

## The Perspectives of American Police Officers Regarding Suspect Interrogation and Interview Legislation

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### Abstract

Interrogations are a central component to criminal investigations, yet few studies have explored the views of police investigators toward interrogation techniques and policies. A random sample of law enforcement officers assigned to criminal investigations units in Texas was surveyed regarding their attitudes toward commonly used interrogation methods. In total, 135 homicide and other police investigators responded by questionnaire, reporting on their views toward interrogation tactics and the frequency they conducted custodial or noncustodial interrogations. Results showed that homicide detectives were significantly more likely to favor rapport building and gaining the suspect's confidence and to conduct interrogations at the police station as opposed to in the field. Respondents choosing to conduct interrogations after giving the *Miranda* warnings were more apt to use evidence disclosure tactics but also more likely to become antagonistic toward the suspect. Results were analyzed and compared to previous research, policy issues, and methodological limitations.

### Keywords

Police, Interrogation, Miranda warnings, Confessions

### Introduction

For decades now, legal and academic professionals have scrutinized criminal interrogations and the consequences they have for criminal defendants. As Justice Scalia noted in his dissenting opinion in *Dickerson v. U.S.* (2000), "in the 34 years since *Miranda* was decided, this Court has been called upon to decide nearly 60 cases involving a host of *Miranda* issues" (p.428). Because interrogations are routine for all types of criminal investigations, police have great autonomy in the selection of interrogation methods. Additionally, officers retain significant discretion in the manner in which individual rights are applied (Urbonya, 2003).

The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states that no individual "shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself." However, a review of the history of law enforcement reveals the fallibility of confessions, dating back to the Salem witch trials, which often resulted in arbitrary convictions and routine executions (for example, see Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2004; Drizen & Leo, 2004; Kassin, 2008). It was not until 1936 when the Supreme Court decided that confessions obtained through coercion and utter brutality violated due process of law (*Brown v. Mississippi*, 1936). Throughout the history of law enforcement, the

use of harsh interrogation methods to obtain confessions was common practice for police officers (Leo, 2004). Finally in *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966), the Supreme Court implemented a new standard for determining the constitutionality of confessions, ruling that criminal suspects must be given specific warnings whenever there is custodial interrogation.

Empirical research has focused on a myriad of interrogation issues including the prevalence of false confessions (Kassin, et al., 2007; Drizin & Leo, 2004; Gross et al., 2005); *Miranda* waivers and the choice of interrogation format (e.g., custodial vs. noncustodial interrogations) (Leo & White, 1999); and deception detection accuracy (Bond & DePaulo, 2006; Vrij, 2008). The way police perceive offenders and the crimes they commit also affects their selection of interrogation techniques, ostensibly shaped by experience and training, with the goal of resolving and closing cases (Culhane, Hosch, & Heck, 2008).

This study adds to the body of criminal interrogation research through an analysis of self-reported data that compares observations of homicide officers to other officers assigned to criminal investigative units in Texas. The article takes another step toward delineating typologies of interrogations and demonstrates the relationship between individual, social, and legal factors to each of these theoretical models.

### **Current Issues involving Confessions as Evidence**

The use of confessions as evidence has a powerful effect on juries, prosecutors, and judges; therefore, police officers devote considerable effort toward obtaining incriminating statements from suspects. It is commonly assumed that police officials, judges, prosecutors, and members of juries highly regard the probative value of a criminal confession. Most individuals reject the notion that innocent individuals would confess to crimes they did not commit. However, confessions have been proven false for a variety of reasons, for example, when the true offender is identified, or it is discovered that a crime never occurred, or that the offender is advised by her lawyer that it is in their “best interest” to cooperate with police by admitting wrongdoing and accepting a plea agreement. Research conducted on the prevalence of false confessions indicates that 4.8% of suspects falsely confess to crimes that they had not committed (Kassin, et al., 2007). Criticism surrounding interrogations that occur under psychologically stressful conditions has led to changes in interrogation policies nationwide, such as the electronic recording of interrogations (Sullivan, 2004). Clearly police culture emphasizes closing cases and obtaining convictions through available investigative means, which may provide insight into the etiology of this phenomenon (Carlson, 2005; Waegel, 1983; Simon, 1991).

The professionalization of policing movement has prompted numerous reforms that have improved police practices. For example, the majority of police officers receive basic interrogation training during the police academy. In addition, criminal investigators routinely complete a certain number of in-service training courses. Two of the most popular methods include the Reid method (Inbau, Reid, Buckley, & Jayne, 2001) and the “kinesic” technique (Walters, 2003). Both approaches recommend that interviewers examine symptoms of increased stress (e.g., rapid eye movement, nervousness, speech disturbances) to discern innocent from guilty suspects. However, research indicates that these methods do not reliably differentiate between liars and those telling the truth (DePaulo, et al., 2003). In fact, evidence suggests that average people are approximately 54% accurate in distinguishing guilty from innocent suspects, and that trained officers are not significantly better than laypeople (Bond & DePaulo, 2006). Further, it is commonly understood that police investigative divisions emphasize resolution of more serious crimes relative to less serious or cases lacking sufficient evidence to proceed to trial (Eck, 1992; Waegel, 1983). It follows that the consequences associated with serious criminal interrogations, such as homicides and violent crimes, are more far-reaching for criminal suspects and the police.

The *Miranda* decision, a major milestone impacting American law enforcement, resulted in procedures that comported with a due process model built largely on case law. However, since the *Miranda* case, the US Supreme Court has created a number of exceptions that reflect a more crime control oriented model of policing (for a review, see Zalman & Smith, 2007). In *Dickerson v. U.S.* (2000), the Supreme Court reaffirmed that *Miranda* is a constitutional rule, but subsequent decisions in *U.S. v. Patane* (2004) and *Chavez v. Martinez* (2003) depict a more nuanced representation.

Average citizens assume that a confession is only valid once the police advise a suspect of their constitutional right to remain silent. In fact, confessions and admissions are frequently a result of this misconception among suspects. Police are not always legally obligated to provide suspects with their *Miranda* warnings, such as in cases where no probable cause exists or no interrogation has occurred. Leo and White (1999) analyzed a sample of post-*Miranda* cases and determined that “interrogation outside *Miranda*” was relatively common. Even in situations where interrogations do occur, a confession is valid as long as it is done freely and voluntarily, otherwise referred to as a noncustodial interrogation (Leo & White, 1992). Once more, a confession that occurs after the warnings have been given is still admissible as long as the suspect has voluntarily and intelligently waived his or her *Miranda* rights. Research has consistently demonstrated that suspects waive their constitutionally protected rights in about 80% of cases (Leo, 1996a; Cassell &

Hayman, 1996; Kassin, et al., 2007). There are two possible reasons for the extraordinarily high waiver rate, one is that suspects do not understand the consequences of providing a warned statement to police, and the other is that police are skilled in eliciting confessions after warnings have been administered (Leo, 1996b, Simon, 1991).

### **Interviewing Styles and Confessions**

A lack of research has examined the utility of interview styles and techniques on truth and deception detection (Kassin et al., 2007; Colwell, Hiscock, & Memon, 2002; Hartwig, Granag, Stromwall, & Vrij, 2005). In the first national self-report study involving police interrogation methods, Kassin, et al (2007) reported that “identifying contradictions in the suspect's story” (*always* = 40%); and “trying to establish rapport with the suspect in order to gain confidence” (*always* = 31%); were among the most popular interrogation tactics. The least popular interviewing techniques included “showing the suspect photographs of the crime scene and/or victim” (*never* = 28%); and “express impatience, frustration, or anger at the suspect” (*never* = 29%); in addition to “having the suspect take a polygraph exam and then tell him that he failed it” (*never* = 71%). A factorial analysis yielded four typologies of interrogation methods: “isolation, rapport, and minimization, confrontation, threatening the suspect, and presentation of evidence” (p.391). The findings revealed that officers with more experience were more likely to rely on tactics such as “threatening the suspect” and “presentation of evidence,” while those who were more confident in their lie detection ability advocated “isolation, rapport, and minimization” and “confrontation.” Respondents with more years of experience and who had performed more interrogations over their careers were significantly more likely to engage in strategies such as “threatening the suspect.” Kassin et al (2007) provide an impetus to explore additional factors that affect interrogations beyond those related to individual officers.

Police interrogators must consider the type of interrogation (e.g., custodial vs. noncustodial) when selecting the appropriate interrogation strategy. For example, when police do not have sufficient evidence to charge a suspect, they may tend to favor techniques such as rapport building, minimization, and appeal to the suspect's self-interests. Additionally, once *Miranda* warnings have been given and the suspect is under increased pressure to cooperate with police, more direct strategies such as confrontation, identifying contradictions, and becoming impatient toward suspects may become more common. A second issue concerns the relationship between the investigative technique and the type of crime investigated. Research suggests that police detectives routinely discriminate between crime types and employ different investigative techniques among them (Waegel, 1981). Intuitively, interrogations involving homicides and other violent crimes involve a high degree of rapport

building, sympathy, and appeals to the suspect's self-interests, all of which are more time-consuming and intensive. Therefore, the "case routinization" of investigative work with regard to more common crimes (e.g., thefts, narcotics) may have different affects on the selection of interrogation strategies specific to those investigations. Therefore, an empirical assessment of legal and organizational issues furthers our understanding of styles of police interrogation (see Culhane, Hosch, & Heck, 2008).

### **Current Research and Hypotheses**

The current study examined the following questions:

- a. Do police interrogation styles differ between homicide officers and other types of police investigators?
- b. What is the effect of the type of interrogation format (e.g., custodial vs. noncustodial) on the selection of interrogation technique?
- c. What is the relationship among individual difference factors (e.g., experience, number of interrogations, confidence level) and the model of interrogation employed?

Thirteen (13) common interrogation techniques to explore several theoretical models of interrogation (Leo, 1996; Kassin, et al. 2007) were tested. One could expect that homicide interrogators would employ more passive techniques that promote rapport building, sympathy, and appeals to the suspect's self interests; whereas, other officers would be more confrontational and impatient toward suspects. Officers assigned higher volume investigative caseloads are constrained with regards to the investigative resources and time they may devote to resolving crimes. As a result of the organizational demands to solve and close cases, there is less time to engage in tactics that "build up" the suspect before seeking a confession (Eck, 1992). Second, one could anticipate that all police interrogations would involve strategic disclosure of evidence to elicit suspect confessions. Previous research confirms that strategic evidence disclosure techniques improve lie detection accuracy and are popular among law enforcement officers (Hartwig, Granhag, Stromwall & Kronkvist, 2006). There is also evidence suggesting that lying is more effortful than truth-telling; therefore, interviewers should test the suspect's cognitive aptitude and focus on signs that resemble stress (Vrij, Fisher, Mann, & Leal, 2006). Further, when suspects were required to repeat the chronological order of facts, interviewers were more accurate in differentiating guilty from innocent suspects.

Due to legal issues surrounding the admissibility of confessions, it could be expected that officers routinely employ more aggressive techniques (e.g., identifying contradictions, appealing the suspect's self-interests) during custodial as

opposed to noncustodial interrogations. The decision to administer *Miranda* warnings formally identifies an individual as a criminal suspect. Once a decision has been made to warn the suspect, police officers have more discretion with regards to the range of interrogation techniques they may employ. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the type of interrogation format (e.g., custodial vs. noncustodial) would be significantly related to the type of interrogation model employed.

## Research Method

During the fall of 2008, a total of 138 surveys were mailed to a random sample of 120 municipal police and sheriff's departments in Texas. Police departments having a local population of at least 2,500 and sheriff's departments in counties with a minimum of 10,000 comprised the total population of agencies for this study. State police and university police departments were excluded, yielding a sampling frame of 588 agencies.

The mailing of questionnaires was prefaced by contacting the respective agencies via telephone and obtaining contact names of criminal investigation supervisors for crimes against persons and property, and specifically for homicide, if available. This approach was taken to improve the tracking and follow-up of surveys to agencies. In total, 18 agencies had specialized homicide investigative units. For most agencies, detectives were either assigned to units such as crimes against persons, property, or narcotics. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate their primary investigative responsibility. In agencies where there were specialized units for homicide, two surveys were mailed: one survey to the homicide unit and another randomly selected from one of the remaining investigative units. We asked respondents to distribute copies of the survey to other willing participants. The cover letter to the survey and research team advised the main contacts from each agency that the survey was intended for law enforcement officers who normally conducted interrogations. After waiting several weeks, non-respondents were reminded about the survey by conducting follow-up phone calls or sending post cards.

## Survey Design

The current survey was an adapted version of the instrument administered by Kassin et al (2007), which was mailed to a national sample of law enforcement agencies. Participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of 13 interrogation techniques on a Likert scale (1=not effective to 5= very effective). Participants were asked to rate their deception detection accuracy from 1-100, with 100 indicating complete accuracy. Information was also gathered on the number of interrogations each officer had conducted (expressed as a continuous variable). Realizing that for legal reasons *Miranda* is required for some interrogations, participants were asked

to indicate the type of *preferred* interrogation format (1=custodial, 0=noncustodial). For comparison purposes, participants were requested to indicate their *primary* investigative assignment (e.g., homicide, homicide and other violent crimes, property, narcotics, and "other." The latter three groups of participants were merged together to form the comparison group for the current study.

Participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. Participants were only requested to provide their age, gender, ethnicity, years of experience, and current rank. This information was contained in the last section of the questionnaire.

## Research Results

Of the 138 surveys distributed, a total of 135 completed forms from 78 agencies (agency response rate=66%) were received. Unfortunately, an accurate estimate of individual officers refusing to participate in the study could not be calculated. Additionally, several respondents disregarded some questions in the survey; and as a consequence the sample sizes varied across questionnaire items. The gender composition of the sample was 92% male ( $n=124$ ) and 8% female ( $n=11$ ), representing 94 municipal agencies (78%) and 26 county agencies (22%). Of the sample, 59 (63%) municipal and 19 (73%) county agencies responded. There were 74 (55%) respondents who reported their primary responsibilities involved homicide investigations; 61 (45%) respondents reported having other investigative responsibilities. Participant rankings were described as follows: chiefs (4); captains (9); lieutenants (18); corporals (8); sergeants (16), detectives (60); and investigators (20).

Respondents had a mean level of 42 years of age ( $SD= 7.08$ ) and had been employed an average of 17.49 years in law enforcement ( $SD = 6.86$ ). Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were classified as "Caucasian," followed by Hispanic (17%); African American (3%); and other (4%). Participants estimated having conducted an average of 600.11 interviews/interrogations during their careers as criminal investigators (Med = 300;  $SD = 920.91$ ), resulting in a mean of 34.31 interviews per year.

The homicide and control group had identical mean levels of age ( $SD=6.8$  and 7.1, respectively). Most homicide participants were male ( $n=68$ ) compared to the control group ( $n=56$ ). Comparatively, homicide detectives were more experienced in conducting interviews than the control group (Mean=645 vs. 545,  $SD= 1068$  vs. 707, respectively).

To ascertain the level of confidence in participants regarding their lie detection aptitudes, respondents were asked to approximate the accuracy of their own judgments regarding truth or deception. Kassin et al (2007) reported lie detection

rates of 77% among a national sample of law enforcement investigators. In contrast, in this study, participants reported an accuracy detection rate of 75% ( $SD = 17.62$ ).

## Interrogation Techniques

The self-reported data on the effectiveness of the interrogation techniques for entire sample are depicted in Table I. When comparing the data on the two groups, there were notable similarities and differences. The most popular techniques were (a) “confronting the suspect with verifiable evidence of guilt,” (b) “establishing a rapport and gaining the suspect's trust,” (c) “identifying contradictions in the suspect's story,” and (d) “conducting interrogations at the police station.” The least popular techniques were (e) “touching the suspect in a friendly manner,” and (f) “conducting interrogations in the field.”

Table I: Group Comparison of Interrogation Usage, Independent and Demographic Factors ( $N=135$ )

Technique	Homicide ( $n=74$ )	Control ( $n=61$ )	Leo (1996)	Kassin, et al. (2007)
Confronting the suspect with verifiable evidence of guilt	93	90	85	22
Establishing a rapport and gaining the suspect's trust	91	89	—	32
Identifying contradictions in the suspect's story.	76	89	—	42
Conducting interrogations at the police station	69	75	—	42
Offering moral justifications and excuses	73	67	34	13
Appeals to the suspect's self-interests	69	54	88	11
Implying or pretending to have independent evidence of guilt	59	56	—	7
Make suspect take polygraph then tell him he failed it	35	38	—	3
Show photographs of crime scene/victim	24	34	—	3
Use of praise or flattery	35	18	30	—
Interrupting the suspect's denials and objections	27	23	13	—
Touching the suspect in a friendly manner	28	5	11	—
Conducting interrogations in the field	11	23	—	—



Age	42(6.8)	42(7.1)
Females	6	5
Custodial Interrogations	34	29
Noncustodial	40	32
Career Interrogations	517 (737)	545(706)
Years of Experience	18.2(6.7)	16.6(7.0)
Confidence in Lie Detection Ability	74.6(19.4)	76(15.2)

*Note: Grouped data reflecting percentage of participants who believed the use of each tactic was either "very" or "fairly" effective. Demographics and individual data reflect frequencies with standard deviations in parentheses.*

When frequencies of self-reported usage on individual techniques were compared, homicide detectives expressed stronger support for four techniques: (a) "use of praise or flattery," (b) "appeals to the suspect's self-interests," and (c) "touching the suspect in a friendly manner," but were less supportive toward "identifying contradictions in the suspect's story."

It was interesting that the four most popular techniques reported by participants in our study were also the most commonly used techniques according to the analysis by Kassin et al (2007). Although the rank order of popularity among participants varies to some degree across studies, it appears that all police interrogators routinely employ a subset of techniques. However, these findings indicate that homicide investigators make use of a greater range of techniques than do other officers.

A factor analysis was performed to investigate the conceptual relationship among the 13 interrogation techniques (see Table II). Four factors with eigen values greater than 1.0 were extracted, representing 56% of the variance in the data. Ten of the variables indicated positive or negative loadings  $>.50$  on one of factors. Only one variable, "appeals to the suspect's self-interests," cross-loaded on factors 1 and 2. The first factor accounted for 19.56% of the variance, which included passive tactics such as "rapport building, bolstering confidence, and minimization." The second factor accounted for 15.6% of the variance, but presented an esoteric construct. Two variables, namely "appeals to the suspect's self-interests" and "stationhouse interrogations," had negative loadings, but "field interrogations" loaded positively. This potentially represents a "mixed method" of interrogation, in situations when police perform a combination of noncustodial and custodial interrogations. The third factor represented 11.86% of the variance and could be descriptive of evidence-disclosure strategies. The variable, "photographs" loaded positively, but "impatience" loaded negatively, thus indicating importance of patience. Finally, the fourth factor accounted for 9.5% of the variance and was represented by the items, "contradictions" and "confrontation." Both items loaded positively, reflecting a more aggressive interrogation style.

Table II: Factor Loadings of Interrogation Strategies in Unrotated Factor Matrix

Technique	Homicide (n=74)	Control (n=61)	Leo (1996)	Kassin, et al. (2007)
Confronting the suspect with verifiable evidence of guilt	93	90	85	22
Establishing a rapport and gaining the suspect's trust	91	89	—	32
Identifying contradictions in the suspect's story.	76	89	—	42
Conducting interrogations at the police station	69	75	—	42
Offering moral justifications and excuses	73	67	34	13
Appeals to the suspect's self-interests	69	54	88	11
Implying or pretending to have independent evidence of guilt	59	56	—	7
Make suspect take polygraph then tell him he failed it	35	38	—	3
Show photographs of crime scene/victim	24	34	—	3
Use of praise or flattery	35	18	30	—
Interrupting the suspect's denials and objections	27	23	13	—
Touching the suspect in a friendly manner	28	5	11	—
Conducting interrogations in the field	11	23	—	—

A MANCOVA was performed to assess mean differences in respondents' scores between groups on the four factors. Previous research has indicated that age and gender are significantly related to interrogation styles (Culhane et al 2008). Bivariate correlations indicated significant relationships among age but not gender to factors one ( $r=-.173, p=.05$ ) and four ( $r=.21, p=.02$ ). Therefore, age was entered as a control variable. The results indicated a significant multivariate relationship between groups and the four factors ( $F=3.97$ , Pillai's Trace=.111,  $p=.005$ ). Additionally, there were significant differences between homicide and the control group on factors one, "passive techniques" ( $F=4.37, p=.04$ ) and two, "mixed method" ( $F=8.69, p=.003$ ). No significant differences existed between groups on factors three, "strategic-evidence disclosure method" and four, "aggressive tactics."

Several regression models were formed to examine the relationship among individual differences in participant's characteristics and each style of interrogation. Five predictor variables comprised the models: (a) whether the officer primarily conducted homicide or other types of investigations (*homicide*), (b) the type of

interrogation/interview the officer is most likely to conduct, e.g., custodial or noncustodial (*Miranda*), (c) the officer's confidence in lie detection accuracy (*confidence*), (d) the number of interrogations conducted by the officer during his/her career (*interrogations*), and (e) the number of years the officer served as a police officer (*experience*).

Results from the regression analyses enhance previous research on the relationship among individual factors and interrogation styles (e.g., Culhane et al, 2008; Kassin et al, 2007). When differences among crime types and interrogation format were accounted for, a different picture emerged. It had been predicted that homicide investigators would be more likely to employ passive interrogation techniques and less likely to use aggressive tactics. This prediction was partially correct. Homicide detectives were significantly more likely to use passive tactics such as “rapport building, praise and flattery, and appeals to self-interests,” ( $r=.18$ ) and significantly less likely to conduct informal or “noncustodial” interrogations ( $r=-.26$ ). An interesting finding was that interrogation format did not vary with group membership across any of the interrogation factors.

It was also expected that officers would be more likely to favor aggressive tactics in the presence of *Miranda* in contrast to noncustodial interrogations. As predicted, participants perceived aggressive tactics to be more effective during a Mirandized interrogation as opposed to a noncustodial one ( $r=.22$ ). Results also indicated that interrogations involving strategic disclosure of the evidence frequently involve noncustodial interrogations ( $r=-.17$ ). This finding possibly represents more serious investigations involving complex evidence, which are more time consuming in nature. Inferentially, this data shows that this style of interrogation involves noncustodial interviews that later develop into formal interrogations at the police station.

These results were also interesting with respect to the individual characteristics of participants. More experienced officers were significantly *less* likely to favor “passive tactics” and “mixed methods” of interrogation. Although failing to reach acceptable significance levels, more experienced officers showed strong support for aggressive tactics. In terms of self-confidence in one's lie-detection ability, participants were significantly more likely to favor passive techniques and a mixture of noncustodial and custodial methods. The number of interrogations an officer had conducted, however, was not significantly related to any of the four dimensions of interrogation.

## Discussion

Numerous studies have confirmed the importance of police discretion and behavior (Mastrofski, Ritti, & Snipes, 1994). The results of this study confirm that police routinely exercise discretion in the selection of interrogation strategies. This research compared the views of homicide investigators to other law enforcement investigators and decisions regarding *Miranda* to various typologies of interrogation. Ultimately, these findings provided support for past research and shed light on new information advancing our knowledge of interrogation practices.

Obtaining confessions and closing cases is a primary measure of investigative productivity for police detectives (Simon, 1991). However, it appears that law enforcement interrogators are not completely opposed to practices such as “interrogation outside *Miranda*” (Leo & White, 1999). Further support for this finding is demonstrated by the fact that almost half of the participants reported that they conducted custodial and noncustodial interrogations equally as often. This result suggests that police have sufficiently adapted to *Miranda* (Leo & White, 1999). The difference in opinions toward *Miranda* policies may also be a result of the fact that most of our participants were from much smaller agencies, which may be less likely to receive regular communication about policy changes established through case law (Weisselberg, 1998). A consequence is that officers themselves determine how rights are applied (Urbonya, 2003).

Studies have produced a wide range of results on the issue of lie detection ability. Bond and DePaulo (2006) indicated that rates vary between 47% and 61% across studies, but much of this research has taken place in clinical settings as opposed to practical conditions that represent actual police interrogations. For example, research shows that accuracy rates increase when training (Inbau et al., 2001) and evidence disclosure strategies (Hartwig et al., 2006) are employed. The above participants reported a lie-detection rate of 75%, a finding that closely parallels Kassin et al (2007) with a reported finding of a 77% accuracy rate. Therefore, the above results suggest that police believe they are more accurate in discerning liars from those telling the truth than previous evidence would suggest, and that they routinely employ evidence disclosure strategies as a means to achieve this end.

This finding confirms previous research indicating that police interrogators routinely endorse those techniques that are most likely to be viewed as favorable by the courts (Culhane, Hosch, & Heck, 2008).

However, it is important to note that psychological research has consistently demonstrated that opinions and actual behavior are often very dissimilar (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Nevertheless, future research should focus on the extent and impact of false admissions, as it appears that such statements are fairly common.

The above study provides ideas for new avenues of research, but it is not without limitations. First, although the sample was derived from a random sample of law enforcement agencies within Texas, volunteers within these agencies were relied upon to gather the data. Second, research confirms that people are mediocre at estimating frequencies of behaviors, as memory decay affects the accuracy of this information (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000).

Despite the underlying limitations to a study such as this one, it is worth noting that many of the results closely parallel findings from previous research. For example, the above participants reported a lie-detection ability of 75%, which is comparable to the 77% accuracy rate reported in Kassin et al (2007) in their national study. And when the *ranked order* of commonly used interrogation techniques was compared to previous research (Leo, 1996; Kassin, et al., 2007), the results were quite similar.

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