

# Effective interrogation techniques essay



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Interrogation describes the art of convincing an individual to give up information that is perceived to be withheld. Interrogation is commonly employed by law enforcement professionals on suspects from whom information and details pertaining the crimes they are accused of is sought. Interrogations are interviews with a basic goal of establishing a purposeful exchange to obtain information from a target, often perceived aggressive and antagonistic by many (Heuback, 2009).

Interrogation has proven to be an effective means of seeking information since it involves giving a suspect an opportunity to express him or herself to prove their innocence. The suspects, however, should be informed of their rights and the consequences based on the information they provide. Failure to this, any information acquired from a suspect is regarded as inadmissible as evidence in a court of law. The United States constitution provides a legal standard into how interrogations are conducted through rights such as the presence of counsel and right against self-incrimination.

Despite the measures put to guide interrogation procedures, interrogation techniques have evolved from establishing a rapport with the suspect to outright torture. However, effective interrogation techniques should obtain the required information while preserving the rights of the suspect. Most of the 19th century was marred by use of interrogation techniques that exerted brutal force on their subjects while leaving no physical evidence (Alexander, 2011). Although such techniques were not legal in most states, they were permitted, and this say suspects subjected to conditions meant to make them uncomfortable and divulge information.

The suspects would be kept in isolation, deprived of food and water, and at times beaten using rubber hoses, which would not leave any permanent marks. However, in 1937, the US Supreme Court ruled against the use of violence to extract information and confessions, and directed that the information obtained by the use of such techniques would not be considered valid in court (Alexander, 2011). In this case, the suspects cited torture as they had been whipped by police officers during interrogation.

Consequently, the Supreme Court directed that confession by violence violated the implementation of the Fourteenth Amendment. This trickled down to trial courts where depriving suspects of food, water and sleep during interrogation was deemed as a violation. A significant violation of suspect's rights saw the Supreme Court reverse the conviction of Ernesto Miranda, who had confessed to rape during interrogation. Although no violence was involved, the court argued that Miranda was not informed of his rights against self-incrimination (Mount, 2010).

Despite the controversy that resulted from the court ruling, law enforcement officers were keen to point out suspect's rights when making an arrest. Once again, a clarification was made stating that a suspect cannot invoke their right to remain silent by saying nothing. The above illustrates the significance of a streamlined law enforcement procedure, which seeks to uphold the law that it also faithfully serves. In this regard, effective interrogation techniques need to be utilized in order to act within the laid down foundation on interrogation.

Conversely, President Barrack Obama issued an executive order to enhance treatment of detainees and ensure they are treated humanely (The White House, 2009). Modern interrogation procedures make use of advanced psychological techniques and tactics that seek to convince suspects into confessions and voluntary information. This has also seen the employment of machines such as the polygraph to aid in gathering information. Coercion is a term used in relation to the use of force in getting unwilling parties to engage in involuntary behaviour during interrogations.

In this regard, the use of excessive force to extract information becomes a legal issue due to the implication of torture, or the likelihood of torture occurring. This means that coercion crosses the line to become torture once other individuals other than self in participating in involuntary behaviour violate an individual's wellbeing in any way (Malinowski, 2008). The information secured from such interrogation techniques may not be as accurate as intended as the suspect is usually under duress.

Constitutionally, coercion in the provision of information crucial for any purpose is a repugnant practice. This is following the earlier mentioned distortion of information due to the use of threats that target the wellbeing of the individual in question. Moral red flags raised following interrogation procedures increase concerns with regard to ethical responsibilities. At the height of it all, law enforcement officers may fail to follow due process to the letter. This has seen increased cases of extra judicial killings where officers administer their own justice in a bid to cover their tracks.

Consequently, there is bound to be increased dissatisfaction among civilians on the handling of suspects during interrogations, making the law enforcement agencies are under scrutiny due to mistrust. In conclusion, effective interrogation techniques should aim at securing the required information without infringing provisions of the constitution regarding rights and freedoms of a suspect. Historic milestones have been overcome, although there are remnants of unruly interrogation techniques in existence among some law enforcement professionals.