual errors in our analysis, we broadened the scope of research on communication errors in investigative settings. Our findings show that contextual errors had a nuanced impact on participants' perceptions. Although they were the least detected of the error types, they still influenced trust when noticed, resulting in significantly lower trust scores than when these errors were not noticed. This suggests that while contextual errors may be less noticeable, they can still undermine trust when participants are aware of them.

While contextual errors did significantly affect rapport, they did not significantly influence willingness to provide information, even when noticed. This indicates that contextual errors can subtly disrupt interpersonal dynamics, especially in terms of rapport. Factual errors, on the other hand, showed no significant impact on either rapport or willingness to provide information, regardless of whether they were noticed. This further suggests that contextual errors may still influence rapport, but their effect is less pronounced than judgment errors, which had a clear and significant negative impact.

One possible explanation for this pattern is that contextual errors might be perceived as more situational or technical, rather than a reflection of the interviewer's competence or intentions. As a result, they may not be viewed as personal or damaging to the interpersonal relationship between the interviewer and the suspect. In contrast, factual errors might be seen as less impactful on the rapport-building process and are not as readily noticed or regarded as disruptive. Given that contextual errors showed almost significant effects on rapport, but factual errors did not, it may suggest that while contextual errors may be less disruptive than judgment errors, they still have a subtle impact on interpersonal relationships. Given these findings, investigative interviewers might benefit from focusing on minimizing both judgment errors and contextual errors, as both can influence rapport, albeit to varying degrees. In contrast, factual errors seem to have less impact on interpersonal dynamics and may not require as much focus in terms of rapport management.

Future research could further explore contextual errors in different domains, such as healthcare, where they have been shown to cause inefficiencies, delays, and team tensions (Lingard, 2004; Weiner & Schwartz, 2015). Additionally, examining the impact of various types of contextual errors could be valuable, as the specific error type studied here may not generalize to all contexts. Finally, investigating the long-term effects of contextual errors, particularly in repeated or prolonged interviews, could provide deeper insight into how such errors influence communication and rapport over time.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of communication errors in investigative interviews, three main limitations should be acknowledged. These limitations highlight areas for improvement from our current research and offer directions for future studies.

First, and not surprisingly, an important limitation of this study is the low error detection rate among participants in the experimental groups. While we argue in the discussion that the error may have implicitly influenced participants' perceptions even if they did not explicitly recognize it, the low detection rate remains a significant concern. However, the adjustment in our procedure - requiring participants to respond to the error - likely increased its salience, potentially mitigating this issue to some extent. Nevertheless, future research could address this limitation by either use a different manipulation control or adapt our manipulation control accordingly. For example, instead of relying on open-ended responses, participants could be given multiple-choice options that list different types of errors from which to choose. This structured approach may make it easier for participants to identify and report errors. In addition, pilot testing the manipulation check before the study could help ensure its sensitivity and effectiveness. Moreover, adjusting the timing of the manipulation check by introducing it earlier in the study - possibly right after the interview

where the error occurred - might increase participants' awareness and responsiveness. In addition, future research could also explore implicit measures of error detection. Even if participants do not explicitly report noticing the error, their implicit responses could still reflect its impact. For instance, using reaction times, physiological measures, or indirect questioning techniques might help assess whether the error subtly influenced participants' perceptions or behaviors. This approach could lead to a more nuanced understanding of communication errors and their impact.

Second, the study was conducted online, which may have compromised the ecological validity of our research. Rather than engaging in a fully interactive chat or live interview, participants read a text, which may have been less engaging and made it harder for them to immerse themselves in the scenario. This is partly due to the fact that participants completed this study on their phones or computers in the comfort of their own homes, rather than in a controlled interview setting, which is the norm for research interviews. This means that they were unlikely to experience the same psychological emotions, stress or anxiety as they would in a real interview, especially if they were actual suspects.

While Jowett et al. (2011) found that online and face-to-face interviews share similarities despite their different characteristics and that the convenience of online interviews can outweigh their limitations, we believe that participants find it more difficult to relate to the story and to imagine themselves as Alex in an online format. In addition, they only imagined that they were participating in an investigative interview, without the interactive aspect of having an actual interviewer. The absence of personal interaction meant that important non-verbal cues - such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact - were also missing (Saarijärvi & Bratt, 2021). These cues could have made the study more realistic but might also have introduced additional variability, potentially limiting internal validity. A

key advantage of a text-based design is that it ensures any observed effects stem from the error itself rather than how the error is communicated.

There are also concerns regarding the effectiveness of connecting with someone you've never encountered before (McGinn & Croson, 2004). Thus, this lack of cues and personal interaction may have weakened the interviewee's connection to both the scenario and the interviewer (McGinn & Croson, 2004). This may not only have hindered the development of trust and rapport with the interviewer but may also have affected participants' ability to identify communication errors. This could have led to participants responding in ways that were different from how they would act in a real-life situation where the stakes are higher (Gudjonsson & Pearse, 2011). To address these limitations in advance, we provided participants with a comprehensive study context and background information. This approach was designed to help them better imagine themselves in the scenario by ensuring that the context felt realistic and that the individuals involved were addressed in a gender-neutral manner. However, to further address this limitation, future research could explore the use of more immersive techniques, such as virtual reality or face-to-face role-playing, to create a more authentic setting. This would help participants to better imagine themselves as suspects and understand more about the emotional dynamics of investigative interviews while carefully balancing ecological and internal validity.

Finally, the third limitation of this study is that our sample consists primarily of participants from Germany. The cultural norms prevalent in Germany, a Western culture, may have influenced how individuals perceived and responded to the interviewer's error. According to Lucas et al. (2018), cultural norms and expectations play an important role in how individuals perceive and react to social interactions and errors. Hofstede's (1980) influential model of cultural dimensions quantifies cultural differences between countries (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018). This model identifies six dimensions that characterize cultures,

which can vary significantly across countries and cultures (Hofstede, 2011). One of these dimensions is Individualism vs. Collectivism, which indicates the extent to which people see themselves as independent (Individualism) or as part of a close-knit group (Collectivism) (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018). Hofstede suggests that individualism tends to dominate in developed and western countries - such as Germany - while collectivism is more prevalent in less developed and eastern countries (Hofstede, 2011). These dimensions have a direct impact on communication because they influence the norms and rules that guide behavior in individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Gudykunst et al., 1996).

In the field of communication, Hall's (1976) similarly influential framework distinguishes between low-context and high-context communication (Wurtz, 2005). High-context communication involves conveying messages in subtle and indirect ways, where meaning is often derived from the relationship or context rather than the words themselves (Hall, 1976). In contrast, low-context communication is characterized by clear and straightforward messages that focus on the explicit content of the communication (Hall, 1976). These communication styles correlate with cultural dimensions, as high-context cultures tend to be collectivistic and low-context cultures tend to be individualistic (Wurtz, 2005). Given that our participants are predominantly from an individualistic culture, their rapport and trust with the interviewer, as well as their communication style, may have influenced their perceptions and responses.

Consequently, the findings may not be fully applicable or relevant to collectivist countries with different cultural communication styles. To increase the generalizability of our findings, future research should consider replicating this study in collectivist countries or with participants from different cultural backgrounds. In addition, cross-cultural comparative studies could further explore how different cultural norms and communication styles impact

error perception. This could help determine the robustness of our findings across different cultural contexts, highlight any possible differences, and enhance their relevance.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that contextual errors had a subtle but significant effect on rapport, while judgment errors had a clear and pronounced negative impact on both rapport and trust. Factual errors, in contrast, showed minimal influence on any of the measured outcomes. The study further indicates that the detection of errors generally led to lower levels of trust, rapport, and willingness to provide information, with the awareness of judgment errors being particularly damaging to rapport. These findings suggest that not only the type of error but also its detection plays a crucial role in shaping participants' perceptions during investigative interviews. Consistent with previous research, the results also highlight the importance of affective trust, which was significantly affected by judgment errors. This reinforces the idea that fostering affective trust is crucial in investigative contexts. Furthermore, the study challenges unidimensional models of trust and suggests that future research should consider both cognitive and affective dimensions of trust to gain a more nuanced understanding of how communication errors affect interpersonal dynamics. Although the study is limited by a low error detection rate and the online setting, it provides valuable insights into the complex nature of communication errors and their consequences in investigative interviews. Future research should explore the impact of errors in more immersive settings and across different cultural contexts to further refine these findings. This study provides valuable insights into the impact of communication errors on trust, rapport, and information provision in investigative interviews, highlighting the importance of avoiding judgment errors and fostering affective trust to enhance the effectiveness of investigative interviews.

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Appendix A

Qualtrics Survey

Start of Block: Block 1: Introduction/ Briefing

Q1.1 Intro-text

Welcome to our study!

Your participation is very important as we look at how different interview techniques affect the way people think and make judgements during suspect interviews. By reviewing your responses to a simulated interview scenario, we aim to find out which techniques work best. Your honest and unbiased responses will help us to improve these techniques. The study will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Instructions

After you agree to participate, you will first imagine that you are a suspect who has committed a crime and you will read a fictional case report describing the situation. Following this, you will read a transcript of an interview between you (the suspect) and an investigator. You will then answer questions about your perceptions and judgements based on the transcript, and complete a short demographic questionnaire about your background. There are no right or wrong answers, we are simply interested in your perceptions and opinions.

Confidentiality and privacy

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. The data collected will be anonymized and used for research purposes only. No personally identifiable information will be shared outside the research team. Once the data is anonymized, it cannot be traced or deleted. The data will be securely stored and will be destroyed ten years after the findings of this research are published.

Risk of Participation

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the BMS Ethics Committee/Domain Humanities & Social Sciences at the University of Twente. There are no known risks associated with taking part in this study. The scenarios and questions are designed to make you think but should not cause you any discomfort. However, if you feel uncomfortable at any point, you can withdraw from the study without consequence by closing your internet browser window. If you do this, we will not include your data in the study. Should you need support or wish to discuss any concerns, please contact us.

Contact Information

For any questions or concerns about the study or your rights as a participant, please contact:
Elisa Moosmayer: e.moosmayer@student.utwente.nl
Miriam Oostinga: m.s.d.oostinga@utwente.nl

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Secretary of the Ethics Committee/Domain Humanities &

Social Sciences of the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences at the University of Twente:
Email: ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl

Informed consent

To participate in this study, you need to read and agree to each of the following statements:

- I voluntarily agree to take part in this research study
- I understand that my data will be kept anonymous
- I understand that the survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete
- The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me in writing
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from taking part in this research
- I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without giving any reason. I can do this by closing my internet browser window
- I understand that I am free to contact the researchers involved in the study for further clarification and information

Q1.2 Consent

By clicking **'I agree'** below, you are confirming that you have fully understood and accepted the above terms and conditions.

○ I agree (1)

○ I do not agree (2)

Q1.3 Next page

Once the question is answered, please press the button below to proceed to the next page.

End of Block: Block 1: Introduction/ Briefing

Start of Block: Block 2: Scenario

Q2.1 Scenario-text

Scenario

You are now going to read a scenario. Please imagine that you are the person in the following story:

You are Alex Jansen, 21 years old and a student at a Dutch university in Amsterdam. Recently, there has been a major incident of exam fraud which has caused serious concern at your university.

On the evening of the exam fraud, you stayed late at the university on the pretext of studying. But you had another reason for staying. As a student assistant in the IT department, you had special access to the university's exam database. You were stressed about your studies and worried about failing your exams. You were also facing financial difficulties and needed extra money. So you planned to sell the answers to other students for a fair price.

That evening, seeing an opportunity, you decided to use your access to the exam database. You logged on to the database, copied the exam answers and saved them on a USB stick. You were careful to delete any evidence. However, the fraud was discovered the next day leading to an investigation.

Since you were one of the few people with access to the database and were in the building that evening, you were asked to come in for questioning. The investigators still don't know who is responsible, so they are questioning everyone who had access to the database.

After copying the exam answers onto the USB stick, you deleted any evidence of the theft. At around 6.30pm, you left the IT office and went to a study room in the same building to establish an alibi. There you spoke briefly with a classmate, Mike, about exam preparation before focusing on your studies alone. The building was mostly quiet, with only a few students and staff around. At around 9pm, you noticed the cleaning staff vacuuming and emptying bins. You stayed in the study room until 10.30pm, when you packed your things and left through the building's lobby.

Q2.2 Next page

Once you have read the scenario, please proceed to the next page by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 2: Scenario

Start of Block: Block 3: Pre-Transcript

Q3.1 InstructionsT

Now, you will read a transcript of the police interview that took place the day after the data theft. In this interview, you (Alex) are questioned about your activities on the night of the incident. Please read the transcript thoroughly.

Q3.2 Next page

Please press the button below to read the interview transcript.

End of Block: Block 3: Pre-Transcript

Start of Block: Block 4.1: Transript - Judgment Error

Q4.1.1 JugmentError1

The Interview
Please read the transcript carefully. At one point, you are asked to choose between two possible answers. Think about how you would react in this situation and choose the answer that best represents your choice.

Interviewer: "Hello, I'm Chris, and I'll be conducting your interview today. Before we begin, how would you like me to address you?"

You: "You can call me Alex."

Interviewer: "Alright, Alex. This interview is being recorded to ensure that we have an accurate record of our conversation. We're investigating a case of exam fraud that occurred at your university, and I need to gather detailed information about your activities that evening. Do you understand?"

You: "Yes, I understand."

Interviewer: "Let's go over your timeline. You already mentioned that you left the university building at approximately 10:30 pm. Can you tell me what happened between then and the time you left the building?"

You: "Sure. I was in the building working late on my studies. I spoke briefly with a classmate, Mike, about exam preparation. After that, I worked alone and finished my studies. I left the building around 10.30pm."

Interviewer: "Did you notice anything unusual or any unusual people in the building that evening?"

You: "No, everything seemed normal. The building was quiet, and I didn't see anything out of the ordinary."

Interviewer: "You claim that everything seemed normal, but you were probably blind to what was really happening."

▼

You: "I mean, I was focused on my studies. It's possible I didn't notice everything, but I wasn't ignoring anything on purpose." (1)

You: "Wait what? Why are you suggesting I was blind to what was happening?" (2)

Q4.2.1 JugmentError2

Interviewer: "Okay. Mike mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30 pm. Was that the last time you interacted with him?"

You: "Yes, we talked around 6:30. After that, I was alone working on my studies."

Interviewer: "Alright. You also mentioned that you saw the cleaning staff in the building around 9:00 pm. Did they appear to be doing their routine work?"

You: "Yes, they were just doing their regular tasks like vacuuming and emptying the bins. Nothing seemed unusual."

Interviewer: "One of the cleaning personnel mentioned seeing you around that time. They noted that you seemed a bit nervous. Can you explain why that might have been?"

You: "Nervous? I don't recall feeling nervous. I was just focused on my studies and trying to finish up for the night. I might have been a bit stressed because of the upcoming exam, but that's all."

Interviewer: "Okay. Before we conclude, is there any other information you think might be important or anything else you can recall from that night?"

You: "No, I can't think of anything else. That's all I remember." Interviewer: "Fine. Thank you for your time. We'll investigate this information and follow up if necessary."

Q4.1.3 Next page The first part of this study is completed. Please continue to the questionnaires by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 4.1: Transript - Judgment Error

Start of Block: Block 4.2: Transript - Factual Error

Q4.2.1 FactualError1

The Interview
Please read the transcript carefully. At one point, you are asked to choose between two

possible answers. Think about how you would react in this situation and choose the answer that best represents your choice.

Interviewer: "Hello, I’m Chris, and I’ll be conducting your interview today. Before we begin, how would you like me to address you?"

You: "You can call me Alex."

Interviewer: "Alright, Alex. This interview is being recorded to ensure that we have an accurate record of our conversation. We’re investigating a case of exam fraud that occurred at your university, and I need to gather detailed information about your activities that evening. Do you understand?"

You: "Yes, I understand."

Interviewer: "Let's go over your timeline. You already mentioned that you left the university building at approximately 10:30 pm. Can you tell me what happened between then and the time you left the building?"

You: "Sure. I was in the building working late on my studies. I spoke briefly with a classmate, Mike, about exam preparation. After that, I worked alone and finished my studies. I left the building around 10.30pm."

Interviewer: "Did you notice anything unusual or any unusual people in the building that evening?"

You: "No, everything seemed normal. The building was quiet, and I didn’t see anything out of the ordinary."

Interviewer: "Okay. Martin mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30 pm. Was that the last time you interacted with him?"

▼

You: "I’m a bit confused. Did you mean Mike instead of Martin?" (1)

You: "Wait what? Martin? I thought we were talking about Mike?" (2)

Q4.2.2 FactualError2

Interviewer: "Okay."

You: "Yes, we talked around 6:30. After that, I was alone working on my studies."

Interviewer: "Alright. You also mentioned that you saw the cleaning staff in the building around 9:00 pm. Did they appear to be doing their routine work?"

You: "Yes, they were just doing their regular tasks like vacuuming and emptying the bins. Nothing seemed unusual."

Interviewer: "One of the cleaning personnel mentioned seeing you around that time. They noted that you seemed a bit nervous. Can you explain why that might have been?"

You: "Nervous? I don't recall feeling nervous. I was just focused on my studies and trying to finish up for the night. I might have been a bit stressed because of the upcoming exam, but that's all."

Interviewer: "Okay. Before we conclude, is there any other information you think might be important or anything else you can recall from that night?"

You: "No, I can't think of anything else. That's all I remember." Interviewer: "Fine. Thank you for your time. We'll investigate this information and follow up if necessary."

Q4.2.3 Next page

The first part of this study is completed. Please continue to the questionnaires by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 4.2: Transript - Factual Error

Start of Block: Block 4.3: Transript - Contextual Error

Q4.3.1 ContextError1

The Interview
Please read the transcript carefully. At one point, you are asked to choose between two possible answers. Think about how you would react in this situation and choose the answer that best represents your choice.

Interviewer: "Hello, I'm Chris, and I'll be conducting your interview today. Before we begin, how would you like me to address you?"

You: "You can call me Alex."

Interviewer: "Alright, Alex. This interview is being recorded to ensure that we have an accurate record of our conversation. We're investigating a case of exam fraud that occurred at your university, and I need to gather detailed information about your activities that evening. Do you understand?"

You: "Yes, I understand."

Interviewer: "Let's go over your timeline. You already mentioned that you left the university building at approximately 10:30 pm. Can you tell me what happened between then and the time you left the building?"

You: "Sure. I was in the building working late on my studies. I spoke briefly with a classmate, Mike, about exam preparation. After that, I worked alone and finished my studies. I left the building around 10.30pm."

Interviewer: "Did you notice anything unusual or any unusual people in the building that evening?"

You: "No, everything seemed normal. The building was quiet, and I didn't see anything out of the ordinary."

Interviewer: "Okay. According to our RMS, Mike mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30 pm. Was that the last time you interacted with him?"

▼

You: "I'm not sure what RMS stands for. Could you please clarify that?" (1)

You: "RMS? What are you talking about?" (2)

Q4.3.2 ContextError2

Interviewer: "Okay. Was that the last time you interacted with him?"

You: "Yes, we talked around 6:30. After that, I was alone working on my studies."

Interviewer: "Alright. You also mentioned that you saw the cleaning staff in the building around 9:00 pm. Did they appear to be doing their routine work?"

You: "Yes, they were just doing their regular tasks like vacuuming and emptying the bins. Nothing seemed unusual."

Interviewer: "One of the cleaning personnel mentioned seeing you around that time. They noted that you seemed a bit nervous. Can you explain why that might have been?"

You: "Nervous? I don't recall feeling nervous. I was just focused on my studies and trying to finish up for the night. I might have been a bit stressed because of the upcoming exam, but that's all."

Interviewer: "Okay. Before we conclude, is there any other information you think might be important or anything else you can recall from that night?"

You: "No, I can't think of anything else. That's all I remember."

Interviewer: "Fine. Thank you for your time. We'll investigate this information and follow up if necessary."

Q4.3.3 Next page

The first part of this study is completed. Please continue to the questionnaires by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 4.3: Transript - Contextual Error

Start of Block: Block 4.4: Transript - Control group

Q4.4.1 Control1

The Interview

Please read the transcript carefully. At one point, you are asked to choose between two possible answers. Think about how you would react in this situation and choose the answer that best represents your choice.

Interviewer: "Hello, I'm Chris, and I'll be conducting your interview today. Before we begin, how would you like me to address you?"

You: "You can call me Alex."

Interviewer: "Alright, Alex. This interview is being recorded to ensure that we have an accurate record of our conversation. We're investigating a case of exam fraud that occurred at your university, and I need to gather detailed information about your activities that evening. Do you understand?"

You: "Yes, I understand."

Interviewer: "Let's go over your timeline. You already mentioned that you left the university building at approximately 10:30 pm. Can you tell me what happened between then and the time you left the building?"

You: "Sure. I was in the building working late on my studies. I spoke briefly with a classmate, Mike, about exam preparation. After that, I worked alone and finished my studies. I left the building around 10.30pm."

Interviewer: "Did you notice anything unusual or any unusual people in the building that evening?"

You: "No, everything seemed normal. The building was quiet, and I didn't see anything out of the ordinary."

Interviewer: "Okay. Mike mentioned that you two discussed the exam around 6:30 pm. Was that the last time you interacted with him?"

▼

You: "Yes, we talked around 6:30. After that, I was alone working on my studies." (1)

You: "I suppose so. After that, I just studied on my own." (2)

Q4.4.2 Control2

Interviewer: "Alright. You also mentioned that you saw the cleaning staff in the building around 9:00 pm. Did they appear to be doing their routine work?"

You: "Yes, they were just doing their regular tasks like vacuuming and emptying the bins. Nothing seemed unusual."

Interviewer: "One of the cleaning personnel mentioned seeing you around that time. They noted that you seemed a bit nervous. Can you explain why that might have been?"

You: "Nervous? I don't recall feeling nervous. I was just focused on my studies and trying to finish up for the night. I might have been a bit stressed because of the upcoming exam, but that's all."

Interviewer: "Okay. Before we conclude, is there any other information you think might be important or anything else you can recall from that night?"

You: "No, I can't think of anything else. That's all I remember."

Interviewer: "Fine. Thank you for your time. We'll investigate this information and follow up if necessary."

Q4.4.3 Next page

The first part of this study is completed. Please continue to the questionnaires by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 4.4: Transript - Control group

Start of Block: Block 5: Questionnaire Rapport

Q5.1 QRapport

Questionnaire (1/5)

You, as the student Alex, have just spoken to the police interviewer Chris. Below are several statements about this interview. Please think about how you felt about the interviewer, Chris, during the interview. For each statement, please indicate how much you agree with it on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I think the interviewer is generally	○	○	○	○	○

honest with me. (1)					
The interviewer did their job with skill during this interview. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer respects my knowledge. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer performed expertly during the interview. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I think that the interviewer can generally be trusted with their word. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer really listened to what I had to say. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I was motivated to perform well during the interview. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel I can trust the interviewer to keep their word to me. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer made an effort to do a good job. (9)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer acted like a	○	○	○	○	○

professional. (10)					
The interviewer paid careful attention to my opinion. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer and I got along well during the interview. (12)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer and I worked together well as a team. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
I wanted to do a good job during the interview. (14)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer was attentive to me. (15)	○	○	○	○	○
Communication went smoothly between the interviewer and me. (16)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer was interested in my point of view. (17)	○	○	○	○	○
I felt committed to accomplishing the goals of the interview. (18)	○	○	○	○	○

Q5.2 Next page Once answered, please proceed to the next page by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 5: Questionnaire Rapport

Start of Block: Block 6: Questionnaire Trust

Q6.1 QTrust

Questionnaire (2/5)

You, as the student Alex, have just spoken to the police interviewer Chris. Below are several statements about this interview. Please think about how you felt about the interviewer, Chris, during the interview. For each statement, please indicate how much you agree with it on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The interviewer seemed very capable of performing their job. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I get the impression the interviewer would be successful at conducting an investigative interview. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer seemed to have much knowledge about how	○	○	○	○	○

things should be done. (3)					
I feel very confident about the interviewer's skills. (4)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer seemed to have specialized capabilities that will help solve the investigation. (5)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer seemed to be well qualified. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer seemed very concerned about my welfare. (7)	○	○	○	○	○
My needs and desires seemed very important to the interviewer. (8)	○	○	○	○	○
I got the impression the interviewer would not knowingly do	○	○	○	○	○

anything to hurt me. (9)					
The interviewer seemed to really look out for what is important to me. (10)	○	○	○	○	○
I got the impression the interviewer would go out of their way to help me. (11)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer seemed to have a strong sense of justice. (12)	○	○	○	○	○
I didn't have to wonder whether the interviewer would stick to their word. (13)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer seemed to try hard to be fair in dealings with others. (14)	○	○	○	○	○
The interviewer's actions and behaviours	○	○	○	○	○

were not very consistent. (15)					
I like the interviewer's values. (16)	○	○	○	○	○
Sound principles seemed to guide the interviewer's behaviour. (17)	○	○	○	○	○

Q6.2 Next page Once answered, please proceed to the next page by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 6: Questionnaire Trust

Start of Block: Block 7: Questionnaire Willigness to Provide Information / Manipulation Check

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Q7.1 QWillignessInfo

Questionnaire (3/5)

To answer the following statements, imagine that you are Alex in a follow-up interview with Chris about the committed exam fraud and think about how you would respond in that situation. When making your judgements, consider how you felt about the interviewer (Chris) during the first interview. For each statement, please indicate how much you agree with it on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In the follow up interview…

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I would tell the interviewer	○	○	○	○	○

everything. (1)					
I would provide a lot of information to the interviewer. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I would give truthful information to the interviewer. (3)	○	○	○	○	○

Q7.2 Manipulation1

Did anything about the interview or the interviewer seem unusual or stand out to you? (This could be something related to the questions, the interviewer or any other detail you noticed)

(Please select 'Yes' or 'No')

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Did anything about the interview or the interviewer seem unusual or stand out to you? (This could... = Yes

Q7.2.1 Manipulation1 Please describe what stood out or seemed unusual to you.

_____

Q7.3 Manipulation2

Did the interviewer make an error or mistake during the interview? (An error in this context refers to any misalignment in communication between the interviewer and the suspect, such as a misjudgement, mix-up of facts or any other miscommunication).

(Please select 'Yes' or 'No')

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Did the interviewer make an error or mistake during the interview? (An error in this context refe... = Yes

Q7.3.1 Manipluation2

Please describe the nature of the error/mistake you noticed during the interview.

_____

Q7.4 Next page

Once answered, please proceed to the next page by pressing the button below.

_____

End of Block: Block 7: Questionnaire Willigness to Provide Information / Manipulation Check

Start of Block: Block 8: Sociodemographics

_____

Q8.1 QAge

Questionnaire (4/5)

Lastly, we would like to ask you some more questions about yourself.

How old are you?

_____

Q8.2 QSex

What is your sex?

- ○ Male (1)
- ○ Female (2)
- ○ Non-binary / third gender (3)

○ Prefer not to say (4)

Q8.3 QNationality

What is your nationality?

_____

Q8.4 QEducation

What is your highest achieved education?

○ High School (1)

○ Professional Degree (MBO, HBO) (3)

○ Apprenticeship (2)

○ University Bachelor (5)

○ University Master (6)

○ Other (7) _____

Q8.5 Next page

Once answered, please proceed to the next page by pressing the button below.

_____

End of Block: Block 8: Sociodemographics

Start of Block: Block 9 Imagination

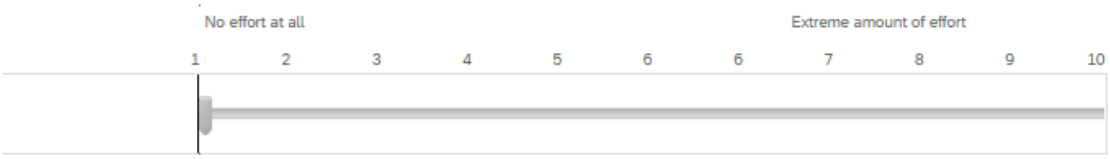
_____

Q9.1 Imagination1
Questionnaire (5/5)

Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about your participation in this study. We ask that you answer these questions as honestly as possible, as this will help us to better assess the value of this study.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I was able to fully imagine myself in the role of Alex. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I was able to fully imagine myself in the interview scenario. (2)	○	○	○	○	○

Q9.2 Imagination2
How much effort did you put into imagining yourself in the scenario?



Q9.3 Next page Once answered, please proceed to the next page by pressing the button below.

End of Block: Block 9 Imagination

Start of Block: Block 9: Debriefing

Q9.1 Debriefing

Debriefing

Thank you for participating in our study!

The true purpose of this research was to explore how different types of communication errors in interviews - such as judgment errors and factual errors - affect trust, rapport, and respondents' willingness to provide information. Our goal is to improve interview practices and legal processes. To ensure that your responses were genuine, we presented the study under a different context. Your participation is incredibly valuable, as it provides us with deeper insights into the impact of communication errors in investigative interviews.

Because we have provided you new information about this study (i.e., that the main objective was actually to measure communiation errors), we would like to give you the opportunity to confirm or withdraw your initial consent without any negative consequences. If you withdraw, your data will be deleted from the dataset.

As the data collection is still ongoing, we ask that you please keep the details of the experiment confidential until November 2024, when the study is expected to be completed.

If you have any further questions about the study, if you would like to receive a summary of the results once the research is completed, or if you have any concerns about your participation, please contact:

Elisa Moosmayer: e.moosmayer@student.utwente.nl

Miriam Oostinga: m.s.d.oostinga@utwente.nl

UT Ethics Committe: ethicscommittee-hss@utwente.nl

Q9.2 Consent

Do you agree to allow the use of your anonymous data for academic research purposes? (**If you select No, your data will NOT be used**)

- ○ Yes, I agree to the use of my anonymous data for academic purposes (1)
- ○ No, I do NOT agree to the use of my data (2)

Q9.3 SONA

If you used **SONA** to complete this study, **please enter your ID code below**. If you did not use SONA you can skip this part and go to the next final page.

9.4 End By pressing the button below, you'll submit the anonymous data and finish this study.

Thank you once again for your participation, we appreciate your time and effort.

End of Block: Block 9: Debriefing