

Exploring Investigative Interviewing: a Dubai Perspective

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He has been an invited speaker at a variety of meetings around the world. In recognition of the quality and extent of his research publications he was in 1995 awarded a higher doctorate (Doctor of Science).

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In accordance with Taylor & Francis policy and my ethical obligation as a researcher, I am reporting that I receive funding from Dubai Police HQ, an institution that may be affected by the research reported in the enclosed paper. I have disclosed those interests fully to Taylor & Francis, and I have in place an approved plan for managing any potential conflicts arising from that involvement.

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author, RA and upon subsequent confirmation of no objection from the Dubai Police HQ. The data are not publicly available due to their containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants and restrictions on sharing the data put in place by the Dubai Police HQ.

Exploring Investigative Interviewing: a Dubai Perspective

Dubai has been developing at an astonishing rate during the past 25 years. This development has been witnessed in most aspects of life, including policing. However, the Dubai Police Force is yet to have a National Standard protocol for the forensic interviewing of individuals involved in major crimes. Findings from studies conducted in other parts of the world may not be generalizable to Dubai due to differences in law, policy, and culture. The Dubai Police granted the research team unparalleled access to conduct this study. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with police officers involved in interviewing individuals in major crime. The analysis showed that cultural barriers are still present for officers in interviewing individuals in major crimes. The paper concludes by suggesting that officers seem to understand the basic foundations for an evidence-based approach but that more needs to be done to standardise training and interview protocols.

Keywords: investigative interviewing; major crime; Dubai police

1. Introduction

Once a crime has been committed and reported, one of the main tasks of the police is to gather relevant information (Milne & Bull, 1999). An essential source for gathering such information is the investigative (or law enforcement) interview (Milne & Powell, 2010). Gudjonsson and Pearse (2011) noted that in the interest of fairness and justice, information gathered by the police has to be accurate, intelligible, coherent, and credible; whilst being obtained fairly and legally. This is especially true for sex crimes (one of the main crime types designated as ‘major crime’ in Dubai), where it is often a ‘word versus word’ challenge between the alleged victim and the alleged suspect (Kebbell, Hurren, & Mazerolle, 2006). Suspects in sex crimes may also be more likely to deny their involvement due to perceived social condemnation (Thomas, 2002; Ward, Hudson, Johnston, & Marshall, 1997) which may add a layer of complexity to the interview process. This is particularly true in socially conservative countries, like the UAE.

Studies examining police interviewing have been mainly conducted in English-speaking and European countries (Baldwin, 1992; Clarke & Milne, 2001; Häkkinen, Ask, Kebbell, Alison, & Granhag, 2009; Kassin, Goldstein, & Stavitsky, 2003; Kassin, Leo, Meissner, Richman, Colwell, Leach, & La Fon, 2007; Read, Powell, Kebbell,

Milne, & Steinberg 2014; Vanderhallen, Vervaeke, & Holmberg, 2011; Volbert & Baker, 2016; Walsh & Bull, 2015; Westera, Kebbell, & Milne, 2016) or in Far East Asia (Wachi, Watanabe, Yokota, Otsuka, Kuraish, & Lamb, 2014; Goodman-De-lahunty, 2016). The findings from these studies may not be entirely generalizable to countries whose culture and policing practices differ. For example, the police in the UAE (and Dubai) are tasked with taking statements only and cannot confront suspects with evidence, as this is part of the Public Prosecution's mandate.

This study therefore examined Dubai police officers' perceptions of interviewing individuals in major crime. This article starts with a brief overview of Dubai, its police force and interviewing laws before moving on to describe the method, results and discussion.

2. Dubai: an Overview

Since the discovery of oil in 1966, Dubai has evolved from a quiet fishing village to an international city (Hirst, 2001). The Emirate (i.e. state), the second largest of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has experienced great economic growth and accelerated urbanisation which turned a village of the desert into a city that is home to a multitude of residential, commercial, sport, medical, and tourism projects (Nassar, Blackburn, & Whyatt, 2014). The scale of these massive development projects is evidenced by the estimate that a quarter of the world's cranes operate in Dubai (Badouri, 2007). More than 2.7 million people now live in Dubai, with around four million being in the city during working hours (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2016). Dubai's population consists of 200 different nationalities, each of which may have its own cultural traditions. It is estimated that there are nearly 100 different languages spoken in Dubai (Khalfan,

2007). The local population may seem conservative to Western audiences, but are considered moderate within the region. However, some issues like sex are still considered taboo.

Unlike cities such as New York, London, Paris, or Zurich that have been gradually shaped and developed, Dubai can be considered an ‘instant city’ (Davis, 2007; Junemo, 2004). A city that has evolved as a result of extremely fast urbanism and global flow (Acuto, 2010; Bagaen, 2007). This rapid growth in both economy and population, means that the government has identified certain areas for improvement, including how to police people from all walks of life. The Dubai Government has embraced its cosmopolitan composition and seems intent to be as accommodating as possible. This has accelerated the Government’s efforts to modernise its institutions, including its police force, especially as it regards itself as a model for development in the region.

2.1. Dubai Police

The Dubai police force can be considered the most progressive police force in the region (Chu & Abdulla, 2014). The force has been known to introduce the latest scientific and technological developments. For example, it is the first Arabic police organisation to introduce electronic finger printing and DNA testing (Chu & Abdulla, 2014). Despite such advancements, maintaining security in a city with rapid population growth (nearly 6% annually) and economic growth (5% average annually) is challenging (Chu & Abdulla, 2014). Whereas applying scientific knowledge in the areas of the ‘hard sciences’ and technology (e.g. DNA and electronic finger printing) may well be easily transferable between different countries, this may not be the case with sciences involving interpersonal skills (e.g. interviewing) that are constrained by cultural and legal considerations.

3. UAE Interviewing Laws

UAE laws regarding police interviewing place officers in a unique position.

While the police are responsible for examining crimes, searching for criminals, collecting evidence (Art. 30 of the Criminal Procedures Law), seeking clarifications (Art. 35), and hearing the statements of witnesses and suspects (Art. 40), they may not confront the suspect with evidence, as this is part of the Public Prosecutor's mandate (Art. 65 through Art. 70). Nonetheless, police interviewing is integral to the investigative process, as the statements made by all (potentially) relevant parties (i.e. victims, witnesses, and suspects) are collected via the interview and, subsequently, further evidence is gathered based on these statements.

The police are responsible for hearing the accused's statement, and if he/she cannot substantiate his/her innocence (e.g. through providing a credible alibi) they send him/her to the relevant Public Prosecutor within 48 hours (Art. 47). This effectively means that the police have to gather enough information for the case without confronting the suspect with evidence (in fact, if the police do confront with evidence the case may be thrown out of court and the police interviewer reprimanded). For example, the police may seek, whilst interviewing, to ascertain where the suspect was at key timelines, for which they have corroborative evidence, without revealing the evidence, nor its source, to the suspect. Since the UAE Criminal Code does not allow conviction to be based on confession evidence alone, the rationale behind this is to provide protection to the suspect, by separating the gathering of evidence (the role of the police) and the evidence presentation components (the role of the Public Prosecutor). This distinction makes it impossible for the police to use interview methods like PEACE¹ (at least not in

¹ A mnemonic acronym for the interviewing framework used by police officers in England and Wales and stands for, Planning and preparation; Engage and explain; Account, clarify and challenge; Closure; Evaluation.

its current form, since a key component of it is to challenge the suspect's account) (see Milne & Bull, 1999, for an explanation of the various stages of PEACE), or the Reid technique (Inbau, Reid, & Buckley, 1986), which often involves the disclosure of evidence and is associated with coercive interview practices (Walsh, O'Callaghan, & Milne, 2016).

4. International studies of police interview techniques

There have been many studies examining police interview techniques over the past 25 years across the globe (Baldwin, 1992; Häkkänen et al., 2009; Kassin et al., 2007; Leo, 1996; Moston & Engelberg, 1993; Pearse & Gudjonsson, 1999; Wachi et al., 2014). The gist of these studies emphasizes the need for the interviewer to build rapport, utilise a humane approach, and effectively use evidence.

Having said that, there is not one definition of rapport that is used consistently in the literature, however, the theoretical model presented by Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990, p.286) in which they define rapport as '...participants in the interaction form a cohesiveness, become unified, through the expression of mutual attention to and involvement with one another', has become widely accepted as a framework for rapport (e.g. Collins, Lincoln, & Frank, 2002; Walsh & Bull, 2012; Vallano & Compo, 2015). One method to understand how police officers build rapport is to ask them about their techniques during an interview. For example, whether they use humor or discuss irrelevant personal matters (Häkkänen et al., 2009); whether they try to establish rapport and gain the suspect's trust (Kassin et al., 2007); whether they attempted to build rapport with the suspect irrespective of the interrogator-suspect situation (Wachi et al., 2014).

As regards the effective use of evidence, Häkkänen et al. (2009) asked 30 violent crime investigators in Finland to rate 39 interrogation tactics used in two hypothetical interviews [consisting of either technical evidence (e.g. DNA or fingerprints) or

‘soft’ information (e.g. tips from informers or gossip)] with a homicide suspect. The research aimed to assess the effects of case-specific facts and investigators’ discomfort with ambiguity on the investigators’ beliefs and interview tactics. It was found that investigators emphasised the utility of using a humane approach to interviewing. In Japan, Wachi et al. (2014) examined interview techniques employed by Japanese police officers (N=276) and identified four interviewing styles: (i) Evidence-focused, (ii) Confrontational, (iii) Relationship-focused, and (iv) Undifferentiated. They found that investigators reported being more likely to obtain confessions from suspects if they employed a Relationship-focused approach. Investigators also reported that if they used Evidence-focused approaches then suspects were likely to provide only partial confessions and were less cooperative. This reluctance may depend on how well the evidence is presented to the suspects (Bull, 2014).

The findings from Wachi et al.’s (2014) study suggest that, contrary to many Western studies, presentation of evidence may not always be an effective method. However, most of Wachi et al. (2014) findings (i.e. the importance of a relationship-focused approach) are similar to findings in Western studies that highlight the importance of building rapport (Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib & Christiansen, 2013; Holmberg and Christianson, 2002; Walsh & Bull, 2012). Since there is not a word in Arabic for rapport, the theoretical model by Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) was used to gather the participants’ views in the current study. The current study built upon the work of Häkkäken et al. (2009), Kassin et al. (2007), and Wachi et al. (2014), and examined both policing practice and cultural norms in the UAE.

The nature of police interviewing currently in Dubai is rather unknown, and an examination of police interviewers’ beliefs may well provide a better understanding. In Dubai there is no standardised evidence-based interview method currently being used

by police. This is not to say that the current methods are inadequate, but rather that they have not been evaluated, and thus, not empirically supported. This study aimed to explore how police officers perceive interviewing in major crimes investigations in Dubai.

5. Method

5.1. Participants

Dubai police officers involved in the investigation of major crimes (homicide, sex crimes, and kidnapping) with at least two years experience were invited to participate in this study by a gatekeeper. The participants contacted by the gatekeeper were from two separate units within the Dubai Police. These two units together employ around 35 police officers, in addition to the 11 police stations in Dubai that employ roughly 90 interviews. The first unit (six participants, 60% of the unit) was a specialized Forensic Psychology unit that deals with major crime exclusively, and officers in this unit are tasked with conducting detailed interviews (as opposed to the statement taking approach in police stations). These detailed interviews are audio-recorded for transcription purposes and are intended to help officers in providing forensic psychology expertise (e.g. evaluation of personality and risk assessments). Officers in this unit are required to have a degree in Psychology, Criminology, or Social Science. The second unit (four participants, around 16% of the unit) is an interviewing unit situated within the Criminal Investigation Department and officers ($N = \sim 25$, actual number is unavailable) in this unit are tasked with interviewing individuals before they are transferred to the prosecution for further questioning (this unit does not audio-record interviews).

The gatekeeper, a psychologist working within the Dubai Police, received responses from ten officers to participate in this exploratory study. (No information is available on how many officers declined to participate). Since research in this area is

still developing, officers may have been reluctant to participate. To help facilitate participation the Dubai Police Head Quarters (DPHQ) allowed officers to be interviewed during their working hours. The mean age of the participants was 30 years (ranging between 24 and 51) and their length of service ranged between 2.5 and 25 years ($M=7.3$ years, $SD=6.9$); eight of the participants were male and two were female.

5.2. Data collection

A semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix A) was developed and then refined (e.g. shifting the focus of the research from examining sex crimes exclusively to examining major crimes more broadly) and concerned beliefs regarding interviewing in major crimes (based on research by Wachi et al., 2014; Häkkänen et al., 2009; and Kassim et al., 2007). Participants were asked open questions about interviewing suspects and victims involved in major crime in Dubai, including how they (i.e. the officers) felt about this; (including about interviewing individuals from a different culture); training²; monitoring and supervision methods. Questions were also asked about interview preparation methods and the interview techniques/tools used. Also included were questions about officers' beliefs, attitudes, and presumptions about major crimes, and any complexities when dealing with major crimes. For purposes of facilitating conversation, the research interview guidelines were translated into Arabic by the lead researcher (who is fluent in both Arabic and English) and then reviewed by two researchers within DPHQ. The interviews were audio recorded and ranged in length between 10 and 51 minutes ($M= 29$, $SD= 13$).

² The semi-structured interview sheet included a question about training, however, this was not realised, since every participant talked about training before the actual question.

5.3 Analysis for themes

The research interview tapes were transcribed and then translated from Arabic into English before being reviewed for accuracy of translation by two other bilingual researchers. The data were imported into NVivo 11. Thematic analysis based on a hermeneutic-phenomenological epistemology (Duke, 1977; Heidegger, 1962; Smith, 2007) was used to analyse the interview responses. Thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyse and report patterns (i.e. themes) within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of analysis was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of analysis.

The analysis of the responses yielded seven themes, as follows: (1) training, (2) planning and preparation, (3) building rapport, (4) active listening, (5) confrontation, (6) discussion of the crime, and (7) attitudes towards sex crimes (see Appendix B for more on the stages of coding of themes). Two other researchers were asked to analyse the whole data set to ensure that the themes identified were consistent with the data. Inter-rater reliability (between the three raters) was assessed using the percentage of agreement method and 91.6% of the themes were agreed on. Any discrepancies were resolved by discussion and the first rater's codes were used for identifying the themes and analysis.

6. Results

6.1. Training

Six participants reported that they had not been formally trained before starting work as interviewers (where as four stated that they were trained). The six described their 'training' process as being one of observation and learning through trial and error (i.e learned on the job).

‘I didn’t have any training regarding police interviews... but I observed my colleagues on how to interview... they observed me as well and gave me feedback’ - Participant 3

‘... at the beginning... me observing... ya so I used to go with my colleagues to observe how they interview... I had some of my colleagues explain to me how it is’ - Participant 2

Even when some were ‘trained’ after they started interviewing, the training involved the same process of trial and error, and ‘expert’ feedback.

‘... he (an external trainer/ expert from a European Police Academy) was more like commenting on what we are doing and giving us feedback... but in terms of courses or lecture... I can’t think of any’ - Participant 1

Others stated that they were trained before starting work (three were internally trained and one externally in a therapeutic hospital setting). The training they described seemed to be heavily based on the legal aspects of the interview process.

‘we learned that when a suspect is transferred to us (in custody)... that we look at his arrest report and prepare for the case... we ask questions about the incident and he answers... we learned what we can talk about and what to not talk about (legally)’ - Participant 5

Training was described as a combination of classroom based lectures and observation of more experienced colleagues.

‘We were trained on forensic interviewing... for a period that was (long pause) satisfactory (upon further clarification about 5 to 10 days)... we then observed our more experienced colleagues before we started interviewing’ - Participant 9

It is important to note that the participants who did undergo formal training were trained by their more experienced colleagues (with the exception of the participant who

underwent training in a therapeutic setting), who themselves were not formally trained in interviewing methods being in turn trained by more experienced colleagues.

6.2. Planning and Preparation

Another theme was how (if at all) the participants planned and prepared for interviews. Seven reported that they prepare extensively for an interview, six of whom had learned on the job. Six (five learned on the job and one externally underwent some non-police hospital-based interview training) reported using a Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)-inspired protocol (known as indirect personality assessment or indirect profiling) for the preparation of an interview.

‘we prepare for the interview... using a protocol called indirect profiling (i.e. personality assessment) as a checklist to cover all the necessary gaps’- Participant 6

‘... we do indirect profiling... where we bring out the most important information and set up questions for the interview... we try to keep them open questions and avoid leading questions...’ - Participant 3

Three (all formally trained) reported that they read the case documents but do not prepare questions. Two (of the three) reported that preparing questions affected their flexibility during the interview.

‘I don’t prepare a great deal of questions... I find that if I prepare... or over-thinked it... that this will effect my ability to adapt to the interviewee’s answers... I will be more mechanical’ - Participant 9

6.3. Building Rapport

Another theme was building rapport with interviewees. Seven participants (six learned on the job) reported using what could be classified as rapport building [according to Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal’s (1990) definition, above].

‘... we would meet the person (interviewee) and we would start by asking about himself or herself... how are you?... and then we would tell them to tell us about their lives... hobbies... what they are doing as expats here (if they were expats)... try to form an understanding of the person I am talking to... and the same for him...’ - Participant 1

Two reported that a formal approach is more appropriate, especially with suspects.

‘It all depends on the case files... all that I have to do is to take his statement... try to find contradictions... things to be used against him (by the prosecutor)’ - Participant 9

For example, a participant noted that a formal approach is needed to ensure the presence of boundaries.

‘[building rapport]...[with] most suspects having an informal discussion can be a signal for them to lie...that is why I prefer a formal approach... where the suspect knows that this is a police interview... [talking about victims]... in some cases it is inappropriate to speak to [other gender] in an informal way because it can send wrong signals’ - Participant 5

One reported that building rapport is appropriate in some cases but not others.

6.4. Active listening

The fourth theme identified was 'active listening'. Eight participants (six learned on the job) emphasised that active listening is extremely important, including listening to the interviewee's life story and to their stories about friends and family, even if those details were not pertinent to the case. They were also uniform in stressing that an interviewee should not be interrupted.

‘The questions we use are open ended... we don't ask yes and no questions... we listen to the interviewee and don't interrupt... we will then ask clarification questions if they are needed...’ - Participant 6

Others acknowledged the importance of active listening in identifying signs of distress and working to alleviate them.

‘We ask open questions... and try to listen to what they say without interrupting but also encourage them to feel safe... there are cases when people begin opening up... they show signs of distress... I think that is why it is important to train people in handling distressed individuals...’ - Participant 3

However, two participants (formally trained) reported that it is appropriate to interrupt interviewees, even during recall, to ask ‘important questions’.

‘I would say that... sometimes you have to keep track of the interview and ask important questions to clarify... even if that means stopping him’ -Participant 5

6.5. Confrontation

The participants acknowledged that the UAE Criminal Procedure Law does not allow them to confront and challenge interviewees with evidence. However, they are allowed to make it clear in their subsequent case files that the interviewee gave contradictory statements or that the interviewee's statement does not match other evidence. The case files are then transferred to the public prosecution, who will take over the investigation. Participants indicated that it is both unethical and impractical to be aggressive. This includes expressing anger towards the interviewees, or about something they said, or telling them that they are lying.

‘It is important to not be deemed threatening or aggressive... for the interviewee to share information’ - Participant 3

‘We try to be calm and not lose our patience... being aggressive means that the person may be scared and that is not good... both in the short-term and the long-term’ - Participant 8

The conduct of an interviewer has consequences in both the short-term, with regards to eliciting information from the interviewee, and the long-term, with regards to police-community cooperation and partnership. However, two participants reported that raising one’s voice may help control a very disruptive interviewee.

‘For some individuals it may be necessary... if all other methods fail... to raise your voice or change your tone... nothing aggressive but more like assertive’ - Participant 5

6.6. Discussion of the Crime

Participants acknowledged that the discussion of the crime is imperative. They reported that the interviewer needs to maintain composure and not rush the interviewee.

‘...we gradually build up to the incident.. most of our questions are open ended.. we don't interrupt the person.. we don't ask yes and no questions.. we give them their space.. they can talk for as much as they want.. it is unrestricted...’ - Participant 4

All the participants reported that they discuss the alleged crime ‘in detail’. This is a critical phase as the police only elicit statements (hence the need for an interviewing method that has been designed to gather information), and the more detail provided, the better the case file will be. This phase of the interview helps police officers provide more analysis in the case files with regard to contradictions or how the statement compares to other testimony (e.g. witness or victim statements) or to the physical evidence (e.g. DNA).

‘you need from the beginning.. you need to know the whole story even before the actual incident.. the amount of detail both during before and after.. people tend to

jump up and down between those times.. I think this aspect is more intense in a sex crime.. than any other crime... they keep adding information.. retrieving information.. and those outbreaks that happen sometimes..' - Participant 3

The participants emphasized the importance of their role to make sure that the interviewee understands the meaning of the alleged crime.

'...It is important for the interviewee to understand what the crime means... for example.. a rape can only be perpetrated by a male and the victim has to be female... there are also other considerations like penetration.. etc...' - Participant 1

6.7. Attitudes towards sex crime

The seventh theme identified was the participants' attitudes towards sex crime. Four participants (including both females in this study) reported that they feel uncomfortable discussing sex crime.

'... it is a bit hard for me to ask.. personal questions.. sometimes I feel uncomfortable... embarrassed... due to our culture' - Participant 6

The four participants indicated that cultural restrictions hamper their efforts to become accustomed to talking about sex, in general, or, sex crimes, specifically. They acknowledge the need for a thorough investigation and said that they do their best to contain these feelings, nonetheless, the feelings are there. They note that even though they feel this way, they try not to allow themselves to be influenced by their reservations and, for example, try to rush the interviewee. Four participants reported feeling neutral about discussing sex crime.

'It my job... I try to be as impartial as possible... and to take a statement that may help in the justice process...' - Participant 8

These participants indicated that even though they feel slightly uncomfortable discussing sex crime, they view this as part of their job. They acknowledge that sex is

considered taboo, but argue that other things are considered taboo (e.g. stealing or being fraudulent) and are yet discussed.

Two other participants reported that they are comfortable discussing sex crime, as this is part of their job. They noted that as soon as they start work, what may be considered taboo is no longer that. The rationale, they stated, was that what they are doing is necessary for the justice process and if they can act comfortably, it will be easier for the interviewee to talk later in the public prosecution and the courts. One compared this with working as a physician, who is not allowed to, for example, view a woman's naked body, in general; but if her body was viewed as part of a check up or surgery then that is acceptable.

7. Discussion

This study examined Dubai police officers' beliefs regarding interviewing in major crimes. Based on a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, seven themes were identified and grouped into one of four broad categories.

7.1. Training

The lack of standardised formal training is evident for this sample. This is not unique to Dubai. For example, Germany (Volbert & Baker, 2016); Belgium (Vanderhallen, de Jong, & Vervaeke, 2016); and the USA (Kelly & Meissner, 2016) each lack uniform, standardised training for interviewing suspects. Many studies emphasise the importance of training to produce methodical, organised, planned, and effective interviews (e.g. Bull, 2013; Cherryman & Bull, 2000; Clarke, Milne & Bull, 2011; Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013; Walsh & Bull, 2015). Countries that have nationally introduced formal interview training (e.g. PEACE in England and Wales, and the similar KREATIV in Norway) have seen improvements in interview practice. For example,

Walsh and Bull (2010) found that interviews that demonstrated satisfactory PEACE skills were more likely to obtain a comprehensive account.

In addition, Baldwin (1992) found little correlation between officers' training (albeit only for one week at the time) and interview performance. Indeed, many participants in Baldwin's study did not acknowledge the importance of what Powell (2002) describes as the 'essential elements of an investigative interview'; namely, the importance of rapport building and effective planning and preparation (both are discussed below). One reason for this could be that in many countries officers are still 'trained' by their 'more experienced' colleagues, without the use of a national training course and strategy. Powell (2002) found that instructions even when taught in training are not fully followed, and concluded that standardisation and stricter supervision/enforcement are probably required. This likely requires creating a standardised programme of training that is informed by relevant research and professional expertise. Griffiths and Milne (2006) found that there was a difference between retaining complex interview techniques (e.g. rapport building) and simple techniques (e.g. delivery of caution). They argue that refresher courses are necessary to maintain the levels of complex interview techniques.

Griffiths, Milne, and Cherryman (2011) found that not every police officer can attain an advanced level of interviewing, only those officers identified as having 'potential' seem to be able to (see also Lamb, Sternberg, Orbach, Esplin, & Mitchell, 2002). Given that not all individuals that undergo training reach the required level (see e.g. Clarke & Milne, 2001, 2016; Griffiths et al., 2011; Snook, Luther, Quinlan, & Milne, 2012), there may be other factors that influence knowledge transference, or lack thereof. It is reasonable to speculate that individual (Griffiths & Milne, 2006), personality (McCroskey, Heisel, & Richmond, 2001) and/or cognitive factors (Risan, Binder, &

Milne, 2016) can influence police interviewers' acquisition of knowledge and skill sets (see Milne, Griffiths, Clarke, & Dando, 2019).

7.2. *Pre-interview practices*

Planning and preparing for an interview is considered an essential step for good practice (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Kim, Walsh, Bull, & Bergstøm, 2017; Leahy-Harland & Bull, 2017; Walsh & Bull, 2010; Walsh & Milne, 2008). The majority of participants in the current study reported that they plan and prepare for an interview. Participants also reported using a structured method for planning and preparing inspired by the RCMP indirect personality assessment (a method that was introduced based on conversations with Canadian RCMP-attache officer, who provided some resources). No published literature is available on this topic, nor is it empirically-evidenced; however, the RCMP Website describes indirect personality assessment as 'the assessment of a known individual believed to be responsible for committing a violent crime' (Royal Canadian Mounted Police Website, 2018). The website goes on to describe a multitude of uses for this 'assessment' including interview preparation, most of which (e.g. whether the suspect's personality fits the crime) have no empirical support.

7.3. *Interview practices*

7.3.1. *Rapport*

Participants acknowledged that rapport building is integral to the interview process. They explained that they view rapport building as an effort to help the interviewee feel more comfortable and, thus, provide a more comprehensive account; something akin to the information gathering approach propagated by PEACE guidelines in the UK and not a manipulative approach to build trust propagated by advocates of the Reid Technique (Inbau et al., 1986). Information gathering approaches that utilise effective

rapport building skills produce more comprehensive accounts than accusatorial and interrogational based approaches (Meissner, Redlich, Michael, Evans, Camilletti, Bhatt, & Brandon, 2014; Walsh & Bull, 2012); thus increasing the diagnosticity of the evidence produced (Vallano, Evans, Compo, & Kieckhaefer, 2015). In the present study, the fact that the majority of participants indicated that building rapport is critical is noteworthy. However, acknowledging the importance of rapport building and applying it in practice are not one and the same thing. In order to establish if rapport building exists in practice and what methods interviewers use to build rapport, a study analyzing actual Dubai police interviews would be beneficial.

It is reasonable to speculate that individual, personality and/or cognitive factors can influence police interviewers' acquisition of knowledge and skill sets (see Milne et al., 2019). For example, regarding individual factors, Griffiths and Milne (2006) examined 60 interviews conducted by 15 basic PEACE trained (i.e. Tier 2 pre-PIP) police officers. Using a novel paradigm known as the Griffiths Question Map (GQM) to assess the level of skill and presence of question types (e.g. use of open, probing, or closed questions), they found that the skill level of participants was below that expected of Tier 2 trained officers. However, some police officers were identified as 'having potential' and were subsequently enrolled in an advanced training course (the three week long Tier 3 course). These individuals showed an improvement overall, but, with regards to complex skills (e.g. rapport building) some depreciation was noticed as soon as they were back to interviewing in the field, and further depreciation was noticed 18 months later.

With regards to personality factors, some individuals are perceived as better communicators, which could influence applying their knowledge to the field (see Milne

et al., 2019). For example, across three studies using Eysenck's big three personality dimensions (i.e. extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism) and communication traits as variables, McCroskey, Heisel, and Richmond (2001) were able to find correlations between personality dimensions and communication skills. Their findings support the common-sense notion that some individuals are naturally better at communicating than others. Akca and Eastwood (2019) conducted a two-part study that aimed to examine whether and how individual differences impact investigative interviewing performance. In the first study, they used the Police Interviewing competencies Inventory (PICI) on a 300 participants sample drawn from the general population. Their analysis created a four-dimensional aptitude scale. In the second study, student participants (N=154) were asked to complete the aptitudes and the Five Factor Model (FFM), before being asked to interview 'witnesses' who were shown a mock crime. The results revealed that those who scored higher in Agreeableness, Openness/Intellect, and Extraversion dimensions of the FFM and high scorers in the one of the dimensions of the aptitudes scale (Communicative-Insisting) were more successful in the interview task than the low scorers in these dimensions. As regards cognitive factors, recent studies (e.g. Risan et al., 2016) have shown the importance of interviewers being self-aware during interviews. These findings indicate that some factors influencing interviewing practice may be less amenable to training than others.

Walsh and Bull (2012) found that rapport building skills were not always evident during the initial 'engage and explain' phase. It is at this phase that interviewers should explain the interview purpose, how it will be conducted, and make sure that the interviewee understood the caution. They suggest that this phase is critical for developing rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee. They found that during this

time interviewers tended to focus on the administrative and legal aspects of the interview, failing to fulfill Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal's (1990) criteria for rapport building.

7.3.2 Active Listening

Another theme was the need for *active listening*. Similarly, Wachi et al., (2014) found that, even though the officers in their study were talking about interviews with serious offenders, they recognised the importance of listening to the suspect's account, relevant to the alleged crime or not. This is particularly important in the UAE since, as previously stated, the police cannot confront interviewees with evidence, which, in turn, means that the more comprehensive and accurate the initial statement is, the better equipped the prosecution will be.

Acknowledging the importance of listening to an interviewees' account is not new. In fact, police officers in the Cherryman and Bull (2001) study reported that they rate listening as the most important skill of the many they were asked to assess. Active listening can be seen as a crucial part of rapport building, and part of one of the three dynamic interrelated components of rapport identified by Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) (i.e. mutual attentiveness, positivity, and coordination). For example, if an interviewer is actively listening to the interviewee, this gives the interviewee the impression that s/he is listened to, thus, encouraging their narration.

The majority of participants who acknowledged the importance of active listening, regularly audio-recorded their interviews. It could be surmised that, since the interview is being recorded, officers do not need to make extensive notes of it and had more time to listen carefully to what the interviewee is saying and encouraged narration, this leading to better rapport building. These same interviewees also emphasised the importance of rapport building. The minority that did not acknowledge the importance of

active listening also do not audio-record interviews. Since they have to write down notes and ask questions, they might feel that active listening is an enormous task and, thus, prefer a more formal approach to the interview process.

Participants in the present study also highlighted the importance of active listening in helping them identify signs of distress. Research on police interviews after potentially traumatic events has shown that some police investigators are conscious of how distress can influence the interview process (Risan, Binder, & Milne, 2017). Participants also reported that they noticed that some interviewees' statements are disorganised. Indeed, research on traumatic recall has found that voluntary memory is likely to be fragmented, disorganised, and, incomplete (Brewin, 2007). Furthermore, sexual assault can be a highly stigmatizing experience (Kennedy & Prock, 2016), that is often associated with societal 'rape myths', such as attributing blame to the victim rather than the assailant (Edwards, Turchik, Dardis, Reynolds, & Gidycz, 2011). Societal pressure and stigmatization could lead victims to internalize these feelings, potentially leading to self blame and shame (Kennedy & Prock, 2016). It could be argued that this is even more profound in conservative countries like the UAE. These issues could lead victims to be less likely to feel comfortable speaking to someone about their experience.

7.3.3. *Confrontation*

Another theme identified was *confrontation of interviewees*. This theme had two manifestations: (1) confrontation (i.e. aggression towards the interviewee) and (2) confronting the interviewee with evidence. The former will be addressed first. Participants were unanimous in condemning aggression towards the interviewee. Indeed, it has been documented that being aggressive towards interviewees is, not only unethical, but, also, unproductive (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Kebbell, Alison, Hurren & Mazerolle, 2010). Some participants, those that viewed active listening as less important, reported

that it may be useful, in extreme cases, to raise their voices. Moston and Stephenson (1993) and Moston and Engelberg (1993) found that when met with repeated denials and resistance, some officers resorted to repeating the question in a louder voice. This could be as a result of not having the skills necessary to overcome suspect resistance [see Walsh and Bull's (2012) study of skills involved in overcoming denials]. Those same participants (i.e. those that viewed active listening as unimportant) reported that it is appropriate to interrupt interviewees during their narration, in order to ask 'pertinent' questions. This could affect rapport building and active listening tasks as interrupting someone is culturally frowned upon in the UAE. In addition to the cultural aspect, many studies have shown that interrupting an interviewee, especially during recall or free narration may well be detrimental to the quality of the interview (see Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Milne & Bull, 1999; Powell, Fisher, & Wright, 2005).

The second manifestation of the confrontation theme was confronting interviewees with evidence. The participants acknowledged that confronting the interviewees with evidence is unlawful and could result in the case being thrown out of court in the UAE. This is a particular disadvantage, not only because confrontation of evidence is becoming accepted as an effective way to elicit accounts (Bull, 2014; Gudjonsson & Petursson, 1991; Moston, Stephenson, & Williamson, 1992; Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2000), but also, because planning and preparing for an interview should include thinking about the strategic use of evidence (Dando & Bull, 2011; Granhag, Strömwall, & Hartwig, 2007; Shepherd & Griffiths, 2013). Moston et al., (1992) found that 67% of suspects confessed when the evidence against them was strong, whereas only 10% confessed when the evidence was considered weak. In the UAE, it does not matter how strong the evidence is considered by the officers to be, as the objective of the interview is to let the interviewee give a statement and, in the case of suspects, provide them with

a chance to substantiate their innocence, and not, challenge them on their accounts.

Thus officers have to be able to get a thorough account of the crime, in order for them to make decisions on the progress of the case. This usually means having to try to discuss the crime in detail. This is especially challenging since suspects have a right to silence and it is up to the interviewer to try to engage them in the interview (this is where building rapport is crucial).

7.3.4 Discussion of the crime

In the current study, *discussion of the crime* was considered important, but it seems that there may be various barriers to discussion or disclosure. There may be three reasons for this: (1) the inability to confront interviewees with evidence; (2) the social stigma that may surround a person convicted of a crime, and; (3) the effects the crime may have on the interviewee. It may be that the interviewer cannot begin the discussion of the crime in order for the interviewee to talk about it. For example, the suspect may deny being at the location of a crime, this means that the interviewer cannot confront the suspect with evidence of involvement in a crime to facilitate conversation. However, the interviewer, in his/her report, may highlight the discrepancy between the statement and the evidence. And if the interviewee does not provide any information to substantiate his/her innocence, the case gets transferred to the public prosecution, who will be able to confront with evidence.

Participants reported that interviewees may be reluctant to discuss the crime because of fears of social stigma attached to the crime. The social composition of the UAE is unique for two main reasons. The first is that all native-born UAE citizens are Muslims and nearly all would view Islam as a major part of their identity (see Simadi, 2006). There are instances where a UAE citizen may be a non-Muslim, for example, a UAE citizen can marry a non-Muslim and after 10 years she can acquire citizenship.

The second is the fact that expatriates comprise 80% of the population with the majority being from other Arab and Asian countries (more than 70% of the whole population) (Suliman, 2006), who are more likely, along with the UAE citizens, to have an interdependent view of self (i.e. have a more collectivist view of self and are thus more prone to external influences) than their Western counterparts (Dwairy, Achaoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006; Fernandez, Paez, & Gonzalez, 2005). These two factors may have a negative influence on interviewees discussing the crime due to the fear that this may result in extensive social stigma (e.g. bring shame to the family name or the fear of being shunned by society). The third reason for the lack of discussion during police interviews is the fact that most expats face the risk of deportation if they are found guilty of a felony.

These factors could raise the risk of false confessions if manipulative interview techniques are used. For example, the proponents of the Reid technique advocate that during the interrogation stage, an interviewer should present the interviewee with two legally equivalent options, but with different moral explanations (Inbau et al., 1986). For example, the interrogator may propose that the suspect raped because the victim was leading him (i.e. the suspect) on and he (the suspect) made a mistake, or, that the suspect raped because he is an immoral monster who preys on vulnerable women. This dichotomy of choices could potentially lead innocent suspects to 'confess' to a crime that they did not commit in order to 'preserve face'.

7.4. Interviewer attitudes

Drawing on the point made above about the UAE and Dubai being socially conservative, the final theme identified was the *participants' attitudes towards sex crimes*. Some participants reported feeling uncomfortable, an equal number reported being neu-

tral, and the minority reported being comfortable. It is important that officers are comfortable or, at least, neutral when interviewing individuals involved in sex crimes. Contrary to the notion of the police 'checking their attitudes at the door' (see Rich & Seffrin, 2012), social norms seem to influence officers' attitudes, at least in this study. If uncomfortableness of the officers is apparent, it could mean that sex crime interviewees, especially victims, are potentially subjected to feelings of victimisation by the legal system and could lead to distress, and, ultimately, a lack of engagement with the forensic interview (see Campbell, 2006; Jordan, 2001).

One method that some officers may use to minimise the level of uncomfortableness when dealing with sex crime is for the interviewer and the interviewee to be of the same gender. This approach is not unusual, as some police departments were found (some years ago) to assign female rape victim interviews to female officers (Gregory & Lees, 1999; Hodgson & Kelley, 2002). Some studies have shown that rape victims tend to prefer female interviewers (Martin, 1997; Temkin & Krahe, 2008), however it is not yet known if female officers are more skilled than their male counterparts in interviewing rape victims (Rich & Seffrin, 2012).

8. Limitations and future directions

Even though the participants form around 8% of all police major crime interviewers in Dubai, the small sample size in this study is a limitation. There are a few reasons for this. First, the initial aim of this research was to study how sex crime interviews were conducted in Dubai. However, the feedback from the gatekeeper was that many individuals were reluctant to participate due to the taboo nature of the crime and the usually reserved nature of the officers when talking about it, even in private conversations between sex crime investigators. This led to a change in focus from sex crime to major crime interview. Almost instantly more people were willing to talk. Second, there

may have been some skepticism about the real reason for this study. Some officers, before the interview started, wanted to make sure that what they say will stay anonymous and that it would not affect their promotions or HQ's opinion of them. However, this study resulted in a spike in interest in research by police officers in Dubai, a follow up questionnaire to examine major crime interviewers' perceptions about interviewing (N=62, with a 69% response rate). Another limitation is the low participation rate among the unit that does not audio-record interviews. There may be two reasons for this. One, the unit consists of officers who work shifts as opposed to regular hours amongst the audio-recording unit. Two, people in the audio-recording unit are all university educated and are interested in psychological research, whereas the other unit consists of a mix of university and non-university educated officers, who may not be interested in investing time and effort on a research study.

9. Conclusion

The thematic analysis presented here explored the beliefs of Dubai police officers and their experiences, being a topic researched for the first time in this region of the world. This approach enabled us to explore what the participants thought without much input from researchers, in order for us to understand how the interview process works and how it is viewed by officers. This study has provided a platform for further studies in the area, with an aim to stimulate academic research and scientific evidence-based practice to policing in Dubai and the wider region. Ultimately, it is hoped, that this study (and subsequent studies) will be used as evidence for Dubai police to have a standardised evidence-based method of interviewing that will highlight the institution's willingness to adopt best policing practice.

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Appendix A semi structured interview plan for Dubai police officers' perceptions of interviewing in major crimes (Empirical Study One)

1. Please describe the process of interviewing a suspect involved in a major crime.
2. How do you feel about interviewing a suspect involved in a major crime?
3. Please describe the process of interviewing a victim involved in a major crime.
4. How do you feel about interviewing a victim involved in a major crime?
5. How would you describe the process?

Check points:

- A. Complexities, if any
- B. Interpretors
- C. Female-male interaction
- D. Intimate details.

6. How would you describe the process if the suspect interviewed is not from a similar culture or background?
7. How would you describe the process if the victim interviewed is not from a similar culture or background?
8. Can you describe any general training that you underwent before you started interviewing? any that is specific to crime type?
9. Can you describe the supervision and monitoring procedures in place for interviewing in general?
10. Is there anything that you would like to add regarding interviewing suspects involved in major crimes?
11. Is there anything that you would like to add regarding interviewing victims involved in major crimes?
12. Can the current interviewing framework be improved? How so?

Appendix B Coding procedure for Dubai police officers' perceptions of interviewing in major crimes

Primary Codes	Secondary Codes	Themes
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Pre-work training	<i>Mandated Training</i>	Training	
Supervised training			
Work training			
Observed colleagues	<i>Learning through observation</i>		
Observing			
Legal training	<i>Legalistic training</i>		
Procedural training			
Indirect profiling	<i>RCMP planning and preparation</i>		Planning and preparation
Structured protocol			
Question preparation			
Prepare questions	<i>General planning and preparation</i>		
Prepare case			
Prepare room			
Do not prepare	<i>Do not prepare</i>		
Lack of flexibility			
Read some case documents			
Talking to interviewee	<i>Rapport building skills</i>	Building rapport	
About life			
About hobbies			
About job			
About relationships			
Emphasis understanding			
Take statement only	<i>Formal approach</i>		
Ask questions			
No side chats			

Primary Codes	<i>Secondary Codes</i>	Themes
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Life story	<i>Listening actively</i>	Active Listening	
Listening			
Listening about friends			
Listening about family			
Do not interrupt			
Do not stop			
Say aah, ok ...			
Keep them on track	<i>Formal/utility</i>		
Interrupt			
Stopping them			
Stopping them to write			
Not threatening	<i>Lack of physical confrontation</i>		Confrontation
Not aggressive			
Calm			
Patient			
Raise voice	<i>Physical confrontation</i>		
Change tone			
Nothing aggressive			
Assertive			
Cannot confront with evidence	<i>Legal confrontation</i>		
Evidence			
Cannot confront CCTV			
Cannot confront DNA			

Primary Codes	Secondary Codes	Themes
Talk about where they were before time of crime	<i>Indirect questions about crime</i>	Discussion of the Crime
Talk about how they go there		
Who they talked to that day		
Gradually build up		
Who knows about the crime		
What happened	<i>Details of crime</i>	
Where it happened		
Why it happened		
Who was the other person		
What where you both wearing		
Why were you there		
With whom where you there	<i>Use of open-questions</i>	
Do not ask yes/no		
Space and time		
Scattered detail		
Understand meaning	<i>Understand meaning</i>	
Understand what was going on		
Do not feel comfortable	<i>Uncomfortable</i>	Attitudes towards sex crimes
If other sex, then not comfortable		
Hard to ask personal questions		
Embarrassed		
Not culturally acceptable		
Try to not be influenced	<i>Neutral</i>	
Take statement		
Impartial		
My job, comfortable	<i>Comfortable</i>	
No issues my job		

