

Eyewitness Identification: Importance of Belief in Memory Accuracy

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Abstract

Eyewitness testimony aids the juror and jury decision making for establishing the truth. Metamemory process, anxiety, recall and retention duration are omnipresent in all crime scene and therefore their effect needs to be estimated. In this experiment (n=240), the effect of metamemory, state-trait anxiety, recall and retention duration was examined on eyewitness identification accuracy. Hierarchical log linear and multivariate analyses were employed to analyze the data. The results revealed that recall, retention duration and metamemory significantly affected identification accuracy. The participants who identified the perpetrator immediately had lower false alarms than the participants who identified after one week. Higher accuracy rate was observed for participants who did not recall the crime scene and perpetrator details. The results indicated that higher level of state-trait anxiety affected identification accuracy for participants who had immediately identified the perpetrator. The participants who engaged in metamemorial processes had better identification accuracy. The results imply that participants who were high on metamemory, did not recall crime scene and perpetrator details and identification immediately after the crime lead to better identification accuracy rate.

Key words: Anxiety, Eyewitness, Hierarchical log linear, Metamemory, Retention duration

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