



Police Interviewing in Nigeria: Examining Self-reported Investigative Interviewing Practices of Police Investigators in Lagos, Nigeria



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Ethical approval

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the Ontario Tech University Research Ethics Board (File No. 16890).

ABSTRACT

In the criminal justice system, investigative interviewing is crucial for getting information that helps law enforcement agencies resolve cases. While there is a relative wealth of scholarly studies on investigative interviewing procedures in the West, there is a paucity of empirical research assessing this concept in an African context. Specifically, very few studies have sought to assess how police investigators conduct investigative interviews in Africa. To begin to fill this gap in the literature, police investigators (N = 64) in the Criminal Investigation Department of the Nigeria Police Force in

Lagos State were surveyed regarding their investigative interviewing practices and training. Most officers reported receiving some interview training, but only a few had been specifically trained on evidence-based investigative interviewing techniques. Most police officers also reported not favouring the application of coercive techniques in their interviews. These findings provide important insights into investigative interviewing practices in Lagos, Nigeria and highlight the need to consider non-WEIRD samples in interviewing research.

Key Words: Investigative interviewing, criminal investigation, interrogation, police interviewing

Introduction

Investigative interviewing involves systematically questioning an individual to gather comprehensive details of an event or occurrence as part of a larger investigative procedure (Meissner et al., 2021). The information gained from interviewees is vital in successfully resolving criminal cases, as they are often the primary or sole source that can provide details regarding the target event (Akca et al., 2021). Even if other tangible evidence exists, questioning the individuals involved can provide the context necessary to fill in knowledge gaps and further put the evidence in perspective (e.g., issues surrounding consent in sexual assault cases; Westera et al., 2016). Over the past century, various investigative interviewing concepts and procedures have been studied in psychological science literature (Milne et al., 2008). More recently, there has been a growing consensus that information-gathering questioning approaches should be favoured over more confrontational and confession-focused approaches (Meissner et al., 2021).

While several studies have examined the real-world application of investigative interviewing practices (Chung et al., 2022; Hill & Moston, 2011; Kassin et al., 2007; Schell-Leugers et al., 2023 & Soukara et al., 2009), this topic is rarely examined in African settings. The current study, therefore, sought to begin addressing this gap in the interviewing literature by assessing investigative interviewing practices in Nigeria. Specifically, the goal was to survey police investigators in Lagos, Nigeria, regarding their current interviewing practices and the training they had received. With very

little literature highlighting the African context, a study like this provides vital information regarding investigative interviewing practices outside of previously studied regions (e.g., North America, United Kingdom, Asia). This will both provide insights into how current approaches match suggested best practices, while also identifying any cultural aspects that may suggest a need for techniques tailored to the unique Nigerian and African context.

Investigative Interviewing Practices

Scholars have studied the art and science of investigative interviewing for at least a century (e.g., Munsterberg, 1908), and many different questioning techniques have been developed and implemented during this time. As outlined by French (2019), physical abuse and schemes referred to as third-degree were adopted in police interrogations in Western contexts until the mid-1930s. The incorporation of third-degree schemes like isolation, starvation, verbal abuse, and physical assault with rubber hoses (Kozinski, 2018) was initially executed discreetly, but as the details of these approaches became public, juries and judges began to question the reliability of confessional statements arising from these techniques. This resulted in widespread reforms in the United States (Chen, 2021), including a switch to psychologically persuasive approaches such as the Reid Technique, which was devised by Fred Inbau and John E. Reid but was made popular by John E. Reid (Kozinski, 2018; Vrij et al., 2017).

The overarching approach of Reid's interrogation aspect is to generate admissions from suspects believed to be guilty by expressing certainty in their guilt and minimizing the moral seriousness of the crime while maximizing the consequences of denying involvement (Kassin, 2006). Although the Reid technique has been widely implemented, its confrontational approach, overreliance on non-verbal cues and potential risk of false confessions are highlighted as some of its flaws (Kozinski, 2018; Moore & Fitzsimmons, 2011).

More recently, The PEACE model was developed due to police reforms in England and Wales (Bull & Rachlew, 2020). The PEACE (Preparation and Planning, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure and Evaluation) model is a newer approach widely regarded as the current best practice in suspect interviewing (Akca et al., 2021). This model promotes a non-accusatory and information-gathering approach to investigative interviewing, and its key aspects include rapport building, evidence presentation, proper question types and sequence, and questioning inconsistencies in the interviewees' account in an inquisitorial manner (Snook et al., 2010). There has been a fundamental shift in countries worldwide from confrontational techniques, such as the Reid Technique, to information elicitation strategies underpinned by rapport building, such as the PEACE model (Meissner et al., 2017).

Another key interviewing model is the Cognitive Interview, developed in the 1980s by Geiselman and Fisher. It was created as a response to continued requests for an improved method for interviewing witnesses

made by law enforcement agencies and legal practitioners. This model comprises various memory retrieval techniques and is rooted in the psychological science of remembering (Memon et al., 2015). Empirical findings based on laboratory studies have revealed that incorporating the CI in witness interviews can greatly increase the likelihood of recalling correct details while only increasing the likelihood of recalling incorrect details on a smaller scale (Memon, 2006; Schrieber & Fisher, 2006, as cited in Memon et al., 2015).

The PEACE model involves aspects of the Cognitive Interview (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992) and seeks to maximize information disclosures by building rapport with interviewees, asking open-ended questions and remaining open-minded throughout the interview, and challenging inconsistencies in an inquisitorial manner where necessary (Snook et al., 2010). The PEACE model is widely regarded as the current best practice in interviewing suspects, and law enforcement agencies worldwide have now adopted the principles of the approach (Akca et al., 2021).

Interviewing Techniques and Training Used in Practice

While evidence-based interviewing procedures such as PEACE have been developed to improve investigative interviewing practices in real-world settings, research suggests that law enforcement agencies follow them rarely (Akca et al., 2021; Chung et al., 2022). This research has been centred primarily within Western countries (e.g., Australia, United States, Canada, Spain and England: Hill & Moston, 2011; Kassin et al., 2007; Schell-Leugers et al., 2023; Soukara et

al., 2009) and, to a lesser extent, Asia (e.g., Indonesia & Malaysia: Chung et al., 2022; Sumampouw et al., 2020).

For example, Kassin and colleagues (2007) used a self-report survey to assess police practices and beliefs in North America. Respondents were 631 investigators from police departments in America and customs officials in Canada. Investigative interviewing techniques that were reported to be commonly used involved physically isolating the suspects, identifying contradictions in suspects' accounts, establishing rapport, confronting suspects with the evidence of their guilt and appealing to their self-interests. This study's respondents believed they were usually successful at obtaining admissions and confessions. Respondents also reported they were 77% accurate at truth and lie detection and elicited self-incriminating statements from 68% of suspects and approximately 5% of innocent individuals. Overall, 81% of participants felt that interrogations should be recorded.

Schell-Leugers and colleagues (2023) conducted a similar study examining police beliefs and practices in Spain. Participants [Guardia Civil ($n = 89$) and Policía Nacional investigators ($n = 126$)] in this study completed an online survey. It was reported that when compared to the North American findings, Spanish investigators were less likely to favour coercive interrogation techniques and conducted fewer and shorter interviews. Police investigators in this study estimated that they could determine truth and deception about 80% of the time. This figure is relatively close to what Kassin and colleagues (2007) obtained in the study involving North American investigators. We

should note, however, that the North American study was published in 2007, and there might be a shift in North American officers' investigative interviewing practices in recent years.

In an Australian study, Hill and Moston (2011) surveyed 2,769 police investigators from the Queensland Police Service. The study assessed their current training and supervision and usage of investigative interviewing techniques. Results showed that only 52% of the respondents had received training on investigative interviewing, while 48% had not. When asked to rate their satisfaction regarding the training they had received, 42% reported they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 38% reported they were dissatisfied, and 20% reported they were very satisfied. Most of the respondents in this study reported that they could detect deception during suspect interviews. Results showed that in the Australian study, police investigators reported using a combination of informational gathering approaches (i.e., asking open questions) and confrontational techniques (i.e., positive confrontation) during suspect interviews. Over 40% of the respondents reported using intimidation tactics at one point or the other.

Soukara and colleagues (2009) were interested in the operational investigative interviewing techniques police investigators employed during practice in England. Eighty interview recordings that were audio-taped were assessed by forensic psychologists. Results showed that police investigators preferred information-gathering techniques, and coercive tactics were not frequently applied during practice.

In a study conducted in Asia, Chung and colleagues (2022) assessed the perception and investigative interviewing practices of Malaysian police officers. The participants were 44 Royal Malaysian Police investigators in the Sexual, Women and Child Investigations Divisions (D11), a part of the Crime Investigation Department. Based on the results of this study, the authors recommended that police officers should strive to gain the requisite knowledge of best practices for investigative interviews and apply them in practice. Half of the respondents were confident in their deception detection ability, similar to the results from studies using a Western sample of participants. Results also showed that 61% of trained and untrained police investigators in this study rated their investigative interviewing skills as average, which may reflect their lack of confidence in their practice.

Sumampouw and colleagues (2020) examined forensic child interviewers in Indonesia. They found that police interviewers relied on suggestive and option-posing questions when conducting forensic interviews involving children—a common trait of police investigators without training in evidence-based practices on child interviewing (see Powell et al., 2016).

While these studies have provided some excellent insights into police interviewing training and practices globally, little is known about police investigative interviewing practices in Nigeria and Africa in general. The current study aimed to address this critical gap in the literature by assessing the beliefs, practices and training of police officers working in Nigeria.

Criminal Investigation in Nigeria

Ladapo (2011) identified eight challenges plaguing criminal investigations in Nigeria: (1) insufficient training of police officers in the criminal investigation process, (2) scarcity of police funding, (3) inadequate record keeping, (4) corruption, (5) reluctance to report illegal activities, (6) shortage of forensics, (7) delays in duplicating case files for further usage and (8) loss of investigation case files. Similarly, in Chinwokwu's (2013) study on police criminal investigation in Enugu state, Nigeria, it was highlighted that corruption, inadequate training, lack of skills and equipment, and lack of regard for due process and best practices were the underlying causes of the increased level of pending and unresolved cases in the criminal investigation process in Enugu State and Nigeria at large.

The Nigeria Police Force's inadequacy in criminal investigation has led to a shift in investigative procedures from seeking, interpreting, and analyzing evidence to forcefully obtaining "confessional" statements from suspects (Alisigwe & Oluwafemi, 2019; Ladapo, 2011). Ladapo (2011) puts forward that 53% ($n = 8$) of prosecutors in Oyo state, Nigeria, rated the police investigators as poor, while 94% ($n = 14$) held the opinion that the results of police investigations adversely contributed to their criminal prosecutions. This lack of adherence to due process has led to the enforcement of torture and abuse of power by the Nigerian police (Alisigwe & Oluwafemi, 2019; Amali & Nwafor-Orizu, 2019; Maiyaki et al., 2019). Therefore, it seems that a suspect-centred approach is adopted in criminal investigations in Nigeria, where criminal investigations heavily rely on the suspect's actions (Alemika & Chukwuma,

2006). The implication is that during prosecutions, many “confessional statements” are challenged in court based on it being obtained involuntarily or by coercion (Ladapo, 2011).

The dependence on information obtained in investigative interviews is further necessitated by the lack of adequate forensic facilities and the application of forensic science in criminal investigations (Agbibo, 2015; Alisigwe & Oluwafemi, 2019; Amali & Nwafor-Orizu, 2019). Alisigwe and Oluwafemi (2019) noted that experts had linked several cold cases in Nigeria to the lack of forensic evidence. The lack of these forensic facilities has led NPF to rely heavily on eyewitness testimonies, confessions, and circumstantial evidence in the criminal investigation process (Alisigwe & Oluwafemi, 2019; Amali & Nwafor-Orizu, 2019).

In the few studies available on criminal investigations in Nigeria, the lack of adequate personnel training involved in the process has been heavily emphasized (Alisigwe & Oluwafemi, 2019; Chinwokwu, 2013; Ladapo, 2011). Unprofessionalism when dealing with evidence and ineptitude were highlighted in these studies. According to Chinwokwu's (2013) study on a criminal investigation in Enugu state, Nigeria, 61% of respondents were not trained before being posted to the investigation department, and only 18% attended a form of detective training. Furthermore, the author asserted that police officers were posted to the department based on corruption. Ladapo (2011) opined that information sharing between junior officers and seemingly experienced senior officers who have not received training might be how information is obtained to make up for the

lack of organized training or refresher courses. The scarcity of capacity-building training among Nigerian police officers results in the enablement of fraudulent acts and practices, and it diminishes motivation to properly carry out their duties (Umar et al., 2013).

It is difficult to precisely ascertain the investigative interviewing procedures adopted in Nigeria as very few studies have examined this concept in the Nigerian context. The available studies examined investigative interviewing from a linguist's perspective. For example, linguists have suggested that the term “interrogation” is more commonly used to refer to investigative interviewing in the Nigerian literature (Farinde et al., 2021; Maiyaki et al., 2019). Ajayi (2016) highlighted that interrogation was more commonly used among police officers in Nigeria and further delineated between interrogation and interviewing. Interviewing was defined as non-accusatory and involved information elicitation, while interrogation was more accusatory and confrontational.

Criminal Justice and the Nigerian Government

There have been some progressive efforts by the legislative arm of the government of Nigeria to enhance the criminal justice system. In recent years, the enactment of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA), 2015, has been the most significant. The Act is universally applied in Nigeria, where law enforcement agencies instituted by the constitution or federal legislation operate (Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015). The Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) presents comprehensive provisions for

suspects, victims, witnesses, and other aspects of the criminal justice system. Section 15(4) of the ACJA mandates that confessional statements voluntarily divulged by suspects with or without warrants must be documented in writing. It also encourages electronic documentation on a video compact disc or audiovisual medium but does not mandate this. Nevertheless, the provision of section 15(4) of the Act, section 15(5), permits an oral confession to be admissible as evidence (Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015). However, scholars have questioned the implementation of this Act in the practice of law enforcement agencies in Nigeria (Adewumi & Dawodu, 2016; Maiyaki et al., 2019).

Additionally, in an attempt to provide a guideline for criminal justice within the context of terrorism, which has increased over the years in Nigeria, while also addressing the human rights concerns underpinning investigative interviews in terrorist cases, the *Nigeria Training Module on Investigative Interviewing, the Right to Remain Silent and the Prohibition of Torture* was developed. This module was developed as a joint effort by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Nigerian stakeholders under the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS) and was published in 2022. The module offers strategies for training different parties in the criminal justice system: law enforcement officials, judges, defence lawyers, public prosecutors and legal advisers within the Nigerian context. It addresses human rights and terrorism investigations, effective investigative interviews with a focus on *The Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering* (The

Mendez principles), the right to remain silent, barring and preventing torture and other inhumane acts, the inadmissibility of evidence obtained under coercive circumstances, gender differences and child victims/witnesses in investigative interviewing related to terrorism cases (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022).

As highlighted above, recent developments by the Nigerian government and its agencies reveal some efforts to improve the criminal investigation and criminal justice process. However, the extant literature reveals very little about what occurs during investigative interviews in the Nigerian context.

THE CURRENT STUDY

While there has been some research on the broader topic of criminal investigations in Nigeria, no study appears to directly assess investigative interviewing practices in the Nigerian context. Based on the limited literature on this topic and the study's exploratory nature, hypotheses were not posed. Rather, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the current state of investigative interviewing practices in Lagos State Nigeria from the perspective of police investigators?
- What type of interview training, if any, are officers receiving?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The initial sample consisted of 80 police officers. Sixteen police officers who were not in the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) but officers in the Nigeria Police Force were dropped from the sample¹, resulting in a final sample of 64 police officers (Mage = 46 years, SD = 8, Range = 27 - 58 years) in the FCID at the Lagos State Command in Nigeria. According to World Population Review (2022), it is estimated that Lagos State has a population of 21 million as of 2016, ranking it as Africa's largest city. Lagos State had the highest number of crimes recorded out of the 36 states in Nigeria (Sasu, 2022), making it an ideal location for the study.

Of the 64 participants, 47 identified as male, 14 as female, and three did not include their gender. The self-report demographic breakdown was as follows: Yoruba (47%), Igbo (16%), Hausa (8%), and Others (23%); the remaining participants preferred not to include their tribe (7%).

Participants reported that the average number of years they had been in the Nigeria Police Force was 24 years (Range = 6 - 34 years, SD = 8), while the average number of years participants had been in the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) was 12 years (Range = 2 - 30 years, SD = 8). For interviewing experience, 67% of the participants reported conducting investigative interviews weekly, 13% reported monthly, 6% reported quarterly, and 14% preferred not to answer the question. Similarly, 37% of the participants reported they had carried out approximately over 100

investigative interviews, 11% reported having carried out about 90 - 100 investigative interviews, 10% reported having carried out about 60 - 89 investigative interviews, 24% reported having carried out 30-59 investigative interviews, 8% reported to have carried out between 1 - 29 investigative interviews and 11% of the participants preferred not to disclose this number.

Materials

Paper and Pen Questionnaire

A paper and pen questionnaire (for the complete questionnaire, see OSF portal: https://osf.io/cu6hv/?view_only=08e7c059b0844c6791178bf424193fb1) was created using similar questions from studies that assessed investigative interviewing practices in other parts of the world (See Chung et al., 2022; Kassin et al., 2007). Other elements to fit the Nigerian context were considered while developing the questionnaire (i.e., the inclusion of the question about the Anti-torture Act). The survey consisted of seven pages. The first page consisted of demographic questions (i.e., age, gender, tribe) and participants' years in the Nigeria Police Force and Force Criminal Investigative Department. The second page contained questions on participants' training level, confidence, and satisfaction with their investigative interviewing skills. The third page contained questions on their truth and lie detection skills, confidence level, awareness, and application of several investigative interviewing techniques, which continued on pages four to six. The seventh

¹ For this study, data analysis was limited to officers in the FCID who are primarily tasked with carrying

out police interviews, future analysis might be explored incorporating all 80 police officers.

page contained questions about criminal investigation, specifically in the Nigerian context. The Consent Form, which highlighted the purpose and procedures, was presented in a separate booklet.

Procedure

Participants were police officers in the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) at the Lagos State Command in Nigeria. The FCID is the division in charge of the investigation in the Nigeria Police. It is responsible for investigating and prosecuting minor and complicated criminal cases within and outside Nigeria. It coordinates various crime investigations across the Nigeria Police Force (Nigeria Police Force, n.d.).

Participants were recruited through the convenience sampling method, and ₦500 (\$1.58) was offered as an incentive for their participation. A research assistant based in Nigeria, alongside a supervisor at the police station, informed the police officers of the study by announcing it at the police station, and officers indicated their interest in the study by verbally answering the call out. The interested officers were then given the Consent Form and Paper and Pen Questionnaire to fill out on a first-come, first-serve basis. The interested police officers completed two copies of the consent forms on their desks, after which they indicated they were done by raising their hands. Participants retained one copy of the consent form and completed the paper and pen questionnaire. Upon completing the document, they submitted the questionnaire by raising their hands and were thanked by the research assistant/supervisor for completing the study. The incentive was

disbursed at the end of completion. After the completion of the study, the study materials were shipped to Canada to be analyzed.

RESULTS

Note that some participants in this study did not give a response to one or more items; therefore, there are slightly different sample sizes across the analyses reported in this section.

Research Question 1. *What is the current state of interviewing practices in Lagos State Nigeria from the perspective of police investigators?*

Respondents ($n = 62$) rated their satisfaction with their existing knowledge of investigative interviewing techniques on a five-point Likert scale. In terms of results, 37% reported being very satisfied, 24% reported they were somewhat satisfied, 13% reported they were neither unsatisfied nor satisfied, 8% reported they were somewhat unsatisfied, 8% reported they were very unsatisfied, and 10% preferred not to disclose their answer.

Similarly, respondents ($n = 63$) rated their confidence level in their skills to carry out criminal investigative interviews on a five-point Likert scale: 52% reported being very confident, 21% reported being moderately confident, 18% reported being confident, 5% reported to be somewhat confident, 2% reported to be very unconfident and 3% preferred not to answer the question. In an open-ended question, participants were asked to approximate the minutes/hours they spent before preparing for an interview. They reported varying times they spent

preparing for an interview. The most common responses were 30 minutes ($n = 11$), 1 hour ($n = 11$), 20 minutes ($n = 5$), depending on the case ($n = 5$), 2 hours ($n = 4$).

Recording of Interviews

When asked if respondents recorded their investigative interviews, 89% reported ‘yes,’ 8% reported ‘no,’ and 3% preferred not to answer the question. In terms of recording format, 43% of the respondents reported that they recorded the interviews in a written format, 38% recorded in a video format, and 19% recorded the interviews in an audio format. Most (91%) respondents ($n = 58$)

agreed that suspect interviews should be recorded, 2% disagreed, and 6% preferred not to answer the question.

Truth and Lie Detection

Respondents were asked to rate the accuracy of their truth and lie detection skills on a scale of 1 to 100. Results are displayed in Table 1. 31% of respondents rated their ability to detect lies as 80 on the scale. Likewise, 30% of respondents rated their ability to detect truth as 80 on the scale. They were also asked to provide the basis for their assumption of truth and deception in an open-ended format.

TABLE 1. Participants’ lie and truth detection accuracy level on a scale of 1 to 100

% of respondents (lie detection)		% of respondents (truth detection)	
30	3	5	3
40	6	50	24
45	3	55	5
50	11	60	14
60	17	65	3
65	3	70	3
70	8	72	3
75	6	75	5
80	31	80	30
90	3	90	14
100	11	95	3
		100	3

Familiarity and Application of Investigative Interviewing Techniques

Participants were asked to rate their familiarity with various interviewing techniques (Reid technique, PEACE model, Cognitive Interview) on a five-point Likert scale (Table 2). As can be seen, for the Reid technique, 31% of respondents were

extremely aware, and 9% were not at all aware; for the PEACE model, 36% of respondents were extremely aware, 5% were not at all aware; and for the Cognitive Interview: 32% respondents were moderately aware, 6% were not at all aware. Similarly, participants rated the frequency of applying these interviewing techniques (Reid technique, PEACE model, Cognitive Interview)

in their practice on a five-point Likert scale (Table 3). As can be seen, for the Reid technique, 21% of respondents applied this technique almost every time, and 9% never applied this technique; for the PEACE model:

30% of respondents applied the PEACE model almost every time, 4% never applied this model, and for the Cognitive Interview: 27% applied the Cognitive Interview occasionally, and 4% never applied this technique.

TABLE 2. Participants’ ratings of their familiarity with various investigative interviewing techniques on a 5-point Likert scale

Interview Techniques	% of respondents					
	Not at all aware	Slightly aware	Somewhat aware	Moderately aware	Extremely aware	Prefer not to answer
REID Technique	9	14	14	21	31	12
PEACE Model	5	14	12	22	36	10
Cognitive Interview	6	15	6	32	30	11

TABLE 3. Participants’ ratings on the frequency of the application of various investigative interviewing techniques on a 5-point Likert scale

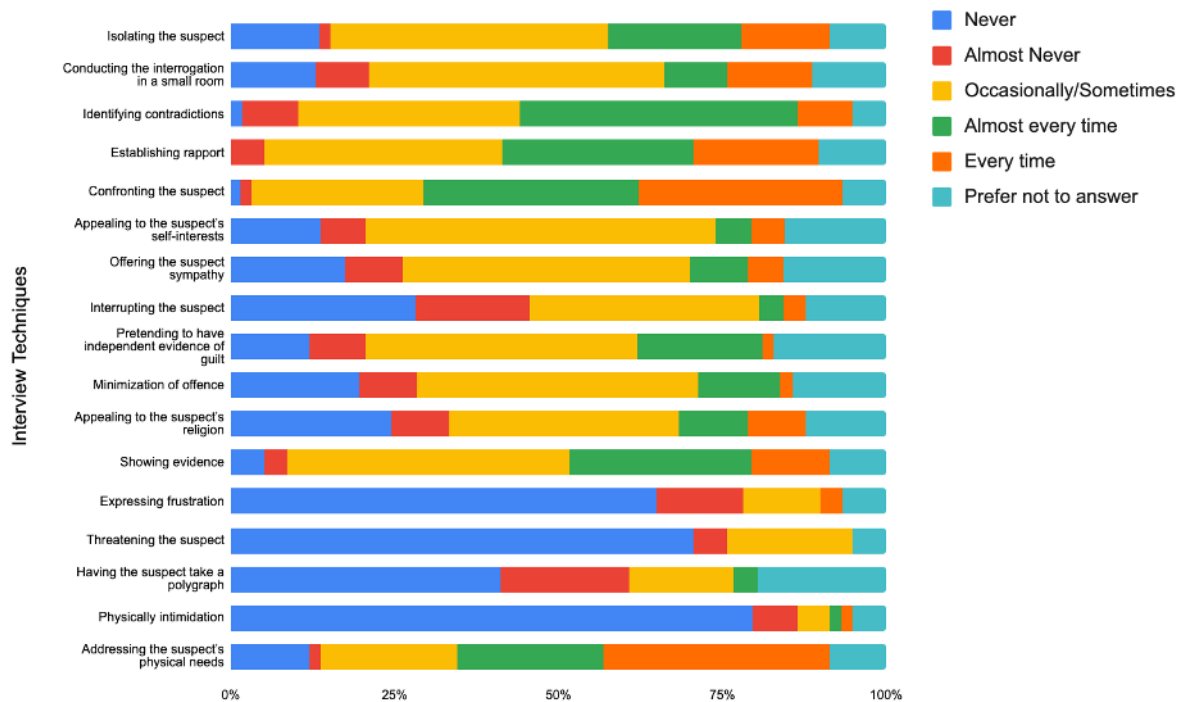
Interview Techniques	% of respondents					
	Never	Almost Never	Occasionally / Sometimes	Almost every time	Every time	Prefer not to answer
REID Technique	9	7	38	21	14	12
PEACE Model	4	4	32	30	18	13
Cognitive Interview	4	15	27	22	14	18

Interviewing Tactics

To further understand the current investigative interviewing practices of police officers in NPF, participants were asked to rate the frequency of their practical application of various investigative interviewing tactics on a five-point Likert scale (Figure 1).

As can be seen, 42% occasionally isolated the suspect, 29% established rapport almost every time, 44% occasionally offered the suspect sympathy or moral justification and excuses, 80% never physically intimidated the suspects, 65% never expressed frustration or anger at the suspect, and 71% never threatened the suspect with consequences for not cooperating.

FIG. 1 A chart displaying the frequency of respondents' application of interviewing tactics



Investigative Interviewing Practice in Nigeria

When asked if participants read any interviewing-related rights or laws to suspects before an interview, 86% reported that they did, 7% reported they did not read any interviewing-related rights or laws to suspects, and 7% preferred not to answer. 85% of participants in this study were aware of the Anti-torture Act of 2017, 2% were unaware, and 14% did not disclose the information.

Additionally, 59% of the participants in this study reported that they did not interview suspects and witnesses in the same manner. In comparison, 31% of the participants reported they did, and 10% preferred not to answer. When asked to further elaborate on this difference, open-ended responses revealed that *interviews* were usually

conducted with victims and witnesses, and *interrogations* were conducted with suspects. Also, suspects were given a *word of caution* (i.e., similar to Miranda's right) while witnesses were free to speak.

When asked if there was a name for the interviewing technique adopted in Nigeria, 40% of the participants reported yes, 24% reported no, and 36% preferred not to answer the question. Participants who reported that there was a name for the investigative interview technique adopted in Nigeria had a variety of responses (i.e., *interview is interview*, UNODC, ACJA) when asked to name the technique. The most common response was the Reid technique. However, this was from only 6 of the 19 respondents.

Research Question 2. *What type of interview training are officers receiving, if any?*

When asked if participants had received training on skills for criminal investigation or interviewing, 71% reported 'yes,' 18% reported 'no,' and 12% preferred not to answer the question. Participants who reported having received some training provided more details in an open-ended response. Respondents reported having received detective training, human rights training, crime, police training courses, cybersecurity, and basic intelligence courses. Respondents ($n = 62$) rated their satisfaction with their current level of investigative interviewing on a five-point Likert scale: 37% reported being very satisfied with their current training level, 27% reported being somewhat unsatisfied, 10% reported being neither unsatisfied nor satisfied, 9% reported being somewhat satisfied, 9% reported being very unsatisfied, and 7% preferred not to answer the question.

DISCUSSION

This study assessed the current investigative interviewing techniques and officers' training in the Force Criminal Department of the Nigeria Police Force in Lagos State. In terms of interviewing tactics, many police officers in this study reported that they never physically intimidated suspects during investigative interviews. Similarly, many reported not expressing impatience, frustration, or anger at the suspect. This result is inconsistent with other studies that have reported the NPF's use of force and other physically intimidating tactics during criminal investigations (Alisigwe & Oluwafemi, 2019; Maiyaki et al., 2019). Various reasons could explain the difference in the results. Police officers might have become more aware of the negative reputation associated with physical intimidation and might be reluctant to admit

that they engage in such acts. Another explanation for this is that police officers might now be valuing building rapport as the study's findings reveal a substantial number of police officers reported establishing rapport in their interviews and also addressing the suspect's physical needs, such as bathroom breaks and food. Therefore, with these measures in place, there might be less concentration on forcefully eliciting information.

Additionally, rapport building is an essential technique in various investigative interviewing frameworks (Cognitive Interview, Reid technique, PEACE model; Geiselman & Fisher, 2014; Inbau et al., 2013; Milne & Bull, 1999; Snook et al., 2010). Hence, if police officers know these investigative interviewing strategies, there might be less emphasis on physically and forcefully eliciting information. This result is similar to the Spanish and English studies (see Schell-Leugers et al., 2023; Soukara et al., 2009), where more police investigators favoured using non-coercive methods in the interview process but inconsistent with the North American findings (Kassin et al., 2007). Our findings, paired with the results of Schell-Leugers and colleagues (2023), point to a pattern whereby investigators might be departing from using coercive techniques and embracing non-confrontational interviewing techniques. It is also essential to note that interview practices in North America might have changed since 2007. At the same time, it is important to highlight that many police officers in this current study reported using minimization tactics (i.e., minimizing the moral seriousness of the offence), which have been criticized as coercive and linked to false confessions (Kassin, 2014).

Many police officers also reported appealing to the suspect's religion or conscience during interviews. As a society where religion is deeply entrenched (Ngbea & Achunike, 2014), it is unsurprising that police officers use religion-based persuasion techniques in their interaction with suspects. Similar to Chung and colleagues (2022) Malaysian study, this study is not based on a sample collected from Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) countries (Henrich et al., 2010). We believe this finding draws attention to the reality that strategies and practices may differ within non-WEIRD countries.

Concerning perceptions of deception detection skills, more than half of the police officers in this sample were confident in their truth and lie detection skills. This finding is consistent with literature where people often overestimate their ability to detect deception (Vrij et al., 2019). The literature also reveals that law enforcement officers, like laypeople, could be better discerners of truth and deception, and training cannot be relied on to improve this skill (Granhag & Stromwall, 2004; Memon et al., 2003). It is consistent with literature for law enforcement agencies to be more confident in differentiating truth and false confessions than lay people, but they are not necessarily more accurate (Kassin et al., 2005). While some police officers reported they would base their assumption of truth and lie on the evidence at hand, many police officers reported they based their assumptions on non-verbal cues, which research has shown to be unreliable (Vrij et al., 2019). On average, police investigators in this study reported a 70% self-reported accuracy rate when the suspect was telling lies and a 68% self-reported accuracy rate when the suspect was telling

the truth. While this figure is concerning, it is lower than some figures researchers examining the concept have obtained from other countries (Hill & Moston, 2011; Kassin et al., 2007; Schell-Leugers et al., 2023). This specific result should be interpreted cautiously as various factors might explain these inconsistencies (i.e., the smaller sample size used in the current study).

Regarding training, we found that a substantial number of police officers in the study were familiar with investigative interviewing frameworks (Reid technique, PEACE model, Cognitive Interview) and occasionally applied them in their practice. While this is promising, further directed questioning would be needed to assess officers' actual understanding of these techniques, their practical applications, and police investigators' awareness of their shortcomings.

While the police officers have received some form of training, from the open-ended questions, it can be inferred that most of them received this training at the beginning of their career (i.e., detective training), which is insufficient and might not be well equipped to meet today's needs. Respondents indicated training as far back as 1992 and, more recently, in 2022. However, the recent training was based on cyber security and personal safety and not specifically on investigative interviewing. Very few respondents alluded to receiving training that could be classified as evidence-based for investigative interviewing. This result is consistent with findings that show that most police investigators in the NPF only go through the three-month basic training where priority is placed on physical training

and not necessarily crime investigation (Tamuno, 1970 as cited in Ladapo, 2011). Police investigators reporting a lack of adequate training, specifically on best practices for investigative interviewing, is not unique to Nigeria alone. Researchers examining this concept also report similar findings in countries worldwide (e.g., Indonesia, Australia, and Spain; Chung et al., 2022; Hill & Moston, 2011; Schell-Leugers et al., 2023; Soukara et al., 2009).

Regarding participants' satisfaction with their training level, findings reveal varying degrees of satisfaction, which might reflect the different levels of training received. This highlights the need for further training and refresher courses to boost police officers' satisfaction levels.

It might be concerning that a substantial amount of police officers in this study were very confident in their knowledge of investigative interviewing skills and satisfied with their training even though a substantial amount still occasionally engaged in "inappropriate investigative interviewing techniques" (i.e., isolating the suspects from family and friends). This finding is inconsistent with a similar study where police officers reported their proficiency more on an average scale (Chung et al., 2022). Their confidence and satisfaction in the skills and knowledge beg the question of whether Nigerian police officers will be receptive to further training, as some of their responses reveal the deficiencies in the strategies adopted in interviewing.

This study also revealed that most suspect interviews are recorded in a written, video or audio format. This insight provides a good

basis for further research studies in the future, as self-reported studies can be compared to what is obtainable in real-life scenarios.

Limitations and Future Directions

Nigeria is a large country with over 200 million people (United Nations Population Fund, n.d.) with diverse cultures. Even though the study was conducted in Lagos State, the small sample size is not a representation of all the police officers in Nigeria, which may impact the generalizability of its findings. Importantly, Lagos State is just one of the thirty-six states in Nigeria. There is a need to examine what is obtainable across Nigeria.

In recent years, the Nigeria Police Force has been associated with much bad press. Police officers, therefore, might feel the need to represent their institution positively, which might influence their responses. In addition, although the responses were anonymous, participants may still have felt pressured to answer in a socially desirable manner. Given the self-report nature of the study, it would be beneficial to investigate interviewing practices by examining real-life transcripts, audio recordings, and videotapes. Using the self-reported opinions of police investigators alone should not be the basis for further decisions (i.e., policy development), and therefore examining objective real-world interviews is a logical next step.

There is also a need to assess the perceptions of individuals who have interacted with the Nigeria Police Force and compare them with self-reported data obtained from police investigators. Despite the weaknesses of self-report data, our results provide a promising

avenue for insights and a basis for conducting other research studies in this area. It is important to emphasize that this study is exploratory and hopefully provides foundational knowledge while also highlighting the need to pursue further knowledge in an African context.

CONCLUSION

This study provides foundational insights into investigative interviewing practices in Lagos, Nigeria. In this study, police investigators were aware of key interviewing frameworks (PEACE model, Cognitive Interview, Reid technique), they reported the application of non-coercive investigative interviewing approaches in their practices, and were confident in their lie detection skills. Some of the results of the study differ from results obtained from Western countries (e.g., North American officers' reliance on coercive techniques). The study also amplifies some culturally specific techniques in investigative interviews (i.e., religion-based persuasion techniques) that might be unique to the Nigerian context. This highlights the significance of the present study as it is not based on a sample from a Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) country (Henrich et al. 2010). We call for more research using non-WEIRD samples as the application of evidence-based investigative interviewing techniques can be further understood while also assessing how rapport is developed and maintained in investigative interviews across various cultural contexts. By identifying investigative interviewing

practices and pivotal gaps in training, the current findings contribute towards a strong roadmap for investigative interviewing training programs in Nigeria moving forward.

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