The Cases Studies of Eyewitness Misidentifications during Criminal Investigation in Taiwan

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Abstract : Eyewitness identification is one of the efficient information to identify suspects during criminal investigation. However eyewitness identification is improved frequently, inaccurate and plays vital roles in wrongful convictions. Most eyewitness misidentifications are made during police criminal investigation stage and then accepted by juries. Four failure investigation case studies in Taiwan are conduct to demonstrate how misidentifications are caused during the police investigation context. The result shows that there are several common grounds among these cases: (1) investigators lacked for knowledge about eyewitness memory so that they couldn't evaluate the validity of the eyewitnesses' accounts and identifications, (2) eyewitnesses were always asked to filter out several suspects during the investigation, and received investigation information which contaminated the eyewitnesses' memory, (3) one to one live individual identifications were made in most of cases, (4) eyewitness identifications were always used to support the hypotheses of investigators, and exaggerated theirs powers when conform with the investigation lines, (5) the eyewitnesses' confidence didn't t reflect the validity of their identifications , but always influence the investigators' beliefs for the identifications, (6) the investigators overestimated the power of the eyewitness identifications and ignore the inconsistency with other evidence. Recommendations have been proposed for future academic research and police practice of eyewitness identification in Taiwan.

Keywords : criminal investigation, eyewitness identification, investigative bias, investigative failures
Conference Title : ICFPFP 2017 : International Conference on Forensic Psychology and Forensic Practice
Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan
Conference Dates : May 28-29, 2017