Adaptability – Positive Outcome Measures in Adverse Contexts and How a Crime Suspect Utilizes Them

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2019 @ Faculty of Behavioural, Management & Social Sciences

This study is on how adaptability might be linked to different evidence disclosure techniques and how it affects a suspect's ability to stick to a pre-planned strategy despite a constantly changing situation. Two evidence disclosure tactics were used to elicit adaptive responses from the participants. Participants (N=51) had to complete a mock-crime and enter an interrogation afterwards. The participants were specifically asked to convince the interviewer of their innocence and come up with a strategy on how to achieve that goal. A shift-of-strategy approach and a late disclosure approach were used in the interview. It was predicted that higher levels of adaptability would lead to better abilities to follow through with a pre-planned strategy and stick to their goal. No significant link between adaptability and of the outcome measures could be established. Adaptability did not seem to influence the participants ability to stick to their pre-planned strategy. Adaptability also has no influence on the amount of statement-inconsistencies a participant made during the interrogation. Several factors, including the strength of the evidence disclosure technique and the subjective measure of adaptability seemed to have resulted in the study outcome. Further research into the phenomenon of adaptability within the interrogation context is needed.

Introduction

Police interrogations have the primary goal of finding the truth about what happened by gathering accurate information about a crime (Kassin, 2005). Guilty and innocent suspects are faced with the prospect of being interrogated about their actions in relation to the crime. Both apply distinctive counter-interrogation strategies within the interrogation context (Hartwig, Granhag, Giolla & Clemens, 2014). These strategies denote all attempts made by guilty and innocent suspects to withstand an interrogation and appear as truthful (Clemens, 2013). This has similarities with the self-regulation theory which proposes that people, who are faced with a goal-oriented situation, will try to control their behaviours in an attempt to move towards a desired outcome, while trying to avoid the negative consequences (Carver & Sheier, 2011). Applied to the interrogation context, both liars and truth-tellers want to be perceived as credible by the interviewer (Carver & Sheier, 2011). The main goal of being regarded as innocent, is identical for both guilty and innocent suspects. Therefore, differences can be examined in the strategies both apply to reach that goal. The main difference relates to the amount and type of information they hold and what they choose to do with that information (Hartwig, Granhag, Strömwall & Doering, 2010). Lying suspects try to conceal information and develop a pre-planned strategy prior to the interrogation to make sure their goal can be achieved (Hartwig et al., 2007). Truthful suspects want to be as open as possible about the crime and their involvement in it. Innocent suspects will apply these strategies to avoid being perceived as deceptive. They hold the general belief by being open, the truth of their actions will be understood by the interrogator (Hartwig et al., 2010).

These two fundamentally different approaches to information management tactics create distinctive counter-interrogation strategies (Hartwig et al., 2015). With regards to lying suspects, Hartwig argues that they make use of two types of strategies, which they pre-plan before entering the interrogation. First off, the avoidance strategies. Liars are trying to avoid disclosing any critical information should the opportunity present itself during the interrogation (Hartwig et al., 2010). This is most commonly identified as vague statements about one´s whereabouts during the interrogation (Hartwig et al., 2010). The second strategy is denial. It is typically found when asked specific questions about the evidence. Liars will switch to denying all critical information that is presented to them (Hartwig, Granhag, Strömwall & Vrij, 2005). Truth-tellers on the other hand have the main strategy of forthcomingness, meaning that they volunteer to present all information they know and tell the truth like it happened (Hartwig, Granhag & Strömwall, 2007).

Despite these, both liars and truth-tellers are faced with several risks when applying their counter-interrogation strategies. The main threat of the truth-teller is the possibility of not being perceived as truthful, despite their openness about the crime and their personal involvement in it (Hartwig et al., 2010). The main risks for the lying suspect are different since their main goal-oriented strategy will be expressed through the suppression of critical information (Granhag et al., 2015). One critical problem that arises when trying to conceal information, is in the way of how much to convey and how it is conveyed to the interrogator (Hartwig et al., 2014). By not providing any information, guilty suspects present themselves as suspicious, leaving them with the other option to provide false or slightly altered information (Hartwig et al., 2014). Offering false information runs the risk, that the evidence the interrogator holds against them contradicts their statement. That impacts their pre-planned strategy forcing them to change their plan, as well as their level of credibility. Overall, both increase the risk of an undesired outcome (Granhag et al, 2014). Guilty suspects automatically run the risk of creating statement-evidence inconsistencies through the very nature of their counter-interrogation strategies. Statement-evidence inconsistencies can be defined as statements that were not answering the questions of the interrogator truthfully (Hartwig et al., 2005). Another form of inconsistencies can be termed the within-statement inconsistencies. These are defined as incoherent statements in the form of different facts related to the same evidence (Hartwig et al., 2005). These can be used by an interrogator to decrease the suspects chances of sticking to their initial goal and reaching their desired outcome (Granhag et al., 2014).

Several different interview techniques have been applied in correlation to the suspect´s counter-interrogation strategies to determine which is the most effective in eliciting statement-evidence inconsistencies (Hartwig, Granhag & Luke, 2013). Two main forms of evidence disclosure tactics have been developed through various research and integrated into the strategic-use-of-evidence framework (Hartwig, Granhag & Luke, 2013). Generally, timing seems to be the most influential factor for evidence disclosure. It refers to the most ideal timeframe, in which to disclose evidence to the suspect and is divided into an early and late disclosure tactics (Hartwig, Granhag & Luke, 2013)

Early disclosure tactics involve the reveal of every piece of evidence at the very beginning of the interrogation to immediately break down any pre-planned strategy of the guilty suspect and produce a confession at the beginning of the interrogation (Jordan, Hartwig, Wallace,

Dawson & Xhihani, 2012). This process seems to be reliant on the strength of the evidence, since stronger evidence makes denial and avoidance futile (Jordan et al., 2012). Recent research however discarded the effectiveness of the early disclosure tactic in producing effective interrogation outcomes, since only minimal inconsistencies are produced after the evidence has been disclosed (May, Granhag & Tekin, 2017; Jordan et al., 2012) This is due to the reason that an early disclosure provides the suspect with an opportunity to develop his narrative to fit the evidence just presented to them in order to come across as innocent (Jordan et al., 2012).

The other tactic is the late disclosure tactic, which confronts the suspect with the evidence at the end of the interrogation (Hartwig et al., 2005). This aims to produce statement-evidence inconsistencies which significantly reduces the suspects level of credibility. The suspect is getting a sense of succeeding in deceiving the interrogator by coming up with a false narrative. Only at the end, suspects realize that this strategy is not working out and too much incriminating evidence was gathered to which they cannot adjust to (Jordan et al., 2012). Furthermore, a late disclosure of evidence would result in only one instance that requires an adjustment to the pre-planned strategy.

Both the early and the late disclosure approach only focus on disrupting any pre-planned goal-oriented strategies of the guilty suspect at one specific moment in time. None of them force the suspect to make any adjustments to their pre-planned strategy throughout the interrogation. In the early disclosure, the suspect does not have to adjust his narrative as he simply has to come up with a story that addresses all of the evidence disclosed to them before (Jordan et al., 2012). In the late disclosure, the suspect also does not have to adjust in the beginning and can simply tell his account, while only being in a position for potential singular adjustment at the end of the interrogation (Jordan et al., 2012). A shift-of-strategy (SoS) approach might be a beneficial evidence disclosure tactic to be used against the suspect to elicit the need for adjustment during the interrogation (Hartwig, Granhag & Luke, 2013). In this approach, the suspect is confronted with one piece of evidence at a time throughout the entire interrogation (Hartwig, Granhag & Luke, 2013). This would force the guilty suspect to adjust his strategy throughout the interrogation. A suspect would provide a false narrative and be under the belief of convincing the interrogator and being able to stick to their goal-oriented behaviour, pre-planned before the interrogation. However, immediately after that recall period, the suspect would be confronted

with evidence against their statement, forcing them to adjust their whole narrative and pre-planned strategy for each piece of evidence.

If the adjustments of a suspect during the SoS-approach are effective and increase the chances of a positive outcome, then it is equal to adaptability. Adaptability is defined as the subjective capacity to make appropriate responses to changing situations, the adjustment and modification of behaviours when interacting with different people or entering new situations (VandenBos, 2015). In addition, adaptability also includes efficient regulation of emotional, behavioural and cognitive responses when responding to change and uncertainty. Martin (2017) also argues that adaptability does not occur within an adverse context. Adaptability is related to positive outcomes in situations that create uncertainty, novelty and change. Change in correlation with adaptability is observed as opportunities for personal growth and new beginnings (Martin, 2017). The interrogation context would be classified as a threatening and adverse situation resulting in negative outcomes should the individual not be able to adjust to these situations. It could be possible that adaptability can be examined through the SoS-approach since it forces the suspect to adjust several times during the interrogation by changing the suspect´s strategy through its continuing disclosure of evidence. Additionally, for guilty suspects, being perceived as credible might be equally evaluated as a situation that allows for personal growth or a new beginning, even though it is adverse (Martin, Nejad, Colmar & Liem, 2013).

Measuring adaptability within the interrogation context could be done by clarifying effective and ineffective adjustments. Effectiveness can be defined in terms of a subject pre-planning their behaviours and being able to stick and adjust that plan to follow through with it. Ineffectiveness can be classified as a subject who planned to behave in a certain way but ultimately deviated from their initial plan, as well as planning not to do something but doing it in the end. By examining effective and ineffective adaptability, it becomes viable to think of this concept as match and mismatch of pre-planned strategies and the actual behaviour during a situation. Applied to the interrogation context, matches can be exemplified with a suspect planning to share a piece of information to avoid losing credibility and succeeding in their plan by actually sharing the information. In contrast, a mismatch would translate into a suspect wanting to share that information but ultimately did not, resulting in them failing their initial plan. The more positive their match-mismatch ratio, the better a suspect has been in following his

pre-planned, goal-directed behaviour, despite a stepwise evidence disclosure forcing constant adjustments to that pre-planned strategy

The Present Study

To summarize, guilty and innocent suspects use different counter-interrogation strategies while being interviewed about their involvement in a criminal activity. These usually focus on information-management tactics, leading innocent suspects to become forthcoming about their involvement in a crime, whereas guilty suspects resort to plan beforehand what type of information they want to reveal and which to hold on to. By doing that, guilty suspects run the risk of making statements that are inconsistent with the evidence held by the interviewer. This in turn creates statement-evidence inconsistencies which can be elicited by using different evidence-disclosure tactics. These being the early and late evidence disclosure techniques, as well as the SoS approach. Generally, the late disclosure technique is more effective in eliciting inconsistencies and break down the pre-planned strategies of the suspect, as compared to the early disclosure (Jordan et al., 2012). However, the new SoS approach could be used to examine possible adjustments of the goal-oriented behaviours of suspects, since it uses several stages of evidence disclosure during the interrogation, forcing the suspect to adapt their strategy on several occasions. Effective adjustment is expressed as adaptability, the ability to adjust behavioural responses during changing situations. Within the interrogation context, effective adaptability is expressed in the total number of matches (goal-oriented pre-interview plan translates into actual behaviour during interview) and mismatches (discrepancies between goal and actual behaviour). The more matches a suspect would have, the more effective his adjustments and therefore the higher his level of adaptability.

The aim of this research is to examine adaptability within the interrogation context since no recent research examined the concept of suspects adapting to different evidence disclosure techniques and how effective they are in adjusting their pre-planned goals to a stepwise disclosure of evidence approach. Two interrogation techniques were used in this study. The SoS approach as the main condition to test for adaptability, and the late evidence disclosure approach as the control condition It is expected that higher levels of adaptability would lead to significantly higher ability to stick to their pre-planned behaviour. As a result, fewer inconsistencies with the evidence would be made, as the suspect is able to constantly adjust his narrative. In addition, we

predict that the SoS approach is significantly better in breaking down the effectiveness of the adjustments in comparison to the late disclosure technique.

The main research question of this study is "*How do suspects adapt their counter-interrogation strategies depending on the evidence disclosure technique applied by the interviewer?".* Five hypotheses have been derived to test the research question. Hypothesis 1 predicts that higher levels of adaptability lead to higher chances of following through with a goal-oriented plan developed prior to the interview (positive match-mismatch ratio). Hypothesis 2 predicts that higher levels of adaptability lead to fewer statement-evidence inconsistencies. Hypothesis 3 predicts that higher levels of adaptability would lead to fewer within-statement inconsistencies. Hypothesis 4 and 5 predicted that a more positive match-mismatch ratio would result in less statement-evidence and within-statement inconsistencies.

To test the research question of whether varying levels of adaptability lead to different levels of outcomes in the interview, three mediator analyses have been conducted. The first test was examining the indirect effect of adaptability with regards to the overall match-mismatch ratio (effectiveness) scale. In addition, the mediator analysis tested for a main effect of the independent variable (interview condition) on the match-mismatch scale. The second test included the statement-evidence inconsistency variable to test for an indirect effect of adaptability to the inconsistency variable. The third mediation analysis examined the relationship between the interview condition, adaptability and the within-statement inconsistency scale to test for the same direct and indirect effects as the second mediator analysis. The fourth and last mediation analyses tested for an indirect effect of match-mismatch onto the statement-evidence inconsistencies and the within-statement inconsistencies.

Methods

Participants

51 students (32 females and 23 males) between 19 and 28 years old (M = 22.38, SD = 1.683). were contacted through various channels, ranging from the universities study sign-up system (i.e., Sona System), information flyers or by directly contacting participants. 26 participants were randomly allocated to the direct interview approach condition, and 25 participants were allocated to the SoS approach. 4 participants were excluded from the data set, due to confounding factors during the interview phase. For example, one participant was aware of the research intention.

Though not specifically stated, the study included some exclusion criteria for the participants, mainly in the form of a proper English language proficiency. Each participant was paid 5 euros as a reward for their participation. Before the experiment started, each participant signed the informed consent. After the experiment, all participants were debriefed about the true intentions behind the study.

Procedure

Phase 1: Background & Planning. In the beginning, all participants received the initial background information about the role that they had to assume for the experiment. All participants had to imagine being a student at the University of Twente. They had come across evidence that one of the professors of the university was doing illegal experiments on dogs. The directorial level of the university was aware of this but did not seem to intervene (Appendix 2). Several unsuccessful attempts to stop these activities have been previously made. The participant decided to contact an investigative reporter through the help of an animal rights activist group. The participant had to commit a crime to reach their goal. All of the background information was presented to the participants in one coherent story (Appendix 2).

Before engaging in the mock crime, the participant received a checklist with all the necessary instructions listed in a step-by-step order. The checklist detailed every step and each action needed to complete the mock crime. The checklist was included to guide participants through the process. The participants had to provide the researchers with their phone number to initiate the experiment. Via a second researcher, a text message was sent out with instructions on how to initiate the mock-crime. The text message contained several pieces of information, needed to successfully complete the mock-crime. Included were the number to a locker, which held a USB-stick needed to store files, as well as passwords to access the two separate computers, one of the professors who was conducting the illegal research, another one that was used by the participants to send the stolen data files to the investigator. After that, they started to complete the checklist and run through the instruction (Table 1.1)

Table 1.1

Instructions – Mock Crime

Action	Location
Receive text message from contact person	Entrance area of the Cubicus Building
Collect envelope at the given location established by the text message	Study area at the ground floor of the Cubicus
go into the office where you find information regarding the animal experiments (room C225)	C-Wing, 2nd Floor of the Cubicus, Room 225
start the computer and plug in the USB stick to collect the necessary evidence	Room C225
search the file 'experiments' and copy it on the USB stick (located on Desktop)	Room C225
search the file 'experiments' and copy it on the USB stick (located on Desktop)	Room C225
go to room XXX (there you can find a secure computer)	Different locations used during data collection Different buildings on university grounds (Raveljin, Vrijhof, Carrè)
use the computer to log into your email- account	Specified Room in building used at collection day
send the files of the USB stick to KalleBlomNews@gmail.com (a journalist who belongs to Rights for Animals who wants to publish your story)	Specified Room in building used at collection day

next to the computer, search for the folder ‘contracts’ and take a picture of the Documents which you find inside. They serve as additional evidence.	Specified Room in building used at collection day
send it via WhatsApp to this number (Kalle Blom):	Specified Room in building used at collection day
put the USB stick back into the envelope and place it into the folder ‘private’ (your accomplice will collect it)	Specified Room in building used at collection day
return to room XXX	Second room in same building located further away from first room

Phase 2: The Interview. Each participant entered the last room specified in the instructions (Table 1.1). Here they received further instructions, explaining that they are guilty of committing a crime and will be interviewed about their actions. The participants were informed that the police had significant suspicion against them. The instruction sheet informed them about the things they had to do during the interview (Appendix 3). They needed to convince the interviewer of their innocence. Otherwise, the animal testing would continue, and they would be prosecuted. The main goal for the participant was to be perceived as innocent. Participants learned that they should not remain silent, as well as not call for a lawyer. After reading the instructions, participants received a five-minute time frame to come up with a strategy to accomplish the goal (convince interviewer of innocence). Participants had no knowledge about possible evidence against them. After the five minutes ended, the interviewer entered the room and the interview started. All interviews were audio recoded for further analysis. The SoS and late disclosure technique were applied by the interviewer in altering order. This was done to compare the SoS approach to the late disclosure approach in eliciting adjustments of goal-oriented strategies during the interview. Both approaches had identical introductions and endings, despite having differing interview protocols.

The Shift-of-Strategy (SoS) Approach vs Late Disclosure Approach. Both interview approaches started similar. The interviewer started by providing the participant with the introductory information. This included the reason for conducting the interview, as well as general information about the participants rights (Appendix 5; Appendix 6). The participant was already made aware of this information during the pre-interview preparation phase. After being presented with the general information, the participant was asked whether he confesses to or denies having committed the crime. A free recall of the participants actions was initiated by the interviewer. After the recall phase, the participants were asked a specific set of questions regarding the evidence that was held against them. The wording and order of the questions were in the exact same order for both approaches. The first question asked about the participants whereabouts in one of the buildings at the university campus "*Have you been around/You mentioned being at the study area of the ground floor of the Cubicus building today*?". Two versions of all evidence themes were created to account for the possibility that the participant mentioned being at the study area for example. The interviewer also was instructed to prompt for further information, should the participant remain silent or answer with a simple yes-answer. Each question was worded like the first question, only referring to different evidence theme, "*Have you been/You mentioned being around the office of one of the professors (C225) after being at the study area*"; "*Have you recently entered/You mentioned entering the office of the professor?; "Have you entered/You mentioned entering another room after you left the office?*. In the end, both interviewers concluded the interview by thanking the participant for their time and by informing them about possible future interviews.

Several differences between the two conditions existed. The main difference was in the questioning and evidence disclosure phase. The SoS approach used specific follow-up responses to the statements of the participants. The interviewer could choose between a discredit, should the statement not fit with the evidence (statement-evidence inconsistency) or accepting the statement if the participant gave a fitting response. In the late disclosure approach all questions were asked in a sequence without the follow-up responses from the interviewer. No evidence was disclosed until the end in which the interviewer disclosed all pieces of evidence at once "*Okay, thank you. We have collected some evidence that I would like you to address. Our tech team intercepted the text message you received today, shortly thereafter a witness saw you pick up an envelope from one of the lockers in the Cubicus building. Later on, another witness saw you near the office of*

the professor. We have also found your fingerprints inside the office, and a webcam has shown that you used the computer in room XXX. Before we conclude this interview, would you mind explaining all these activities." The participant was able to respond and after that the interview was finished.

The interviewers. The researchers of this study acted as the interviewers, which negated the need for training on how to conduct the interview protocol and each interview condition was applied equally. The interviewers followed scripted protocols and were not allowed to make any deviations to ensure standardization. The interview protocol contained the standard introduction with which the interview would be initiated, followed by exactly worded questions to ask over the course of the interview. All interviews included phases of free recall, specific questions and disclosure of evidence, as well as a closing phase in which the interviewer asked whether the participants confirms having committed a crime. The interviews were audio recorded and lasted between 3 and 15 minutes on average. All five interviewers were aware of the main research questions of the study.

Phase 3: Post-Interview Questionnaire. After the interview the participants were provided with a questionnaire. The questionnaire examined psychological concepts in relation to adaptability and how it was expressed within the interview. General measures of motivation were gathered to examine how motivated participants were to follow through with the study and pretend to be an actual suspect in a criminal investigation. The item was coded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). Overall, the participants had high motivational levels over the whole study procedure (M = 3.96, SD = .744, Min = 2, Max = 5, Range = 3).

Data Analysis

Dependent Variables. Two dependent variables were used in the data analysis. The first dependent variable was the effective adjustment variable (*effectiveness variable*). This variable examined the amount of information a participant planned or did not planned to share (*Pre-planning scale*) and what they shared or did not share of that in the end (*Actual Behaviour scale*). The items of both the pre-plan and actual behaviour scale contained seven pieces of information that were related to the actions of the participant, for example them being at the study area. Both scales were coded with two-point dichotomous questions, ranging from 0 to 1. For the pre-plan

scale, 0 was coded for (did not plan to share) or 1 (did plan to share). The actual behaviour scale was coded with 0 (did not share) and 1 (did share). To create the match and mismatch conceptualization, two new variables were coded. The first was labelled match, the second got labelled mismatch. To quantify the matches and mismatches, the scores for the pre-plan and the actual-behaviour scale were subtracted from one another to have a single value for both the matches and mismatches for each individual participant (Pre_planning – Actual_behaviour = match/mismatch; *0-1, 1-0, 0-0, 1-1*). By subtracting the individual scores for the pre-plan and actual-behaviour scale the participant would either get a 0 score (match) or a -1 and +1 score (mismatch). Both match and mismatch scores were combined to the total amount of mismatches and matches. That created the effective adjustment variable, which contained two match options (wanted to share and did - did not want to share and did not = [0]) and two mismatch options (wanted to share and did not = [1] ; did not want to share but did = [-1]). Each participant obtained values in a range from -7 to +7 depending on how many matches and mismatches he gathered. The range from -7 to 0 would be defined as lower ability to follow the pre-planned strategy, whereas scores in the range from 0 to +7 would equal a higher ability to follow the pre-planned strategy.

The second dependent variable was divided into two different subscales and examined statement inconsistencies occurring during the interview. The first subscale gathered data on the statement-evidence inconsistencies (SEI´s). The second subscale measured within-statement inconsistencies (WSI´s). The SEI´s were examined for the five evidence themes and coded when the suspect did not answer truthfully, for example admitting entering the office of the professor. Coding only took place once per evidence. A coding scheme was developed and based on the statements of the participants. A [0] was coded if the participant answered the question of the interviewer truthfully, and a [1] was coded should the participant answered deceptively. By combining all inconsistencies per evidence, a total statement-evidence inconsistency scale was created resulting in an end score of either 0 (*no inconsistencies*) or 5 (*inconsistencies with all 5 pieces of evidence*). Regarding the WSI´s, they were coded when the participants would pose two different facts regarding the same evidence themes over the duration of the interview. The coded WSI`s did not have a maximum score like the statement-evidence inconsistencies, since participants were able to make several inconsistencies when addressing one piece of evidence. In the end, the within-statement inconsistency scale had a total score of inconsistencies per entire

interview, not per piece of evidence like the SEI´s. Both SEI´s and WSI´s had inconsistencies at the beginning of the interview (*before the last phase of the interview*) and at the end of the interview (*during the last phase of the interview*). Beginning and ending inconsistencies for both types were combined into a total score variable (*WSI_beginning + WSI_ending = WSI_total, SEI_beginning + SEI_ending = SEI_total*). The total scores were used to establish how the independent variable (adaptability) would indirectly affect the amount of inconsistencies a participant would make.

Independent Variables. Two independent variables were used in order to predict the dependent variables of admissions and inconsistencies. The first was the adaptability scale derived from the post-interview questionnaire, consisting of nine items related to cognitive, behavioural and emotional adjustments during the evidence disclosure procedure. The variable was used as a mediator variable in the data analysis to examine potential indirect effects of adaptability in combination with the interview approach. All the items were statements about the participants cognitive and emotional responses towards the evidence disclosure. Each item measured the subjective experience of their level of adaptability when incriminating evidence was disclosed to them. The remaining items further examined themes of adaptability. This includes the participants perception of their success in adjusting their thinking and behaviour during the interview. In addition, the scale examined the participants ability to seek out new information or draw from other sources to adjust to the situation as well as the interview tactics deployed by the participants and how effective they were able to utilize them to adapt to changing situations. Then it probed about the verbal responses of the participants during confrontation with the evidence. Lastly, three items were examining the emotional responses of the participant and the way they were able to adapt these during evidence disclosure, including the negative emotions, as well as the positive emotional resources available (see Table 1.2). The scale was coded on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). The adaptability scale was run through a Cronbach´s alpha and showed strong reliability coefficients of .87.

Table 1.2

Adaptability-Scale Items

Item Nr.	Item Content

1.)	"I was able to think through a number of possible options to assist me in the situation".
2.)	"I was able to revise the way I was thinking about the evidence to help me through the situation."
3)	"I was able to adjust my thinking or expectations to assist me in the situation when it was necessary."
4)	"I was able to seek out new information, alternative scenarios, or useful memories to effectively deal with the situation."
5)	"When I was uncertain of what evidence the interview held, I was able to develop new ways of going about things (e.g. a different way of answering questions or new ways to redirect/interfere the interviewer's questions) to help me through."
6)	"To assist me when being presented with the evidence, I was able to change the way I responded when necessary"
7)	"I was able to reduce negative emotions (e.g., fear, frustration) to help me deal with unexpected evidence."
8)	"When uncertainty arose about what evidence was actually known to the interviewer, I was able to minimize frustration or irritation so I could deal with it best."
9)	"To help me through when presented with unexpected evidence, I was able to draw on positive feelings and emotions (e.g. enjoyment, satisfaction)."

The second independent variable was measured through the interview conditions applied to the participants. These interview conditions were divided into a late evidence disclosure approach and the Shift-of-Strategy-Approach. In the first approach, all existing evidence was used at the end of the interview to confront the participants. Within the second approach, the interviewer disclosed evidence at several key moments over the course of the whole interview.

Results

Hypothesis 1 stated that higher levels of adaptability lead to higher success outcomes. The standardized indirect effect was (-.05)(.43) = -.02. More importantly, no direct effect of interview condition on the success rate, $t(2,48) = 1.00$, $p = .263$ was found, hence the mediation model for Hypothesis 1 cannot be significant. The regression coefficient between the interview condition and the perceived level of adaptability showed no effect, $t(1,49) = -0.18$, $p = .859$. The regression coefficient between adaptability and the effectiveness of information management strategies showed no effect, $t(2,48) = -1.13$, $p = .321$. Thus, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Hypothesis 2 stated that depending on the interview condition, higher levels of adaptability would lead to fewer statement-evidence inconsistencies. There was a direct effect of interview condition on statements evidence inconsistencies, $t(2,48) = -2.48$, p .000. Analyzing the means and standard deviations, the late disclosure elicited more statement-evidence inconsistencies (M= 4.35, SD = .745) as compared to the SoS approach (M= 3.72, SD= 1.021). However, no significant indirect effect of adaptability on the total amount of statement-evidence inconsistencies has been found $t(2,48) = .05$, $p = .96$. The significance values for the indirect effect of the interview condition on the adaptability variable (path a) was the same as for the first test. The standardized total effect size of the second analysis displayed a sole direct effect of the independent measure on the dependent variable (-.63). 5000 bootstrapped samples were computed for the indirect effects and a 95 % confidence interval was created. The effect was .00 and the confidence interval ranged from -.10 to .09. Thus, the indirect effect is almost non-existent and only able to explain a small fraction of the total effect size, but nonetheless significant. Based on the results, Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Hypothesis 3 stated that, depending on the interview condition, higher levels of adaptability would lead to fewer within-statement inconsistencies. Firstly, no direct effect was found between the interview condition and any within-statement inconsistencies $t(1,49) = -.18$, p

= .37, leaving the mediation model non-significant. Even though the standardized indirect effect size was able to establish that the effect (-.0049) was within the 95 % confidence interval ranging from -.1043 to .0593, no significance on path c means no mediating effects can be observed and Hypothesis 3 is rejected. Secondly, no mediating effect of adaptability on the within-statement inconsistencies have been established by the analysis $t(2,48) = .69$, $p = .496$. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that a more positive match-mismatch ratio (more effective adjustments) would lead to significantly less statement-evidence inconsistencies. Like with Hypothesis 2, a direct effect from the interview condition variable was found $t(2,48) = -2.20$, $p = .032$. No indirect effect from the interview condition on the mediating variable (match-mismatch) was established $t(1,49) = -1.157$, $p = .253$. A significant indirect effect did occur from the match-mismatch ratio variable onto the statement-evidence inconsistency scale $t(2,48) = 2.453$, $p = .017$. The bootstrap analysis confirms the indirect effect size (-.096) was within the boundaries of the 95 % confidence interval ranging from -.302 to .067. Total effect sizes also were able to establish a negative total effect size (-.626). That implies that the mediation model with both the independent and mediating variable is able to explain over 60 percent of the effect on the dependent variable. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that a more positive match-mismatch ratio would lead to significantly less within-statement inconsistencies. No significant direct effect was found between the interview condition variable and the within-statement inconsistency variable $t(2,48) = .612$, $p = .543$. A non-significant direct effect means that the mediation model cannot be significant. No significant indirect effects could be established from the interview condition to the match-mismatch ratio variable $t(1,49) = - 1.157$, $p = .252$, as well as from the match-mismatch variable to the within-statement inconsistency variable $t(2,48) = -1.713$, $p = .093$. Hypothesis 5 is rejected based on the results of the analysis.

A correlation analysis for the match-mismatch variable and the two inconsistency scales was made, to examine whether any type of adjustments that have been made could be objectively related to the actual interview outcome. Fewer inconsistencies would mean a higher chance of being perceived as innocent. The match-mismatch ratio variabel showed a positive correlation with the variable statement-evidence inconsistencies, $r(51) = .37$, $p = .008$. The variable success showed a negative correlation with the variable within-statement inconsistencies, $r (51) = -.255$, $p > .070$.

Hypotheses 1,2,3 and 5 have been rejected based on the outcome measures of the four independent mediator analyses, only Hypothesis 4 showed significant effect sizes and is accepted.

To further analyse the data, four mean analyses have been conducted to produce further implications for the results of the mediator analyses. All variables were used to compare the means (Table 2)

Table 2

Means Independent & Dependent Variables

Variable	Mean	N	Standard Deviation
Interview Condition*Match-Mismatch	2.57	51	3.208
Adaptability	4.36	51	1.061
Interview Condition*SEI	4.04	51	.937
Interview Condition*WSI	.41	51	.853

Discussion

The main focus of this research was to establish whether higher levels of adaptability would lead to higher chances of following a pre-planned strategy to reach a previously set goal. Two interrogation techniques were compared to observe which was better at eliciting adaptability and which made it more difficult to stick to the initial plan of a suspect. Five hypotheses were created that predicted different outcomes. Hypothesis 1 predicted that higher levels of adaptability would result in a more positive match-mismatch ratio. Hypotheses 2 and 3 predicted that higher levels of adaptability would result in fewer statement-evidence and within-statement inconsistencies. Hypotheses 4 and 5 predicted that a more positive match-mismatch ration would result in fewer statement-evidence and within-statement inconsistencies. Five independent mediator analyses were conducted to examine the mediating effect of (1) adaptability and (2) interview approach on (3) match-mismatch ratio, (4) statement-evidence inconsistencies and (5) within-statement inconsistencies. Only one mediator analysis produced a significant indirect effect, the mediator analysis for Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis 1,2,3 and 5 were all rejected based on the results of the mediator analyses.

Regarding the first three hypotheses, the non-significant results seem to suggest that the disclosure of evidence is the main influencing factor on adaptability. We can assume that evidence disclosure is overwhelming to such a degree that adaptability simply does not occur. Both evidence-disclosure techniques appear highly effective. They significantly limit the ability to behave in a goal-directed way and adjust behaviour to stick to a pre-planned strategy. That resulted in more inconsistencies in the interview. Hypothesis 4 was found to be significant which means that a more positive match-mismatch ratio resulted in fewer inconsistencies regarding the evidence. This makes sense, since evidence disclosure techniques were not directly affecting the match-mismatch ratio, as established in the first mediation analysis, testing Hypothesis 1. It seems that the pre-planning and translation into actual behaviour are separated from the interrogation tactics. The higher the match-mismatch ratio, the more efficient was the suspects ability to follow through with the pre-planned strategy. This resulted in less inconsistencies, since suspects planned what to reveal without the need for major adjustments. Further research is needed to confirm this assumption. Hypothesis 5 might have been non-significant due to several factors. First of all, the evidence disclosure had no significant indirect effect on the match-mismatch ratio variable. That suggest that, the late disclosure and SoS have no influence on the pre-planned strategy and how it is translated into actual behaviour. No direct effect on the within-statement inconsistencies were found in both H5 and H3. It seems that despite the evidence disclosure participants were able to hold on to the strategy without major adjustment necessity. That led to fewer contradicting statements. This could be explained by the small significant indirect effect that adaptability had on the within-statement inconsistencies. It could imply that participants were able to utilize it to some degree to produce less within-statement inconsistencies. By comparing the means of both statement-evidence and within-statement inconsistencies, higher means were found in the SEI´s (Table 2). A significant direct effect was established from the evidence disclosure technique to the SEI´s. This implies that WSI´s might be more influenced by adaptability than the evidence disclosure technique used, as indicated by the significantly lower mean scores.

One limitation of this research were the confounding interview variables. All hypotheses which incorporated adaptability as their mediator variable showed non-significant results. This is directly related to the interview conditions of the study. The late disclosure approach gave the participants no possibility to adapt their pre-planned strategy at all. The SoS approach contained

too effective evidence disclosure techniques which overwrote adaptability. Future research should aim to develop another evidence-disclosure technique that is better suited to elicit adaptive responses from the participants. Another explanation could be related to the adaptability variable. Adaptability showed no significant effects because the variable was based on subjective measures. A possibility could be related to participants misjudging their own level of adaptability during the evidence disclosure in hindsight. Mean scores overall indicate high levels of adaptability, whereas the objective measures indicate the opposite (Table 2). Both statement-evidence inconsistencies and the match-mismatch ratio variable had mean scores directly opposing the mean score of the adaptability variable. The statement-evidence inconsistencies had higher total mean scores and the match-mismatch ratio variable had mean scores in the lower positive range, indicating only moderate effectiveness rates overall (Table 2). Therefore, adaptability had no significant indirect effects, as participants overestimated their own level of adjustments. To negate this problem, future research should develop adaptability variables which are less reliant on subjective judgements.

Another limitation of the study is related to the match-mismatch ratio variable. It measured the times a participant planned to share something but did not and did not plan to share information but did in the end (mismatch) or planned to share something and did or did not plan to share information and did not in the end (match). If a participant did not want to share a piece of information but ultimately did during the interview, the participant might have picked that he wanted to share it to look more efficient and in control of their thought processes and behaviours. Two biases could influence the participants response in this example. For one the hindsight bias, arguing that the participant wanted to say that information all along. In addition, the outcome bias, which resulted from the participants having trouble acknowledging his errors. One possible solution to this problem would be a pre-interview assessment of the strategies before the interview starts to properly examine possible adjustments to the pre-planned strategy.

A follow up study might want to include another measure into the study procedure and data analysis. Further research could incorporate the measure of resilience as a mediator variable. By conducting a comparison study, researchers could examine if adaptability was exclusively overwritten by the evidence disclosure techniques or whether resilience was a more dominant response to the evidence disclosure, as it is closely correlated with adaptability (Martin, 2017). Instead of using adaptability variables, the comparison study could develop resilience variables and compare the results of the adaptability variable study and the resilience variable study. The

study should be a 2x2 design (late disclosure vs SoS approach & adaptability vs resilience) with the mediator of match-mismatch ratio and the dependent measures of inconsistencies and admissions as the outcome variables. With this, researchers could examine which of the two processes would be dominant during an interrogation. Research by Martin (2017) backs this up, as he claims that individuals who enter a threatening situation will draw more on resources related to resilience, rather than adaptability.

Conclusion

In the context of police interrogations, next to no research has examined how suspects might adapt their strategies to successfully reach their goal of being perceived as innocent. Most research solely focused on evidence disclosure techniques that aim to seek out the truth and gather new information from the suspect. Much is known on which evidence disclosure tactic elicits responses from the suspects and wears down their counter-interrogation strategies (Hartwig et al., 2014). Adaptability also has been the subject of several studies. No research has been conducted on adaptability within the interrogation context, despite growing interest in the cognitive elements behind suspects counter-interrogation strategies. No study established a link between adaptability and the evidence disclosure tactics applied by the interrogator. The present study was one of the first that aimed to examine how suspects adjust their pre-planned strategies and how they are able to translate that into actual behaviours during an interrogation. The results showed that adaptability had no significant effect on the amount of statement-evidence inconsistencies a suspect would make. Additionally, adaptability also showed no significant influence on the suspects ability to follow his pre-planned strategy and translate it into actual behaviours. Several factors might have influenced the effects of adaptability on the dependent measures. For one, the evidence disclosure techniques might have been too overwhelming for the participants, which overwrote any adaptive responses. Secondly, adaptability was measured by using subjective judgements, creating the possibility that participants misjudged their own ability to adapt to the evidence disclosure techniques. Lastly, the usage of evidence disclosure techniques might have triggered a resilient response rather than an adaptive response. To conclude, more research into the phenomenon of adaptability is needed to draw further conclusions.

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Appendices

Background & Planning (Materials)

Appendix 1

Criminal Decision Making

Informed Consent

Purpose

This study is about criminal behavior. An important feature of a criminal investigation is to understand the behavior of suspects of crime. The current study will examine your perceptions and behaviors as a suspect who commits a mock crime.

More detailed information regarding the theoretical background, such as underlying concepts or frameworks, cannot be disclosed at the present moment to ensure that you behave as normal and natural as you would in reality. Any detailed information will be provided upon request after the experiment is done.

Procedure

As a participant in this study, you will be instructed to perform some criminal activities and afterwards you will be interviewed about it and fill in a questionnaire about your perceptions of your experiences. The interview will be audio recorded.

Once you have filled in the questionnaire the study is completed. Because it is important to protect the validity of psychological experiments (i.e., that you behave as normal and natural as possible during the operation), we cannot tell you everything about the study at this time. After the study is complete you will be fully debriefed and we will answer any questions that you may have about the study. If you decide to enroll in this study, your involvement will last for up to 60 minutes and you will receive 1 SONA credit for your participation. To ensure confidentiality, your responses will be anonymous (i.e., personal identifying information cannot be matched with your answers) and we only analyze group averages (i.e., individual performances will not be analyzed). The recorded data is treated confidentially and only available to the research team. In case of publication, it is obligatory to store the material for up to 10 years.

Participant Rights

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without consequences. Also, the audio recordings will be destroyed immediately at your request. You will receive the full compensation also if you stop participating. For further information about this study, contact the principal investigator Simon Oleszkiewicz, Ph.D. at s.oleszkiewicz@utwente.nl

Consent and Authorization Provisions

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in **Criminal Decision Making**, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered.

Name

I consent to participate in the study on criminal behavior

Signature

I consent to be audio recorded during the interview

Signature

Appendix 2

Background

Imagine that you are a person who was raised in a house full of love for pets, especially cats and dogs. Having been around animals all your life you have developed a very special bond to them. Simply put, you love cats and dogs.

You are currently studying at the UT and from your fellow students, you just heard some rumors that made your bones chill to the core: There is a professor at the University who does animal testing on dogs. You found out that this professor is doing his research on animals illegally, and that he violates the strict ethical procedures for animal handling.

However, it seems as if the university is turning a blind eye. Because of your love for animals, you decided that this was too much: There is no way such cruel treatment of animals can be justified, you had to do something to make it stop!

Since your gruesome discovery, you have made several attempts to put an end to this horror. You have emailed the professor directly, you have arranged demonstrations, talked with the heads of several faculties, the HR department, study advisors, you name it. However, this has only resulted in straight out denials – nobody acknowledges any unethical animal treatment. At this point in time, your hard work and efforts have not paid off at all, and you conclude that only one option remains: To collect evidence about the unethical behavior and forward it to an investigative journalist that will publish a story about it in the news.

To collect the evidence you need help, so you contacted the organization *Rights for Animals*. However, this organization is currently under investigation for other crimes. Therefore, they cannot play any major role in gathering evidence, but they are willing to help you work out the necessary activities to secure the necessary evidence.

What you are going to do

You're planning to collect evidence that the UT is involved in illegal and cruel treatment of animals. The organization *Rights for Animals* supports you. Soon, they will get into contact with you and help you with your mission. The collected evidence will then be forwarded to an employee at *Rights for Animals.*

Briefly put, to complete your mission you have to (specific instructions will follow later):

(1) gain access to the office

(2) collect evidence in the office

(3) provide the evidence to your accomplice

You will next receive detailed instructions for what you have to do to collect and forward the evidence. Read the instructions carefully so you know it by heart. You will be allowed to take these instructions with you, so you do not need to memorize every word. Feel free to check this paper if you get insecure or can't remember what to do next.

Appendix 3

Instructions

These instructions will be performed in consecutive order. Meaning that once you have ticked of a box, you move to the next box directly under it. Do not jump between boxes; you have to follow the order from top to bottom.

☐ received text message from your contact person from the animal rights organization

(mission starts) → WhatsApp message

☐ collect envelope at the given location established by the text message

☐ go into the office where you find information regarding the animal experiments (room XXX)

☐ start the computer and plug in the USB stick to collect the necessary evidence

☐ search the file ‘experiments’ and copy it on the USB stick (located on Desktop)

☐ take the USB stick and the envelope and leave the office

☐ go to room XXX (there you can find a secure computer)

☐ use the computer to log into your email- account

☐ send the files of the USB stick to KalleBlomNews@gmail.com (a journalist who belongs to *Rights for Animals* who wants to publish your story)

☐ next to the computer, search for the folder 'contracts' and take a picture of the Documents which you find inside. They serve as additional evidence.

☐ send it via WhatsApp to this number (Kalle Blom): +4915774479784

☐ put the USB stick back into the envelope and place it into the folder 'private' (your accomplice will collect it)

☐ return to room XXX

Pre-Interview Instructions

Appendix 4

Instructions for participant (before the police interview starts)

In 5 minutes, you will be interviewed by a police officer. You are instructed to interact with the police, so please try to imagine how you would answer possible questions in reality. The police already held several interviews with suspects, collected fingerprints from all involved (including you) and checked back alibis.

Please imagine that you have already concluded that it is important for you to give an innocent appearance and that this will best be done by speaking with the police. Hence, you concluded that using your right to remain silent will only make you seem more suspicious. In addition, during

the interview you will be asked whether you want to have a lawyer present. Please imagine that you have already considered this option and decided it was best to not invite a lawyer, because in this way you look more innocent. Hence, you are instructed to answer this question with a 'No'.

Don't forget: You are an activist for animal rights. While getting your information about the cruel researcher, you were, however, committing a crime. In order to complete your mission, you should try to convince the interviewer of your innocence. Otherwise, *Rights for Animals* won't be able to publish your findings as their work will be linked to your criminal activity; all your work would be for nothing. Please imagine that this is very important for you: If you don't come across as innocent during the interview you will fail to save the animals.

Please note that it is the interviewer who will end the interview. The interviewer will then tell you what you need to do after the interview is over.

Interview Protocols

Appendix 5

Control Interview

Control Interview- Late disclosure

"Hello, my Name is XXX. I am part of the team investigating a crime that was committed here at the University today. Someone broke into the University's facilities and stole confidential data. There is reasonable suspicion that you have committed this crime, and I will therefore ask you some questions about your behavior and your observations around the University today. Because of the suspicion against you, you do have the right to have a lawyer present during this interview. Would you like to consult one?

I also want to mention that you have the right to remain silent and that you do not have to answer any of my questions.

#Response of Suspect

Do you confess or deny having engaged in any criminal activities?

#Response of Suspect

You can start by freely telling me how you arrived at the university today and what you did there.

#Response of Suspect

Thank you. I have a few more specific questions.

Have you been around/ You mentioned being at **the study area on the ground floor of the Cubicus builduing** today?

#Response of Suspect

if suspect remains silent or only answers with a 'yes' after the first question of each evidence theme, prompt once by saying: Please tell me about that

Have you been around/you mentioned you were around **the office of one of the professors** after being at the study area?

#Response of Suspect

Have you recently entered/ you mentioned that you entered the office of a professor?

#Response of Suspect

Have you entered/you mentioned that you entered **another room** after you left the office?

#Response of Suspect

Is there anything you would like to add at this point?

#Response of Suspect

Okay, thank you. We have collected some evidence that I would like you to address. Our tech team intercepted the text message you received today, shortly thereafter a witness saw you pick up an envelope from one of the lockers in the Cubicus building. Later on, another witness saw you near the office of the professor. We have also found your fingerprints inside the office, and a webcam has shown that you used the computer in room XXX. Before we conclude this interview, would you mind explaining all these activities.

#Response of Suspect

Alternative Deceptive: I would like to point out that you're better off, the more information you provide voluntarily. I'll give you one last chance to cooperate by answering my questions.

#Response of Suspect

If suspect remains silent

So, do you have anything to add?

If suspect objects or complains, simply read out the evidence again

---

Okay, to conclude this interview I will ask the same question I started with: Do you confess or do you deny having engaged in any criminal activities?

Okay, thank you for your time. If we find something in need for further clarification, we will ask you to come back at a later time. Have a good day.

(Investigator opens the door for participant)

SoS-Interview Protocol

Appendix 6

Control Interview- Late disclosure

"Hello, my Name is XXX. I am part of the team investigating a crime that was committed here at the University today. Someone broke into the University's facilities and stole confidential data. There is reasonable suspicion that you have committed this crime, and I will therefore ask you some questions about your behavior and your observations around the University today. Because of the suspicion against you, you do have the right to have a lawyer present during this interview. Would you like to consult one?

I also want to mention that you have the right to remain silent and that you do not have to answer any of my questions.

#Response of Suspect

Do you confess or deny having engaged in any criminal activities?

#Response of Suspect

You can start by freely telling me how you arrived at the university today and what you did there.

#Response of Suspect

Thank you. I have a few more specific questions.

Have you been around/ You mentioned being at **the study area on the ground floor of the Cubicus builduing** today?

#Response of Suspect

if suspect remains silent or only answers with a 'yes' after the first question of each evidence theme, prompt once by saying: Please tell me about that

Have you been around/you mentioned you were around **the office of one of the professors** after being at the study area?

#Response of Suspect

Have you recently entered/ you mentioned that you entered the office of a professor?

#Response of Suspect

Have you entered/you mentioned that you entered **another room** after you left the office?

#Response of Suspect

Is there anything you would like to add at this point?

#Response of Suspect

Okay, thank you. We have collected some evidence that I would like you to address. Our tech team intercepted the text message you received today, shortly thereafter a witness saw you pick up an envelope from one of the lockers in the Cubicus building. Later on, another witness saw you near the office of the professor. We have also found your fingerprints inside the office, and a webcam has shown that you used the computer in room XXX. Before we conclude this interview, would you mind explaining all these activities.

#Response of Suspect

Alternative Deceptive: I would like to point out that you're better off, the more information you provide voluntarily. I'll give you one last chance to cooperate by answering my questions.

#Response of Suspect

If suspect remains silent

So, do you have anything to add?

If suspect objects or complains, simply read out the evidence again

---

Okay, to conclude this interview I will ask the same question I started with: Do you confess or do you deny having engaged in any criminal activities?

Okay, thank you for your time. If we find something in need for further clarification, we will ask you to come back at a later time. Have a good day.

(Investigator opens the door for participant)