Impact of Minimization and Maximization in Simulated Investigative Interviews with Suspects

Hannah Olden

Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences

University of Twente

Supervisor: Dr Steven J. Watson

Second Supervisor: Iris van Sintemaartensdijk

Abstract

Previous research in the field of investigative interviews indicated that the minimization interview tactic decreases the perceived severity of a possible punishment, while it increases the rapport found between the interview parties. Furthermore, maximization interviews were found to increase the perceived likelihood and severity of the punishment, as well as decrease the level of rapport as viewed by the suspect. The purpose of this study was to gain deeper insights into the influence of minimization and maximization on the likelihood and severity of punishment as perceived by the suspect, as well as the rapport between the interviewer and the suspect. Therefore, 51 participants were asked to play the role of a suspect. To do this, they read descriptions of a crime that occurred. Next, they took part in an online mock interview with the task to convince the interviewer that they are innocent. There were three interview approaches in this study which were all accusatory. First, the control condition, and next the manipulation conditions of minimization and maximization. Afterwards, they were asked to complete a questionnaire about their perceptions of the risk they were facing and their impression of the interviewer in terms of rapport. While there were no significant differences between the interview approaches, there were indications that minimization increased the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment, and the perceived likelihood cooperation during the interview brings benefits, while it decreased the perceived extent of benefits through cooperation. Maximization was indicated to increase the perceived likelihood of punishment and the perceived extent of benefits, whereas it decreased the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits. Overall, this study emphasizes the need for more research into the influence of minimization and maximization while taking into account factors such as the suspect´s sense of guilt or evidence strength.

Keywords: minimization, maximization, rapport, risk perception, investigative interviewing

Introduction

Confessions are one of the most convincing types of evidence to jurors, even more so than eyewitness testimony (Wetmore et al., 2013). For this reason, in the US, these confessions have to be voluntarily provided by the suspect as they are inadmissible in court otherwise (Shouse California Law Group, 2020). In some European countries, confessions are not admissible in court if the suspect has been deceived or was promised something by law enforcement. In Sweden, promises of leniency and working with information that is known to be false in interrogations is forbidden (European e-Justice, n.d.). Promising leniency is also not allowed in Austria (Schaffler, 2010), whereas in Germany, law enforcement may offer leniency but only if this is also applied. If the police cannot or do not follow through with this promise, it is seen as deception and therefore illegal as well as inadmissible in court (Bundesministerium für Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, n.d.). In general, explicit offers of leniency are banned because they are coercive, whereas some interviewing techniques only imply leniency. Thus, these techniques can be coercive without being overtly deceptive.

When looking at interrogation and police interviews, there are further issues that are regularly criticised by researchers in this field. One of those issues is when interviewers show coercive behaviour that influences interviewees to confess to a crime they did not commit, which is not rare. As of 2020, in 12% of exonerations in the US, the suspects had given a false confession (Possley, Roll, & Stephens, 2020). Additionally, even if laws and restrictions like those explained above are in place, it is unclear how closely law enforcement will follow those rules (Malsch & de Boer, 2019). Many times, these laws are not formulated clearly enough which makes it difficult to pinpoint exactly what is not allowed in interrogations or interviews. Therefore, there are many possible influences an officer could have on a suspect without violating the ground rules of interrogation. In the US, another problem is that law

enforcement tactics and strategies do not change, or only change slowly, although research clearly shows interview strategies which would be helpful in interrogations (Snook et al., 2021).

Interview Tactics and Perceived Risk

Still, the most popular method used in interviews in North America is the Reid Technique, which, among others, includes two problematic strategies called maximization and minimization (Cleary & Warner, 2016; Gudjonsson, 2003). In this context, according to Kassin and McNall (1991), maximization refers to a strategy used by the interviewer where they inflate the seriousness of the crime or make false statements about evidence in order to scare the suspect and make them think they are very likely to be getting convicted. By making the suspect´s crimes seem more severe, the interviewers imply a high punishment or sentencing if they are convicted. As maximization increases the risk of not saying anything by increasing the perception that the suspect will be found guilty if they do not speak, the suspect should confess to lower the possible sentence or get offered a plea bargain (Kassin & McNall, 1991; Legal Information Institute, n.d.).

Moreover, maximization affects both the likelihood or probability of receiving punishment as perceived by the suspect and their perceived severity of this punishment separately. This effect is expected to go in the same direction for both aspects so that maximization increases the expected likelihood and severity of punishment. A model that can help explain how this process might work in investigative interviews is the decision-making model of confessions by Hilgendorf and Irving (1981). Subjective probabilities in this theory are seen as only the personal perception of the suspect and not an objective view of the probability of certain consequences. Further, the utility gains for the suspect are the positive values or benefits they expect to come with the possible consequences. According to this model, the decision-making process in an interrogation consists of the suspect trying to

balance the subjective probabilities of different perceived consequences with their utility gains to the suspect. Accordingly, a suspect in a maximization interrogation would try to balance the different options of staying silent, saying something, or confessing to the crime with their consequences and what each option would mean for the suspect. This explains why a suspect who is told that their situation is serious and that their crime was severe might perceive the subjective probability of receiving a sentence as high. Furthermore, they could think that if they are found guilty, this sentence will be harsh, indicating a low utility of not talking. Hence, the probability of a poor outcome is high while the utility of staying quiet is low, which is why it is less likely that the suspect stays quiet under these interview conditions.

Minimization, the second interview tactic that is being investigated, takes place when the interviewer acts as though they are understanding and provides moral rationalization for the committed crime in order to make the suspect think they are less likely to be severely punished and that their crimes were not too serious. This can also contribute to making the suspect confess as they might think that they will get a lesser sentence for the committed crime, compared to maximization or direct threats. This was found by Russano et al. (2005) who showed that minimization and explicit leniency promises increased both the true and the false confession rate in their study when compared to using none of those tactics. Additionally, Kassin and McNall found in their 1991 research that participants who read an interrogation transcript where the suspect had been promised lenient sentencing or was subjected to minimization tactics had the lowest score on the length of the expected sentencing compared to those who read a transcript where maximization or a threat of punishment were used. Some participants even only expected probation. These results demonstrate that the perceived severity of punishment is affected in similar ways by both the minimization strategy as well as explicit leniency promises. Similar to the maximization

condition, the decision-making model of confessions (Hilgendorf & Irving, 1981) can help explain why minimization tactics work in investigative interviews, as the suspect in a minimization interview is offered rationalizations for their crime and is told that their crime is not severe. Therefore, the suspect feels like the subjective probability of a positive outcome is high if they speak up. Furthermore, if lenient sentencing is implied, offering information would be the action with the largest utility, namely a minor punishment, to the suspect.

Additionally, Luke and Alceste (2019) found that minimization decreases the perceived likelihood of punishment after a confession, even when the interviewer warned the suspect that leniency could not be promised. Moreover, Klaver, Lee and Rose (2008) also warned about the dangers of using minimization in suspect interviews as it heightened the number of false confessions given in their study. This is the case because when the interview tactic implies leniency, the suspect has to choose between either hoping to get out of the situation without saying anything or giving information through which they expect to receive the implied leniency.

When considering all the above information, a moral question can be asked about the ethics of using such coercive interview tactics. Therefore, in this study, I will focus on comparing maximization and minimization in suspect interrogations as they can also be seen as persuading tactics and may be manipulating the suspect to think that their punishment is more likely and more severe because their crime is so grave, or that they may have a lower likelihood and severity of punishment because the interviewer is understanding. Additionally, in the current study, false confessions are not a risk as it is only necessary to know whether people are providing information because the interviewer is misleading them concerning the likelihood and severity of the risk they face.

Rapport

While the decision-making model of confessions by Hilgendorf and Irving (1981) assumes that people are thinking rationally and weighing up the benefits and disadvantages of cooperating, more recent research suggests that the interpersonal relationship can have a large influence on the suspect as well. Therefore, building rapport, which is defined as the connection or alliance between interviewer and suspect, can help in making the source more responsive and cooperative (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Vallano et al., 2015). Furthermore, multiple studies found a positive relationship between rapport and the amount of information that is disclosed in an investigative interview (Gabbert et al., 2021). According to Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990), rapport consists of three components, with the first one being mutual attention, which is used when participants in an interaction are present and focussed on the other person. The second component is positivity, which includes mutual respect and liking. Mutual respect is especially important in establishing this positivity in investigative interviewing as there is an inherent hierarchy present, which impedes mutual liking to some extent. Lastly, the third component of coordination is present in an interaction that runs smoothly and where the participants are in sync. To build rapport in suspect interviewing, law enforcement uses different strategies such as active listening, self-disclosure and establishing common ground (Vallano et al., 2015).

Overall, generating rapport in an investigative interview is important as it can encourage the source to speak more freely and can bring the interviewer crucial information and evidence (Gabbert et al., 2021). This could be influenced by minimization and maximization in different ways. The expected influences of the interrogation approaches on rapport can be explained by the findings of Alison et al. (2013) that in investigative interviewing, positive, adaptive behaviour on the side of the interviewer correlates to the same positive behaviour from the suspect. Contrarily, negative or maladaptive behaviour of the interviewer, like in a maximization interview, generates a similar response in the suspect.

Thus, minimization will likely foster rapport as it is a tactic that makes use of sympathy and moral excuses for suspect behaviour. Minimization might specifically affect rapport by facilitating positivity and mutual attention, which is done through agreeable and understanding interviewer behaviour. Maximization on the other hand could influence rapport negatively as it is a more aggressive tactic that is supposed to scare the suspect or imply a higher sentence rather than developing a positive relationship with the suspect. In general, this could mean that the suspect does not want to cooperate openly with the interviewer because they did not build enough rapport.

This thesis examines the influence of minimization or maximization on rapport as well as on the suspect's perception of the likelihood and severity of punishment in order to explore these different facets of suspect interrogation. Therefore, the research questions are "What is the influence of maximization and minimization on the perception of likelihood and severity of punishment of the suspect?" and "What is the effect of maximization and minimization on the rapport between the interviewer and the suspect?".

Hypotheses

1. Maximization increases the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment of the suspect when compared to a control condition in which there is no maximization or minimization.
2. Minimization decreases the severity of punishment of the suspect, but should not affect the perceived likelihood of punishment when compared to the control condition.
3. Both minimization and maximization increase the overall perceived benefit of cooperation, the perceived extent of benefit of cooperation, and the likelihood that cooperation brings benefits when compared to the control condition.

4. Minimization increases the level of rapport between suspect and interviewer when compared to the control condition.
5. Maximization decreases the level of rapport between suspect and interviewer when compared to the control condition.

Methods

Design

In the current study, a between-subject design was employed. There was one independent variable, *interrogation technique*, with three conditions, minimization, maximization, and the control condition. The dependent variables were *rapport* and *perceived risk of punishment*, which was split into five different subscales for analysis, namely *perceived likelihood of punishment*, *perceived severity of punishment*, *overall perceived benefit of cooperation*, *perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefit*, and *perceived extent of benefits of cooperation*.

Participants

In total, 51 participants (female: 41; male: 10) volunteered their time for the study after seeing the study posted on the Sona Psychology Test Subject Pool, which is a web service that allows students at the University of Twente to publish their studies and to take part in other research in exchange for study credits. Additionally, participants were gathered by being asked to participate through postings on social media, specifically Instagram and WhatsApp. This means that a convenience and voluntary response sample was used. Each of the three conditions had 17 participants. Forty-five participants were German and three were Dutch, while three participants chose the option "other". The age ranged from 18 to 61 (M_{age} = 25; SD_{age} = 9.43). All participants have agreed to their data being used anonymously for research purposes.

Materials

Crime Scenario

Participants in this study had to play the role of a suspect in an investigative interview, so in order to give all participants the same realistic backstory, a crime scenario was written in which the day they committed the crime was described in detail (see Appendix A). The chosen crime was the theft of an expensive necklace from a party. The crime was simple and its details were easy to recall, which is why enough details could be provided for the participant to think of a cover story for the described events. In the scenario, a first-person description of how and why the criminal got to the house where they stole the necklace is given, alongside information that makes the story more believable, such as how the criminal was in a lot of debt and was therefore looking for ways to make quick money. Furthermore, multiple details such as where exactly in the house the necklace was and how the possible eyewitnesses looked are given in the scenario. This was done so the interviewee does not have to think of answers spontaneously when asked for such details in the investigative interview. Moreover, those details make the participant´s experience of the interview more immersive.

Interview Script

For the interview, a script was made for each of the three conditions in order to have comparable length and content for each interview (see Appendix B). All three of the conditions were guilt presumptive and accusatory to be able to compare the specific elements of minimization and maximization against each other clearly. The accusatory aspect was ensured by the interviewer mentioning that they know the suspect took the necklace, and the suspect should not try to deny it. In the control condition, the interview introduction was held neutral and did not contain any statements specific to minimization or maximization. For the minimization condition, some statements were changed in the introduction in order to show

understanding and give excuses to the suspect as to why they might have stolen the necklace. An example of this is when the interviewer said “Everyone would understand that, I mean, we would all be tempted.” In contrast, the maximization introduction contained comments that were confronting the suspect and were aiming to induce feelings of guilt, like “All of this together is enough to put you behind bars.”

Questionnaires

Rapport. The questionnaire scales for the measurement of rapport in investigative interviews by Duke et al. (2018) were used (see Appendix C). With 21 items, the scale measures six different aspects of rapport in their interviewee version, namely attentiveness, trust or respect, expertise, cultural similarity, connected flow, and commitment to communication. Those aspects are measured on a Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Cronbach´s alpha for all subscales together was 0.83, which means the scale has acceptable internal reliability.

Risk and benefits perception. The first part of the questionnaire contained questions on the suspect´s perceptions of likelihood and severity of punishment to find out how different interviewer behaviours influence those perceptions (Appendix D). In other words, the questionnaire measured how likely a suspect believed it was that they would be found guilty of the crime, and how harsh they expect their punishment to be if they were found guilty. As the research is also aimed at finding out how the different tactics influence how beneficial suspects think it is to cooperate with the interviewer, the questionnaire contained five questions that address if suspects expected benefits, as well as the expected extent of benefits of cooperation and the likelihood of cooperation bringing benefits to a suspect. Furthermore, five out of the twelve questions were reverse coded as they were negatively formulated. As the different subscales only contain between three and five items, the average inter-item correlation is used as a measure of internal consistency. For the likelihood of

punishment scale, this correlation was calculated at .18, which is within the ideal range from .15 to .5 (*Average Inter-Item Correlation*, 2018). For the severity of punishment scale, it reached a value of .16.

Procedure

After signing up on Sona Systems or being recruited privately by the researchers, participants could choose a date for taking part in the study. Via email, they received the link to the online meeting, the crime scenario, and a pdf of the participant information sheet and consent form in order to become familiar with what would be expected of them in the study. Further, the participants were instructed in the email to try to get away with the crime they read about in the crime scenario so they would not just refuse to answer in the interview. Moreover, they were told that they should prepare a believable cover story and that they should not act as another person but stay themselves in how they answered the questions. Next, they were asked to take part in the interview over Google Meet where the researchers split into two roles. One researcher was the interviewer, and the other was the researcher who welcomed the participants. Participants were not interviewed by an interviewer they knew personally. After starting the video recording, the researcher asked the participants if they agree to the consent form and whether they had read the crime scenario. During this part, the interviewer had their camera and microphone turned off because one of the variables to measure was rapport, which could be influenced by the impressions of the interviewer if they were present while the researcher did the introduction. When the participant agreed to both questions and had understood everything, the researcher muted themselves and turned their camera off. Then, the interviewer unmuted themselves and turned on their camera, and started with the introduction to the interview. The interviewer used one of the three interview scripts which had all the same questions, as explained in the materials. Participants were allocated sequentially. In the control condition, the introduction and questions were delivered

in a neutral but interested tone. When using the maximization script, the tone was serious. During the minimization condition, the overall conversation was held in a nice and sympathetic tone of voice. The tone of voice was changed in the two conditions in order to reinforce the manipulation as it would not be believable if the interviewer stayed neutral while using minimization or maximization, which include showing emotions such as understanding or disapproval, respectively.

After the interview, the researcher took back over and the interviewer turned off their camera and microphone. Participants were then instructed to go to the Qualtrics tab and fill in the questionnaire while the researcher muted themselves and stayed in the call to be available for questions. Subsequently, participants were presented with demographic questions considering their gender, age, and nationality. Next, they completed the post-interview questionnaire. The purpose of these questions was to find participants´ level of rapport and risk perception following the interview. They had to select all fitting answers before reaching the debriefing on the final page, after which the researcher asked if there were any other questions.

Data Analysis

The responses to the questionnaire were recorded in the Qualtrics software and then exported to IBM SPSS Statistics 24 for analysis. Five of the questions needed to be reverse coded (see Appendix D). In order to test the hypotheses, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was run to determine whether there is a difference between the three conditions of the interview. The effect size, measured in Epsilon squared (E^2), was calculated for each comparison. This was followed by two Mann-Whitney U tests to see the specific differences between the control condition and either of the manipulations. Next, a Bonferroni correction was applied to the results of the Mann-Whitney U tests in order to correct the p-values for a type I error.

Results

First, as shown in table 1, the mean scores for the dependent variables were calculated. A visualization of the means per condition can be found in Appendix E. Furthermore, it was established through a Shapiro-Wilk test of normality that two variables showed a significant departure from normality, namely the mean overall perceived benefit of cooperation, $W(51) = 0.76$, $p < 0.001$ and the mean perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits, $W(51) = 0.95$, $p = .021$. Both variables are positively skewed, with respective skewness values of 1.26 and 0.43.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of all Variables

Variable	*M*	*SD*
Likelihood of Punishment	3.52	0.81
Severity of Punishment	3.67	0.68
Overall Perceived Benefit of Cooperation	1.88	1.07
Perceived Likelihood Cooperation Brings Benefits	2.56	0.78
Perceived Extent of Benefits	2.52	0.75
Rapport	3.56	0.51

Lastly, the Pearson correlation was calculated for the dependent variables where one significant correlation was found between the mean perceived severity of punishment and the mean perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits. This correlation shows that in the current sample, the higher the perceived punishment, the higher the likelihood of benefits of cooperation. All correlations and respective p-values can be found in table 2.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Matrix of the Dependent Variables

		Mean Perceived Likelihood of Punishment	Mean Perceived Severity of Punishment	Mean Overall Perceived Benefit of Cooperation	Mean Perceived Likelihood Cooperation brings Benefit	Mean Perceived Extent of Benefit of Cooperation	Mean Rapport
Mean Perceived Likelihood of Punishment	*r*	1					
	p						
Mean Perceived Severity of Punishment	*r*	.016	1				
	p	.909					
Mean Overall Perceived Benefit of Cooperation	*r*	-.012	.055	1			
	p	.932	.700				
Mean Perceived Likelihood Cooperation brings Benefit	*r*	-.082	.285*	-.056	1		
	p	.567	.043	.694			
Mean Perceived Extent of Benefit of Cooperation	*r*	-.166	.163	-.121	.245	1	
	p	.245	.253	.398	.084		
Mean Rapport	*r*	.139	-.193	.178	-.132	-.256	1
	p	.331	.175	.212	.356	.069	

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis testing

Influence of Interview Approach on Risk Perception

To begin with, the first and second hypotheses about the influence of minimization and maximization on the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment when compared to the control condition were tested. This was done by running Kruskal-Wallis H tests with the

mean perceived likelihood of punishment and mean perceived severity of punishment as the dependent variables. The interrogation approach was the independent variable.

Perceived Likelihood of Punishment. There was no statistically significant difference found between the approaches for the perceived likelihood of punishment, $H(2) = 3.02$, $p = .221$, $E^2 = .06$. Thus, there was no association found between the interview approach and the perceived likelihood of punishment. Further, the mean score of perceived likelihood of punishment was 3.31 in the control condition ($SD = 0.59$), whereas it was 3.63 in both the maximization and minimization conditions ($SD = 0.95$; $SD = 0.83$). Hence, both manipulation conditions scored higher than the control condition.

Perceived Severity of Punishment. There was also no statistically significant effect found between the interview approaches for the perceived severity of punishment, $H(2) = 1.61$, $p = .448$, $E^2 = .03$. This means that the individual differences in the perceived severity of punishment cannot be attributed to the different interview approaches. For the perceived severity of punishment, the mean scores were lowest at 3.47 in the control condition ($SD = 0.65$), 3.66 in the maximization condition ($SD = 0.78$), and highest at 3.70 for minimization ($SD = 0.58$).

Influence of Interview Approach on Benefits Perception

For the third hypothesis that both minimization and maximization increase the perceived benefit of cooperation when compared to the control condition, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was run with the mean overall perceived benefit of cooperation, mean perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefit and mean perceived extent of benefit of cooperation as the dependent variables, and the interrogation approach as the independent variable.

Overall Perceived Benefit of Cooperation. There was no statistically significant effect found between the approaches for the overall perceived benefit of cooperation $H(2) = 4.29$, $p = .117$, $E^2 = .09$, therefore, showing no association between the interview approaches

and the overall perceived benefit of cooperation. The mean scores for this variable were 2.24 for the control condition (*SD*= 1.14), 1.58 for maximization (*SD*= 1.06), and 1.82 for minimization (*SD*= 0.95). Here, the control condition had a higher mean than both manipulations.

Perceived Likelihood that Cooperation brings Benefits. There was also no statistically significant difference found between the approaches for the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefit $H(2) = 0.39$, $p = .825$, $E^2 = .01$. Hence, the variation in perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits could not be ascribed to the interview approaches. For this variable, the means were 2.56 for the control condition (*SD*= 0.86), 2.47 for maximization as the lowest mean (*SD*= 0.67), and 2.65, the highest mean, for minimization (*SD*= 0.82).

Perceived Extent of Benefit of Cooperation. Moreover, the perceived extent of benefit of cooperation showed no statistically significant differences per interview approach, $H(2) = 1.57$, $p = .455$, $E^2 = .03$. Thus, there was also no association found between the interview approaches and the perceived extent of benefit of cooperation. The mean for this variable was 2.53 for the control condition (*SD*= 0.87), 2.68, the highest mean, for maximization (*SD*= 0.73), and at the lowest, 2.35 for minimization (*SD*= 0.65).

Influence of Interview Approach on Rapport

The fourth and fifth hypotheses that minimization increases and maximization decreases the level of rapport as compared to the control condition were also tested by a Kruskal-Wallis H test with the mean level of rapport as the dependent variable and the interrogation approach as the independent variable. There were no statistically significant effects found between the approaches regarding the level of rapport $H(2) = 3.02$, $p = .221$, $E^2 = .06$, which shows that the differences in rapport could not be attributed to the interview

approaches. The mean rapport scores were 3.67 in the control condition (*SD*= 0.42), 3.41 in the maximization condition (*SD*= 0.48), 3.61 for minimization (*SD*= 0.59).

Exploratory Analyses

Next, the Mann-Whitney U tests were used to inspect the differences between the control condition and each of the interview approaches respectively. A Bonferroni correction was applied to correct the alpha for Type I errors to an adjusted alpha of .008. There were no statistically significant differences found, *U*s > 91.00, *p*s > .008. This can be seen in Table 3, where the results of the Mann-Whitney U tests are displayed.

Table 3

Results of separate Mann-Whitney U tests between the control condition and the manipulation conditions for all dependent variables

Test statistics	Mean Likelihood of Punishment	Mean Severity of Punishment	Mean Overall Perceived Benefit of Cooperation	Mean Perceived Likelihood Cooperation Brings Benefits	Mean Perceived Extent of Benefits	Mean Rapport
Control Condition - Maximization						
U	94.00	108.50	91.00	138.50	136.50	95.00
p	.077	.210	.047	.832	.779	.088
Control Condition - Minimization						
U	111.00	121.50	115.50	133.50	122.00	140.50
p	.243	.421	.283	.700	.430	.890

As there was a significant correlation found in the general correlation matrix, but no differences were found in the Kruskal-Wallis H tests, the correlation analyses were done in a split dataset with the three conditions separately in order to find out in which of the interview approaches this correlation was strongest. For the control condition, one statistically significant correlation was found between the perceived extent of benefits and the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits, $r(49) = .566$, $p = .020$. In the minimization condition, three correlations were found to be significant. The first was between the perceived likelihood and the perceived severity of punishment, $r(49) = .626$, $p = .007$. Next, the perceived severity of punishment and the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits correlated at $r(49) = .557$, $p = .020$. Lastly, the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits and rapport were correlated negatively at $r(49) = -.525$, $p = .031$. In the maximization approach, only the perceived likelihood of punishment and the perceived extent of benefits of cooperating were correlated, $r(49) = -.608$, $p = .010$.

Discussion

In this research, I investigated the influence of maximization and minimization on the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment, the perceived benefits of cooperation and the rapport between the suspect and the interviewer. There were no statistically significant differences found between the interview approaches for any dependent variables, however, there were significant correlations found in all of the conditions. Apart from the overall benefits of cooperation, all dependent variables correlated with other variables in at least one interview condition.

Effects of the Interview Approach on the Perceived Likelihood and Severity of Punishment

Previous research by Kassin and McNall (1991) showed that maximization increases the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment by emphasizing the severity of consequences, the amount of evidence against the suspect, and the severity of the crime. The hypothesis that the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment will be increased is also reinforced by the decision-making model by Hilgendorf and Irving (1981), which implies that the suspect in a maximization condition would have to balance the value of speaking up with the probability of receiving a sentence. This prediction could not be verified in the current study. There was no statistically significant effect found between the interview approaches, but there was a negative correlation found between the perceived likelihood of punishment and the perceived extent of benefits of cooperation in maximization interviews. This means, for participants in a maximization interrogation a higher likelihood of punishment is associated with fewer benefits of cooperating. It is possible that participants did not think cooperating in a maximization interview will bring them any advantages, and therefore, they might have been motivated to become resistant. Similar discoveries were made by Alison et al. (2013), who found that even small maladaptive behaviour on the side of the interviewer increased the resistance of suspects significantly. Hence, the current results offer a possible reason for this resistance, which is that the suspects perceive no benefits from cooperating when in a maximization or another confrontational interview.

In addition, there was a pattern in the means of both the likelihood and the severity of punishment as perceived by the suspect, indicating that maximization was higher than the control condition in both the likelihood and the severity of punishment. This indicates that the aggressive approach of maximization increases the overall risk, in terms of likelihood and severity of punishment, as perceived by the suspects. This pattern was based on the manipulations but was not statistically significant. Furthermore, the effect sizes had very low values, so a possible effect would have been small.

The second hypothesis was that minimization decreases the perceived severity of punishment. This was expected because research by Kassin and McNall (1991) showed that participants expected the punishment of a suspect to be lowest in a minimization setup, compared to explicit threats or maximization, after reading transcripts of investigative interviews. There were also no significant effects found for this, which is why this hypothesis was rejected. Moreover, there was a positive correlation found between the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment in the minimization approach. This means that the more likely participants perceived a punishment, the harsher they expected it to be. As this was not found for maximization, possibly this interview approach does not offer a mechanism by which both the likelihood and severity of punishment are influenced in the same direction. Furthermore, a second positive correlation was found between the perceived severity of punishment and the likelihood cooperation brings benefits. This indicates that when participants in a minimization interview expected a harsh punishment, they also saw a greater likelihood that cooperating would be beneficial for them. Further, this implies that a harsh impending punishment could be a motivation to cooperate with the interviewer in order to heighten the probability of receiving benefits. As this was not found for maximization, this motivation may be dependent on interpersonal factors like rapport or trust. As found by Collins and Carthy (2019), building rapport can help in gaining relevant information for the investigation. Therefore, in order to offer information, the suspect needs to be motivated to cooperate, which is hard to achieve in a maximization interview, a situation in which building rapport is difficult because of its confrontational nature.

When looking closer at the means, minimization actually slightly increased the perceived severity of punishment compared to the control condition, although again, this difference was not statistically significant. This is surprising because it was hypothesized any differences would be in the opposite direction as Kassin and McNall (1991) found that for

minimization interviews, the expected punishment was lower than in a maximization interview. Moreover, it was expected that the perceived severity of punishment in the current study would be lower than in the control condition because the interviewer is understanding and the suspect would expect a high probability of a positive outcome because of the implied leniency of the minimization approach (Hilgendorf & Irving, 1981; Luke & Alceste, 2019). A possible reason for this surprising, but not statistically significant result could be that it is not feasible to threaten participants with a real danger or risk of losing something to put them at a realistic risk as this would not be ethically acceptable. Furthermore, as this study used mock interviews, it might be the case that participants did not take it seriously enough to act as if they were a real suspect. Another reason for this finding could be differences in study design to previous studies. As an example, in the current study, participants took part in the mock interview themselves, as opposed to participants reading an interview transcript in Luke´s and Alceste´s study (2019). Possibly, those differences could influence the measurement of risk perception as in Luke´s and Alceste´s study, there was actual jeopardy for the suspect in the transcripts. Hence, their participants inferred the risk for suspects from what both suspect and interviewer said during the interrogation. In the current study, there was only the hypothetical risk of punishment in a low stakes scenario while participants experienced the interrogation themselves, therefore only being able to judge the risk by what the interviewer was telling them. Thus, this would mean for this study that the measures of the likelihood and severity of punishment, as well as the different benefit measures, could be influenced by the fact that the dangers for participants were only hypothetical. Therefore, it is recommended for future studies to take into account some possibilities of inducing more realistic risk instead of only the imagined risk of being found guilty.

Additionally, it is possible that the crime of stealing a necklace from a rich couple was not severe enough to make the participants worried about punishment. It is possible that the

participants did not feel guilty enough to be afraid of a possible punishment. Thus, it would be a possibility for future studies to incorporate measures of guilt to inspect this potential connection. Further, future studies could try using more severe crimes than the theft of something valuable from a wealthy person. Especially in the minimization interrogations, the results could have come out this way because of a denial of injury. This is a technique that offenders use in order to neutralize the impact of harm they caused (Maruna & Copes, 2005). In the current case, because the owners of the necklace were rich and left the necklace unsecured, the offenders could believe that no real harm has been done to the victims. As stated during the minimization interviews, the loss of the necklace would not have a big financial impact on the Smith family. This denial of injury could have weakened the moral threat to participants in all conditions, regardless if they were told so by the interviewer or not.

Effects of the Interview Approach on the Perceived Benefit of Cooperation

The third hypothesis proposes that the manipulation conditions increase the overall perceived benefit of cooperation, the perceived extent of benefit through cooperation and the perceived likelihood that cooperation brings benefits. This could also not be verified because there was no statistically significant effect found between the interrogation approaches for the three variables. Considering the means of those variables, the indications were also unexpected because, for the overall perceived benefit of cooperation and the perceived extent of benefit of cooperation, the mean of the control condition was highest. For the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefit, minimization had the highest mean score and maximization was the lowest. This is contrary to the hypothesis as it was expected that both manipulations would have a higher mean than the control condition because the suspect in the maximization condition is told that they are in a serious situation after committing a grave crime. The suspect then would perceive a high subjective probability of receiving a sentence

and the utility of staying quiet would be low, as explained above by the decision-making model of confessions (Hilgendorf & Irving, 1981). Hence, the current findings suggest that a harsh accusatory approach, like maximization, reduces the perception of the suspect that there is a point in cooperating. Generally, an increased benefit of talking was partly anticipated due to an increase in the perceived risk of not cooperating. Thus, if there is not a statistically significant increase in risk, it is consistent that there is no increase in the perceived benefit either.

In the minimization condition, through the friendliness and moral excuses given by the interviewer, the suspects were expected to feel like there is a high subjective probability of a positive outcome and the utility of speaking up would be large as well. This was seemingly not the case with the participants in the current sample as none of the variables had the control condition as the least beneficial condition. Further, a significant negative correlation between rapport and the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits was found in the minimization condition. This indicates that participants associated a lower level of rapport with a higher likelihood of gaining benefits through cooperation, which is contrary to expectations. It was anticipated that a higher level of rapport, meaning a more positive relation between the suspect and the interviewer, would be linked with a more positive expected outcome, namely a lower likelihood of punishment. The current results suggest that there are possibly other factors, apart from the friendliness or a good rapport in minimization that influence the likelihood cooperation brings benefits as perceived by the suspect.

Lastly, there was a correlation found in the control condition between the perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefits and the perceived extent of benefits. Thus, those that anticipated a high probability of gaining benefits through cooperation also expected those benefits to be larger than those who expected a low likelihood of benefits by cooperation.

Overall, the current study did not find any clear mechanism by which an increase in risk brings an increase in the perceived benefits of cooperation. Instead, there are no indications that the perceived risk and benefits of cooperation are related strongly. Accordingly, it would be incorrect to assume that increasing the possible risk a suspect is facing, in terms of the likelihood and severity of punishment, is always a good way to gain information from suspects.

Effects of the Interview Approach on Rapport

The fourth and fifth hypotheses, namely that minimization increases and maximization decreases the level of rapport, were also rejected because no statistically significant difference was found between the levels of rapport. The means of rapport also show that the control condition had the highest mean, whereas maximization had the lowest mean. According to this indication, the fourth hypothesis of minimization increasing the level of rapport is not correct, whereas the fifth hypothesis that maximization decreases the level of rapport might be accurate, however, these indications were not statistically significant. It was not anticipated that the mean of the control condition would be highest because it was hypothesized that the level of rapport is highest in the minimization condition and lowest in the maximization conditions. As explained above, the minimization interview is held in a friendly way and was expected to increase rapport because Alison et al. (2013) found that adaptive behaviour on the side of the interviewer is positively associated with adaptive suspect behaviour. Furthermore, maladaptive interviewer behaviour was found to yield maladaptive behaviour in the suspect as well, explaining why maximization was the condition with the lowest mean level of rapport in this study.

This effect was possibly found because all of the interviews were accusatory, which is an interview approach in which it is generally hard to build rapport. In this study, some of the main interviewer behaviours for generating rapport were missing, such as self-disclosure and

common ground, which lead to mutual liking, and consequently to rapport (Stokoe, 2009; Swaab et al., 2007; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). Another reason why the levels of rapport were distributed unexpectedly could be that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meetings could not be held in person. Therefore, they were held in an online environment which could be an influence on the capabilities of the interviewer and the suspect to form a connection. As described by Abbe and Brandon (2014), multiple non-verbal cues are important in building rapport, e.g., orienting the own body towards the suspect or leaning in closer to them to show attention. This is impossible to do over the Google Meet where the interviews were held in the current study, and could therefore have a negative influence on the level of rapport. Hence, future studies could benefit from holding the interviews in person in order to be able to show the non-verbal cues for generating rapport as well.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

In this study, with only 17 participants per condition, it is clear that the sample size was too small. This small sample size occurred because there was a limited time frame to carry out research that was also an effort for the participants. Further, it is known that a larger sample size increases the reliability and validity of the results. Hence, future studies should aim at having more participants take part in the interviews for the possibility of verifying the small indications that were found in the current sample.

Another possible reason for the non-significant findings could be that the questions were the same in every condition. This was chosen to do because using different questions for the different approaches could result in confounding factors. If effects would have been found using different interview questions, it would not have been clear if they can be attributed to the difference in the questions or to the different interview approaches. However, using the same questions in every approach could also be a possible reason for the statistically non-significant results as the interviews were only changed in the introductions. Accordingly,

future research should investigate minimization and maximization with interview approaches that are not as similar, in order to find out if there could be significant differences for the risk and benefit appraisal as well as for rapport.

Lastly, future research should find clearer explanations for the influences of maximization and minimization on rapport, the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment as well as the perceived benefits of cooperation. As found by Moston et al. (1992) with an increase in evidence strength, the number of admissions also rose. These findings were replicated by multiple researchers (Gudjonsson & Petursson, 1991; Kebbell et al., 2006). In those studies, there are seldom mechanisms mentioned that could lead to this increase in confessions. Therefore, future research could investigate the influence of evidence strength on the risk perception of the suspect and possibly the rapport between interviewer and suspect. This could further lead to finding a mechanism of risk perception or rapport explaining the relationship between the perceived strength of evidence and the rising number of confessions.

Conclusion

This research aimed to identify the influences of minimization and maximization on the perceived likelihood and severity of punishment, the expected benefits of cooperating and the rapport between the interviewer and the suspect. The study showed that, in a minimization interview, an imminent threat that is harsh can be a motivator for the suspect to cooperate with the interviewer. Moreover, there are possibly other factors influencing the perceived benefits of cooperating than the positivity and friendliness in a minimization interview. Further, contrary to minimization, a threatening accusatory approach like maximization was found to reduce the suspect´s perception that there is a purpose to cooperation. Additionally, this was interpreted as a potential reason for suspects to resist cooperation in a maximization interview. Overall, the indications in the means could offer

further insights into the effects of minimization and maximization in suspect interviews if they can be verified. In general, the effect sizes of the differences found in the means are very small, which is why it is recommended to do similar studies with a larger sample size and the above-mentioned possible improvements, which could lead to significant observations in the field of interrogation.

References

Abbe, A., & Brandon, S. E. (2013). The Role of Rapport in Investigative Interviewing: A Review. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, *10*(3), 237–249. https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.1386

Abbe, A., & Brandon, S. E. (2014). Building and maintaining rapport in investigative interviews. *Police Practice and Research*, *15*(3), 207–220. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2013.827835

Alison, L., Alison, E., Noone, G., Elntib, S., & Christiansen, P. (2013). Why Tough Tactics Fail and Rapport Gets Results: Observing Rapport-Based Interpersonal Techniques (ORBIT) to Generate Useful Information From Terrorists. *Psychology Public Policy and Law*, *19*, 411–431. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034564

Average Inter-Item Correlation: Definition, Example. (2018). Statistics How To. https://www.statisticshowto.com/average-inter-item-correlation/

Bundesministerium für Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz. (n.d.). *§ 136a StPO - Einzelnorm*. Strafprozeßverordnung (StPO). Retrieved 25 February 2021, from http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stpo/__136a.html

Cleary, H. M. D., & Warner, T. C. (2016). Police training in interviewing and interrogation methods: A comparison of techniques used with adult and juvenile suspects. *Law and Human Behavior*, *40*(3), 270–284. https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000175

Collins, K., & Carthy, N. (2019). No rapport, no comment: The relationship between rapport and communication during investigative interviews with suspects. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, *16*(1), 18–31. https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.1517

Duke, M. C., Wood, J. M., Bollin, B., Scullin, M., & LaBianca, J. (2018). Development of the Rapport Scales for Investigative Interviews and Interrogations (RS3i), Interviewee

Version. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, *24*(1), 64–79. https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000147

European e-Justice. (n.d.). *My rights during the investigation of a crime and before the case goes to court*. Retrieved 25 February 2021, from https://e-justice.europa.eu/content_rights_of_defendants_in_criminal_proceedings_-169-SE-maximizeMS-en.do?clang=en&idSubpage=2

Gabbert, F., Hope, L., Luther, K., Wright, G., Ng, M., & Oxburgh, G. (2021). Exploring the use of rapport in professional information-gathering contexts by systematically mapping the evidence base. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *35*(2), 329–341. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3762

Gudjonsson, G. H. (2003). *The Psychology of Interrogations and Confessions: A Handbook*. John Wiley & Sons.

Gudjonsson, G. H., & Petursson, H. (1991). Custodial interrogation: Why do suspects confess and how does it relate to their crime, attitude and personality? *Personality and Individual Differences*, *12*(3), 295–306. https://doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(91)90116-S

Hilgendorf, E. L., & Irving, B. (1981). A Decision-Making Model of Confessions. In S. M. A. Lloyd-Bostock (Ed.), *Psychology in Legal Contexts: Applications and Limitations* (pp. 67–84). Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-04917-2_5

Kassin, S. M., & McNall, K. (1991). Police interrogations and Confessions. *Law and Human Behavior*, *15*(3).

Kebbell, M. R., Hurren, E. J., & Roberts, S. (2006). Mock-suspects' decisions to confess: The accuracy of eyewitness evidence is critical. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *20*(4), 477–486. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.1197

Klaver, J. R., Lee, Z., & Rose, V. G. (2008). Effects of personality, interrogation techniques and plausibility in an experimental false confession paradigm. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, *13*(1), 71–88. https://doi.org/10.1348/135532507X193051

Legal Information Institute. (n.d.). *Plea bargain*. LII / Legal Information Institute. Retrieved 1 March 2021, from https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/plea_bargain

Luke, T., & Alceste, F. (2019). *The mechanisms of minimization: How interrogation tactics suggest lenient sentencing through pragmatic implication*. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/etudk

Malsch, M., & de Boer, M. M. (2019). *Interviews of Suspects of Crime*. The Oxford Handbook of Criminal Process. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190659837.013.18

Maruna, S., & Copes, H. (2005). What Have We Learned from Five Decades of Neutralization Research? *Crime and Justice*, *32*, 221–320.

Moston, S., Stephenson, G., & Williamson, T. (1992). The effects of case characteristics on suspect behaviour during police questioning. *British Journal of Criminology*, *32*, 23–40. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.bjc.a048178

Possley, M., Roll, K. J., & Stephens, K. H. (2020). Government Misconduct and Convicting the Innocent, The Role of Prosecutors, Police and Other Law Enforcement. *National Registry of Exonerations*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3698845

Russano, M. B., Meissner, C. A., Narchet, F. M., & Kassin, S. M. (2005). Investigating True and False Confessions Within a Novel Experimental Paradigm. *Psychological Science*, *16*(6), 481–486. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2005.01560.x

Schaffler, M. (2010). *Das Geständnis im Strafprozess, Österreich und das Common Law* [Karl-Franzens-Universität]. https://unipub.uni-graz.at/obvugrhs/content/titleinfo/212844/full.pdf

Shouse California Law Group. (2020). *Coerced confession law—How to avoid wrongful conviction*. https://www.shouselaw.com/ca/defense/legal-defenses/coerced-confessions/#

Snook, B., Barron, T., Fallon, L., Kassin, S. M., Kleinman, S., Leo, R. A., Meissner, C. A., Morello, L., Nirider, L. H., Redlich, A. D., & Trainum, J. L. (2021). Urgent issues and prospects in reforming interrogation practices in the United States and Canada. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, *26*(1), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/lcrp.12178

Stokoe, E. (2009). "I've got a girlfriend": Police officers doing 'self-disclosure' in their interrogations of suspects. *Narrative Inquiry*, *19*(1), 154–182. https://doi.org/10.1075/ni.19.1.09sto

Swaab, R., Postmes, T., van Beest, I., & Spears, R. (2007). Shared cognition as a product of, and precursor to, shared identity in negotiations. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *33*(2), 187–199. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206294788

Tickle-Degnen, L., & Rosenthal, R. (1990). The Nature of Rapport and Its Nonverbal Correlates. *Psychological Inquiry*, *1*(4), 285–293. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli0104_1

Vallano, J. P., Evans, J. R., Compo, N. S., & Kieckhaefer, J. M. (2015). Rapport-Building During Witness and Suspect Interviews: A Survey of Law Enforcement. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, *29*(3), 369–380. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3115

Wetmore, S. A., Neuschatz, J. S., & Gronlund, S. D. (2013). On the power of secondary confession evidence. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, *20*(4), 339–357. https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2013.777963

Appendix A

Crime Scenario

Thank you for taking part in this study. Below is a short story about a theft at the house of a building contractor. Please read the whole story in detail and try to put yourself in the place of the person described here. You will take the role of this person and be asked questions about the content of this story in the interview.

Your best friend Max called you on the morning of the 15th of April. Max invited you to a party hosted by a successful building contractor that he knew well. The contractor's name is Mr Smith. You were not in the best mood because your own IT company is not doing very well and now you are in a lot of debt and struggling to pay back your loans. For the sake of your best friend, you said you would go to the party anyway.

You put on your best clothes and, in the evening, you drove to Mr Smith's mansion with your best friend. The mansion was situated on a large property with a huge garden. An employee took your invitations at the door and let you inside the mansion.

Mr Smith and his wife greeted you personally at the entrance to the villa. While you were talking to them, you could not stop looking at the shiny diamond necklace worn by Mrs Smith. It must be very valuable, you were sure that it might even cost so much that you could pay your debt with it.

The party itself was happening in the garden pavilion, where all the other visitors flaunted their wealth. As the evening progressed, you had a couple of superficial conversations with strangers but none of them were meaningful or memorable.

At 11 p.m., you wanted to go home but you could not find your friend anymore. While looking for him you went back to the entrance of the villa. Here, two men and one woman were having a conversation, but none of them paid you any attention. You went into the next room which seemed to be a private living room with a TV and a fireplace. Just as you wanted to turn around to leave the room, you saw a diamond necklace on the side table next to the door. The same one you were marvelling over at the beginning of the party.

You picked up the necklace and looked at it closer. Suddenly, the door behind you was opened and you let the necklace slip into your jacket/gown. Your best friend stood in the doorway; he had been looking for you as well. Together, you went through the entrance and out into the garden. The two men that had been standing there were observing you carefully.

One of them was tall and had black hair and the other one was a little shorter and bald. Both were wearing black suits and were still talking to a woman in a dark red gown. Then you were back in the pavilion and said goodbye to the host. Shortly after, you and your friend left the property while the necklace was still in your jacket/gown.

Two days later, the police knock on your door and arrest you on suspicion of theft. They take you to the police station and put you into a small room with a table and three chairs. Now, you are waiting for them to start interviewing you.

You decide that you will not confess to the crime. Your task is to prepare for the interview. You will need to be able to provide plausible answers to the interviewer's questions. Just staying silent or saying no comment will not work. Try to come up with a cover story that will explain any evidence the police may have against you so you are able to answer questions they might ask.

Appendix B

Interview Script (Introductions and Questions)

Control condition:

Hello (name of the participant),

My name is (name of the interviewer). In this interview, I will ask you several questions. All these questions refer to a theft that we are sure you committed on the 15th of April, in the house of the building contractor Mr Smith. We know that you took the necklace so there is no use denying it.

I want you to answer my questions in as much as detail you can, additionally, I would recommend you to stick to the truth. If you think you have already answered one of my questions please answer anyway. We want to make sure that we really get all the information we need from you. Is everything clear right now?

Minimization:

Hello (name of the participant),

My name is (name of the interviewer). In this interview, I will ask you several questions referring to a theft that we are sure you committed on the 15th of April, in the house of the building contractor Mr Smith. We know that you took the necklace so there is no use denying it.

We also know that you have a lot of debt and the necklace could be enough to pay your debt. Everyone would understand that, I mean, we would all be tempted. Especially because Mrs Smith just left such a valuable necklace lying around. No one is angry with you because of this. It's not like the Smith's aren't so rich the loss of the necklace would matter to them financially.

I want you to answer my questions in as much as detail you can, additionally, I would recommend you to stick to the truth. If you think you have already answered one of my questions please answer anyway. We want to make sure that we really get all the information we need from you. Is everything clear right now?

Maximization:

Hello (name of the participant),

My name is (name of the interviewer). In this interview, I will ask you several questions referring to a theft that we are sure you committed on the 15th of April. We know that you took the necklace so there is no use denying it.
I hope you understand how serious this situation is for you. You have abused the trust of the host, disregarded the privacy of the victim and stolen something that means a lot to her. She is really upset by what you have done. Right now you are looking at a very severe punishment. So I need you to do the right thing and cooperate with me now.
I want you to answer my questions in as much as detail you can, additionally, I would recommend you to stick to the truth. If you think you have already answered one of my questions please answer anyway. We want to make sure that we really get all the information we need from you. Is everything clear right now?

1. Tell me everything that happened on the night of April 15th from your perspective.
2. Tell me how you know the Smiths and why you were at their party.
3. The Smiths tell us you were staring at Ms Smith's necklace at the start of the evening. Can you explain why that was?
4. Several of the guests say you barely interacted with anyone. Can you explain why you were at this party if you had no interest in talking to people?
5. Ms Smith says she was sure she left her necklace in her living room. We have witnesses saying they saw you walk into the living room alone. Can you explain why you entered this private room?
6. Tell me everything you did in the private living room, step by step.
7. Is there anything else you would like to add for your defence?

Appendix C

Rapport questionnaire

1. I think the interviewer is generally honest with me.
2. The interviewer did her job with skill during the interview.
3. The interviewer respects my knowledge.
4. The interviewer and I have our culture in common.
5. The interviewer performed expertly during the interview.
6. I think that the interviewer can generally be trusted to keep her word.
7. The interviewer and I probably share the same ethnicity.
8. The interviewer really listened to what I had to say.
9. I was motivated to perform well during the interview.
10. I feel I can trust the interviewer to keep her word to me.
11. The interviewer made an effort to do a good job.
12. The interviewer acted like a professional.
13. The interviewer paid careful attention to my opinion.
14. The interviewer and I got along well during the interview.
15. The interviewer and I worked well together as a team.
16. The interviewer probably shares my culture.
17. I wanted to do a good job during the interview.
18. The interviewer was attentive to me.
19. Communication went smoothly between the interviewer and me.
20. The interviewer was interested in my point of view.
21. I felt committed to accomplishing the goals of the interview.

Appendix D

Risk questionnaire

Perceived likelihood of punishment

1. I think it is likely that I would be found guilty of stealing the necklace if the case went to court.
2. I think it is likely the interviewer will continue to investigate me for the theft of the necklace.
3. I do not think the interviewer really thinks I stole the necklace. (recoded in SPSS)

Perceived severity of punishment

4. I think that I would face a harsh punishment if I were found guilty of stealing the necklace.
5. I do not think my punishment is likely to be very severe if I were found guilty of stealing the necklace.
6. I think it would make things very difficult for me if the interviewer thinks I am guilty

Overall perceived benefit of cooperation

7. I think that cooperating with the interviewer is beneficial for me. (recoded in SPSS)

Perceived likelihood cooperation brings benefit

8. Appearing cooperative during the interview makes it less likely that I get caught. (recoded in SPSS)
9. I think that giving the interviewer information makes it more likely I would be found guilty of the theft.

Perceived extent of benefit of cooperation

10. Providing more information to the interviewer makes it less likely I would receive a harsh punishment. (recoded in SPSS)
11. I think that appearing to be cooperative in an investigative interview would reduce how severe my punishment is if I am found guilty. (recoded in SPSS)

Appendix E

Bar Chart of the Mean Distributions per Condition