RELEVANCE

The research presented in this thesis could have relevance to the many situations where we rely on our memory. As explored in Chapter 1, human memory is not always as reliable as we might hope. Memory does not work like a video camera and our memories are prone to distortion. Memory errors within legal settings can have a significant impact on both the individuals who are wrongly imprisoned, but also on society as the real perpetrator is not apprehended. The results reported here provide further insight into human memory.

More specifically, Experiments 3 and 4 examine the important issue of having our memories challenged by other people. In legal settings, witnesses, victims and even offenders can have their memories for past events challenged by investigators. Our findings demonstrate that challenges by other people can result in these memories being withheld in subsequent memory tests. In terms of the real-world, withheld information could limit the amount of available information for investigators.

TARGET GROUPS

Given the relevance of this research to investigative interviewing, it seems plausible to argue that this research is most relevant to investigators. Investigators should be aware of the consequences of challenging the memories of other people. However, the findings reported here would require significantly more research before concrete recommendations could be made to investigators operating in the real world.

ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS

To promote the results of this research, I have presented these research findings at international conferences which have a specific focus on the application of applied research in memory and cognition.
INNOVATION

Research into human memory can rarely be considered innovative. But, with that having said, there are a number of investigative interviewing tools which are used by agencies. For example, police in the UK use an interview protocol based on the Cognitive Interview. Also, based on the Cognitive Interview Geiselman, Fisher, MacKinnon, & Holland, 1985; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992, another investigative interview tool is the Self-Administered Interview© (Gabbert, Hope & Fisher, 2009). Given further research on the topic of this thesis, it is possible that these results could contribute to changes in investigative interviewing tools.

SCHEDULE AND IMPLEMENTATION

As mentioned above, errors in eyewitness memory can result in innocent people going to prison. It could also be argued that rushing to make changes to investigative interviewing process could also increase the risk of miscarriages of justice. Therefore, before any recommendations can be made, the results of this thesis need to be tested further. Furthermore, given the nature of the stimuli used in this research, additional research is needed using ecologically valid stimuli. Therefore, the innovative benefits of this research will be slowly realised through additional research.