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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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# Police's and victim care officers' beliefs about memory and investigative interviewing with children: Survey findings from Malaysia

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## Abstract

Years of psychological research has demonstrated that the use of investigative interviewing methods based on up-to-date scientific evidence is important to ensure the reliability of child witnesses' statements. Ideally, professionals working with children are equipped with knowledge of memory functioning, as erroneous beliefs may impact how they handle cases of alleged abuse. Fifty police officers and 23 victim care officers serving the Royal Malaysian Police completed a 20-statement questionnaire assessing beliefs about memory functions and child investigative interviewing. The police sample also read a child sexual abuse case vignette and listed the questions they would ask the alleged victim in an investigative interview. Consistent with findings from other parts of the world, the beliefs of child protection professionals were not always in line with the latest memory research. Directive-type questions were used more than option-posing and suggestive questions. Findings are considered in relation to variations in culture and legal systems.

## KEYWORDS

children, culture, investigative interviewing, memory, police, victim care officer

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Child protection professionals deal with many complex cases of alleged child abuse daily. These professionals are typically police investigators, in which a major part of their work involves interviewing child victims or witnesses about their alleged abuse experiences. In many cases, there is no corroborating evidence other than the child witness themselves, and hence the investigative outcomes rely heavily on the child's recollection. Interviewing children is a challenging task, considering empirical data has shown children to be more susceptible to suggestive influence that can lead to memory errors (Bruck & Ceci, 1999). That said, if special care is taken during the investigative procedures and when carrying out the investigative interview, children can provide reliable testimony (Otgaar et al., 2018).

Investigative interviews conducted poorly have serious consequences: children may be put through prolonged, stressful legal proceedings, only to have their interviews testified by experts as inconclusive (Lamb et al., 2018). Inaccurate information can also lead to false accusations and family separation; or worse yet, the abuser may run free and exploit other children. It is therefore crucial that those tasked with interviewing children adhere to evidence-informed protocols (La Rooy et al., 2015). Knowing the interviewing methods that are best at maximising reliable information and minimising memory distortion will lead to a useful testimony that is less likely to be challenged in court (Myklebust & Bjørklund, 2010). Through considerable research in the past few decades, there is now a more robust understanding of children's cognitive development – particularly how child memory works – and this knowledge has shaped

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best-practice recommendations for child investigative interviews (Lamb et al., 2007).

Although recommended guidelines for interviewing children informed by psychological research are available, practitioners from many parts of the world still tend to rely on techniques that are based on pre-existing intuitive beliefs about memory functioning and investigative interviewing which may not be in line with current scientific research. For instance, Quas et al.'s study (2005) in California showed substantial variability in jury-eligible students' knowledge about children's memory, suggestibility, and reactions to sexual abuse; some beliefs were compatible with scientific research findings (e.g., children can be suggestible about events they do not understand) while others were not (e.g., children can remember sexual abuse that occurred during infancy). A survey conducted by Erens et al. (2020) revealed that many social workers, behavioural scientists, and medical doctors in the Netherlands agreed that repressed memories can be retrieved accurately using certain therapeutic techniques, despite such an argument running counter to current memory research (see Otgaar et al., 2019; see also Dodier & Otgaar, 2019).

Studies on beliefs about child witnesses have mostly been conducted in the Western part of the world. Melinder et al. (2004) surveyed judges, police detectives, mental health professionals, prosecutors, and defence lawyers in Norway, and found that defence lawyers were the least likely to believe children are credible and better witnesses than adults. In contrast, psychiatrists and police detectives were the most positive about children's capacities and credibility as eyewitnesses. Buck et al. (2014) in the United States revealed that knowledge of child interviewing research was poorest among university students eligible for jury service, as compared with forensic interviewers, public defenders, and forensic psychologists, but the forensic interviewers did not believe that children's answers to open-ended questions can be as accurate as adults. In Sweden, Knutsson and Allwood (2015) reported that police and legal professionals generally did not view child witnesses to be less competent than adult witnesses in providing reliable memory-based report, contrasting the general assumption in existing literature that the memory of children are inferior to those of adults. In a study by Dodier et al. (2019), French court experts, who are clinician practitioners, thought children are as good as, if not better than adults at retrieving an episodic event. These findings demonstrate that professionals vary in their beliefs in terms of whether children are able to recall reliable information; the evidence indicates that they are, but they generally perform poorer than adults (Jack et al., 2014).

Only a couple of similar studies have been conducted in the Eastern part of the world. Jiang and Luo (2016) evaluated knowledge among Chinese legal professionals on factors that affect eyewitness accuracy, in which their questionnaire had items on child witness accuracy and child suggestibility. Another survey study was conducted among Indonesian police officers and psychologists (Sumampouw et al., 2021). Both studies documented similar findings in that professionals exhibited less-than-optimal knowledge of eyewitness memory.

If children are seen as less competent than adults in remembering incidents they have experienced, this perceived lack of credibility and reliability may lead to their testimony being more likely to be dismissed or given less weight in court (Bull, 2010). Such perceptions held by the key actors in the criminal justice system are contingent upon the beliefs and opinions about child victims and witnesses. Erroneous beliefs may negatively impact the behaviour of professionals and have a profound influence on the outcome of an investigation. For example, an investigative interviewer who believes that memory is not influenced by suggestions may be less likely to take precautions with wording when carrying out an interview with a child. Psychological expert witnesses may be basing their recommendations on personal beliefs as opposed to up-to-date scientific knowledge, which is problematic given the implicit assumption that they are experts on human memory (Melinder & Magnussen, 2015).

Investigative interviewing is a highly specialised area that requires expert skills, and such skills can only be developed through training, practice, and routine supervision (Powell et al., 2010). Ideally, interviewers should be equipped with a broad understanding of basic psychological knowledge, including how memory works, how cognitive biases can influence interviewer behaviour, as well as how individual differences in compliance can influence interviewee behaviour (La Rooy et al., 2015). These psychological factors interact with how interviews are conducted, which can have a profound impact on the outcome of subsequent criminal proceedings. It is important to note that authorities in the criminal justice system with pre-existing intuitive or pseudoscientific beliefs about what works in an investigative interview may be opposed to acquiring up-to-date knowledge about effective techniques, especially if they are inconsistent with their prior experiences (Adams-Quackenbush et al., 2019).

In furtherance of the scope of data available in Eastern demographics, the current study examined beliefs about children's memory and child investigative interviewing practices among police officers and victim care officers in Malaysia. Malaysia is a unique Southeast Asian country that is diverse and multicultural, containing various ethnicities, languages, and religions. The majority of the population is ethnically Malay, with minorities of Chinese, Indians, and indigenous groups. This cultural diversity undoubtedly has influence on the way crimes are reported and investigated. For instance, Sumampouw et al. (2020, 2021) in their studies among Indonesians put forward that culture may very well influence how events are remembered as well as how people interact with children.

In Malaysia, police investigators who investigate child abuse cases serve the Royal Malaysian Police, in the Sexual, Women and Child Investigations Division (D11) of the Crime Investigation Department. A number of these investigating officers are trained to conduct interviews with children. Victim care officers (some of which who are registered counsellors) work under the Crime Investigation Department, supporting victims of abuse and their families. In line with findings from other countries, it was expected that inaccurate beliefs about children's memory functioning would be prominent among these groups of child protection professionals in Malaysia. It was also expected that the child investigative interviewing performed by police

interviewers would not be in accordance with internationally endorsed, evidence-based protocols. More specifically, it was predicted that police officers would report using fewer open prompts, and instead, more focussed questions.

## 2 | METHOD

### 2.1 | Participants

The questionnaires were distributed to police officers and victim care officers serving the Royal Malaysian Police, Sexual, Women and Child Investigations Division (D11) of the Crime Investigation Department. The link to the study was distributed to police officers via an administrative officer who acted as a gatekeeper. After participants read the information sheet and provided consent to take part, they reported basic demographic information, including sex, age, ethnicity, length of service, position held, and number of child investigative interviews involved in since joining the police force. Victim care officers were recruited by the second author who is also a victim care officer in one of the police contingents. Victim care officers were asked to report their sex, age, ethnicity, education level, length of service, and whether they were registered counsellors. Both groups were also asked to indicate how good their understanding of child investigative interviews is and how satisfied they are with the outcome of their work with children interviewed as alleged victims or witnesses on two 7-point Likert scales.

A total of 73 participants took part. In the police sample, there were 50 participants (6 men, 42 women, 2 did not report their gender) aged 28 to 56 ( $M = 38.85$ ,  $SD = 8.20$ ). The majority of the police sample were ethnic Malay (62%), followed by ethnic Chinese (16%), ethnic Indian (6%), other ethnicities (14%), and one participant did not report their ethnicity (2%). The mean length of service in the force was 14.90 years ( $SD = 9.65$  years, range = 3–34 years). Majority (42%) were serving as investigating officers, 14% were assistant investigating officers, only 6% were senior investigating officers, while 38% held other positions but did not provide further information. About one third of the sample (36%) had conducted more than 20 child investigative interviews during their service, 20% had conducted 6 to 10 interviews, 16% had conducted 1 to 5 interviews, 12% had conducted 11 to 20 interviews, 12% had not done any interviews, and 4% did not provide data.

There were 23 participants (7 men, 16 women) aged 30 to 40 ( $M = 36.41$ ,  $SD = 2.42$ ) in the victim care officer sample (one response was excluded due to non-completion). The majority of the victim care officer sample were ethnic Malay (75%), followed by ethnic Chinese (12.5%), ethnic Indian (8.3%), and one participant did not report their ethnicity (4.2%). Most participants (45.8%) had at least a Masters' degree, 33.3% had a Diploma, 12.5% had a bachelor's degree, only 4.2% had a doctorate qualification, and one did not report their level of education (4.2%). The mean length of service is 7.37 years ( $SD = 3.08$  years, range = 0.58–11 years). Twelve (52.2%) were registered counsellors while 11 (47.8%) were not.

### 2.2 | Materials and procedure

The survey study was administered anonymously via an online platform, Jisc Online Surveys. The first author translated the English questionnaire to Bahasa Malaysia, the national language of Malaysia. The Bahasa Malaysia version was then back-translated by the second author, and subsequently reviewed by the third author who designed the materials (see <https://osf.io/57qtg/>). The study was reviewed and approved by the University of Reading Malaysia Research Ethics Committee. Data was collected between April and July 2021, with the first reminder sent after a month, and one final reminder before data collection closed.

The main section of the study comprised a 20-statement survey to assess beliefs and knowledge on memory functioning and child investigative interviewing. This section was completed by police officers and victim care officers. Participants were asked to indicate whether they thought each statement is 'true' or 'false', or they could select the 'don't know' option. Of the 20 statements, 19 are false based on broad scientific consensus (see Erens et al., 2020; Sumampouw et al., 2020).

The next section contained a case vignette in which a 7-year-old girl was allegedly abused sexually by her stepfather. This section was completed only by the police officer sample; they were asked to prepare an interview plan that consists of a list of questions related to alleged abuse in order to know what actually happened. Participants were asked to write down the questions in order and to formulate questions in direct sentences.

## 3 | RESULTS

Table 1 displays the percentage of professionals who provided answers that are in line with current memory research. The mean score was 30.9 ( $SD = 20.32$ ) for the police officers and 34.35 ( $SD = 17.73$ ) for victim care officers. An independent-samples  $t$ -test showed no difference in overall performance between the police and victim care officer groups (95% CI,  $-13.27$  to  $6.38$ ),  $t(71) = -.70$ ,  $p = .49$ ,  $d = .18$ . The mean percentage of police officers responding 'don't know' to questions was 8.5 ( $SD = 13.67$ ) and 8.26 ( $SD = 12.21$ ) for victim care officers, with no statistically significant difference between the two groups, (95% CI,  $-6.41$  to  $6.89$ ),  $t(71) = .07$ ,  $p = .94$ ,  $d = .02$ . Multiple regression analyses were also run to determine the extent to which age and length of service, and for police officers, number of interviews conducted, influence the performance of each group. None of these were significant predictors.

A Fisher's exact test was conducted to see if there were significant differences between the two child protection professional groups in how they performed on each item. There were three items in which they differed significantly ( $p < .05$ ). Post hoc analyses of pairwise comparisons using multiple Fisher's exact tests ( $2 \times 2$ ) revealed that for the statement '*It is impossible for a child to develop false memories of child sexual abuse*', the victim care officer group showed more erroneous beliefs than the police group ( $n = 19$ , 82.6% versus  $n = 26$ ,

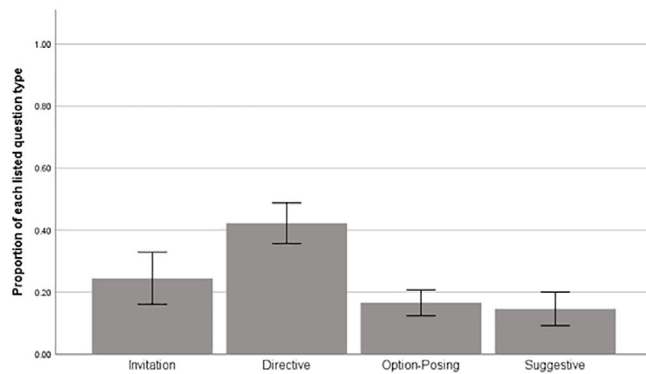
**TABLE 1** Percentage of police officers and victim care officers who responded correctly to statements about memory and child investigative interviewing

No	Statements	Police officers (n = 50)	Victim care officers (n = 23)	Total (N = 73)
1	The brain is capable of unconsciously blocking out memories of traumatic events, such as sexual abuse.	32	39.13	34.25
2	Memory is like a video camera/computer that accurately records events as they actually occurred.	22	17.39	20.55
3	It is impossible for a child to develop false memories of child sexual abuse.	42	17.39	34.25
4	Very vivid memories are more likely to be accurate than vague memories.	10	4.35	8.22
5	A poor memory for childhood events is indicative of a traumatic childhood.	40	60.87	46.58
6	The more confidence a person has when reporting a memory, the more likely it is that the memory is accurate.	6	26.09	12.33
7	Early memories, from the first years of life, are accurately stored and retrievable.	38	30.43	35.62
8	The more emotion with which a memory is reported, the more likely it is to be accurate.	24	26.09	24.66
9	It is possible for an individual to distinguish between true and false memories.	16	30.43	20.55
10	Memory is not influenced by suggestion.	34	47.83	38.36
11	In cases of alleged abuse against more than one child, conducting a group interview with all children, will be more accurate.	56	60.87	57.53
12	Compared to adults, children remember more details about events they have experienced.	34	39.13	35.62
13	Compared to adults, a child's memory for an event they witnessed or experienced is more vulnerable to subsequent suggestive influence.*	70	60.87	67.12
14	Witnesses sometimes change their accounts of an event, either during an interview or between interviews, because of pressure put on them by an authority figure. Compared to adults, children are less susceptible to such influence from authority.	26	43.48	31.51
15	When a child's statements are detailed and rich, it means that the child is remembering correctly.	22	21.74	21.92
16	Police investigators should use focussed-questions (e.g., When? Where? How?) rather than open-ended questions (Tell me what happened) when interviewing children.	36	39.13	36.99
17	Anatomically correct dolls should be used to explore the details of the sexual abuse when interviewing child victims.	4	0	2.74
18	The child's non-verbal behaviour during the interview is the best predictor of the accuracy of the child's statement.	8	8.70	8.22
19	If a witness mentions details of an event later but not mentioned in earlier statement, those details are less likely accurate.	62	65.22	63.01
20	Repeated interview improves memory retrieval of the event then lead to complete and accurate statement.	36	47.83	39.73

Note: Item 13 marked with an asterisk indicates that it has broad scientific consensus (i.e., true statement).

52.0%),  $p = .019$ . For the statement 'The more confidence a person has when reporting a memory, the more likely it is that the memory is accurate', more victim care officers answered accurately ( $n = 6$ , 26.1% versus  $n = 3$ , 6.0%)  $p = .024$ . For the statement 'If a witness mentions details of an event later but not mentioned in earlier statement, those details are less likely accurate', all pairwise comparisons were not statistically significant ( $p > .01$ ).

Participants rated their understanding or knowledge of children who are interviewed as alleged sexual abuse victims or witnesses on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = very limited, 7 = very well). The average rating for police officers was 4.16 ( $SD = 1.75$ ), while for victim care officers the average rating was 5.22 ( $SD = 1.31$ ). When asked how satisfied they are with the outcome of their work with children who are interviewed as alleged sexual abuse victims or witnesses on a



**FIGURE 1** Proportion of each of the four main substantive question type

seven-point Likert scale (1 = not satisfied, 7 = very satisfied), police officers reported an average rating of 4.34 ( $SD = 1.73$ ), while victim care officers had an average rating of 5.22 ( $SD = 1.31$ ). A Mann-Whitney  $U$  test showed that knowledge and satisfaction ratings for victim care officers (mean rank = 45.04 and 44.70 respectively) were significantly higher than those of police officers (mean rank = 32.49 and 33.46 respectively),  $U = 760$ ,  $z = 2.41$ ,  $p = .016$  and  $U = 752$ ,  $z = 2.14$ ,  $p = .033$  respectively.

The questions participants listed in response to the case vignette were coded with reference to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) manual on utterance types (following Ahern & Lamb, 2017). Responses were first categorised into non-substantive and substantive utterances. The substantive utterances were then coded into four different question types, namely invitations (e.g., *Tell me everything that happened*), directives (e.g., *Where did it happen*), option-posing (e.g., *Did it hurt*), and suggestive (i.e., anything that implies a particular response is expected). A question that contains material that was not disclosed at the beginning (e.g., *Who did something bad to you*) or sounds risky from the outset (e.g., *Do you understand what rape means*) was coded as suggestive. The first author and a research assistant who was trained by the first author performed the coding independently; there was a good inter-rater agreement, Cohen's  $\kappa = .75$  (95% CI, .69 to .80),  $p < .001$ . Disagreements were resolved through discussions with the third author, who is also trained in using the NICHD protocol. The responses were not translated to English for coding to ensure that the original expressions by the participants were retained.

More than half of the police respondents (58.3%;  $n = 48$ ) included non-substantive utterances, which are excluded from the current analyses. The total number of substantive utterances listed was 388 ( $M = 8.08$ ,  $SD = 6.30$ , range 0–31 questions), out of which 60 (15.46%) were invitations, 183 (47.16%) were directives, 81 (20.88%) were option-posing, and 54 (13.92%) were suggestive. There were also nine (2.32%) utterances that include mention of dolls and drawings (e.g., interviewing asking the child to demonstrate something with the dolls or drawings) and one (0.26%) summary question which were coded separately as they did not fit into any of the four main question types. Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of each

substantive question type for the police respondents. The proportions for all four main question types were also calculated for each participant. A one-way repeated measures analysis of variance revealed that there were statistically different proportions across the four question types  $F(2.20, 101.04) = 12.05$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .21$ . Post hoc analysis with a Bonferroni adjustment showed that there were significantly more directive than option-posing and suggestive utterances, with a difference of 2.57 (95% CI, .15 to .37) and 2.77 (95% CI, .15 to .40) respectively,  $p < .001$ .

## 4 | DISCUSSION

One section of this study examined beliefs about memory and investigative interviewing among police and victim care officers in Malaysia. As expected in light of the existing literature, child protection professionals who deal with child abuse cases did not fully endorse beliefs that are consistent with the up-to-date scientific literature on memory and investigative interviewing. Less than half of the total participants responded accurately to most statements; the exceptions were two items in which most participants provided science-consistent responses: item 13 relates to the accurate belief that children's memories are more vulnerable to suggestive influence than adults, while item 19 relates to the correct belief that a witness may mention details of an event at a later time which does not indicate inaccuracy of the recall.

The current study found that more victim care officers than police officers inaccurately believed that children may not develop false memories of child sexual abuse. However, previous studies have shown the possibility for children to develop false memories of abuse through suggestive interviewing and social influence (Garven et al., 1998; Schreiber et al., 2006). Additionally, more police officers believed that there is a positive relationship between confidence in memory recall and accuracy. In a commentary, Otgaar et al. (2017) argued that not only is it common for individuals to be susceptible to creating false memories, but individuals also often report implanted false memories with high confidence. Overall, current findings are in line with previous findings (e.g., Jiang & Luo, 2016; Melinder et al., 2004; Sumampouw et al., 2021) concerning the lack of knowledge among child protection professionals, including police investigators.

As much as we would like to think that professional knowledge reflects scientific insight, as pointed out by Goodman and Melinder (2007) in their review, the expertise of professionals working in the criminal justice system is not necessarily always evidence-informed, even if they are more confident about their practice or decision-making. Police practitioners are not forensic experts who are expected to engage in the current literature, so it is unsurprising that they endorse beliefs that are not scientifically based. Victim care officers in Malaysia typically have some background in psychology, but as generalists they cover a wide range of victim services within their job scope, ranging from rapport-building with alleged victims (children and adults) prior to the investigative interviews to counselling after



the investigation is complete. This situation is not ideal, seeing that with the workload expectations victim care officers simply do not have the capacity to engage in specialist training to enable them to be more competent in their jobs. Moreover, while any interaction with the alleged victim or witness before the formal investigative interviewing should not focus on information-gathering, it is inevitable that this may happen. For instance, the child may have disclosed information about the alleged abuse to caregivers, doctors, teachers, welfare officers, or victim care officers prior to the investigation. Researchers in child investigative interviews have noted the issues that may arise as a result of multiple interviews (albeit informal), particularly in relation to the potential misleading influences that may contaminate their testimonies (Ceci & Bruck, 1995; however, see La Rooy et al., 2010 for the benefits of repeated interviewing). It is very common for alleged victims to go through multiple interviews during the forensic process, but it is important for the abovementioned frontliners as well as decision-makers to be well-equipped with knowledge of memory, suggestibility, and eyewitness capabilities, in order to understand the implications for the investigations.

The other section of this study assessed child investigative interviewing practices of Malaysian police through the examination of their interview plans in response to a fictional child sexual abuse case. Ideally, interviewers would use more invitation-type, open-prompt questions, but current findings demonstrated that in comparison with the other question types, the proportion of suggestive-type questions was relatively low as well. Comparing these with findings from Sumampouw et al.'s (2020) study among Indonesian interviewers, police officers in Malaysia appeared to be more well-aware of the dangers of option-posing and suggestive questions in child investigative interviews. The illustration in Figure 1 is in line with police officers' answers to the statement "*Police investigators should use focussed-questions rather than open-ended questions when interviewing children*", although the revised NICHD protocol (Hershkowitz et al., 2014) recommends that the interviewer pairs open-ended invitations with directive questions whenever possible.

Besides, although the police respondents were asked to prepare a list of question related to alleged abuse, there was evidence that a small number of them had plans to engage in rapport-building with the alleged child victim in the hypothetical scenario. These are encouraging findings indicating that Malaysian police engage in positive interview practices. Meanwhile, a more concerning finding is the mention of props or visual aids such as dolls and drawing in the planned interviews. In Santtila et al. (2004) and Lamb et al. (1996), concerns about the use of dolls were raised, as its use tended to increase suggestive and longer questions by the interviewer and elicit less detailed responses from children. There is, however, very limited evidence on its effectiveness, and the general consensus among child interview experts is that props should be avoided (Poole et al., 2011).

It is perhaps worth noting the limitations and barriers associated with this study, as well as their implications. Police officers were recruited through snowball sampling, through an administrative officer based at the police headquarters who acted as a gatekeeper. The representativeness of the sample is therefore not guaranteed as the

researchers had little control over who receives information about the study. This also means that it is unclear what the response rate was. Due to low response rate despite a couple of reminders, it was suggested to the researchers that they took a top-down approach, that is, to seek cooperation from superiors at D11 to instruct officers to take part in this study. This is particularly interesting, as such data collection practices are not unheard of in organisations that operate under a hierarchical structure, even if they can be frowned upon by research ethics committees in most Western countries. The discussion of this phenomenon is relevant because it highlights the importance of taking into account cultural considerations when identifying training needs and designing training programmes. As an example, Malaysia sits very high on the Hofstede's (1980) power distance dimension, which means that individuals within such societies accept a hierarchical structure and are less likely to challenge authority. Children from such cultures are often expected to be obedient to those in positions of authority, and as such adhering to best practices such as establishing rapport to engage with the child is not necessarily intuitive to some child protection professionals who adopt these social expectations.

The key takeaway from the current findings, however, is that knowledge and skills gap among practitioners can be rectified through training, supervision, evaluation and feedback, as well as continuing education (St-Yves et al., 2014). Having said that, an issue that transcends all nations is that research-based knowledge does not always transfer to work in the field. Griffiths and Milne (2018) developed the Framework for Investigative Transformation (Griffiths & Milne, 2018), pointing out that there are several factors that need to be in place to ensure that organisations apply the best evidence in investigative interviewing, and also policing in general: (i) leadership that encourages institutional culture or change towards evidence-based approaches, (ii) a legislative framework that allows transparency and fairness, (iii) a mindset or cognitive style that is open to effective techniques among investigators, (iv) the right knowledge base to apply appropriate methods, (v) an organisational training and knowledge regime to optimise learning, (vi) quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate performance, (vii) corresponding ability of the investigators to acquire and apply the learnt skills, and (viii) access to technology. Particularly relevant to the context in Malaysia are leadership and open-mindedness. The motivation to make a positive change in the criminal justice system usually arises after high-profile miscarriages of justice happen, in which there is a demand for the governmental authorities to increase accountability and transparency in their practices. With more awareness and continued training, it is expected that there will be more positive investigation outcomes, and this may motivate investigators to be more open to reflecting upon their own methods and techniques. Findings from this study serve as a foundation for intervention and policymaking, especially in a country that is seeking to move forward in terms of investigative interviewing research and practice.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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