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**The making of intentional communication errors and their
effect on trust, rapport and information provision, and the
ethics regarding error making strategies**

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Abstract

Communication errors have been found to increase information provision during investigative interviews with suspects. What is not known is what happens when a judgment error is made strategically during suspect interviews to increase information provision. The current research is to see if there is a different effect on information provision, trust and rapport when an error is made intentionally, and whether this differs between an accusatory and investigative interview style. In the current study, 150 participants were asked to imagine themselves as suspect of a crime in a between-subjects design. The information they provided was counted and their perceptions on trust and rapport were assessed, as well as ethical questions regarding the acceptability of currently used interview strategies and the potential use of intentional errors as a strategy. The findings of this study indicate that there is no significant difference between error conditions for information provision, rapport and trust. However, there was a higher amount of trust, rapport and information provision seen when the investigative interview style was used as compared to the accusatory interview style. There was no significant difference between how participants experienced their specific error condition, when it comes to acceptability. However, participants, regardless of error condition or interview style, rated statements on unintentional strategies less acceptable than statements on intentional errors. While, unintentional error making was seen as less acceptable than coercive strategies already being used during suspect interviews.

Introduction

Solving a crime is done by getting various types of evidence to figure out what happened and identify the person that committed the crime. One way to find evidence and build a strong case is through information provision from a suspect or witness. Police officers use various strategies and techniques to obtain information from a suspect, who might be unwilling to give up information. Various research has already been done on what kind of strategies work best to get information or a confession out of a suspect. Important with these strategies is how reliable the information is, how publicly accepted the strategy is and whether or not the information obtained through these strategies is usable in court.

Recent research has shown that when making a communication error during a suspect interview, more information is shared (Oostinga et al., 2018). Although more information was shared, the communication error did undermine the relationship between suspect and interviewer, as the error had a negative effect on affective trust and rapport. As information provision is an important goal of suspect interviewing, this brings the question if error making during these interviews can be used as a strategy. There is, however, a difference between an error being made intentionally (as strategy) and making an error unintentionally. An intentional error would be perceived as a manipulative strategy if the suspect is aware of the error being intentional, while an unintentional error would more likely be seen as incompetence. This could mean that the effect seen in the research of Oostinga et al. (2018) could be different when the error is intentionally made. This research will study if the increased information provision from error making, seen in the research of Oostinga et al. (2018), is also present when the communication error is made strategically. Since different interview styles are used during suspect interviews, both the investigative interview style and accusatory interview style are presented in this study. As both these interview styles have their own goal, the communication error could have a different effect on the suspect, their

information provision, and the trust and rapport the suspect has in the interviewer. The perception of the communication error could also differ greatly based on the different boundaries that are set within each interview style. There is also the ethical side of using strategies to make suspect give up more information. If the strategy works as intended, but is deemed as unethical, then the strategy would be less likely to give information that is admissible in court and makes the strategy not viable to use during suspect interviews.

In the following paragraphs, first the different interview styles are discussed to see how they differ in their approach and goals and their effect on information provision, then trust and rapport are discussed to see how they might be affected by intentional error making. Lastly, error making in itself and why intentional error making might lead to different results than just making an error intentionally.

Investigative and accusatory style of interviewing

The police use different methods in different parts of the world when interviewing a suspect (Vrij et al., 2004). A broad distinction of the interview styles the police uses, can be made between an accusatory style and an investigative style. They both use a different approach to reach their goals, while the goals themselves are also different. The goal of the accusatory style of interviewing is getting a confession from the suspect. Investigative interviewing is focused on getting more information on the case and testing evidence, as well as testing the suspect's account against that evidence (Meissner et al., 2004). As both methods are widely used and are very different in approach, it is necessary to include both in the study to find out whether error making has a different impact depending on which interview style is used. Because it is expected that the effect of the error, intentionally or unintentionally, will differ between the interview styles.

The most used accusatory style of interviewing is the Reid technique (Inbau et al., 2011). The Reid technique follows a nine-step process in which the resistance of a suspect is

broken down to obtain a confession (Inbau et al., 2011). Within this nine-step process, there are different strategies that can be considered deceptive and the questions are usually closed and leading. Two of the strategies that are used within the Reid technique are minimization and maximization. Minimizing is the interviewer offering justifications for the crime to make the suspect admit responsibility. Maximization is adding pressure to a suspect, by stressing the extent of evidence that is available against the suspect, or by stressing the consequences that are attached to the particular crime (Inbau et al., 2011). Applying the accusatory style of interviewing is allowed in the courts of the USA and the Reid technique is widely used in practice in much of the USA. While the Reid technique is still widely used in the USA, there is also evidence that the accusatory methods are flawed. The evidence in favour of the accusatory style has no scientific basis and is anecdotal (Leo, 1992). The Reid technique does increase the likelihood to obtain a true confession (compared with a no-tactic control condition), but also leads to eliciting false confessions from people that are innocent. (Kassin et al., 2010; Meissner et al., 2014). Because of this, the Reid technique is seen as a less ethical way of interviewing, as the technique puts a lot of pressure on the suspect and could result in trouble for innocent suspects who falter under this pressure (Kassin et al., 2010).

An interview style with a different goal than the accusatory style of interviewing is the information gathering approach (investigative interview style). This is an interview style that is more focused on rapport between interviewer and suspect (Alison et al., 2014). The interview style is developed to create a more ethical interviewing method and to elicit detailed and accurate information from a suspect (Hoffman, 2005). The PEACE model is an example of a model that emphasizes the ethical form of interviewing that comes with the investigative interviewing style. Next to the consideration of a more ethical interviewing method, the PEACE model was also created because of the police interviewing in England and Wales being of low quality, which resulted in several miscarriages of justice (Walsh &

Milne, 2008). There seemed to be other methods (information gathering approaches) that lead to a similar amount of confessions as the accusatory interview style and did not seem less effective and were ultimately shown to be even more effective than accusatory methods when it comes to gathering information (Moston and Stephenson, 1993; Weiher 2021). To make the PEACE model work, the police officers had to receive standardised training in these more ethical methods of interviewing. PEACE is a model that is a non-coercive interviewing method that focuses on gathering information (Meissner et al., 2014; Walsh & Bull, 2015; Gudjonsson, 2011). PEACE consists of 'Preparation and Planning' before the interview. The preparation is followed by the 'Engage and Explain' phase within the interview, which aims to build rapport between the interviewer and the suspect. Rapport in this case can be defined as "a working relationship between operator and source based on a mutually shared understanding of each other's goals and needs, which can lead to useful, actionable intelligence or information" (Kelly et al., 2013, p. 166). After this the stage 'Account, Clarify and Challenge' takes place, in this stage, it is important to achieve a complete as possible account and to summarize the given account. This gives the suspect the possibility to correct or add additional information to their account. As for clarification and challenge, it is necessary to establish a chain of evidence and to identify the weaknesses and/or inconsistencies present in the suspect's story. Followed by 'Closure' giving the suspect the opportunity to add or modify statements to the summary that has been given by the police officer. The last phase is after the interview itself, where an evaluation is done to reflect on the interview and its effectiveness and what information has actually been gathered. The PEACE model seems to be associated with securing more full accounts and more truthful confessions as compared to the accusatory interview style (Walsh & Bull, 2010).

The difference between these two interview styles is that they have a different impact on how a suspect experiences the interview. To summarize the differences, the PEACE

model uses rapport-based techniques, whereas the accusatory interviews focus on control-based techniques like the Reid technique (Kelly et al., 2013). Control-based techniques in this case are techniques that emphasize the authority the interviewer has over the suspect (Kelly et al., 2013). The PEACE model focuses on making a good impression in the first moments of an interview and to have a more humane approach (Walsh & Bull, 2015). Making a good impression and being non-judgemental towards a suspect, will lead to a higher amount of rapport between suspect and interviewer and therefore potentially give a higher quantity of information provision compared to the accusatory- style. Meaning that in the investigative interview a higher amount of information provided is expected (Vallano et al., 2015). When comparing the two distinct interview styles through meta-analysis, Vrij et al. (2014) found that investigative interviewing elicited significantly more relevant information, compared to an accusatory style. Meaning that the information provision might be higher in an accusatory style, but that this extra information provision has a higher likelihood of being incorrect.

Rapport and trust in suspect interviewing

The methods in the interview styles are very different, but the exact explanations for the different outcomes are unknown. Rapport and trust are two variables that are often studied during suspect interviews as they seem to have an effect on how successful the suspect interviews are and that there are also possible explanations to why these variables lead to more information provision. This is also the reason that rapport and trust are included in the research of Oostinga et al. (2018).

Rapport is one of the keystones of investigative interviewing and a fundamental component of high quality interviewing practice (Abbe & Brandon, 2012). As mentioned earlier, rapport is about the relationship between interviewer and suspect. The better the working relationship between these two, the higher the rapport. The working relationship in

this case being the shared goal of discovering the truth about a crime that was committed. The reason rapport is important in suspect interviewing is because rapport could increase the likelihood of a suspect to talk (Vallano et al, 2015; Rass, 2020). A high degree of rapport also has the consequence of an increased amount of communication effort from the interviewer. This increased communication effort could help the suspect try harder to remember certain details that occurred (Abbe & Brandon, 2012), and therefore might be the reason the suspect is giving more information. Rapport-based strategies (mostly investigative interviewing) seem to be more effective in getting useful information from suspects, in comparison to tough tactics (accusatory interviewing) (Alison et al., 2013). Which is emphasized by Vallano et al. (2015) stating that police investigations can benefit from rapport as they could increase the accuracy of eyewitness reports and evidence obtained from suspects. This means that there is not only evidence on rapport resulting in more information, but also evidence that the information is more useful. Something to consider when using rapport-based strategies is that the strategy is not only about the initial rapport building alone, but also about maintaining the rapport by an open questioning stance and demonstrating active listening (Walsh & Bull, 2012).

As the investigative interviewing style focuses on rapport building and maintaining the rapport. The accusatory style, as mentioned before, focuses on getting a confession, and as such, makes no deliberate effort to maintain rapport during the interview. It is, therefore, to be expected that the rapport is higher during investigative interviews compared to interviews done with the accusatory interview style and that information is also higher in investigative interviews based on the higher amount of rapport.

Trust is another factor that is closely monitored during suspect interviews and could be an explanation for a higher information provision. Trust can be defined as the willingness to make oneself vulnerable to another, in expectation of beneficial outcomes (Rousseau,

Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998). According to Rutten, Blass-Franken and Martin (2016) there are two components that aid in enhancing an overall judgement of trust in another individual. These are cognition based trust, which refers to professionalism, confidence in competency and efficiency, and also affect based trust, which refers to emotional investment, mutual concern and fairness. Aside from an error, interviewing techniques that use a form of deception could impact the trust that is felt towards the interviewer. Maintaining trust is important, as trust can maximize the disclosure of information, as the trust minimizes the anxiety and distress felt by an individual (Gudjonsson, 2011). If the trust is low towards the interviewer, the low trust might lead to less willingness to share information (Vallano et al, 2015). As trust is about the willingness to make oneself vulnerable, it is unlikely that a suspect is feeling comfortable enough to be vulnerable when being subjected to an accusatory interview style. This interview style focuses on putting pressure on the suspect and coercive methods. These coercive methods often are manipulative in some shape or form, which makes it hard to gain trust in the interviewer. When comparing this to trust in the investigative interview style, this pressure is not present. The suspect gets the opportunity to tell their side of the story and therefor might feel more inclined to trust the interviewer. As in the investigative interview style the focus is on the relationship between interviewer and suspect (rapport) which creates some form of trust as they are not being directly accused of the crime or subjected to coercive methods.

Error making during suspect interviews

Communication errors happen daily through text or verbal communication and there is always the chance that a police officer will make some type of communication error during a suspect interview. These errors could be mixing up names, making incorrect observations about the circumstances of a crime or being wrong about the reason a suspect committed a

crime (Oostinga et al., 2018). Being aware of the presence of communication errors matters, because of the negative consequences they can have on relationships and cooperation during suspect interviews (Oostinga et al., 2018). These communication errors could change the suspect's perception of an interviewer, and the error could negatively affect rapport, which is something that to be avoided, as a higher amount of rapport could increase the likelihood of a suspect to talk (Vallano et al., 2015).

There are different kinds of communication errors in different contexts, but errors can mostly be put into three broad categories: contextual, factual and judgement errors. (Bohus & Rudnicky, 2008; Halverson et al., 2011; Vignovic & Thompson, 2010; Oostinga et al. 2018). Contextual errors are messages related to the practices or procedures that the police use. These errors could come, for example, from the police using jargon in their communication. Factual errors are messages that contain things that are objectively wrong, for example saying the wrong name or date during a suspect interview. Errors surrounding judgement are errors that are subjectively wrong, during a suspect interview a judgement error would be the police officer not reflecting the thoughts and feelings of the suspect adequately (Oostinga et al. 2018). Judgement errors and factual errors are most relevant to suspect interviewing as the error is made towards the suspect directly and therefor is most likely to negatively impact the interaction (Oostinga et al., 2018).

There is not much research done about error making during suspect interviews. The research this study is based on from Oostinga et al. (2018) is one of the few. Oostinga et al. (2018) tested two types of errors, judgement and factual errors, to see if they had an effect on trust, rapport, hostility and the amount and quality of information shared, and whether or not a response strategy affected this. A lower amount of affective trust and rapport was found when an error was made, undermining the relationship between suspect and interviewer, irrespective of the response strategy that was used. This effect was particularly seen when a

judgement error was made (Oostinga et al., 2018). While it was expected that the error would lower affective trust and rapport, the more surprising finding was that judgement errors in particular could lead to the suspect giving more information, as the opposite effect was expected (Oostinga et al., 2018). A lower rapport and trust usually lead to less willingness to provide information as discussed previously. Oostinga et al. (2018) offer some possible explanations as to why more information is given by the suspect even though a lower rapport and trust is measured. It could be that the suspect chooses to respond to the error, by providing more information/details, to explain why the police officers is wrong. Oostinga et al. (2018) further suggests that a judgement error could be seen as a threat to one's ego where the suspect feels the urgency to correct the error. Ren and Gray (2009) argue that if a suspect feels threatened, the suspect has the need to call attention to the offense, this makes the suspect symbolically demonstrate that they feel they deserve respect. As gaining more information provision is important for suspect interviews, the question arises whether communication errors can be used strategically. While these are possible explanations for the suspect to provide more information due to the error that has been made, it is unknown if there is a difference when the error is made intentionally.

This study tests if the effect seen in the study of Oostinga et al. (2018) will still have the same results if the communication error is made strategically (intentional error) as opposed to a unintentional error. Judgement errors will be used as the communication error in a suspect interview, since these errors are the most likely to result in more information provision based on the study of Oostinga et al. (2018). To make a prediction on the effect of an intentional error as opposed to an unintentional error, the differences between the two errors need to be discovered.

As the research of Oostinga et al. (2018) is about the error being made unintentionally, the main difference is that making communication errors deliberately could

make the error a form of deception. Deception or so-called investigative lies involve deceit, pretext and trickery (Slobogin, 1997). Forms of deception or psychological manipulation that are done in actual practice involve showing fake sympathy, admitting to doing something similar, exaggerating the crime or claiming the codefendant has already confessed when this is not the case. Deliberately making a communication error to make the suspect give up more information, could be rated among these forms of deception. The reason making a communication error intentionally could be seen as deception is because the police officer would imply they know the reason why a suspect committed a crime. Ultimately “tricking” the suspect into providing more information than they were previously willing to give. Psychological manipulation or deception is a not an uncommon method used by the police to prompt the suspect into providing information, mainly in accusatory interviews, if deception is deemed legal according to jurisdiction (Meissner et al., 2004). How far one can go depends on the country or state where the suspect interview takes place. The Reid technique is often used in the United States, while the United Kingdom routinely uses the PEACE model, avoiding deception. In the Netherlands, the GIS-model is used. A model that came from a miscarriage of justice and builds on similar principles as the PEACE model when it comes to rapport-building and getting an account and challenging this account (Hoekendijk & van Beek, 2015). Whether coercive methods are used in these countries (or specific states) is based on whether information gotten from deception is expressly permitted in the legal system.

When a suspect is aware that the error that has been made was intentional, could change the way the suspect perceives the interviewer. This could be dependent on the expectations the suspect has on how they will be treated during a suspect interview. For the accusatory interview style, the presumption of guilt is made very clear from the start. The pressure will start immediately and the interviewer will make clear that they want a

confession. For the investigative interview style, the suspect is not presumed guilty and within this style of interviewing, the interviewer makes clear that they will be treated fairly. These expectations could impact the trust and rapport the suspect has in the interviewer differently. Using the judgement error as a strategy during the investigative interview style, would be out of place. Using a deceptive strategy within this interview style would negatively influence the predictability of the interviewer, which is an important condition for the formation of trust (Hommel & Colzato, 2015). Within the accusatory interview style, a judgement error as a strategy will most likely be one of many deceptive tactics used to make a suspect give a confession. For this reason, the effect might not be stronger compared to an unintentional error, as in the accusatory interview style it is to be expected that the interviewer will employ deceptive strategies and the trust and rapport is already low because of the approach taken in this interview style.

The acceptability of error making as a strategy

The effectiveness of using error making as a strategy to increase information provision and their effect on variables as trust and rapport has been discussed. Another thing besides the effectiveness of a potential new strategy is whether it is ethical to use the strategy. When ethical interviewing was introduced, one aim was to clearly identify what kinds of police behavior were seen as acceptable and also which were not (Roberts, 2012) With the PEACE model focusing more on this side of interviewing, the question can be asked whether or not it is acceptable to intentionally using a communication error knowing this error could lead to more information provided. In the research of Moston and Fisher (2007) different interviewing strategies were rated by a “mock jury” to determine their acceptability. This resulted in the participants rating investigative interviewing style methods as acceptable, focused on rapport building and general prompts on questioning the suspect. While

minimization, deception cues and implied impotence were rated as unacceptable. When considering whether or not error making is an acceptable strategy, they need to be compared to something. Strategies that already being used during investigative interviewing or accusatory style interviewing could form a baseline, where coercive strategies are rated less acceptable than strategies used during investigative interviewing (Moston & Fisher, 2007). People might perceive the use of error making as a strategy as not acceptable when they are subjected to the error, because they would rate the intentional error amongst other coercive interviewing methods. The police making a mistake is possible and might be understood as everybody makes mistakes once in a while. A suspect might not be so acceptant of the police officer using a communication error when they know the error is being made intentionally, as this could negatively impact the trust and predictability of the officer (Hommel & Colzato, 2015).

This study

The main objective of this study is to see if there is a difference between interview styles when it comes to error making and whether intentional communication error and an unintentional communication error influences this. The variables trust and rapport are included to determine if these variables are influenced by the error as trust and rapport could offer an explanation why the information provided increases or decreases.

Hypotheses:

- 1) The accusatory interview style will be associated with less rapport, trust and information provided, compared to participants allocated to the investigative interview style.

- 2) Intentionally making a judgement error will lead to less trust, rapport and information provided, compared to unintentionally making a judgement error or when no error is made.

As an intentional error might not be noticed as much in an accusatory interview style, because it deploys multiple forms of deceptive strategies, it is expected that trust and rapport lower more in an investigative interview when an intentional error is made. As the intentional error would violate the promise of fair and impartial treatment that is done for an investigative interview according to the PEACE model.

- 3) The intentional error lowers trust and rapport more in an investigative interview, compared to an accusatory interview.

When it comes to manipulating suspects through errors in suspect interviews, considerations need to be taken as how ethical it is, as certain interview techniques are perceived as unethical. So, to take ethics into consideration it is important to know how acceptable they find certain interviewing strategies and error making as a strategy, possibly differing on how their own experience was with the making of communication errors.

- 4) An intentional error strategy will be rated as less acceptable when compared to an unintentional error strategy, and will be rated similar to other coercive strategies.

Methods

Design

Participants were asked to imagine themselves being accused of shoplifting, after which they were subjected to a suspect interview. The participants were randomly assigned to one condition in a 2 (Interview style: investigative, accusatory) x 3 (Error: intentional, unintentional, control) design. The study is part of a larger study, three dependent variables were measured in this study: The amount of perceived trust and rapport that the suspect had in the interviewer and the quantity of information provided by the suspect. Also the acceptability of certain behaviors during suspect interviewing were measured. Another researcher also focuses on the quality of information provided.

Participants

A total of 156 participants were acquired through convenience sampling, reaching out to the network of the research group, approaching students at the University of Twente (UT) and through the SONA system from the UT. Students need to get a certain amount of SONA credits as a way for students to help other students with their research by participating in it. Six participants were excluded for not noticing the error was made (intentionally), through a manipulation check resulting in 150 participants, these were mainly from the intentional error condition. The excluded participants were from the intentional error condition, where participants had to link a news article to the error being made intentionally. Of the total of 150 participants, 70 were female and 80 male, with an age ranging between 19 and 68 with an average age of 35.07 ($SD = 14.26$). One participant was German (0.67%) and the rest of the participants (149) were Dutch (99.33%).

The interviews were conducted in Dutch for all participants except for the German participant who had the interview in English. To prevent miscommunication having an influence on the results, the preferred language of the participant was chosen.

Materials & Measures

The error manipulation

There were two ways for the judgement error to be made, intentionally and unintentionally. The participants in the intentional condition were made aware of the error possibly being used strategically prior to the interview, while the other groups did not. This was done through a news article, both interviews contained the same judgement error. This results in an intentional error made in both investigative and accusatory interviews and an unintentional error made in both investigative and accusatory interviews. A control condition was created where no error was made at all in both investigative and accusatory interviews, this results in the six experimental conditions. The two interview styles are also a manipulation in itself.

News article

A news article (Appendix A) was provided for the participant to read prior to the interview. For the intentional error condition, this news article is intended to inform the participant that a judgement error can be made intentionally as a strategy. The news article consists of information that the police may use a strategy that involves making intentional errors, which could lead to the suspect giving more information. By adding this article, it can be made sure that the suspect is aware that the error during the interview is made intentionally. For the unintentional error and control conditions, a news article was added with general interviewing strategies. The strategies that are mentioned in the news article for the unintentional and control condition, such as lying about evidence, showing sympathy for the suspect and looking at body language, are not used during the investigative and accusatory interviews. This to make sure that participants get similar info between intentional and unintentional error condition, without preparing the participant on any specific interview technique that is used within the two interview conditions.

Scenario.

The scenario (Appendix B) is intended to make the participant imagine themselves as somebody who committed theft in a grocery store. The scenario consists of a motive, the actions surrounding the crime and several key points about the people that were present during the theft and the products that were gathered with some of them being stolen. The motive of the crime was financial problems, which is important for the error that is made. The judgement error that is made is a wrong assumption of the reason why the crime was committed. Quotes of the kind of information that are present in the scenario are: “In order to not forget your groceries, you made up a list on what to buy”, “An employee randomly selected the elderly man to check his receipt before you.” and “But then, you see that you still need laundry detergent and toilet paper”.

Interview Scripts.

There are two scripts (introduction + questions), one for the investigative interviewing style and one for the accusatory interviewing style (Appendix C), which outline the dialogue for each interview style condition. The interview script for the investigative style of interviewing was aimed at gaining information and creating rapport between the interviewer and suspect as is common in the PEACE method of interviewing. This is done by making the suspect feel comfortable with remarks such as “Of course, if you have questions, feel free to ask them.” and “My only goal here is to obtain the truth, so that is why I would like to give you a chance to tell your side of the story.”. These remarks emphasize the cooperative nature of the interview and focus on getting the account of the suspect. Rules and procedures for engagement are also explained, for example: “When you speak I will try not to interrupt you, and I hope you will do the same for me.”. The questions within this script consist of open questions where the suspect can give their account of the crime they are suspected of, the interviewer does not deviate from the questions that are in the script. The only exception

when it is appropriate to deviate from the script is to conform to the interviewing style, such as acknowledging a personal tragedy from a “suspect” in an investigative interview, and not in an accusatory interview, as to not negatively impact the rapport in the investigative interview. As maintaining rapport through demonstrating active listening is important for investigative interview (Walsh & Bull, 2012). Additional questions (aside from repeating a question if it is unclear) should be avoided all together as this could lead to the reason on why more details are shared.

The interview script for the accusatory style of interviewing is aimed at getting a confession and not on creating rapport between interviewer and suspect. The elements that are present are direct accusation (“I am certain that you did not pay for all the products”) assuming guilt and telling the benefit of confessing (“save both of us time”). The introduction of the interview is shorter and is underpinned by an overall assumption of guilt and includes why it is a bad thing to steal (“Thefts like this can cause small shop owners a lot of harm. Now, this is a problem as you can probably see”). The reason the introduction is short is because the accusatory method is more to the point and also lacks extensive explanation of rules and rights compared to the investigative style. The questions, however, are the same as with the investigative style and the interviewer also does not deviate from these questions, unless deviating is appropriate for the interviewing style.

Both intentional and unintentional errors contain an error at the end of the introduction of the interview to make the error more salient. By making the error appear at the end, it is easier to notice for the participant. The judgement error that is made is: “Over the last couple of days, we have arrested several people. Just like you they have shoplifted for the thrill of it”. This error makes the wrong assumption that the “suspect” did it for the thrill and is therefore a judgement error.

Quantity of information provision.

In order to assess the quantity of information that is given by the participant, the information that is given needs to be quantifiable. This was done based on the notetaker system of Hilbourne and Marlow (2013). They developed Notetaker to provide a more consistent approach to the gathering of details. The Notetaker system divides information into four categories, namely: People, Location(s), Action(s) and Time (PLAT). Any details that are given by the participant that can be allocated to one of these categories are counted and are listed in a details list (Appendix I). After the interview, all of these details that participants have provided were counted. The more details the participants provided, the higher the quantity of information and thus information provision.

Post-interview Questionnaire.

To examine the participant's experience of the suspect interview, the participants were asked to complete a post-interview questionnaire (Appendix D). First the questionnaire involved demographic questions such as the participants' age, gender and nationality, then participants were asked to complete questionnaires on experienced trust and rapport during the interview. Finally, participants answer an ethics questionnaire about their general opinion on the acceptability of certain strategies used by the police in suspect interviewing.

Rapport.

In order to assess the interviewee's perceived rapport, the participants completed the Rapport Scales for Investigative Interviews and Interrogations (RS3I) questionnaire that was published by (Duke et al., 2018). The RS3I is a multidimensional self-report questionnaire intended to measure interviewees' experience of rapport in forensic and intelligence interviews. It contains 33 items and participants used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Duke et al., 2013). The scale had a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$) in the sample of this study. The RS3I contains 9 subscales,

namely General Trustworthiness, Attentiveness (how well the interviewer attended to what was said by the interviewee), Professional Expertise (interviewee's perception that the interviewer or interrogator has displayed professional competence), Professional Dedication (interviewee's perception that the interviewer has been professionally dedicated to the task of conducting the interview), Deep Respect, Trustworthiness Towards the Source, Cultural Similarity, Connected Flow (interviewee's perception that there was easy communication with the interviewer) and Commitment to Communication (interviewee's perception that he or she was motivated to cooperate with the interviewer). The higher participants score on this scale, the more rapport they have experienced.

Trust.

To assess the perceived trust of the interviewee in the interviewer, a seven-item trust scale was used. This scale was based on research by Robinson (1996) in which trust of employees in their employers is investigated. This research focused on dimensions of trust and measures interpersonal trust. For this study the items were adjusted to some degree, to better fit with this study. For example, Robinson (1996) included 'my employer' in the items. This was replaced by 'the interviewer' in this study. Examples of items that are included in this scale are: "I believe the interviewer has high integrity" and "The interviewer treats me in a consistent and predictable fashion". Participants used a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Three items were reverse coded. The scale had an internal consistency ($\alpha = .61$). By averaging the score of the items, the higher participants score on this scale the more trust they have experienced.

Ethics.

To see how error making compares to other strategies/behaviors when it comes to ethical considerations during suspect interviews, participants received 23 statements (Appendix E). 17 of these statements were regarding strategies that the police already use in

accusatory and investigative interviewing and six statements regarding the making of intentional and unintentional errors during interviews, with three statements for each type of error. The 17 statements consist of five examples of behaviors from the Reid technique, three examples of minimization, four examples of maximization and five examples of behaviors from the PEACE model, some of them being used in the interview styles. Behaviors will not only be compared against each other, but also if it makes a difference whether the participant is subjected to the intentional or unintentional error condition. This is to check whether experiencing a certain type of error impacts the way participants view certain behaviors. Participants could score these statements on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 = “strongly unacceptable” to 5 = “strongly acceptable”. The statements regarding the intentional (3) and unintentional (3) strategies will be measured separately against all the other coercive strategies (statements regarding the Reid technique, maximization and minimization combined), to see if there is a difference in how participants rate error making against currently used coercive behaviors. The overall scale had a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$).

The participants from the intentional error condition and the unintentional condition received an extra question before they got the questionnaire. This question is about how they felt about the specific type of error they endured during the interview, which were phrased as following:

“How acceptable is it for you if a suspect interviewer intentionally makes an error on the reason why you committed the (fictional) crime as was done in the interview.”

“How acceptable is it for you if a suspect interviewer accidentally makes an error on the reason why you committed the (fictional) crime as was done in the interview.”

This gives a general idea on how acceptable the participant perceived the judgement error that they experienced during the interview.

Procedure

Participants were asked to pick a date and time to meet through a video call using Microsoft Teams. Then participants were randomly assigned to one of the six experimental conditions,

The participants received the scenario Appendix (B), information sheet (Appendix F) and the news article (Appendix A) that is in accordance with their experimental condition a day before the time and date that was picked to meet through a video call. This was for them to read through and prepare for the interview. They were instructed to try to develop a cover story to try and convince the interviewer they are innocent as compared to giving answers to the interviewers like “no comments” or argumentative responses that would not convince the interviewer of their innocence.

At the appointed time and date for the interview itself, the researcher introduced what the steps are in the experiment and gave the link to the Qualtrics site, where the scenario, information sheet and news article were once again provided. Enough time was reserved for the participant to read through these again to make sure they were properly prepared and to ask questions about things that were unclear, with a time limit of 5 minutes. After this, the consent form (Appendix G) was presented and participants were asked to fill it in. The researcher hereafter turned off his camera and microphone, and the interviewer joined the call. The interview (Appendix C) began either in the accusatory or investigative interview style, with an error being made intentionally, unintentionally or not at all. When all the questions were answered, the interviewer would mute their sound and turn off his camera and the participant was referred back to the researcher. The researcher referred back to the Qualtrics link that was provided at the start of the experiment, and asked the participant to fill in the post-interview questionnaire involving the measures: demographics, experienced trust,

rapport (Appendix D) and ethics (Appendix E). A debrief (Appendix H) was also presented within Qualtrics. This study was approved by the BMS ethics board of the UT (Application number: 210245).

Results

Descriptive statistics

The means, SD's, and inter-correlations among the study measures are shown in Table 1. There are positive correlations between rapport and trust and also between information provision and rapport.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among study variables

| Variables | Mean | SD | Trust | Rapport | Information provision |
|-----------------------|-------|------|-------|---------|-----------------------|
| Trust | 3.58 | 0.82 | | | |
| Rapport | 3.73 | 0.53 | .65* | | |
| Information provision | 17.40 | 0.80 | .14 | .19* | |
| Ethics | 2.89 | 0.59 | .10 | .09 | .07 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hypothesis testing

The first three hypotheses can be analyzed for each variable, trust, rapport and information provision, separately. Showing the main effects on interview style, error type and ultimately the interaction effect between these two.

H1: It is hypothesized that the accusatory interview style will report less rapport, trust and information provided, compared to participants allocated to the investigative interview style.

H2: It is hypothesized that intentionally making a judgement error will report less trust, rapport and information provided, compared to unintentionally making a judgement error.

H3: The intentional error lowers trust and rapport more in an investigative interview, compared to an accusatory interview.

A two-way analysis of variance was run to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences for trust, rapport and information provision between the two interview styles and three error types.

Trust

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations belonging to the participants' trust over the six experimental conditions. The analysis was conducted to test for effects of error type and interview style on the level of trust to see if there were any differences between the six conditions. There were no statistically significant main effects for error type $F(5,144) = 1.41, p = .25, \eta_p^2 = .02$. However, there were statistically significant main effects for interview style as determined by the two-way ANOVA $F(5,144) = 5.37, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .01$. Meaning that interview style did have a statistically significant effect on the amount of trust perceived by the participants. As can be seen in table 2, trust is significantly lower in the accusatory style ($M = 3.47, SD = .66$) as opposed to the investigative style ($M = 3.70, SD = .54$). This supports the hypothesis (H1) that the accusatory style has a lower amount of trust compared to the investigative style. The difference between error types, intentional error ($M = 3.61, SD = .57$), unintentional ($M = 3.47, SD = .64$) and control ($M = 3.66, SD = .62$) that was predicted (H2) for trust, was not statistically significant.

As for an interaction effect between interview style and error type, there were no significant interaction effects for trust $F(2,144) = .62, p = .54, \eta_p^2 = .01$. Suggesting that there

is no evidence for the prediction that there would be an interaction effect (H3) for the variable trust.

Table 2

Means, standard deviations and number of participants for the variable trust over the six conditions

| Interview style | Error type | Mean | SD | N |
|-----------------|---------------|------|-----|-----|
| Accusatory | Intentional | 3.56 | .64 | 25 |
| | Unintentional | 3.37 | .72 | 25 |
| | Control | 3.47 | .65 | 25 |
| | Total | 3.47 | .66 | 75 |
| Investigative | Intentional | 3.67 | .50 | 25 |
| | Unintentional | 3.57 | .55 | 25 |
| | Control | 3.85 | .54 | 25 |
| | Total | 3.70 | .54 | 75 |
| Total | Intentional | 3.61 | .57 | 50 |
| | Unintentional | 3.47 | .64 | 50 |
| | Control | 3.66 | .62 | 50 |
| | Total | 3.58 | .61 | 150 |

Rapport

There were no statistically significant main effects for error type as determined by two-way ANOVA $F(5,144) = .60, p = .55, \eta_p^2 = .01$. However, just as with trust, there were statistically significant main effects for interview style $F(5,144) = 4.30, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Suggesting that rapport also is significantly lower in an accusatory interview style ($M = 3.63, SD = .63$) compared to an investigative interview style ($M = 3.83, SD = .54$) as was predicted (H1) (Table 3). The difference between error types, intentional error ($M = 3.72, SD = .52$), unintentional ($M = 3.67, SD = .64$) and control ($M = 3.79, SD = .62$) that was predicted (H2) for rapport, was not statistically significant. Meaning that there were no significant differences for rapport for each of the three error conditions. As for an interaction effect between interview styles and intentionality of the error. There were no significant interaction effects for rapport $F(2,144) = 1.49, p = .23, \eta_p^2 = .02$. Suggesting that for rapport there was

no evidence for the prediction (H3) that an intentional error would have a bigger effect on the investigative interview style compared to the accusatory interview style.

Table 3

Means, standard deviations and number of participants for the variable Rapport over the six conditions

| Interview style | Error type | Mean | SD | N |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----|
| Accusatory | Intentional | 3.67 | 0.56 | 25 |
| | Unintentional | 3.63 | 0.72 | 25 |
| | Control | 3.58 | 0.62 | 25 |
| | Total | 3.63 | 0.63 | 75 |
| Investigative | Intentional | 3.77 | 0.48 | 25 |
| | Unintentional | 3.70 | 0.55 | 25 |
| | Control | 4.01 | 0.55 | 25 |
| | Total | 3.83 | 0.54 | 75 |
| Total | Intentional | 3.72 | 0.52 | 50 |
| | Unintentional | 3.67 | 0.64 | 50 |
| | Control | 3.79 | 0.62 | 50 |
| | Total | 3.73 | 0.59 | 150 |

Information provision

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations belonging to the participants' information provision over the six experimental conditions. An analysis was conducted to test for effects of error type and interview style on the amount of information provided to see if there were any differences between the six conditions just as with trust and rapport. There were no statistically significant main effects for error type as determined by two-way ANOVA $F(5,144) = 1.18$ $p = .31$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. However, just as with trust and rapport, there was a statistically significant main effect for interview style $F(5,144) = 7.62$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$. Suggesting that information provision is significantly lower in an accusatory interview style ($M = 15.79$, $SD = 7.13$) compared to an investigative interview style ($M = 19.01$, $SD = 7.23$) as was predicted (H1). The difference between error types, intentional error ($M = 16.90$, $SD = 6.92$), unintentional ($M = 16.64$, $SD = 6.61$) and control ($M = 18.66$, $SD = 7.34$) that was predicted (H2) for information provision, was not statistically significant. Meaning that

just like the other variables, there was a significant difference between the two interview styles as proposed (H1), but no significant difference between the three error conditions (H2)

An additional analysis was done to look for an interaction effect between interview styles and intentionality of the error. There were no significant interaction effects for information provision $F(2,144) = 1.32, p = .27, \eta_p^2 = .02$). Suggesting that there was no evidence for an interaction effect between error condition and interview style on the variable information provision (H3).

Table 4

Means, standard deviations and number of participants for the variable information provision over the six conditions

| Interview style | Error type | Mean | SD | N |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|------|-----|
| Accusatory | Intentional | 14.88 | 7.20 | 25 |
| | Unintentional | 14.12 | 5.47 | 25 |
| | Control | 18.36 | 8.03 | 25 |
| | Total | 15.79 | 7.13 | 75 |
| Investigative | Intentional | 18.92 | 6.13 | 25 |
| | Unintentional | 19.16 | 6.79 | 25 |
| | Control | 18.96 | 8.80 | 25 |
| | Total | 19.01 | 7.23 | 75 |
| Total | Intentional | 16.90 | 6.92 | 50 |
| | Unintentional | 16.64 | 6.61 | 50 |
| | Control | 18.66 | 8.34 | 50 |
| | Total | 17.40 | 7.34 | 150 |

Ethics

H4: Intentional error strategies will be rated as less acceptable than unintentional error strategies and similar to other coercive strategies.

First the question was looked at how acceptable the participant found the intentional error or unintentional error they had just experienced. These questions were:

“How acceptable is it for you if a suspect interviewer intentionally makes an error on the reason why you committed the (fictional) crime as was done in the interview.”

“How acceptable is it for you if a suspect interviewer accidentally makes an error on the reason why you committed the (fictional) crime as was done in the interview.”

The group that experienced the intentional error resulted in an acceptability of $M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.17$, while the group that experienced the unintentional error resulted in an acceptability of $M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.02$. When comparing the means with an independent t-test, there was no significant difference $t(149) = 5.10$, $p = .78$. This means that although the difference was high, the difference was not significant between how acceptable participants rated an intentional error they experienced and how acceptable participants rated an unintentional error they experienced during the suspect interview.

Within the questionnaire with 23 statements on interviewing strategies, there were three statements regarding intentional error making and three statements regarding unintentional error making. All participants rated these six statements, independent of what condition they were assigned to. When comparing these means with a paired-samples t-test, there was a significant difference in the scores for the acceptability of intentional error making ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 0.85$) and the acceptability of unintentional error making ($M = 2.09$, $SD = 0.73$); $t(149) = 7.32$, $p < .001$. This means that intentional error making was seen as more acceptable than unintentional error making, regardless of the error condition they were in.

Comparing the statements about intentional error making and unintentional error making does not say anything about how they are viewed as opposed to coercive strategies that are already being used during suspect interviews. The ethics questionnaire consisted of 23 examples of strategies, with three statements each for intentional and unintentional error making as described previously, but also included twelve statements on coercive strategies (combination of Reid, maximization and minimization strategies). To see how intentional and unintentional error making are rated against coercive strategies, while controlling for

interview style and error type, a mixed ANOVA is used. This analysis shows that there are significant differences between the within-subjects variable consisting of intentional error making, unintentional error making and coercive strategies for $F(1) = 7.40, p = .01$.

However, there seem to be no significant differences when it comes to interview style ($F(1) = .44, p = .13$) or error condition ($F(1) = 2.09, p = .51$) participants were in.

To see the differences between intentional error making and coercive strategies and unintentional error making and coercive strategies, a paired t-test was conducted. There was a significant difference in the acceptability scores between the statements on intentional error making ($M = 2.61, SD = 0.85$) and the coercive strategies ($M = 2.46, SD = 0.53$); $t(149) = 8.82, p < .001$. There was also a significant difference in the acceptability scores between the statements on unintentional error making ($M = 2.09, SD = 0.73$) and coercive strategies ($M = 2.46, SD = 0.53$); $t(149) = -.04, p = .008$. This means that intentional error making is seen as more acceptable than the use of coercive strategies, while unintentional error making is seen as less acceptable than the use of coercive strategies.

Discussion

There have been interesting findings on error making during suspect interviewing and the effect of these errors on information provision. This study furthered research on how the intentionality of these errors changes the effect on information provision and whether these changes depend on the interview style used (Oostinga, 2018). This study showed that interview style is important when it comes to information provision, trust and rapport. All these variables were significantly lower in the accusatory style of interviewing, compared to the investigative style of interviewing. The intentionality of the error did not make significant differences for trust, rapport and information provision, which goes against the prediction of the hypotheses (H2), as well as that the intentional error would show an interaction effect based on the interview style (H3).

To get a grasp on the ethical side of error making as a strategy, the acceptability of certain strategies were measured. For the ratings the participants gave the acceptability of the error condition they experienced, the participants in the unintentional error condition rated the experience as more acceptable than the participants in the intentional error condition by a whole point. This, however, was not a statistically significant difference. The overall rating of intentional and unintentional error making strategies, regardless of the error condition the participant was in, resulted in the intentional error making as being more acceptable than the unintentional error making. For the statements in the questionnaire regarding intentional and unintentional error making, the statements regarding intentional error making were seen as more acceptable than the statements regarding unintentional error making, regardless of the error condition they were in. When putting these statements against the coercive strategies in the questionnaire, intentional error making seems more acceptable than the use of coercive strategies, while unintentional error making is seen as less acceptable than the use of coercive strategies.

Rapport, information provision and trust being lower in the accusatory interviewing style is well established in earlier literature, but has less often been shown under lab conditions, with the results coming from field studies, where it is difficult to clearly establish cause and effect (Schreiber Compo et al., 2012). This research clearly resembles this difference between accusatory interview style and investigative interview style and confirms the hypothesis (H1). What did not have significant differences was the error condition on trust, rapport and information provision (H2). The connection that was made between deception and intentional error making in the introduction, did not show in the results. As it did not influence rapport and trust (as much) as was previously hypothesised. This could be because intentional error making is not similar to the deception described in the research of Slobogin (1997), or it is simply not perceived by the participants as deceptive. For information provision, the results were not similar to the findings of the research of Oostinga et al. (2018) as it did not increase when an error was made. The reason for this could be that the scenario from the study of Oostinga et al. (2018) was more tailored towards the participants they sampled. The participants from the research of Oostinga et al. (2008) were all psychology students that were suspected of exam fraud, which is something that is close to the perception of these students. This is not the case in this study, which means that the participants could have a harder time placing themselves in the situation and might not be as emotionally attached to the character they were imaging themselves as. This could diminish the effect of the judgement error as they do not feel a threat to their ego or integrity and therefor not react with more information provision by providing more attention to the offence as was a suggested explanation in previous research (Oostinga et al., 2018; Ren & Gray., 2009).

The assumption was wrong about intentional errors being amongst other coercive strategies based on how acceptable the strategies are perceived, and people are not as negative about deliberate errors as was thought previously (H4). Reason could be that participants find it more important for a police officer to not make mistakes, as compared to them using a strategy that could be seen as manipulative. They might expect manipulative behaviour from a police officer, but not incompetence. Something else to consider is one of the differences between this study and the research of Oostinga et al. (2018), which is the lack of a response strategy. The response strategy would acknowledge the error and offer some explanation as to why the error was made. Looking back at the research of Hommel and Colzato (2015), it was expected that an intentional error could negatively impact trust and predictability. In hindsight, the predictability of a police officer might be more negatively impacted by an unintentional error, as a suspect might not expect the officer to make an error. While with an unintentional error the trust might be damaged, (although not significantly different in this study) the predictability might be the same as a suspect expects a police officer to use manipulative methods to gain more information.

Limitations

One limitation of this research was the study being done through online sessions, making the interviews less personal. Jowett et al. (2011) suggests that online and face-to-face interviews are similar even though they both have a different character and that the limitations of an online interview is outweighed by the convenience of online interviewing. While this point makes sense, the online setting does make it harder for a participant to imagine themselves being in a position that they are arrested by the police, because they are comfortably in their home and not in a police environment. The simulation was accurate enough to show significant differences between interview styles as seen in earlier research,

but the effect might have been stronger if participants had the “stress” of being in an environment that resembles a interrogation/interview room in a police office. This effect could also be increased because of the researchers playing the part of police officer did not have training on playing their part. The researchers not having this training showed, as some participants mentioned that they found it hard to imagine the researcher as a police officer.

As for simulating the interview styles, there were some things that could better project the suggested interview style. In this research, the questions in both the accusatory style and investigative style were the same, because information provision was the most important variable. Asking different questions or a different amount of questions would make comparing the information provision from the two interview styles hard or even impossible. Limiting the possibility of distinguishing between the two interview styles even more, through the questions. It would probably make the difference between trust and rapport even bigger between the two interview styles as the accusatory interview style would be more controlling through the questions compared to the open style questions used in investigative interviewing.

Participants remarked that the context was important for how they rated the acceptability of the strategies. There was no example for a situation for when these strategies are used, so the context could be dependent on what they imagined the crime to be or used the scenario they experienced as an example. From the remarks of the participants, it was clear that a more severe crime would make the use of more extreme strategies acceptable, however, there was no question specifically aimed at when more extreme strategies are acceptable. This line of reasoning could be problematic, because if more extreme strategies are applied, the chance that an innocent suspect will be subjected to those strategies, will increase. Since the more extreme strategies are mostly used in the accusatory interview style, it is already known that these could potentially lead to false confessions. False confessions

that could lead to great consequences as the punishment for the severe crimes are also a lot higher. As from a limitation standpoint, the participants might have been more lenient on the strategies if they thought it involved a more severe crime.

The participants that were gathered for this study were mostly from people that the researchers knew. How an individual evaluates a particular stimulus (e.g., the making of a judgement error) or situation is mostly based on their own experiences and exposure (Slovic et al., 2007). The sample that was used for this study, were not known for having any experience with law enforcement in the form of a suspect interview. Many participants remarked that they would never expect themselves to be in such a situation. This combined with what was earlier mentioned about the scenario in the research of Oostinga et al. (2018) being tailored to their sample, could lower the impact of the judgement error. Using the current findings for the generalisability of an actual suspect population, should be done carefully. As it might not realistically show how a suspect might react to the making of a judgement error (intentionally or unintentionally) during a suspect interview. Based on the lack of stakes, having a hard time imagining themselves in such a situation and the general lack contextual cues that come from doing an interview online as mentioned in an earlier limitation.

Conclusion

The main question was whether or not an error being intentionally made as a strategy could impact information provision. Based on the results, it cannot be concluded that intentionally making a communication error has a negative or positive effect on information provision, even with different interview styles. The three error conditions did not have a meaningful difference regarding rapport, trust and information provision, but only on the acceptability of using a certain strategy. For the type of interview style the results confirmed

the literature that investigative interviews lead to more information as opposed to accusatory interviewing, even with communication errors, intentional and unintentional, being present. There are possibilities for future research that could build on findings from this study. Future research could focus on how judgement errors are perceived differently based on how realistic a scenario is to the participant/suspect. This could change the reaction to a judgement error, not only for information provision, but also trust and rapport. When it comes to the acceptability of certain strategies, it would be interesting to see how people rate incompetence against manipulative strategies, as the participants in this research seemed harsher towards incompetence than towards coercive strategies in general. The predictability of the police officer might be a variable that comes into play with that question, as an unintentional communication error might be less predictable than a coercive strategy. This study and the research of Oostinga et al. (2018) only scratch the surface of error making during suspect interviews. More could be discovered when it comes to (intentional) error making and how it influences a suspects' perception of a police officer. Based on this research there are no reasons to assume that the making of an intentional communication leads to a more negative effect on trust and rapport compared to error making in general. Future research can focus more on the perceptions of a suspect about how they experience certain interviewing strategies and when certain strategies are deemed as acceptable. How suspects perceive a certain strategy and how predictable this strategy is, can be important on how they perceive the police officer and react towards them during a suspect interview, and this should be taken into account when conducting suspect interviews.

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Appendix A: News article

The police are always looking for new strategies that could help suspects talk. By using different techniques/strategies, the police try to make suspects talk during interviews as more reliable information makes it easier to solve cases. They could use strategies like lying about the available evidence, look at body language or show sympathy for the suspect for committing the crime. *The most recent strategy in this department is the usage of deliberate errors. Investigators will pretend to misunderstand a key detail of a crime or even propose false motives in order to provoke suspects to correct these errors. This leads to unwittingly giving the interviewers more evidence.*



*Intentional condition

The police are always looking for new strategies that could help suspects talk. By using different techniques/strategies, the police try to make suspects talk during interviews as more reliable information makes it easier to solve cases. They could use strategies like lying about the available evidence, look at body language or show sympathy for the suspect for committing the crime. *Some strategies work better than others, and differences in individual*

characteristics such as cultural or age must also be taken into account when law enforcement interviews suspects.



*Unintentional condition

Appendix B: Participants' scenario

Half a year ago, the company you were working for was forced to downsize and unfortunately they had to let you go. Since you are out of a job, you live on benefits from the government. You had saved up enough money to last for several months, but since you did not expect that you are out of a job for so long, your savings have run dry. You are very worried on how to cope with all of this, and how you will get through the next couple of months. Yesterday you received yet another bill in the mail, and you wonder if there is going to be any money left for necessary things such as your groceries. You are thinking about postponing doing your groceries, but you realize that your cabinets are getting empty. Since you really need your essential groceries, you decide to go to the supermarket this afternoon.

At 4:00 PM on Wednesday you arrive at the local supermarket. In order to not forget your groceries, you made up a list on what to buy. After you grab your trolley, you grab the

list that you made earlier that day at home to look for the groceries you need. You check the list and wonder if you have the money required to buy all the necessary things.

You start your groceries at the vegetables section and pick the carrots, cauliflower and spinach for the coming days. The next things you get are loaves of bread and eggs for the whole week. Next on the list are a couple bottles of milk and a bag of potatoes and rice. You calculate the prices in your head and think that you have just enough money and you feel happy for a moment. But then, you see that you still need laundry detergent and toilet paper.

When you put your laundry detergent in your trolley you check your bank account to see how much money you have. You should have just enough money, and continue on to the self-checkout cash register. At the self-checkout, an elderly man, a mother with her child, and a young girl are paying for their groceries. When you are almost done scanning your groceries, you suddenly realize that you cannot afford all your groceries, and start thinking about a solution for this. You definitely need the laundry detergent and toilet paper, and cannot remove any other items that are already in your trolley. You have already cut everything down to the bare essentials. After careful consideration, you decide to not scan the laundry detergent and the toilet paper. It should be easy enough to just move them from one side of the till to the other without anyone noticing. You pay for the other products and receive a receipt. An employee randomly selected the elderly man to check his receipt before you. You think that this will make you less likely to be checked.

Suddenly, you hear someone call your name. You feel your heart thumping and quickly turn around to see an acquaintance. You feel relieved, because you thought you were caught. You greet your acquaintance and head for the exit where you say goodbye to the employee. While you were getting close to your bike, you hear the manager calling out for you. You turn around, and see that a police officer is already accompanying him. Quickly you

dispose of the products you did not pay for in a nearby bin around the corner. The police officer walks towards you and says: Sir/Madam, could you please come with me?

Appendix C: Interview scripts

Investigative interviewing style

Hello, my name is [NAME]. I will be conducting your interview today. May I ask how I can refer to you during this interview?

You can call me [NAME].

Before we start the interview, I would like to inform you about the procedure and rules.

This interview is being recorded for both video and audio. This is so we can properly analyze the data and have a record of what has been said.

We will need to transcribe these records as well. So, to help with that process afterwards, it would be a great help if we try to not interrupt each other. When you speak, I will try not to interrupt you, and I hope you will do the same for me. Of course, if you have questions, feel free to ask them. And don't worry if I ask two similar questions, or if I ask you to repeat something. I just want to make sure we get as much information as possible and I want to understand everything that you say here today as best I can.

Now, the reason I'm interviewing you today is to talk about the fact that you have been apprehended by the police regarding shoplifting. In order to fully understand the events that have happened, it is important that you tell me everything you can remember. Every little thing is important, so please be as detailed as possible. My only goal here is to obtain the truth, so that is why I would like to give you a chance to tell your side of the story. Do you have any questions so far?

It is important that you tell me everything that you know, no matter how insignificant you think it might be. Please use as much detail as you can and do not edit anything out. I was not

there, so I am not aware of everything that has happened. That is why I want to give you a chance to tell me your side of the story. Over the last couple of days, we have arrested several people in connection with shoplifting. Just like you, they have shoplifted for the thrill of it. We will begin the interview now.

Introduction accusatory approach

I am here to talk to you about the fact that you stole groceries. I am sure that you did not pay for all the products. Thefts like this can cause small shop owners a lot of harm. Now, this is a problem as you can probably see. So, I want you to do the right thing by cooperating and telling me about what you have stolen from the supermarket. We know you are guilty, and have evidence to prove this. So, the only right thing to do for you now is to confess. Over the last couple of days, we have arrested several people in connection with shoplifting. Just like you, they have shoplifted for the thrill of it.

Interview questions

- Please tell me in as much details as possible about everything that happened in the supermarket?

- Is there anything else you can tell me about what happened in the supermarket from your point of view?

Now I will ask you some more specific questions. You may have already answered them, but if that is the case, please answer them again.

- We have an employee who says that you were acting nervously. Can you explain why this person felt that you were acting nervously?

- We have another eyewitness who says that you did not scan all your groceries, can you explain to me why he would say this?

- We saw you on the CCTV carrying more items than you paid for. Can you explain what you did with those additional items?

- Is there anything else you can tell us that might help us to understand what happened at the supermarket?

[After questioning]. Thank you very much. I have all the information we need for now. You can please stay on the call the researcher will rejoin the conversation.

Appendix D: Post-interview questionnaire

1. Age:

2. Gender:

3. Nationality:

Part A

On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), please circle one number to reflect the extent to which you agree with the following:

1. I believe the interviewer has high integrity.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The interviewer treated me in a consistent and predictable fashion.

1 2 3 4 5

3. The interviewer is not always honest and truthful.

1 2 3 4 5

4. In general, I believe the interviewer's motives and intentions are good.

1 2 3 4 5

5. I don't think the interviewer treats me fairly.
- 1 2 3 4 5
6. The interviewer is open and upfront with me.
- 1 2 3 4 5
7. I am not sure I fully trust the interviewer.
- 1 2 3 4 5

*Question 3, 5 and 7 are reverse coded

Part B

On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), please circle one number to reflect the extent to which you agree with the following:

1. It is my impression that the interviewer is an ethical person.
- 1 2 3 4 5
2. I think that the interviewer can generally be trusted to keep his word.
- 1 2 3 4 5
3. It's my impression that the interviewer has high moral standards for himself.
- 1 2 3 4 5
4. I think that the interviewer is an honorable person.
- 1 2 3 4 5
5. The interviewer strikes me as a person of genuine integrity.
- 1 2 3 4 5

6. The interviewer paid careful attention to my opinion.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The interviewer was interested in my point of view.

1 2 3 4 5

8. The interviewer really listened to what I had to say.

1 2 3 4 5

9. The interviewer was attentive to me.

1 2 3 4 5

10. The interviewer does his job with skill during the interview.

1 2 3 4 5

11. The interviewer performed expertly during the interview.

1 2 3 4 5

12. The interviewer acted like a professional.

1 2 3 4 5

13. The interviewer tried hard to carry out his part of the interview.

1 2 3 4 5

14. The interviewer made an effort to do a good job.

1 2 3 4 5

15. The interviewer was motivated to perform well during the interview.

1 2 3 4 5

16. The interviewer respects my intelligence.

1 2 3 4 5

17. The interviewer respects my knowledge.

1 2 3 4 5

18. The interviewer values my point of view.

1 2 3 4 5

19. I think the interviewer is generally honest with me

1 2 3 4 5

20. I feel that I can trust the interviewer to keep his word to me.

1 2 3 4 5

21. I think that the interviewer would be honest with me, even if it wasn't in his best interest.

1 2 3 4 5

22. I think the interviewer has good intentions towards me.

1 2 3 4 5

23. The interviewer means what he says to me.

1 2 3 4 5

24. The interviewer and I have their culture in common.

1 2 3 4 5

25. The interviewer and I probably share the same interests.

1 2 3 4 5

26. The interviewer probably shares my culture.
- 1 2 3 4 5
27. The interviewer and the I worked well together as a team.
- 1 2 3 4 5
28. I would probably be willing to do another interview with the interviewer.
- 1 2 3 4 5
29. Communication went smoothly between the interviewer and me.
- 1 2 3 4 5
30. The interviewer and I got along well during the interview.
- 1 2 3 4 5
31. I was motivated to perform well during the interview.
- 1 2 3 4 5
32. I wanted to do a good job during the interview.
- 1 2 3 4 5
33. I felt committed to accomplishing the goals of the interview
- 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E: Ethics questions

For the group in the intentional error condition:

“How acceptable is it for you if a suspect interviewer intentionally makes an error on the reason why you committed the (fictional) crime as was done in the interview.”

For the group in the unintentional condition

“How acceptable is it for you if a suspect interviewer accidentally makes an error on the reason why you committed the (fictional) crime as was done in the interview.”

The following statements describe behaviours that are performed by an interviewer when questioning someone that is suspected of a crime.

Please indicate on the scale how acceptable (from strongly unacceptable to strongly acceptable) you think it is for an interviewer to engage in each of these behaviours during an interview with a suspect.

How acceptable is it for you if a suspect interviewer...

Reid/accusatory

1. ... directly accuses the suspect of being guilty of a crime they are being interviewed for, before getting the suspect's side of the story?
2. ... pretends to create a positive relationship with the suspect?
3. ... shows a firm belief in the guilt of the suspect?
4. ... accuses a suspect of lying?
5. ... tells a suspect that they are not interested in the suspect's denials, but just want to know the reason why the crime was committed?

Unintentional error making

6. ... accidentally makes an error on the time and day a crime took place?
7. ... accidentally addresses a sensitive personal topic more than once, when the suspect has clearly indicated they do not want to talk about it?
8. ... accidentally uses hard to understand technical and legal terms during the suspect interview?

Intentional error making

9. ... intentionally makes an error on the time and day a crime took place?
10. ... intentionally addresses a sensitive personal topic more than once, when the suspect has clearly indicated they do not want to talk about it?
11. ... intentionally uses hard to understand technical and legal terms during the suspect interview?

Minimization

12. ... falsely implies that they have considered committing the same crime as the suspect?
13. ... falsely implies to the suspect that confessing to the crime could lower the punishment received for the crime?
14. ... falsely implies that others will not judge the suspect as harshly if they admit their guilt?

PEACE/humanitarian interview

15. ... shows that they do not prejudge the suspect as guilty?
16. ... focuses on creating a genuine relationship with the suspect?
17. ... explains the responsibilities of a suspect during the suspect interview?
18. ... sets clear guidelines on how the suspect and interviewer should communicate during the interview?
19. ... explains the rights to legal counsel to the suspect?

Maximization

20. ... exaggerates the severity of punishment the suspect would receive, for the crime the suspect is accused of?
21. ... exaggerates the strength of the evidence that is available against the suspect?
22. ... lies about the existence of evidence against the suspect?
23. ... has an aggressive manner when questioning the suspect?

Appendix F: Information sheet

This research will investigate the behaviour of suspects during an interview with the police. We will ask you to take the role of a suspect of a theft.

There are 4 steps to taking part in this research.

1. With this information sheet you have also received a description of a crime. You will need to read this scenario and imagine yourself as the person who committed the theft. Please take the time to understand what is going on in this situation, why you commit this theft, and how you will approach the interview. Your task will be to try to convince the interviewer that you are innocent so you should prepare as though you really were going to be interviewed by the police. Therefore, you should be aware that you will need to prepare a cover story to try to explain away any evidence they may have against you. Only saying “no comment” or being argumentative will not help to convince them that you are innocent.

2. We have set an appointment for a video call through Microsoft Teams prior to sending this information and a researcher will explain the procedure and answer any questions you may have at the start of this video call. A link will be provided by the researcher to join a call through Teams. After opening this link, you will have the option to access Teams through the web-app or download the desktop app. If further help is needed with installing teams or the use of the program, we will be available to assist through the contact info found at the bottom. We recommend testing if Teams works for you and how it works before the appointment, as the link will be provided well in advance of the appointment.

3. During your appointment, the interviewer will first explain the procedure, and will give you time to read the scenario again and make final preparations. The interview will then begin. This will be about the crime that was described in the scenario. As a reminder, you are expected to take the role of a suspect of the crime and your task will be to try to convince the police interviewer you are innocent.

4. After the interview, the interviewer will leave the call and the researcher will come back into the call. This researcher will send you a link to a post-interview questionnaire that you can then complete. There is also room for questions while filling in the questionnaire as a researcher will be present. Questions related to the purpose of the study cannot be answered until the questionnaire is fully completed. After the questionnaire is completed, the researcher will also answer any questions that are related to the study and the use of the data.

BMS ethics committee: ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl

For question concerning the study or the handling of the data please contact one of the researchers:

Appendix G: Consent form

Participating in this study does not put you at any risk and the study has been approved by the BMS ethics committee of the University of Twente (Application number: 210245).

We will record the Teams call so that we can analyse your responses. However, these recordings will only be stored on secure university servers, can only be accessed by the research team, and will never be made public without your consent. We would also ask to use the transcript of the recording and some of the video material.

Keep in mind that this a fictional scenario, but it is possible that being questioned as in a police interview can result in having feelings of discomfort or stress. You have the right to withdraw from participation at any time without giving any reasons for withdrawal. You can simply hang up the Teams call, the researcher will not call you back as we do not want to pressure you to continue. However, if you lose connection accidentally please contact the researchers for further instructions through the information below. All questionnaire and demographic data will be anonymised so that you cannot be personally identified and will be used for completing two master theses but may also be presented in an academic article or at an academic conference.

Anonymised questionnaire data, but not video recordings, will also be made available to the scientific community via the Open Science Framework (<https://osf.io/>). However, we would like to reiterate data is only available in a completely anonymous form and you and your data will not be personally identifiable, and we will not make the recordings available to others. For further questions or any complaints, you can contact the researchers or the BMS ethics committee of the University of Twente:

BMS ethics committee: ethicscommittee-bms@utwente.nl

For question concerning the study or the handling of the data please contact one of the researchers:

I voluntarily agree to take part in the Interview and to answer the questionnaire and understand that have the right to withdraw from this study at any point and that your data will be removed if you leave before completing the questionnaire

- I am over the age of 18
- I have read the information sheet above and fully understand the purpose of the research
- I understand that if I complete the study my data will be kept confidentially and anonymously

Appendix H: Debrief

Thank you for participating in this research concerning (un)intentional error making during suspect interviews. This research aimed to find if the making of errors, intentional or unintentional, had an impact on how much information is provided to police by suspects. It is expected that a suspect gives more information when they are confronted by an error that the interviewer makes. In this study an error is made about the reason why somebody would commit a crime and also by accident to see if this would make a difference. There were also two interviewing styles, the information-gathering approach and the accusatory approach. The information-gathering approach is based on getting as much information as possible and to create rapport, this being the positive relationship between the interviewer and suspect. The accusatory approach has the goal of obtaining a confession and is direct and harsh in its approach. Besides the amount of information given by the suspect, other variables were considered, like trust and rapport. These two variables could play a role in why people provide more information or whether the making of an error has a negative effect on trust and rapport. It is also considered how ethical/acceptable behaviours of interviewers are perceived to be. The post-interview questionnaires were about these three variables. We will acquire knowledge on what effect the making of communication errors during suspect interviews have on suspects giving more information and their experience regarding these errors. Will the error make the suspect talk more or shut down and does this depend on the interview style being used? The results of this research could potentially help improve the techniques used in investigative and accusatory interviews. This could lead to more successful convictions as there is more information to work with. The researcher will let you know in which condition you were placed and answer any questions you might have regarding the study.

Hopefully you enjoyed taking part in this study! We are still in need of a few participants, so please do ask friends or family members to contact us if they want to take part. However, we would like to ask you to please not discuss this research with them before they have participated, as this could alter their results.

Feel free to contact the researchers with any questions or feedback that you may have.

You have the right to withdraw your initial consent without any negative consequences. This will result in your data being removed from this research.

For further questions or any complaints, you can contact the researchers or the BMS ethics committee of the University of Twente: BMS ethics committee, ethicscommittee@utwente.nl

Appendix I: Details list

| Detail | Description |
|---------------|---|
| 1 | The reason why the participant would shoplift, motive. (e.g. the cabinets are getting empty, little or no money, loss of job) |
| 2 | Decision to go the supermarket |
| 3 | 4 PM |
| 4 | Wednesday |
| 5 | Made up a list on what to buy |
| 6 | Look at the list on what to buy |
| 7 | Wonder if participant has enough money |
| 8 | Thought of having just enough money for groceries |
| 9 | Laundry detergent |
| 10 | Toilet paper |
| 11 | Check bank account |
| 12 | Continue on to cash-register |
| 13 | Elderly man |
| 14 | Mother |
| 15 | Child |
| 16 | Young girl |
| 17 | Not scan the laundry detergent and toilet paper |
| 18 | Move them from one side of the till to the other |
| 19 | Pay for other groceries |
| 20 | Receive a receipt |
| 21 | Employee checks the receipt of the elderly man |
| 22 | See your acquaintance |
| 23 | Say goodbye to the employee |
| 24 | Getting close to your bike |
| 25 | Manager calling out for you |

| | |
|----|--|
| 26 | Police officer is accompanying manager |
| 27 | Dispose of the laundry detergent and toilet paper in a bin |
| 28 | Police officer request that participant comes with him/her |