Abstract

Eyewitness testimony is crucial to the proceedings of a criminal trial. However, eyewitnesses are often subject to a number of psychological factors that diminish their ability to recall events accurately. The New Jersey State Supreme Court recently adopted the *Henderson* instructions to sensitize jurors to the possibility of eyewitness inaccuracies. Few previous studies have demonstrated the success of *Henderson* instructions; as such, this study hypothesized that the current, case-specific New Jersey *Henderson* instructions should be amended and that the new non-case-specific instructions should be evaluated alongside trial evidence prior to a mock juror’s rendering of a verdict, in order to better sensitize participants to the system and estimator variables that influence eyewitness identification accuracy. The results showed a statistically significant two-way interaction between instruction type and variable quality when evidence evaluation (verdict) occurred after the questionnaire that highlighted the non-case-specific *Henderson* instructions. The amended instructions effectively alerted jurors to stimuli that commonly alter eyewitness perceptions. The *Henderson* instructions were shown to be most effective when administered as non-case-specific and when jurors were prompted to consider the factors affecting eyewitness accuracy prior to evidence evaluation. Implementing these practices may allow jurors the capability to discern eyewitness accuracy and decrease the prevalence of false convictions if other state or federal courts adopt them.