Beliefs of Forensic Investigators Regarding Bi- and Uni-directional Behavior Analysis

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Abstract

In bi-directional behavior analysis, investigators look for changes in behaviors to detect deceit by interviewees, regardless of whether the result may be more or less of a behavior. Uni-directional analysis requires that either more or less of a behavior is observed, for example deceivers’ eye contact may be expected to decrease. Forensic investigation training materials refer to both approaches, bi- and uni-directional, and it is an empirical question whether a majority of investigators believes in either approach. A survey of 55 investigators’ beliefs with regard to 13 verbal and non-verbal behaviors found that the majority opinion sided with the uni-directional approach. This result held whether or not investigators had a background in policing. Implications for education and practice are discussed.

Keywords: deceit, fraud, interview.

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