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IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES OF DECEIVERS AND HONEST REPORTERS IN AN INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEW

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Abstract

Understanding the subjective experience of respondents attempting to convince an investigator will enhance our theoretical knowledge of deception and improve assessment techniques. Discrepancies between respondents' understanding and actual credibility criteria are especially important. Sixty-six participants engaged in a small crime, and were interviewed following a week's preparation. All were provided incentive for convincing the interviewer of the veracity of their statement. Thirty-two were honestly reporting the theft, and thirty-four were responding to avoid being found guilty. After a Reality Interview (a derivative of the Cognitive Interview), participants were asked to describe what was important in convincing the interviewer through open-ended and Likert-type questions. These strategies of impression management are presented here. The basic task of convincing appeared similar for both groups, with participants focused on providing clear and careful stories without contradictions rather than attempting to provide vivid and spontaneously-constructed statements. Deceivers attached more importance to: 1) preparing in advance, 2) monitoring and controlling information, and 3) maintaining eye contact. Honest respondents were more concerned with providing correct peripheral detail. Importantly, both groups were reporting much more similarity than difference, and the strategies described are not likely to succeed against verbal content analysis.

Keywords: deception, interrogation, testimony, verbal communication, credibility.

Resumen

La comprensión de la experiencia subjetiva de los que intentan convencer a un investigador mejorará el conocimiento teórico del engaño y robustecerá las técnicas de evaluación. Las discrepancias de los informes de los sujetos y los criterios de credibilidad reales son especialmente relevantes. Setenta y dos participantes, a los que se les pidió que cometieran un pequeño delito simulado, fueron entrevistados aproximadamente una semana después de éste. Todos fueron motivados con incentivos para que convencieran al entrevistador de la veracidad de su declaración. A treinta y dos se les solicitó que informaran con honestidad del robo, y a treinta y cuatro que respondieran de modo que no fueran considerados culpables. Después de una Entrevista de Realidad (una derivación de la Entrevista Cognitiva), se le pidió a los participantes que describieran en un formato de respuesta tipo Likert y en una entrevista abierta cuáles eran las claves para convencer al entrevistador. Las estrategias de gestión de la impresión resultaron similares para ambos grupos. Los participantes se centraron en la prestación de historias claras y cuidadosas, y sin contradicciones, en lugar de tratar de proporcionar declaraciones construidas espontáneamente y con viveza. Los mentirosos conferían más importancia a: 1) la preparación anticipada, 2) el seguimiento y control de la información, y 3) el mantenimiento del contacto visual. Los honestos mostraban más interés en aportar más información periférica correcta. Es importante destacar que ambos grupos mostraron más similitudes que diferencias y que sus estrategias es probable que no resulten eficaces frente al análisis de contenido verbal.

Palabras clave: mentira, interrogatorio, testimonio, comunicación verbal, credibilidad.

Introduction

Significant research attention has been given to objective indicators of deception within investigative contexts. In contrast, less attention has been given to the ways in which people attempt to convince interviewers and to appear credible. By investigating such impression management, we can understand better the intentions and allocation of effort of respondents as they attempt to convince investigators. Of special interest are the discrepancies between perceived and actual indicators of deception, as well as the common assumptions shared by honest and deceptive respondents concerning how to convince an interviewer. This knowledge will allow investigators to refine existing interviewing and detection strategies by focusing attention on indicators that deceivers do not manipulate directly or manipulate erroneously as a result of impression management efforts.

Objective indicators of deception

Memory and credibility

The longest standing and most researched memory-based system of credibility assessment is Criteria-Based Content Analysis (CBCA; see Vrij & Mann, 2006, and Colwell, Hiscock-Anisman, Memon, Rachel, & Colwell, 2007, for reviews). Two CBCA criteria, Unstructured Production (or Spontaneous Reproduction) and Quantity of Details (or Sufficient Detail) have been promising in differentiating honest from deceptive statements. These criteria together posit that statements derived from genuine memory differ in amount and distribution of detail content. In short, genuine memories for external events are more detailed and follow a less rigid, more spontaneous structure than memories derived from imagination or fabrication.

Another line of research that attempts to determine whether a memory is derived from genuine experience (i.e., externally) versus imagination or fabrication (i.e., internally) is Reality Monitoring (RM; Johnson, 1988; Johnson & Raye, 1981). Like CBCA, RM decisions often are made from both the amount and type of details in a statement. Internally generated memories are said to contain less detail and spontaneity. Instead, the respondent gives details of imagination and fabrication derived from his or

her cognitive processes, emotions, and personal history. On the contrary, externally generated memories come from personal experience and are more likely to contain contextual details (e.g., temporal and spatial relationships) and external-sensorial details (e.g., colors, smells, tastes). Thus, according to RM, genuine memories contain more details and greater vividness.

Interpersonal deception

Research into interpersonal deception has focused on the need to balance disclosure with withholding potentially incriminating information, as well as the cognitive effort or “load” associated with these demands (Colwell, Hiscock, & Memon, 2002; Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell, Hiscock-Anisman, Memon, Taylor, & Prewett, 2008; McCornack, 1992; see also Vrij, 2006, for a recent review). This research has shown that lying is more cognitively demanding than honest reporting, and that liars work harder to control their speech (Colwell et al., 2008; Vrij, 2006). As a result, deceptive responses regarding performed or witnessed events obtained through investigative interviews are generally shorter and have less supporting detail than do true responses given in the same circumstances (Colwell et al., 2002; Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell et al., 2008). Research has shown that these findings are consistent with Information Manipulation Theory, which describes deception as a balance between disclosing enough information to satisfy the interrogator or interviewer while protecting and hiding any information that could betray deception (McCornack, 1992). Thus, in order to deceive the responses must be short, well-phrased, scripted, and controlled. The deceiver must supply enough information to satisfy the interrogator but must be careful not to give damaging information or anything that would lead to suspicion (e.g., sensitive information, contradictions in one’s story).

Recent developments

Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception (ACID). Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception (ACID; Colwell et al., 2008) is a system of credibility and research assessment that combines select criteria of CBCA, RM, and theories of interpersonal deception with careful investigative interviewing designed to maximize differences between honest and deceptive responding. This system takes advantage of the fact that deceivers consciously create a lie script in order to minimize their anxiety and to maximize their ability to control information (Porter & Yuille, 1996). Thus, the

interview situation is systematically different for honest and deceptive respondents. Honest respondents are free to access their memory for the target event. In contrast, deceivers are trying not to access the target event and instead must think about their carefully created and well-phrased script (Colwell et al., 2002; Colwell et al., 2008).

The ACID system integrates previous research in credibility assessment and detecting deception with an investigative interview that aims to maximize differences between true and fabricated accounts. It begins with the Reality Interview, which uses specific strategies designed to increase cognitive effort, to highlight attempts at impression management, and to force deceivers to shift their attention between their lie script and their memory for the target event (see Colwell et al., 2008, for a detailed description). The statement analysis portion combines the above-mentioned variables from CBCA and RM in order to measure the constructs of vividness and spontaneity (Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell et al., 2008). Vividness refers to honest statements being longer and more detailed, with more of this detail related to externally-derived sensory experiences, temporal and spatial context, and the affective reactions of the respondent during the target event (Ansarra, Colwell, Hiscock-Anisman, Hines, Cole, & Kondor; 2009). Spontaneity refers to honest reporters benefitting more from the recall enhancement effects of mnemonics and multiple recall attempts of the Reality Interview. The automatic processes of priming and spreading activation result in additional details being recalled with each attempt following the initial description of the event. Therefore, these differences between honest and deceptive reporters are exacerbated by specific interviewing strategies that are designed to facilitate recall for honest respondents while increasing the effort and need for impression management required for deceptive respondents (Colwell et al., 2002; Colwell et al., 2008).

Strategic Use of Evidence (SUE). Another promising recent technique is the Strategic Use of Evidence (SUE; Hartwig, Granhag, Stromwall, & Kronkvist, 2006). SUE focuses on careful disclosure of evidence at opportune moments during an investigative interview. The goal is to heighten anxiety and the amount of cognitive effort required by deceivers in order to magnify differences between honest and deceptive reporters. Additionally, this technique may be successful in persuading investigators not to present all of their existing evidence at the outset of an interview in order to persuade or to coerce a confession. This could result in a conceptual shift toward investigative interviewing rather than interrogation and may, therefore, reduce false confessions and convictions.

Finally, the Global Evaluation System (GES; Arce & Farina, 2005), is a proposed mechanism to integrate content analysis with other sources of evidence that are often available to the legal system. GES attempts to integrate traditional evidence with indicators of statement reliability and validity such as CBCA. Importantly, GES pays close attention to the type of interview used to elicit each statement. GES is capable of standing as is. Moreover, the techniques described above could be integrated into the GES framework to augment the interviewing and statement analysis components.

Subjective strategies of impression management and deception

To date, two major studies have looked into subjective strategies of impression management and deception. The first of these asked students to provide honest or deceptive statements during an investigative interview regarding the theft of a test (Colwell, Hiscock-Anisman, Memon, Woods, & Michlik, 2006). In this scenario, students were asked to provide statements that were helpful and convincing, with half of the students responding honestly and half to avoid implication of guilt for the theft they had committed. In describing what they thought was important in convincing their interviewer, most of these students either did not mention statement detail content in any way, or the mistakenly stated that a convincing statement should not be too detailed. Providing a large number of details was viewed as increasing the chance of providing contradictory information or accidentally disclosing something sensitive, which could lead to detection. Additionally, deceivers often stated that providing a highly detailed statement made one look overly ingratiating and suspicious. Participants most were most likely to report consistency and clarity as the most important factors in providing a convincing statement.

In the second study (Hartwig, Granhag, Stromwall, & Doering, 2009), participants were given time to prepare for an investigative interview when being blamed with a small crime. Deceivers were more likely than honest participants to report conscious strategies to control information released from episodic memory. Both honest and deceptive participants were concerned with reducing overt behaviors related to appearing guilty. However, these overt behaviors were generally nonverbal, or were aimed at verbal consistency.

Two common themes have resulted from these studies. The first is that deceivers attempt to control their verbal behavior in order to avoid contradictions, mistakes, or

any admission that they could be mistaken. Respondents, in general, and deceivers, in particular, are more concerned with these things than with providing complete, detailed, or spontaneous accounts (Colwell et al., 2006). The second theme deals with nonverbal behavior. Respondents focus a portion of their attention and effort on appearing calm or relaxed or on attempting to make eye contact (Colwell et al., 2006; Hartwig et al., 2009). To the extent that respondents focus on these behaviors, their increased effort is not likely to improve their apparent credibility.

Conclusions and rationale for present study

Recent research in credibility assessment has shown that honest reporting can be discriminated from deception in laboratory settings through analysis of the amount, type, and distribution of statement detail content. Participants have focused on avoiding inconsistency, careful release of information, and regulating their nonverbal behavior to appear honest and convincing. The present study hopes to augment that information by providing additional insight into the manner in which people attempt to be convincing in a situation that mirrors a genuine investigation as much as possible. It is important to learn of the assumptions of respondents and how they allocated their effort in the interview and impression management setting. If respondents focus their efforts on erroneous tactics, due to mistaken assumptions regarding how to convince an interviewer, then objective verbal content analysis is likely to experience continued success. Importantly, if respondents are focusing on erroneous or ineffective strategies, the things such as motivation and time to plan are not likely to help them to be convincing. Thus, this research can provide insight into the basic process of impression management and deception, and can give an indication of the real world applicability of credibility assessment procedures.

Method

Participants

Sixty-six undergraduate university students, aged 19 to 36 years ($M= 23.3$; $SD= 1.7$) participated in this study. Forty-five (68%) of the participants were female, and 21 (32%) were male. The self-reported ethnicity of the students was as follows: 60% Caucasian, 23% African American, 14% Asian, and 3% American Indian or Pacific

Islander. Students participated in the study as partial credit for an Introductory Psychology course.

Design and procedure

Participants were met by a Research Assistant (RA) who described the study and obtained informed consent. Participants were told that they would have to sneak into a classroom, avoid detection while stealing a small tennis ball, and later provide either an honest or a deceptive statement in a mock investigation. The participant was then required to sneak into an empty classroom and search for a hidden tennis ball. All participants were told prior to leaving the experiment whether they would have to provide an honest or deceptive account at the subsequent interview. Thirty-two participants were told that they would be required to report honestly about their theft, and 34 participants were told that they would need to distort their statements to avoid any blame for the stolen ball.

Participants also were instructed that they could earn up to \$27.00 and two hours of research credit for their Introductory Psychology course by: (a) finding the tennis ball without being seen in the room by another RA who checked the room and reset a loud timer approximately every 15 minutes (worth \$2.00 and one research credit), and (b) convincing an interviewer of their honesty at the subsequent investigative interview (worth \$5.00 and an additional research credit). In addition, participants were instructed that the “two best statements” would each win \$20.00. In reality, all participants received \$7.00 and two research credits for participating. The two \$20.00 prizes were chosen randomly.

Participants returned after an average of 5.5 days ($SD= 2.1$) for the investigative interview. Honest participants were instructed to answer “as completely and convincingly as possible.” Deceptive participants were instructed to “distort their testimony to avoid any blame for the theft of the tennis ball.” The investigative interview followed the format of the Reality Interview, a scripted derivative of the original Cognitive Interview modified to aid in detecting deception (Colwell et al., 2002; Colwell et al., 2008; Geiselman & Fisher, 1989).

Likert-type ratings

Upon completion of the interview, each participant was given a piece of paper and instructed, “Describe the things that you thought were important in order for your

story to be convincing.” Participants then completed several Likert-type ratings describing the importance of various strategies in telling a convincing story, including story coherence, amount of detail, impression management, appearance while reporting, and mental preparation. The specific questions used are present in Table 1. These Likert-type scales have been used to assess theoretical aspects of deception in numerous studies (e.g., Colwell et al., 2006; Colwell et al., 2007; Ansarra et al., 2009).

Table 1. Likert-type Rating Scales.

1. <u>Coherence</u> - telling a story that was consistent and did not contradict itself.						
<i>Not important</i>			<i>Sort of important</i>			<i>Very important</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. <u>Amount of detail to look convincing:</u>						
<i>Small</i>			<i>Medium</i>			<i>Large</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. <u>How important was it for you to prepare a mental version of your account prior to the interview?</u>						
<i>Not important</i>			<i>Somewhat important</i>			<i>Very important</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Coding of responses

Participants’ open-ended descriptions of the strategies they used in order to be convincing first were analyzed in a qualitative manner by the first and second authors. If both authors agreed that a strategy was present in even one description, then that strategy was included for coding in the study. Fourteen strategies described in previous research (Colwell et al., 2006) served as the basis for this initial review. The two authors were specifically looking for these previous strategies, and “any new strategy types necessary to code ALL of the open-ended descriptions provided”. The strategy “Appear willing to help,” reported in previous research, was not reported by the participants in this study; therefore, this strategy was eliminated. In contrast, two new strategies were reported by the current study’s participants: “Include your thoughts and emotions in the description to appear honest” and “You have to believe yourself when you tell the story to appear honest.” Two of the strategies coded were based on the absence of specific information, specifically, the absence of any mention of statement detail (one of the original 14 strategies) and the absence of any specific relationship of

statement detail to credibility (new to the current study). This resulted in 16 total strategies, which are described in Table 1. Once all strategies were identified, the first and second authors selected prototypical statements from the open-ended descriptions that best represented each strategy.

Training of raters

Four Research Assistants (RAs) were trained by the second author as coders. Training consisted of teaching the operational definitions of the strategies and providing the prototypical statements. Next, the four RAs each classified the strategies of deception described by six of the participants. The four raters, along with the first and second authors, worked as a group until consensus was reached on each of these strategy descriptions and correct placement of each response in a specific category. This resulted in 1.0 proportion agreement between the 4 raters on the strategies provided in the open-ended descriptions from these 6 participants.

To code the data, each of the remaining 66 open-ended descriptions was read by the four RAs, in counterbalanced order. Each RA coded the strategies described by each participant. RA1 began with participant 1 and progressed in ascending order. RA2 began with participant 66 and progressed in descending order. RA3 began with participant 33 and progressed in ascending order (33-66 then 1-32). RA4 Began with participant 32 and progressed in descending order (32-1 then 66-33). Each rater coded a “0” if they did not believe the strategy was described, and they coded a “1” if they did believe the strategy was described. If three of the four RAs agreed on a particular strategy’s presence in a participant’s open-ended description, that strategy was scored as present in that particular description. In other words, there was a minimum proportion agreement of .75 among the 4 raters in order for a strategy to be considered “present” in any particular open-ended description. The proportion agreement among the 4 raters for each strategy is presented in Table 2.

Results

Manipulation checks and reliability

Each transcript was read and checked against experimental condition to make certain that instructions were followed. This verified that all participants had responded in the appropriate manner.

Table 2. Strategies of Impression Management for Honest and Deceptive Participants.

Strategy (Proportion agreement among raters)	Honest %	Deceptive %	<i>t</i>	Prototypical Statement &
Details not mentioned (.88)	26	13	1.43*	N/A
Details mentioned, direction/amount not specified (.79)	15	21	0.75	N/A
Complete detail (.96)	29	41	-0.95	“Tell as much detail that you can recall.”
Minimal detail (.94)	29	28	0.11	“Details have to be kept to a minimum so that if the story needed to be repeated there would be less room for error.” “Giving too much detail makes you look like you have something to hide.”
Appear calm/confident (1.0)	26	31	-0.42	“Talk at a conversational pace, and be relatively calm.”
Coherent and consistent (.92)	26	19	0.74	“Explain everything the same way even if asked the same question again.”
Thoughts and emotions (.81)	18	13	0.58	“Tell Interviewer what you were feeling.”

Table 2 (cont). Strategies of Impression Management for Honest and Deceptive Participants.

Strategy	Honest %	Deceptive %	<i>t</i>	Prototypical Statement
Eye contact (1.0)	3	22	-2.40**	“Maintain eye contact.”
Accurate (.95)	12	13	-0.09	“Don’t make any mistakes so they don’t know your story is [dishonest].”
Convincing/plausible (.82)	9	3	0.96	“Tell a story that could have really happened.”
Believe it yourself (1.0)	9	3	0.96	“Convince yourself that the story can take place.”
Spontaneous (credible) (.90)	3	3	-0.04	“Honest stories can change a bit over time so it is important to remember and tell as much as possible throughout the interview.”
Spontaneous (not credible) (.96)	3	3	-0.04	“Don’t add or change anything, because that gives the interviewer a reason to question your story.”
Admit Uncertainty (.77)	1.5	3	.97	“Tell interviewer if not certain about details.”

Note: * $p < .05$, one-tailed; ** $p < .05$, two-tailed.

Likert-type ratings

Overall, the highest-rated strategy was “Telling a story that is consistent and does not contradict itself” ($M= 5.6$; $SD= 1.1$). Interestingly, this strategy was rated as more important by deceivers ($M= 5.9$; $SD= 0.9$) than by honest reporters ($M= 5.2$; $SD= 1.2$), $t(64)= 2.8$; $p < .05$; $d= 0.6$). There was no significant difference between honest ($M= 4.3$; $SD= 0.3$) and deceptive respondents ($M= 4.1$, $SD= 0.4$) in the ratings of the amount of detail required to be convincing, $t(64)= 0.25$; $p > .05$, with both groups rating this strategy as moderately important. The strategy with the largest difference between honest reporters and deceivers was “Mentally prepare and rehearse your statement,”

with this strategy being rated as more important by deceptive ($M= 5.8$; $SD = 0.9$) than by honest respondents ($M= 3.6$; $SD= 1.4$), $t(64)= 3.4$; $p< .05$; $d = 1.7$.

Open-ended descriptions

Table 2 contains the 16 strategies that emerged in this study, the proportion agreement among the 4 raters, the proportion of honest and deceptive participants that used each strategy, the t value for differences between groups, and the two-tailed level of significance for these group differences. The first pattern that emerged from this data was the remarkable similarity between the honest and deceptive groups. Honest and deceptive descriptions did not differ in their rate of reporting 13 of the 16 behaviors considered in this study (see Table 2). Most of the behaviors were described in similar rates by each group, indicating the common task of being convincing that was faced by all participants.

Statement Detail Content. More than 80% of the sample mentioned the importance of statement detail content in some manner, with the majority commenting on the amount of detail in some way. However, of those who specified a relationship between the amount of detail and credibility, the sample was split between those who thought that maximal detail was indicative of credibility (35.0%) and those who thought that intermediate to minimal detail was indicative of credibility (28.5%). The former group stated or implied that a convincing statement should contain as much detail as possible, whereas the majority of the latter group stated or implied that maximal detail would not be convincing because it would seem as though the participant was trying to hide something. Eighteen percent of the participants mentioned detail content as important, but did not specify any relationship between the amount of detail and credibility. A small proportion of participants also stated what types of detail should be included to appear credible. For example, they indicated that it was important to include thoughts and emotions to appear credible (16.5%) and to give information about peripheral as well as central details (12.0%). The remaining 18.5% of the sample did not mention statement detail content in any way.

Impression Management. A second set of strategies dealt with manner of presentation. Things mentioned included appearing calm and confident (28.5%), not making mistakes (22.5%), and being accurate (12.5%). Also mentioned were making eye contact (12.5%), tone of voice (11.0%), believe it yourself (6.0%), and admitting uncertainty (1.5%).

Honesty versus Deception. Honest participants were more likely to not mention tracking or controlling statement detail content in any way when compared to deceptive participants. Also, honest participants were more likely to mention the need to provide honest descriptions of peripheral details. Finally, deceptive participants were more likely to mention the need to make eye contact than were honest participants. As a whole, honest participants were more less concerned with tracking detail content and more free to present details. Deceivers were more concerned with controlling or tracking detail content and with giving the appearance of being honest.

Discussion

Nature of interaction

Participants in the current study were exposed to a situation that was not unlike a typical criminal investigation. Both honest and deceptive respondents had to commit a transgression without being seen by an eyewitness. Both had to convince an interviewer of their honesty in order to obtain promised incentives. That is, each had to be concerned about their style of presentation during the interview. Both had one week to plan how to provide a convincing statement, else they would lose their promised rewards. Therefore, this study attempted to create mild anxiety during a theft, gave participants time to plan their strategies for telling a convincing story, and provided incentives for being convincing, all of which are present in the typical criminal investigation, whether the person involved is guilty or innocent.

Likert-type ratings

This study supported one of the basic assumptions underlying the ACID technique – deceivers attempt to avoid contradictions or releasing sensitive information by preparing and rehearsing a fictitious account of the event prior to being interviewed. This is a mechanism to reduce anxiety and minimize the cognitive effort required during deception. The idea is that the deceiver will answer questions based upon their script rather than their genuine memory for the event, to avoid mistakes or sensitive information. This strategy of deception has been referred to as superficial encoding (Colwell et al., 2002; Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell et al., 2008; Porter & Yuille, 1996). Because of this, the ACID procedure employs an interview (Reality Interview) derived

from the original Cognitive Interview, but modified to increase cognitive effort and highlight attempts at impression management. The RI uses multiple recall tasks, mnemonics, reverse-order recall, and unanticipated questions that force the participant to draw an inference. The forced-choice inferences cause a deceiver to have to think outside of their planned lie script, and hopefully increase cognitive effort and anxiety (Colwell et al., 2002; Colwell et al., 2008). In support of this, it has been demonstrated that reverse-order recall increases cognitive load, and that reverse-order recall and unanticipated questions can facilitate the detection of deception in research conducted independently of the RI (Vrij, Granhag, Mann, Fisher, Hillman, & Sperry, 2009).

This preparation and reliance on a rehearsed script could also make deceivers vulnerable to application of the SUE technique. In those cases where investigators have information that is outside of or in contradiction to the information provided as part of a lie script, SUE would highlight the deception. Ideally, an investigator would be able to withhold certain evidence until the participant/suspect had provided their careful lie script. Then, the investigator would confront the suspect with the evidence that brings this script into question.

Statement detail content

These findings correspond with previous research on CBCA criteria and RM decisions. One of the CBCA criteria, Quantity of Details (or Sufficient Detail), states genuine memories will contain more details than fabricated memories (Vrij 2006 & Colwell, 2007). RM research also reveals that internally generated memories will contain less detail as opposed to genuine memories (Johnson, 1988; Johnson and Raye, 1981). Similarly, the ACID system, which is partially derivative of CBCA, posits that honest statements will be more vivid (longer and richer in detail) than deceptive statements (Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell et al., 2008).

Impression management

This set of strategies relates to prior research on Information Manipulation Theory, as the deceiver tries to control both their speech and presentation in order to not give damaging information (McCornack, 1992). Participants attempted to control their presentation to avoid drawing attention to themselves. They reported concerns with the quality and quantity of information presented, as well as the manner in which they presented the information. This led to tracking of the quantity of details by many, along

with an attempt to be clear and coherent. Related, participants described attempting to appear calm and confident and making good eye contact.

Honesty versus deception

In general, there were few differences between honest and deceptive respondents in terms of the strategies employed to appear convincing. Deceivers were more concerned with not drawing attention to themselves by making obvious mistakes, with not disclosing sensitive detail, and with not looking guilty. Honest participants were twice as likely not to mention detail content, whereas deceptive participants were more intent on monitoring detail content in general. This was supported by the findings from the rating scales. Deceptive participants were more concerned with making contradictions than were honest respondents, and they were more likely than honest respondents to prepare and to rehearse their story prior to the interview. These findings are consistent with Hartwig et al.'s (2009) finding that deceivers are more likely to plan and to monitor verbal content than are honest respondents. Thus, a plausible inference is that deceivers prepare a lie script in order to avoid an incoherent story and to facilitate the control of information (Colwell et al., 2008).

The increased monitoring of statement detail content by deceivers is not seen as an attempt to provide as much detail as possible but rather to make as few mistakes as possible and not to draw attention or disclose sensitive information. Consistent with this, deceivers were much more likely than honest participants to mention the need for making eye contact. Also, honest reporters were more likely to mention the need for honestly reporting peripheral details. These findings are consistent with previous research, indicating that respondents are concerned with avoiding contradictions, accidental disclosure of sensitive information, or with behaviors that make them look suspicious. Respondents are relatively less concerned with providing a highly detailed statement, and very few are trying to make certain that their statement increases in detail content with multiple recall tasks (Colwell et al., 2006).

Comparison to verbal credibility assessment

If the strategies mentioned in this research are consistent with actual performance in interviews, they do not bode well for the ability of deceivers to escape detection through current credibility assessment techniques. Sixty-five percent of participants did not mention the need to provide maximal detail in order to appear

credible. Similarly, only 3% of participants mentioned that the spontaneous addition of detail would make their story appear more credible. Therefore, it appears that the variables that are actually indicative of credibility are not consistent with people's perceptions about how to appear credible. This discrepancy between objective and subjective indicators is significant, because this means that planning and motivation are not likely to improve interview performance. If respondents are focused on the wrong criteria (or the right criteria but in the wrong direction), then their efforts at planning and practicing will not enable them to escape detection. In fact, the statements given during this study were transcribed and analyzed per the ACID criteria, and 80% were correctly classified as honest or deceptive (Ansarra, et al., 2009).

Conclusions

In conclusion, both honest respondents and deceivers have similar (but not identical) ideas regarding how to be convincing. However, these ideas are not consistent with the behaviors targeted by recent systems of verbal credibility assessment. Therefore, the effort that is expended on behalf of deceivers who are trying to convince is not likely to thwart credibility assessment. Furthermore, the objective indicators that distinguish truth from deception are based on automatic memory processes that are elicited naturally by certain interview strategies. As such, to the extent that deceivers focus their efforts on the wrong behaviors, and to the extent that credibility assessment methods can maximize naturally occurring differences between honest and deceptive reporters, investigators will be more successful at discerning truth from deception. Therefore, the findings of this study demonstrate the need for continued research into both objective and subjective indicators of deception. Future investigators and practitioners will need to consider how to combine credibility assessment variables with optimal forensic interviewing, and continue to develop and refine approaches such as the GES that integrate interviewing and credibility data with other sources of evidence from the judicial process.

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