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**Understanding and Operationalising Rapport Building in Police
and Probation Interviews**

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Understanding and Operationalising Rapport Building
in Police and Probation Interviews

Zacharia Nahouli

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Abstract

Rapport building is effective for fostering a comfortable environment and facilitating communication between interacting parties in many professional interviewing contexts (e.g., therapy, counselling). Rapport is also recommended in forensic contexts, such as interviews between police officers and witnesses/suspects, or between probation officers and their service users. However, little research exists investigating how police and probation officers conceptualise rapport, how rapport can be operationalised for practice, or what impact rapport has on forensic interviews; research that does exist has several limitations. The current thesis aimed to address these current gaps in knowledge.

Study 1 investigated the impact of clusters of verbal and non-verbal rapport behaviours (separately and combined) on mock witness memory, finding that non-verbal behaviours were highly effective towards establishing rapport and guiding memory recall, while verbal behaviours had negative or inconsequential effects. Study 2 investigated the views of UK police officers regarding rapport building when interviewing suspects, finding that officers generally regarded rapport as a positive relationship that enhanced communication and increased information gain, and they reported using several verbal and non-verbal rapport behaviours in practice – although, a minority of participants disagreed. Finally, study 3 investigated the views of probation officers regarding rapport building with service users. Again, rapport was regarded as having a positive impact on supervision and participant views were conceptualised into a general rapport-building process, but a myriad of organisational barriers hindered following this process effectively in practice.

This research provides a unique insight into rapport, both by showing how forensic interviewers use rapport in practice and the challenges they face, but also by providing evidence of several rapport behaviours that can be used easily and effectively in forensic interviews. Thus, a novel contribution to the current rapport literature is made, and several key implications for Police/Probation services, as well as future research are highlighted.

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List of abbreviations

ABE	Achieving Best Evidence
ADHD	Attention-Defecit/Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CA	Content Analysis
CI	Cognitive Interview(ing) [Not to be confused with CI when reporting statistics, which refers to confidence intervals]
CITs	Counter Interrogation Tactics
COREQ	Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Studies
EDA	Electrodermal Activity
GT	Grounded Theory
HI	Humanitarian Interview(ing)
IBC	Interpersonal Behaviour Circle
ICC	Intraclass Correlation Coefficient
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
(M)ANOVA	(Multivariate) Analysis of Variance
MI	Motivational Interview(ing)
MISC	Motivational Interviewing Skill Code
NPS	National Probation Service
ORBIT	Observing Rapport-Based Interviewing Techniques
PEACE	P = Planning & Preparation; E = Engage & Explain; A = Account, Clarification & Challenge; C = Closure; E = Evaluation
PO	Probation Officer
SEED	Skills for Effective Engagement Development
STAI-S	State Trait Anxiety Inventory – State
TA	Thematic Analysis
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TDR	Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal

List of publications and presentations

Publications:

- Nahouli, Z.,** Dando, C. J., Mackenzie, J. M., & Aresti, A. (2021). Rapport building and witness memory: actions may ‘speak’ louder than words. *PLOS ONE* 16(8): e0256084. Doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0256084.
- Nahouli, Z.,** Mackenzie, J. M., Aresti, A., & Dando, C. J. (in prep). *Rapport building with offenders in Probation supervision: the views of UK probation officers*. Manuscript in preparation.
- Nahouli, Z.** (2019, March). What I learned from my semester studying with prisoners. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2019/mar/07/what-i-learned-from-my-semester-studying-with-prisoners>

Presentations:

- Nahouli, Z.** (2021, November). *Effective Communication with Offender Populations*. Presentation at the Criminal, Investigative & Forensic Research (CIFR) conference, University of Westminster, London.
- Nahouli, Z.,** Mackenzie, J. M., Dando, C. J., & Aresti, A. (2020, July). *Rapport building in service user supervision*. Online webinar presented to the National Probation Service, London.
- Nahouli, Z.,** Mackenzie, J. M., Aresti, A., & Dando, C. J. (2020, March). *Actions ‘speak’ louder than words: The effect of rapport-building techniques during witness interviews*. Poster presentation at the American Psychology-Law Society (APLS) conference 2020, New Orleans.
- Nahouli, Z.** (2020, February). *Ethics and Empirical Research in forensic contexts*. Panel presentation at the University of Westminster annual Social Sciences conference 2020, London.
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Author's declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is the work of the author and has not been submitted to any other University.

Zacharia Nahouli, 14th September 2021

1 Chapter one: Introduction to rapport

Rapport building is argued as being a useful tool in many forensic contexts¹.

However, this thesis concerns two forensic contexts, namely the interviewing of witnesses and victims² of crime by police, and the supervision of offenders released into the community. In the case of the latter, that is where the probation services seek to motivate offenders to cooperate and share information during interpersonal interactions.

A survey of British police officers found that 87% (N = 221) of participants regarded rapport building as a key part of interviewing a witness to a crime (Dando et al., 2008), and a survey of US officers found that 32% (N = 631) reported rapport building as one of their most widely used tactics for interviewing criminal suspects (Kassin et al., 2007). Alongside perceived importance, empirical research also highlights the importance of rapport in police interviews. The witness interviewing literature reveals that building rapport with adult eyewitnesses leads to them recalling more accurate information about a witnessed event than when rapport is absent (R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011; see Gabbert et al., 2020 for a systematic review of this literature). Furthermore, rapport-based interviewing, compared to other interviewing methods (e.g., accusatorial or confrontational approaches), has been found to be more effective when interviewing suspected offenders in terms of increasing information yield and increasing the likelihood of obtaining a full confession (Alison et al., 2013, 2014; Dando & Ormerod, 2019; Kim et al., 2020; Wachi et al., 2014, 2016).

The majority of research that has been conducted in relation to forensic rapport building has primarily focused on police interviewing. To date, there has been little focus on probation supervision and the associated interviews that occur between probation

¹ Throughout this thesis, the term *forensic* is used as an umbrella term to refer to the investigation of crime and criminal justice processes in general.

² From here on, the term *witness* is used to include both onlookers and victims of crime.

officers and service users³ (Shapland et al., 2012). Here, service users have important information that they can disclose to officers related to their likelihood of recidivism after release (Clark et al., 2006) – akin to the information emanating from interviews conducted by police during the investigation of crime, this information is crucial for protecting the public (Doherty & White, 2014). However, unlike police officers, probation officers meet with their service users on a regular basis and over a prolonged period of time (Ministry of Justice, 2015). They are also tasked with guiding service users towards making positive behavioural change (Clark, 2005; Clark et al., 2006) and gathering information related to their well-being to keep them from harm, such as their risk of self-harm or suicide which are prevalent issues in offender populations (Mackenzie et al., 2015; Sirdifield et al., 2020). As such, the nature of rapport, the way in which rapport is built or maintained, and the aims of building rapport may well differ in probation supervision compared to a police interviewing context.

There is evidence that rapport-based supervision is considered important by probation officers for supporting service users to disclose information (Annison et al., 2008; Ireland & Berg, 2008). There is also some evidence to suggest that rapport-based supervision can have positive effects for service users, such as helping them curb problematic behaviours that are predictive of a reduction in recidivism (Anstiss et al., 2011; Blasko et al., 2015; Chamberlain et al., 2018; Florsheim et al., 2000; Harper & Hardy, 2000; Kistenmacher & Weiss, 2008; Polcin et al., 2018; Vidal et al., 2015; see McMurrin, 2009 for a review). However, this research is limited as it tends to provide very little indication of what rapport is, or how it develops in probation supervision (Chamberlain, 2018; Shapland et al., 2012). A literature search of databases such as Psycinfo, Science Direct and Web of Knowledge, using key terms such as ‘probation’, ‘rapport building’ and ‘relationship building’ also reveals that rapport building in a

³ Throughout this thesis, the term *service user* will be used to refer to an offender on probation licence, which is the term used by the UK probation services (for example, see Sorsby et al., 2013 for use of the term).

probation context has received little attention and, as far as can be ascertained, there is no published research directly investigating rapport between probation officers and service users in a UK setting.

There is currently little indication as to what constitutes rapport *per se*, nor which are the most effective means of building rapport in a police interviewing context either, and the available empirical evidence pertaining to its effectiveness is quite limited (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Gabbert et al., 2021; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015). The few studies conducted have generally been descriptive in nature, often using self-report data from practitioners of forensic interviews (e.g., police interviewers, Vallano et al., 2015) and those who have undergone a forensic interview (e.g., convicted offenders, Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; victims of crime, Holmberg, 2004). This research has concentrated on understanding interviewees' definitions, experiences and perceived usefulness of rapport. Or, research has analysed real-world interview transcripts post-hoc to map the presence/absence of numerous behaviours and consider their likely impact (Alison et al., 2013; 2014; Kim et al., 2020; Nunan et al., 2020; Risan, 2017; Risan et al., 2017).

Hence, there exists large amounts of information pertaining to the potential benefits of rapport building during police interviews, but there is a dearth of empirical data extracted from controlled experimental settings to support it. Some experimental research exists detailing the utility of rapport building with witnesses, although with mixed results (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Sauerland et al., 2019; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Again, research on rapport in probation contexts is scarce (Shapland et al., 2012).

Furthermore, offender populations present high levels of mental, cognitive and intellectual disorders and/or impairments in comparison to the general population. For example, it is estimated that roughly 7% of the UK prison population has some form of intellectual disability (Talbot, 2009), nearly 20% present autism spectrum disorder (ASD;

Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2021), and up to 25% present disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Young et al., 2018). It has also been estimated that around half the prison population have had some level of traumatic brain injury (TBI; Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2021), with many individuals experiencing cognitive impairment due to their TBI which also increases their risk of reoffending (Ray & Richardson, 2017; V. Walker, 2017). Furthermore, it has been estimated that somewhere between 10% – 90% of offenders have a mental health disorder (Cunniffe et al., 2012). Individuals with disorders and impairments such as these may have difficulties with social cognition and communication (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2021), and research has found that they may also find common rapport-building methods to be disingenuous and/or patronising (Duggan et al., 2011). To date however, the ways in which rapport can be built with neurodivergent individuals in forensic contexts is unexplored, and it is not understood how police and probation officers navigate this unique challenge.

Considering that rapport building is recommended in most major police interviewing guidelines (e.g., the cognitive interview, CI⁴, Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; achieving best evidence, ABE⁵, Ministry of Justice, 2011; the Reid technique⁶, Inbau et al., 2013), and major interviewing frameworks used in probation services (e.g., the motivational interview, MI⁷, W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991; the skills for effective engagement development framework, SEED⁸, Sorsby et al., 2013), it is surprising that this topic has received such little attention – to date, there is too little information to indicate

⁴ The CI is a tool commonly used in the UK for interviewing witnesses and victims, and incorporates several cognitive techniques to help guide memory recall (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Ministry of Justice, 2011).

⁵ ABE is an expansive UK document that summarises the best evidence-based practice for interviewing witnesses and victims (Ministry of Justice, 2011).

⁶ The Reid technique is a method of interviewing commonly used in the US for interviewing suspects (Inbau et al., 2013). However, it has been characterised as being accusatory and confrontational and potentially leading to false confessions (Gudjonsson & Pearse, 2011).

⁷ The MI is an expansive interviewing method used in therapy and counselling (Miller & Rollnick, 1991), and more recently in the UK probation services to motivate clients to disclose information (Sorsby et al., 2013). A detailed overview of the MI is provided in Chapter 2 (section 2.3).

⁸ SEED is a newly developed framework of offender engagement used in UK probation which incorporates motivational interviewing, along with cognitive behavioural techniques and pro-social modelling (Sorsby et al., 2013).

what rapport is in forensic contexts, or whether building rapport has concrete benefits for forensic interviewing practice. This thesis addresses the apparent gap in knowledge by investigating rapport building in two distinct forensic contexts, police and probation services.

As such, the programme of research reported in this thesis considers: 1) What is rapport in forensic contexts?, 2) How is rapport operationalised in forensic interviews?, and 3) What is the impact of rapport in forensic interviews? These research questions are investigated employing a mixed-methods approach towards understanding the views of forensic interviewers on rapport building (qualitative), and the impact of different rapport-building techniques by experimentally manipulating rapport during forensic interviews (quantitative). The aim being to offer a stronger conceptualisation of forensic rapport building than is available in the current literature, and evidence-based research that highlights the utility of rapport for forensic interviews.

1.1 What is rapport?

The concept of rapport is one that is familiar to all communicative professions (e.g., therapy & business) and the general population as a tool to achieve successful interactions with one another (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). It has been described as a “harmonious, empathetic, or sympathetic relation or connection to another self” (Newberry & Stubbs, 1990, p. 14), which manifests itself as “the development of interactions that are trusting, accepting, respectful and helpful (Matthews & Matthews, 2006, p. 44). In professions such as therapy, rapport has often been described as a therapeutic alliance between a therapist and a patient, which consists of them building a bond and having a shared understanding of the tasks and goals of therapy (Bordin, 1979).

Developing this type of relationship is recommended in order to foster a comfortable environment that motivates patients to cooperate and share information

(Ardito & Rabellino, 2011; Bordin, 1979). As such, several tools have been developed within this context that aim to conceptualise and operationalise rapport, such as the working alliance and the motivational interview (MI) which emphasise building rapport with clients through the use of accepting, empathic, and collaborative behaviours and activities (Ardito & Rabellino, 2011; W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991). There is also extensive evidence to suggest that these rapport-based and client-centred approaches are effective in therapy, counselling and social work for motivating clients to engage in ‘change talk’ and eventually addressing their problematic behaviours, such as substance abuse (see Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Martin et al., 2000; Moyers et al., 2009; Rubak et al., 2005 for reviews).

1.2 Rapport in police interviewing contexts

In the context of police interviewing, working alliance is discussed as an operational accord, which is defined as “a relationship orchestrated by an interrogator with a source that is marked by a degree of conformity and/or affinity and is based on a sense of understanding of, and perhaps even guarded appreciation for, respective concerns, intentions, and desired outcomes” (Kleinman, 2006, p. 278). In the context of a suspect interview, the operational accord seeks to create a bond between interacting parties to help counter the often adversarial nature of the interview, reduce the interviewee’s resistance and improve their cooperation, inevitably leading to a more productive interaction.

Developing an operational accord can also have similar uses and be beneficial for eliciting important crime-relevant information during witness interviews (Vanderhallen et al., 2011). However, unlike a therapeutic or working alliance, this conceptualisation does not stress the need for a positive bond between the interacting parties to establish rapport and instead favours a bond consisting of respect and understanding. Abbe and Brandon (2013) argue that this may be beneficial as positivity can be difficult to develop during a

police interview. This is generally due to the discrepancy in power between the interviewer and interviewee (Gabbert et al., 2020), which can cause an interviewee to feel threatened and develop a negative perception of the interviewer.

This point is important to consider as it highlights how police interviews can differ in their nature and goals from that of therapeutic interviews. However, the current literature on rapport building in a police context is heavily informed by the therapeutic literature and generally lacks research conducted in actual police interviewing practice (Abbe & Brandon, 2013). As such, there is no real consensus on what rapport is in police interviews or how it should be utilised in practice (Vanderhallen et al., 2011). Researchers such as Vallano et al. (2015) have attempted to address this major gap in the literature. They surveyed US police officers (N = 123) to understand their views and uses of rapport when interviewing both suspects and witnesses. Officers commonly defined rapport as a communicative relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee, with trust, comfort and understanding being elements generally stated as important to develop that relationship. Respondents also regarded rapport as an effective tool for motivating an interviewee to talk and provide valuable crime-relevant information, and they stated using many verbal (e.g., discussing common interests) and non-verbal techniques (e.g., open body language, making eye contact) to establish rapport.

While this study shows that there are parallels between how rapport is conceptualised in the literature and how it is conceptualised and utilised in practice by police officers, it must be noted that some participants did not consider building rapport with uncooperative interviewees to be beneficial, and there were an equal number of respondents that considered rapport building to be ineffective with suspects as those that considered it to be effective with suspects. In addition, a considerable number of those that considered it effective saw rapport primarily as a tool to extract a confession. This implies that police officers may use rapport depending on the context of the interview, but also that they may not always be genuine in their attempt to build rapport. St-Yves (2006) suggests

that being genuine is a key element to building a good rapport, and being disingenuous runs the risk of developing pseudo-rapport (DePaulo & Bell, 1990). While the effect of pseudo-rapport has not been studied, it can be assumed that if it is detected by an interviewee then it can lead to distrust for the interviewer and lead to negative feelings developing (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Gabbert et al., 2020). Furthermore, Vallano et al. (2015) did not clearly distinguish between witnesses and suspects on their survey, making it difficult to determine if rapport building is viewed differently by police officers based on the type of interview.

Russano et al. (2014) conducted a similar study, but instead carried out qualitative interviews with highly experienced US human intelligence (e.g., FBI counterterrorism agents) and military interviewers (N = 42) regarding their interviewing practices solely with suspects, with one main aspect being their views and usage of rapport and relationship building. Rapport building between an interviewer and a suspect was regarded as an integral aspect to any successful interview as a means of getting the suspect to disclose information, with it generally being defined as a working relationship between the interacting parties that consists of trust and respect. Most respondents deemed the most effective methods of building rapport with a suspect as simply treating them in a dignifying and humane manner, and showing a level of concern for them and their situation. The perceived importance and benefit of rapport was also more profound for experienced interviewers. Unlike the study by Vallano et al. (2015), all participants in this study considered rapport to be important for suspect interviews. However, this study only represented the views of elite level interviewers and therefore may fail to generalise to standard law enforcement agents.

Furthermore, studies by Vallano et al. (2015) and Russano et al. (2014) also only represent the views of officers working in the US, where police interviewing can differ significantly to the UK. In the US, interviewers conduct 'interrogations' which tend to adopt an accusatory style of interviewing, and predominantly follow the Reid model of

interviewing. Here, the interviewer often has a guilt-presumptive mindset towards the suspect and uses a number of psychologically coercive methods to extract a confession, such as isolating the suspect, maximising or minimising the severity of the crime, and even directly accusing the suspect (Meissner et al., 2014). In this model, rapport may be used as a further means of extracting confessions (and may explain findings by Vallano et al., 2015), but it is well documented that coercive interviewing methods can have serious negative consequences, such as leading suspects to falsely confess to a crime (Gudjonsson & Pearse, 2011; Kassin, 2017). The UK on the other hand adopts an information-gathering model of interviewing, which favours extracting in-depth and accurate information rather than a confession, and follows the PEACE model which advocates non-coercive and humane methods of interviewing – here, developing rapport is also heavily emphasised (Meissner et al., 2014). As such, rapport may play a considerably different role in a UK police interviewing context, and UK officers may have a different mindset to US officers towards interviewing suspects – this makes it difficult to generalise findings from US studies and highlights the need for UK-relevant rapport research.

1.3 Rapport in a probation context

Similar to police interviewing contexts, the limited literature on rapport building in a probation context has also developed from the therapeutic literature. For example, the MI is an expansive interviewing framework that aims to motivate patients in therapy and counselling to discuss ideas about behavioural change and obstacles that hinder them in this regard. It emphasises building rapport with patients by showing an unconditional positive regard and empathy towards a patient, and involving them in the therapeutic process (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991; a more detailed overview of the MI is provided in Chapter 2, section 2.3). This approach to interviewing has also been suggested for use in a probation context for engaging with service users and guiding them towards positive

behavioural change (Clark et al., 2006; McNeill, 2009), and the MI has been adopted into probation practice – elements of the MI are seen within other interviewing frameworks used in Probation (e.g., SEED; Sorsby et al., 2013). There is also evidence that MI training improves probation officers' use of rapport-building techniques (e.g., reflective listening; Walters et al., 2008), and that MI is effective for tackling problematic service user behaviours (e.g., substance abuse) and reducing reoffending, amongst other things (see McMurrin, 2009 for a review). As such, it can be implied that rapport-based interviewing is an integral aspect to successful service user supervision.

However, research in this domain has typically focussed on measuring service user outcomes when rapport-based interventions have been used compared to when they have not (e.g., Blasko et al., 2015), or comparing service users who were paired with an MI-trained probation officer compared to a non-trained officer (e.g., Harper & Hardy, 2000; Kistenmacher & Weiss, 2008). As such, the quality of the relationship developed between officers and service users is not typically investigated, and the contribution of this relationship towards these outcomes is generally overlooked (Chamberlain et al., 2018; Shapland et al., 2012).

One study exists that interviewed adult male service users in the US (N = 1697) several times over an 18-month period, regarding their relationship with their probation officer, and it was found that service users that had more positive relationships with their officer were less likely to recidivate compared to those with more negative relationships (Chamberlain et al., 2018) – similar findings have been found with juvenile female offenders in the US (N = 140; Vidal et al., 2013). Another study by Sturm et al. (2020) found that several service user (N = 201) and probation officer (N = 137) characteristics could influence the quality of the relationship that developed during supervision. For example, officers who were inflexible in their supervisory approach and service users who suffered from addiction risked damaging the relationship, while supportive officers and motivated service users were likely to develop a positive relationship. However, these

studies used rating-scale or short answer questions to gauge service user and probation officer perceptions of rapport, and did not uncover what participants understood as rapport or what techniques could be used to develop rapport during supervision.

Thus, current research does not adequately highlight what rapport is, how it is built, or which elements of the aforementioned tools (e.g. MI) are effective for building rapport and leading to positive outcomes in probation supervision. Furthermore, probation officers experience unique challenges because they have a dual role. Not only do they have to help meet service users' needs, they are also charged with carrying out procedural justice (i.e., punishments for transgressions; Alexander et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2006; Skeem et al., 2007; Trotter, 2015). Regarding the latter, this may truncate and/or interfere with attempts to build and maintain rapport with service users, and therapeutic tools such as the MI may be ineffective and/or inappropriate for carrying out the role of procedural justice. Additionally, officers who are unable to balance this dual role or focus only on carrying out one of these roles may also disrupt rapport development (Skeem et al., 2007; Sturm et al., 2020). Existing research has done little to understand how probation officers effectively navigate this dual role and build rapport (Manchak et al., 2014).

It would appear that just one study has specifically attempted to investigate how probation officers view and build rapport in practice with service users. Ireland and Berg (2008) interviewed 12 female probation officers in the US who stated that they favoured the use of good communication and relationship building skills during interactions with service users over confrontational and forceful behaviours, with these latter behaviours postulated as often being used by male officers. As one respondent stated, "If you treat your parolees right [and] they know you're not playing games with them, they'll do what they need to do" (p. 487). This was a sentiment shared by other participants as rapport was generally conceptualised as a harmonious working relationship achieved by treating a service user with a high degree of dignity and respect and treating them fairly. By doing so, participants claimed they could gain the compliance of a service user and motivate them to

talk and provide information. Furthermore, rapport was considered to be a useful technique to ensure the safety of the probation officer during interactions with service users.

However, Ireland and Berg (2008) admit that due to their very small sample of only female probation officers, it is difficult to ascertain whether these views are representative of a wider ethos of rapport building in probation settings. As well, this study and many others investigating rapport in probation (e.g., Blasko et al., 2015; Chamberlain et al., 2018; Vidal et al., 2013) have been conducted in the US. There are distinct differences between the US and UK probation services, with the UK having a considerably more standardised approach to supervision and placing more emphasis on evidence-based practice, client-centred management and professionalism (Phillips, 2010). As such, findings from these studies may not generalise to a UK probation context.

1.4 Limitations to conceptualising rapport

It is clear that rapport is generally considered beneficial in both police interviewing and probation supervision, and there is some understanding of rapport by forensic interviewers that parallels recommendations from the literature. However, the current literature provides only a vague, or as DePaulo and Bell (1990) would phrase it, ‘mushy’ indication of what rapport actually is in a forensic interview and how best to establish it – for example, what does it mean to build a positive or respectful bond with a witness, suspect or probation service user? While some studies have attempted to answer these questions (e.g., Ireland & Berg, 2008; Russano et al., 2014; Vallano et al., 2015), there is currently too little information to be able to draw any strong conclusions from this research. Furthermore, the limitations of the studies discussed previously raise further questions that need to be answered, and they further highlight a lack of in-depth understanding of rapport in forensic contexts. If rapport is beneficial for forensic interviews as claimed, then this lack of understanding is problematic as rapport may be

neglected or used ineffectively by interviewers, inevitably hindering their interviews. Furthermore, this lack of clarity is problematic for researchers that seek to test the utility of rapport building as they are unable to determine how to manipulate rapport experimentally.

1.5 Thesis overview

The current thesis aims to understand and operationalise rapport in forensic contexts. The separate studies conducted for this thesis (which are described briefly below and in more detail in Chapter 2 and their respective chapters) use a range of methods and address different research questions. However, the thesis as a whole aims to address three overarching questions: 1) What is rapport in forensic contexts?, 2) How is rapport operationalised in forensic interviews?, and 3) What is the impact of rapport in forensic interviews? To answer these questions, two forensically relevant contexts were chosen, Police and Probation services, with the research objectives set to investigate what rapport is in these contexts from the perspective of the interviewers (i.e., police and probation officers) and highlighting how they build rapport in practice, as well as experimentally investigating the utility of rapport-building behaviours for building rapport and meeting interview goals.

Chapter 2 i) provides an overview of the current rapport-building models used in forensic settings, ii) reviews the research associated with these models, iii) highlights the limitations and gaps in knowledge of the existing research, iv) outlines how these have led to the formulation of the research questions for this thesis, and finally, v) provides a brief overview of the studies conducted for this thesis. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the mixed-methods approach taken for the research and an outline of the specific methods used for each study, providing a rationale as to why each method was deemed appropriate. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present three empirical studies investigating rapport building across contexts. The first is an experimental chapter investigating the effect of rapport building on

eyewitness memory (Chapter 4), the second is a questionnaire-based study investigating the views of police officers regarding rapport building with criminal suspects (Chapter 5), and the third reports a qualitative focus group/interview-based study investigating probation officers' views of rapport building with probation service users (Chapter 6). Finally, Chapter 7 provides a general discussion of the findings from all three studies, evaluating the implications of rapport building for forensic practice in general and outlining recommendations for future practice and research. Constraints and limitations of this research are also discussed.

2 Chapter two: Rapport-building models and research in forensic contexts

To date, several models or tools have been developed to explain and operationalise rapport building in practice. The majority of these have been developed within therapeutic and counselling settings, but recently there has been a push towards developing forensic-based models of rapport. Although forensic-based approaches often use the therapeutic models as their basis, they are generally underdeveloped. Furthermore, there is a considerable amount of research that has investigated the impact of rapport building for communicative practice – however, again there is a limited amount of research on forensic interviewing practice.

This chapter outlines the prominent models of rapport building, including those developed in therapeutic settings, such as the Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal model of rapport (TDR; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990) and the MI (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991). TDR and MI have been influential towards the study of rapport in both general and forensic contexts, and they act as the backbone for two prominent forensic models of rapport which are also discussed within this chapter, the humanitarian interview (HI; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014) and the observing rapport-based interviewing techniques model (ORBIT; Alison et al., 2013). This chapter also discusses the empirical research associated with the models to provide an understanding of rapport and its efficacy for forensic interviewing practice, as well as the clear gaps, limitations and inconsistencies in the current rapport-building models and research. The chapter culminates with the rationale for the programme of research documented in this thesis and an overview of the research studies.

2.1 Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal model (TDR)

The TDR model was one of the first theoretical models of rapport building to explain the intricate nature of rapport and how it develops during dyadic interactions (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). This model consists of three interrelated components that further consist of behavioural expressions to establish and facilitate rapport between interacting parties, and to instil affective communication between them. The first of these components is *mutual attentiveness*. This culminates in directing focus and attention to one another (e.g., directing gaze or body position), and showing a degree of interest in the other. The second component is *positivity*, that is the sense of friendliness, liking or caring that interacting parties have with one another and the comfortable atmosphere that ensues because of it. Immediacy behaviours, such as smiling and nodding, can be used to achieve positivity, as well as sharing personal information. The final component is *coordination*, which manifests itself as interactional synchrony or an equilibrium between interacting parties and fosters fluid, natural communication between them. This final component is the hardest and longest to develop, requiring the interacting parties to become familiar with one another, but it leads to “mutual responsiveness, such that every member of the group reacts immediately, spontaneously, and sympathetically to the sentiments and attitudes of every other member” (Park & Burgess, 1924, p. 893).

The TDR model has been highly influential to the development of all other rapport-building models and frameworks, and so research has attempted to transpose the components of attention, positivity and coordination from theory into practice. In particular, Abbe and Brandon (2013, 2014) have provided the first and most influential reviews of the research on rapport, and how rapport can be operationalised for forensic interviewing practice. To date, they provide one of the most in-depth understandings of rapport in a forensic context (although, see Gabbert et al., 2020 for a more recent systematic review), and so underpin the basis of the introduction to rapport in this chapter, and elsewhere. These seminal reviews indicate which verbal and non-verbal techniques or

behaviours can be operationalised to develop the TDR components and build rapport in forensic interviews, and they highlight the key research studies that highlight the efficacy of these behaviours for facilitating interviewing goals.

As such, the following sections summarise these behaviours and the related research. Table 1 provides an overview of the TDR components, their associated operationalised behaviours, and the goal of developing each component for interviewing practice (as discussed by Abbe and Brandon, 2014). Most of the behaviours and research discussed below have also been highlighted in a recently published systematic review of the forensic rapport literature (see Gabbert et al., 2020).

2.1.1 Operationalising the *attention* component

Developing the component of attention (i.e., showing interest and focus towards somebody) is regarded as the first point of call during an interaction and can lead to the development of further components (e.g., positivity; Abbe & Brandon, 2014). This can be achieved through relatively simple means, such as directing one's body or gaze towards the person you are communicating with. These immediacy behaviours are described as a useful initial step for expressing one's dedication to focusing and listening to what someone has to say. In addition, active listening is highlighted as an essential tool to further enhance the feeling of being heard, and also indicates to a person that their perspective is being or has been understood. This can be achieved by summarising the verbal account that someone has provided you with and repeating it back for clarification or confirmation that it has been understood, as well as through back-channel responding (e.g., yes, uh-huh responses). Furthermore, taking a personal approach to an interview, such as referring to somebody by name, has also been suggested as a means of showing interest and focus towards them.

Table 1. *The TDR (1990) model of rapport building operationalised by Abbe and Brandon (2014). Shown below are the three components of rapport, the operational behaviours used to express them, and the goal/aim of doing so.*

Rapport component	Operationalised behaviours	Goal/Aim
Attention	- Immediacy behaviours: making eye contact, leaning forward, open body language, nodding	Communicate focus and interest towards the interviewee, making them feel valued and invested in the interview
	- Active listening: summarising account, asking for clarification, back-channel responses (e.g., yes, uh-huh)	
	- Personalising the interview (e.g., using the interviewee's name)	
Positivity	- Immediacy behaviours: smiling, dynamic tone of voice, hand gestures	Communicate warmth or liking for the interviewee, or at least respect, making them feel comfortable in the interview
	- Interviewer disclosing personal information	
	- Eliciting disclosure of personal information from the interviewee	
Coordination	- Mimicking behaviour	Develop an interactional synchrony with the interviewee so that communication is fluid and natural
	- Contrasting behaviour	
	- Creating a shared understanding	

These techniques are common place within many interviewing frameworks that emphasise developing collaborative relationships and building rapport as powerful tools for fostering productive interactions. For example, the MI highlights the need for an interviewer (in the context of therapy and counselling) to express interest and understanding for a client's situation, perspective and ideas, with active listening (or reflective listening as they call it) being a key method of doing so (W. R. Miller et al., 2008; MI is discussed in more detail in section 2.3). Contrary to more traditional interviewing approaches adopted within therapeutic and counselling settings, such as those that emphasise authoritative advice-giving strategies, the MI approach has shown to be successful towards meeting relevant goals. For example, treating alcohol and drug addictions within non-offender populations (see Rubak et al., 2005 for a review) and criminal offender populations (e.g., probation service users), with some limited evidence to suggest it also reduces recidivism rates in the latter population (see McMurrin, 2009 for a review).

There is also some experimental research showing the use of attentive behaviours and techniques – such as immediacy behaviours (e.g., smiling, eye contact), open body language and active listening – as beneficial during forensic interviews. These techniques are characteristic of a supportive interviewer (Carter et al., 1996). In studies involving mock witnesses – that is, participants who witness a staged event, either live or by video, who are later interviewed for their memory of the event (Powell, 2002) – it has been found that a supportive interviewer can lead participants to recalling more information for an event, resist misinformation/leading questions (thereby, making their accounts more accurate), and reduce their feelings of anxiety and/or stress during the interview (Almerigogna et al., 2007; Carter et al., 1996; Davis & Bottoms, 2002; Quas & Lench, 2007). This was in comparison to an unsupportive interviewer who did not express the positive attentive behaviours. However, these studies were conducted with children, and it has been well documented that a more careful interviewing approach is necessary with

children in order to extract the most informative and accurate account (see Lamb et al., 2007 for a review). As such, findings from child interviewing studies may not generalise to adult populations, which is the target population of the current thesis.

R. Collins et al. (2002) investigated the effect of rapport building using primarily attentive behaviours, characteristic of a supportive interviewer, with a population of adult mock witnesses (N = 42). Here, participants were interviewed for a video scene they had watched. Rapport was manipulated within three different groups. In the rapport condition the interviewer was said to show interest towards the participant, adopt an open and relaxed body posture, use the interviewee's name, speak in a dynamic tone of voice, and remove objects from the environment that could create a barrier or distraction. In another condition, the interviewer was abrupt, showing a severe lack of interest and focus in the participant, and speaking in a harsh tone. In the third condition the interviewer was neutral in all behaviours. To measure rapport, participants were asked to provide their view of the interviewer. Participants in the rapport condition provided a more positive view of the interviewer compared to the other two conditions and recalled more correct pieces of information during the interview. Hence, this study also showed attentive rapport behaviours to have a positive impact on eyewitness recall.

However, it must be noted that these interviewing studies have several limitations which make it difficult to discern the true impact of rapport. Firstly, rapport was not directly measured in many of these studies. Carter et al., (1996) did not ask participants (i.e., child interviewees; N = 60) to indicate whether they felt rapport with the interviewer, and instead independent raters assessed whether rapport was present or not based on video footage of the interviews. R. Collins et al. (2002) had participants (i.e., adult interviewees) write one-sentence accounts of their relationship with the interviewer, but again independent raters assessed whether rapport was present or not from these accounts. The other studies (i.e., Almerigogna et al., 2007; Davis & Bottoms, 2002; Quas & Lench, 2007) did not measure rapport. As such, it is unclear whether participants felt rapport with their

interviewer, or how strong that rapport was, making it difficult to discern whether it was truly rapport that led to their findings or some other factor.

Secondly, these studies often included a free recall phase followed by pre-prepared, closed-choice questions (Carter et al., 1996; Davis & Bottoms, 2002; Quas & Lench, 2007), only incorporated closed-choice questions (Almerigogna et al., 2007), or only incorporated a free recall phase (R. Collins et al., 2002). Closed-choice questions are often considered inappropriate in interviewing practice due to the limited amount of information that can be gathered from them, and the risk they may incur false information due to their leading nature (Griffiths & Milne, 2006). On the other hand, engaging in tell, explain and describe questions that allow an interviewee to engage in free recall are considered appropriate questioning, and research has shown that appropriate questions incur greater detail from interviewees compared to inappropriate questions (Dalton et al., 2020). It is also recommended that interviewers follow up free recall with open-ended probing questions based on the free recall account to gauge further information (Griffiths & Milne, 2006) – however, while probing questions are considered appropriate, recent research has found these to incur less accurate information than free recall, and may lead to similar problems as closed-choice questions (Boon et al., 2020; Kontogianni et al., 2020). Regardless, free recall followed by probed recall are the method of interviewing recommended by UK police guidelines (College of Policing, 2013; Ministry of Justice, 2011), and so the prior studies (which were primarily conducted in the US/Australia) do not reflect current UK practice.

R. Collins et al. (2002) also had participants provide a written rather than verbal account of the witnessed event. Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) state that “rapport exists only in interaction between individuals” (p. 286), and so the lack of interaction by the interviewee in that study may have affected the rapport-building process. There is also evidence to suggest that verbal accounts produce significantly more information than written accounts (Sauerland & Sporer, 2011), and extracting verbal accounts from

interviewees is the main method of interviewing currently advocated for all formal interviews by UK police officers in the PEACE⁹ model of interviewing (College of Policing, 2013; Dando et al., 2008; Ministry of Justice, 2011; Shawyer et al., 2009).

Finally, studies such as that by R. Collins et al. (2002) provided vague indications of how the interviewer built rapport, such as adopting a relaxed posture – however, it is unclear how the interviewer expressed this. No indication of behaviours was included for the neutral condition, and so it cannot be discerned how the rapport-consistent behaviours differed from the neutral behaviours (e.g., how does a relaxed body posture differ from a neutral body posture?). This lack of clarity makes it difficult to identify the locus of effect for rapport and hinders the ability to replicate these findings. Furthermore, some techniques used within this study (such as using a personal approach) have been criticised as unproductive when interacting with offenders or suspected offenders, as it can undermine the authority of the interviewer and lead to a negative form of rapport occurring (Doherty & White, 2014).

It should also be noted that some attentive behaviours that fall under the ‘active listening’ umbrella, such as summarisation, may be difficult to accomplish in practice and may be misaligned with effective information gathering practices. For example, research has shown that amongst police interviewing skills, summarising is often one of the most poorly performed skills, potentially due to the inability of the interviewer to prepare for these in advance, and due to the cognitive difficulty of adequately summarising responses – providing a good summary requires both attentive listening and full comprehension of meaning (Griffiths, 2008). Guidelines such as ABE also recommend only using summaries with interviewees when their responses are disjointed and/or ambiguous, or in the closure phase of an interview (Ministry of Justice, 2011) – doing so as a matter of routine, by

⁹ PEACE is a mnemonic acronym that outlines the five key stages of a police interview: planning & preparation; engage & explain; account, clarification & challenge; closure; and evaluation (College of Policing, 2013)

interviewers who cannot adequately summarise responses, or with interviewees who are fatigued and/or unable to hold attention may cause the interviewee to become disengaged, confused, or lead them to agreeing with incorrect information. Furthermore, frequent summarisation would also break the recommended 80-20 rule, whereby the interviewee speaks for 80% of the interview and the interviewer 20% to ensure a good flow of communication – although, evidence suggests police interviewers already frequently break this rule (Snook et al., 2012).

The issues raised by summarisation may be most pertinent with interviewees who require an interpreter due to a language barrier. It is highly difficult, and in some cases not entirely possible to translate exact meaning between languages due to both structural and cultural differences found in different languages, and research has shown that information in police interviews can often get lost in translation due to this (Lai & Mulayim, 2014). Considering the already existing difficulty of adequately summarising an interviewee's responses, having to then translate that summary into another language poses a further possibility for their responses to be misconstrued and distorted. A similar issue may arise where vulnerable interviewees are involved (e.g., children, interviewees with learning disabilities) as they are at an increased risk of suggestibility (Gudjonsson & Henry, 2010), which may inadvertently lead them to agreeing with incorrectly summarised information – in such cases, intermediaries can help facilitate communication (Henry et al., 2017), although this may again run into similar problems as with interpreters. As such, shorter and more understandable reflections on the overall meaning of an interviewee's account may be more effective when summarisation is required, compared to summarising every detail and potentially distorting meaning – although, further work needs to be conducted investigating the impact of summarisation within forensic interviews.

Thus, while some of the research discussed throughout this section highlights the efficacy of attentive behaviours (e.g., active listening, open body language) for building rapport and guiding interviewee memory and communication, there are a myriad of

limitations with these studies and potentially limited positive, or even negative consequences of using certain behaviours (e.g., summarisation). These issues make it difficult to generalise study findings to UK police practice, or practice elsewhere, and they may not generalise to a wider context of forensic interviewing (e.g., suspect interviewing, probation supervision), or interviewee populations (e.g., non-native speakers, vulnerable interviewees).

2.1.2 Operationalising the *positivity* component

Abbe and Brandon (2014) highlight self-disclosure as a useful aid in fostering positivity and developing trust during an interview. Here, the interviewer discloses personal information about themselves – interviewee self-disclosure is also important, but the interviewer may have to motivate the interviewee to do so, often by disclosing information about themselves first. The cognitive interview (CI) recommends this technique for building rapport (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992) and it is one of the most frequently cited techniques US police officers report using with witnesses/suspected offenders (Vallano et al., 2015).

An empirical study by Vallano and Schreiber Compo (2011) investigated the use of self-disclosure when interviewing adult mock witnesses. Participants (N = 125) watched a video of a mock crime scene and were then given post-event information about the crime, with some participants receiving misinformation. The interviewer built rapport with one group of participants using several techniques (e.g., active listening), but most importantly by asking them questions that elicited disclosure of personal information (e.g., ‘tell me about your family’; uni-directional). In another group, the interviewer also disclosed personal information (bi-directional). In a no-rapport group, the interviewer used a standard interview protocol that did not incorporate personal questions. After the

interview, participants rated the interviewer on several factors related to rapport (e.g., friendliness).

Participants in the rapport groups had more positive impressions of the interviewer, recalled more correct details from the video scene, and were more resistant to misinformation compared to those in the no-rapport group. However, there was no difference between the uni- and bi-directional disclosure groups, which makes it difficult to discern whether it was truly self-disclosure that caused these benefits or a culmination of factors (e.g., self-disclosure and active listening). Although, other studies have also shown the efficacy of self-disclosure for building rapport and guiding memory (e.g., Nash et al., 2016), as well as to create a common or shared identity between interacting parties, with this enhancing their ability to negotiate with one another (e.g., Platow et al., 2000).

However, other studies have shown no effects of self-disclosure when interviewing adult mock witnesses (e.g., Sauerland et al., 2019), or negative effects (e.g., Kieckhaefer et al., 2014). The latter study found that while participants ($N = 253$) were more resistant to specific misinformation when rapport was present, and they also reported lower levels of anxiety, rapport in general led participants to recalling a higher number of other false information (i.e., confabulations) compared to when rapport was absent. It is unclear why this effect occurred, however it could be due to over-rapport. In the literature, this is discussed as interviewees becoming too familiar with the interviewer, making them more comfortable to report information that has no value or they are unsure about (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Duggan et al., 2011; S. M. Miller, 1952) – discussing personal information may have led to this increased familiarity.

Another explanation may be due to the absence of interview ground rules (e.g., informing participants to only report what they remember and not to guess) in the aforementioned studies (i.e., Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Sauerland et al., 2019; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Ground rules are a key part of UK interviewing

practice (Ministry of Justice, 2011) and have been found to limit memory inaccuracies (Brubacher et al., 2015), and so the lack of ground rules in these studies may have led to the increased reporting of incorrect information.

These mixed findings for memory performance may also be explained by the manner in which rapport was built. For example, both Vallano and Schreiber Compo (2011) and Kieckhafer et al. (2014) stated they were investigating the effect of verbal techniques, but they also incorporated other techniques such as active listening which can often include non-verbal behaviours (e.g, nodding, making eye contact). It was not specified in these studies whether the interviewer's non-verbal behaviours were manipulated or controlled between the rapport and no-rapport conditions. As such, the true locus of effect for rapport cannot be determined from these studies and it is unclear whether it was the verbal techniques that had the most impact. This is important because many forensic interviewers use verbal rapport-building techniques in practice, albeit they are sometimes used without expression and with indifference towards the interviewee, making their use seem routine and potentially insincere (Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012). Verbal techniques that are not accompanied by positive non-verbal behaviours may hinder the rapport-building process (Gabbert et al., 2020), although the isolated effects of verbal and non-verbal techniques have yet to be fully investigated.

Finally, Abbe and Brandon (2013) elaborate on the component of positivity, arguing it may not only manifest itself as friendliness or caring, but that it may sometimes establish itself as mutual respect rather than mutual liking. They break this component down into two established interpersonal sub-components: warmth and competence. The former relates to the degree of liking/disliking between the interactants, as well as their perceived intentions to help or harm one another. The latter relates to the degree of respect that exists between the interactants, based on their perceptions of the other to act upon perceived helpful or harmful intentions (Fiske et al., 2006). Abbe and Brandon (2013) suggest that in certain contexts it may not be appropriate or even possible for an

interviewer to create a bond based on mutual liking between themselves and the source, and so respect might be more appropriate.

However, research has shown that interviews with certain offenders may be too emotionally difficult for interviewers, and so they may be unable to show positivity in any capacity, instead appearing 'cold'. For example, police investigators often find conducting interviews with those suspected of serious offences (such as child sexual abuse) to be highly stressful, invoking painful feelings and potentially leading to secondary trauma (Huey & Kalyal, 2017; MacEachern et al., 2011). Officers may also have biases towards these types of offenders, and may be wary of appearing too 'nice' (B. Loftus, 2010; Minhas et al., 2017). Consequently, interviewers are less likely to be empathic towards suspects of sexual offences and more likely to shut down opportunities to be empathic with them (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Oxburgh et al., 2006, 2012, 2015). There is some evidence to suggest that this is also true when interviewing victims of sexual offences (e.g., Holmberg, 2004), perhaps also due to the emotionally charged nature of these offences. This evidence is problematic considering that research has found empathic forms of interviewing to be an effective means of engaging with both offenders and victims of sexual offences (Baker-Eck et al., 2020b; Risan et al., 2017; Webster et al., 2020).

The literature indicates that there are two types of empathy, affective and cognitive. Affective empathy refers to a vicarious experience and response to another's feelings and emotions, whereas cognitive empathy refers to understanding another's emotional state without internalising and experiencing it yourself (Bull & Baker-Eck, 2020; Oxburgh & Ost, 2011). Baker-Eck et al. (2020a) also found that police officers generally report using more cognitive empathy techniques when interviewing suspects, although Dando and Oxburgh (2016) found that cognitive forms of empathy may not always be used effectively in practice. Regardless, cognitive empathy appears to entail showing understanding towards an interviewee's situation in a non-judgmental manner and without the need for emotion and/or liking, and so may relate to the concept of respect discussed by Fiske et al.,

(2006). While it can be difficult to detach empathy from its affective component, and may require training and a good degree of emotional intelligence on the part of the interviewer to achieve this (Risan et al., 2016), cognitive empathy appears to be a possible route towards developing the component of positivity in forensic interviews, particularly when investigating serious crime.

To conclude this section, it appears that similar to attentive behaviours, studies using behaviours related to positivity (e.g., self-disclosure) have shown to be effective at building rapport and potentially improving on witness memory performance – although, recent research has shown that positivity may be less important for forensic interviews than attention (Nunan et al., 2020). However, there are mixed findings here and again the limitations of these studies highlight the need for further research that can generalise findings to a UK police interviewing context, as well as wider forensic interviewing (e.g., suspect interviewing, probation supervision). There also appear to be situations (e.g., interviews with sex offenders) in which positivity may be difficult to establish, or require a different mindset on the part of the interviewer to achieve positivity, and so this also needs to be further understood.

2.1.3 Operationalising the *coordination* component

Finally, Abbe and Brandon (2014) discuss the component of coordination as being the development of interactional synchrony between interacting parties which helps to develop a deeper relationship. This is generally thought to be achieved once rapport has already been established and interacting parties have a clear understanding of each other's interactive and communicative style – this allows them to engage in reciprocal and complementary behaviour with one another. Here, convergence is discussed as a key element of coordination, which relates to interactants coming to match or mimic one another's behaviour, which has been found to increase trust and positive affect for one

another (Scissors et al., 2008). For example, Drolet and Morris (2000) found that when adult participants (N = 134) underwent a conflict resolution task with a confederate, either over the telephone or in person, those who interacted in person had more warmth and positive affect between them and were more cooperative. This was suggested as being due to an increase in multi-channel responding (i.e., nonverbally, verbally, emotional expression) and the ability to synchronise or mirror each other's behaviour.

Another important element of coordination discussed by Abbe and Brandon (2014) was interacting parties contrasting, rather than mimicking, one another's behaviour – for example, displaying dominant behaviour in response to submissive behaviour. There are certain social situations where contrasting behaviour is said to be complementary to an interaction, such as situations where there is actual or perceived imbalance of status or control (Markey et al., 2003), such as interviews with police officers (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Gabbert et al., 2020) or probation officers (Alexander et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2006).

Research by Tiedens and Fragale (2003) also found that when adult participants (N = 98) carried out a task with a confederate that either presented a dominant or submissive disposition, they often complemented this by presenting the opposite disposition, and again felt more comfortable and liked the confederate more compared to participants who did not do this. Even so, Anderson (2002) found that when interviewing violent sexual offenders (N = 148) they can often be overly dominant or arrogant, and it was suggested that an interviewer complementing such behaviour with a submissive disposition may exacerbate the offender's behaviour and negatively impact the interview. As such, while coordinated behaviour can create an interactional synchrony and build rapport, different types of coordinated behaviours (i.e., mimicking or complementing) may be more beneficial than others within certain contexts or scenarios.

Abbe and Brandon (2013) elaborate further on coordination by stating that it may not only culminate as behavioural synchrony between interactants, but also through cognitive elements such as developing a shared understanding. In therapy, a strong working relationship between a therapist and a patient not only consists of a positive bond between them, but also having a mutual understanding of the tasks to be carried out during the sessions and the goals of therapy (Bordin, 1979). In a forensic context, it has been suggested that an interviewer can establish or strengthen rapport with an interviewee by explaining the true purpose and expectations of the interview, and removing ambiguity regarding their roles (Milne & Shepherd, 2006), implying that mutual understanding may be the most beneficial aspect of the coordination component in this context.

Even so, Vanderhallen et al. (2011) report that suspects do not always realise that they are being questioned as a suspect to a crime. Walsh and Bull (2010) also report that some suspects do not fully understand the caution they are given regarding their right to silence and interviewers often do not properly check whether they do. This implies that shared understanding for the interview may not always exist between the interacting parties of a forensic interview, and this could hinder the establishment of rapport between them. As such, further work needs to be conducted to investigate the efficacy of techniques/behaviours related to coordination – such as developing a shared understanding, but also mimicking and complementing behaviours – for forensic interviewing practice.

2.1.4 Maintaining the TDR rapport components

Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal (1990) highlight the idea that the three components of rapport carry specific weightings within any given interaction, and these weightings can differ between components and fluctuate during the interaction. For example, they state that a romantic couple undergoing an argument may express a high degree of attention by focusing intently on one another and coordination through interactional synchrony, but

have a low level of positivity within this interaction. However, once the argument is resolved, positivity between them can increase again. This could be a similar occurrence during a forensic interview, whereby the often adversarial nature of a suspect interview may cause positivity to be low, but this can fluctuate throughout the interview based on how this adversity is addressed and resolved. The importance of some components may also change after rapport has already been established (Nunan et al., 2020), and so it may be important for interviewers to build and maintain components at a level that would foster a productive interaction.

Walsh and Bull (2012) investigated the ability of police interviewers to build and maintain rapport in interviews with suspects charged with benefit fraud (N = 142). They assessed rapport-building skills using audio recordings of the interviews and found that many interviewers were poor at developing rapport, and even those who did manage to build rapport at the start of the interview were not able to maintain rapport as the interview progressed. This is concerning as when interviewers successfully built rapport suspects were three times more likely to provide a comprehensive account or confess compared to when rapport was absent, and when rapport was also maintained throughout the interview this increased to five times more likely. Hence, in this context maintaining components of rapport (i.e., attention, positivity and coordination) appears more important than just developing rapport at the start and then allowing rapport to lapse.

2.2 The humanitarian interview (HI)

Building upon the TDR component model of rapport, Holmberg and Madsen (2014) developed a forensic-based model of interviewing known as the HI. This model was developed by investigating the experiences of those who had undergone a forensic interview. Holmberg and Christianson (2002) surveyed convicted murderers and sex offenders (N = 83) to understand how they perceived their suspect interview. Two main

interviewing styles emerged, one of which was humanitarian and the other dominant. Participants who reported having a humanitarian interviewer felt respected, and reported a positive and friendly relationship between themselves and the interviewer. Conversely, participants interviewed by a dominant interviewer reported their interviewer was impatient and aggressive and that the relationship was negative.

Holmberg (2004) also surveyed sexual abuse and assault victims (N = 178). Again, the same two styles of interviewing emerged. Some participants perceived their interviewer to follow a humanitarian style while others perceived their interviewer to follow a dominant style. Most participants considered their interview to have been humanitarian, perceiving their interviewer as calm, obliging and cooperative, as well as empathetic to their situation. A humanitarian style was also associated with a reduced level of anxiety and a greater feeling of being respected, and those who experienced this style also reported providing more information to their interviewer.

From these studies, Holmberg & Madsen (2014) identified key rapport-building behaviours and linked them to the aforementioned TDR components of rapport, which formed the basis for the HI. Here, they stated that the component of attention could be operationalised as engaging in personal communication with an interviewee which leads to self-disclosure, engaging in active listening (e.g., summarising and feeding back what an interviewee said), and using several attentive non-verbal behaviours (e.g., making eye contact). Positivity was operationalised as an interviewer having a friendly and positive attitude which could be achieved through immediacy behaviours (e.g., smiling, nodding) and showing empathy or understanding for the interviewee's situation. Finally, coordination was operationalised as an interviewer being cooperative with the interviewee and giving them agency in the interaction, as well as being obliging to their needs. By engaging in all of these behaviours, the interaction would gradually manifest into a balanced and harmonious communicative relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (see Figure 1 for an overview of this model).



Figure 1. *The humanitarian interview as detailed by Holmberg and Madsen (2014).*

2.2.1 Testing the HI

Holmberg and Madsen (2014) tested the efficacy of the HI in an experimental setting, and empirically assessed whether it increased information gain during forensic interviews. Adult participants (N = 146) completed a computer simulation scenario following which they were interviewed about the simulation one week and 6 months later. Half underwent a humanitarian interview (i.e., the interviewer used behaviours discussed in section 2.2) and the other half a dominant interview (i.e., the interviewer did not express the humanitarian behaviours, and instead were unemotional, unfriendly and condemning during the interview). Participants in the humanitarian group reported a far better level of rapport with their interviewer than those in the dominant group, and they recalled significantly more details at both time points. Madsen and Holmberg (2015) later reported that participants (N = 146) who underwent a Humanitarian interview expressed higher psychological well-being (i.e., their ability to deal with stressors) and a higher sense of coherency during the interview than those who underwent a dominant interview.

Together these results provide strong evidence to indicate that HI techniques are effective for building rapport, which can in turn have a positive impact on interviewee

memory and psychological well-being. However, as with previously discussed studies (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011), again rapport-building techniques were only vaguely described (e.g., stating the interviewer used an obliging manner without distinguishing how), and the interviewer could conduct the interview within the constraints of a 'style'. In doing so, interviewers could utilise both verbal and non-verbal techniques, and the specific verbal and non-verbal behaviours used were not discussed. As such, it is again unclear how rapport was built during these studies or which rapport behaviours led to their positive outcomes.

2.3 The motivational interview (MI)

The MI was developed in therapeutic and counselling settings to create a comfortable atmosphere for a client to disclose information (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991). While not a specific model or framework of rapport building, the MI incorporates many of the same rapport-building methods described previously, and it is an element of both probation practice and one of the forensic-based models of rapport (i.e., ORBIT, discussed in section 2.4; Alison et al., 2013). The MI stresses that an interviewer should be accepting, non-judgemental, and empathetic, attempt to understand interviewees' perspectives, and involve them in the interview process and decision making – by doing so, the interviewer can build rapport and motivate interviewees to disclose information and enact positive behavioural change (W. R. Miller et al., 2008; W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991).

In the context of forensic interviewing, Alison et al. (2013) explain that this approach to interviewing should be adopted in police interviews, as it is also imperative here that an interviewer influences a suspect, for example, to move from a stance of resistance to one of cooperation towards disclosing valuable crime-relevant information. In the Probation services, this approach is also seeing prominence. Clark et al. (2006) explain

that offenders on probation often face an internal rift, whereby they want to change their behaviour (i.e., offending behaviour) but do not see the benefit or possibility to change. In this respect, an MI approach is said to be a valuable tool for tipping the scale and motivating them on a path towards change.

The MI is an expansive framework that employs multiple tools to motivate someone to change (e.g., treating drug addictions), and these elements are laid out within the motivational interviewing skill code (MISC) developed by W. R. Miller et al. (2008). The MISC consists of 3 global counsellor ratings which highlight the way in which an interviewer (in this case, a counsellor) should interact with a client. The first of these ratings is *acceptance* and is understood as the culmination of an unconditional positive regard during an interaction, with the counsellor expressing a high degree of warmth and friendliness towards their client, being supportive of their ideas and communicating with them in a respectful and dignifying manner. Here, acceptance does not necessarily imply that a practitioner should or will come to agreement or approval of the patient's ideas or choices, and they should neither condone nor condemn behaviours.

The second global rating of the MISC is empathy. This is discussed within the framework as the counsellor's ability to, or attempt to understand the patient's perspective. In this regard, the counsellor should express an active interest in the patient's current situation and they should probe for clarity where necessary using open questioning and reflective listening (i.e., conveying received information back to the client and confirming correct understanding).

The final global rating of the MISC is spirit, which is broken down into three components: collaboration, evocation and autonomy. The spirit of collaboration is described as a counsellor's ability to limit and break down power differentials. Rather than taking an authoritative stance and enforcing or persuading a client to utilise their ideas about change, the counsellor listens to the client's own ideas and concerns and negotiates

with them on a plan for change. The spirit of evocation allows a counsellor to achieve collaboration, as it aims to extract the client's perspective and ideas for change. Instead of a counsellor taking on an 'expert' stance they allow the client to take an active role in thinking about their desires for change and are non-judgemental. Finally, the spirit of autonomy is the counsellor's acceptance that the client is their own catalyst for change, and they can choose not to change. Patience is key, as indicating a sense of urgency for immediate change can make the client feel a lack of control over their situation.

2.3.1 Operationalising the MI for use in probation supervision

The original intention of the MISC was to identify the ideal methods and techniques to build a bond with a client and to influence them to talk about their problematic behaviours (e.g., drug/alcohol addictions), inevitably leading to positive behavioural change in the process. This resonates within probation services, as service users (i.e., offenders on probation) often have information to disclose in relation to their offending behaviour and motivations for change (Clark et al., 2006; Shapland et al., 2012), as well as their mental health and wellbeing (Mackenzie et al., 2015). Hence, a probation officer is described as an agent for change as they attempt to build rapport with service users and get them to discuss their problematic behaviours, with the intention of leading them on a path to changing those behaviours.

This is not only considered important for keeping the offender from risk to themselves, but also limiting the risk to the officer and the wider public. As such, Alexander et al. (2008) developed a model plan for MI within this context that emphasises the need for probation officers to adopt elements of the MISC. Furthermore, it emphasises the need for the officer to take on a dual role that must be able to develop a positive working alliance with an offender, while at the same time being firm in their ability to carry out procedural justice (i.e., punishments for transgressions). To achieve this, the

officer must make the offender aware of the goals of probation and what role each of them have during their supervision, making any procedural justice seem fair and consistent rather than imposing.

Furthermore, the MI is a key element in the more recent SEED framework developed in Probation (Sorsby et al., 2013), which provides probation officers with the tools (e.g., cognitive behavioural techniques and pro-social modelling) to carry out effective and worthwhile supervision of their service users, and it also emphasises the need to build rapport in these interviews to do that. While this framework is relatively new and has yet to be tested thoroughly, there is evidence that probation officers value the SEED framework as an effective means of interacting with service users, and value rapport building towards facilitating effective service user supervision (Sorsby et al., 2013).

The MI has been found to be more effective for leveraging positive behavioural change compared to traditional interviewing methods that emphasise general advice giving. Reviews by Moyers et al. (2009) and Rubak et al. (2005) provide extensive evidence that motivational interviewing can reduce or eliminate numerous problematic behaviours that cause poor mental or physical health in general populations (e.g., substance/alcohol addictions). McMurrin (2009) also identified multiple studies that had shown positive effects of the MI in enacting positive behavioural change in offender populations. Similar to the therapeutic literature, the MI has shown that offenders suffering from mental disorders and substance abuse (N = 43) later abstained from further drug use (H. Miles et al., 2007). Other studies that used samples of offenders court-mandated to substance abuse treatment (N = 167) showed that they were twice as likely to finish treatment when this was MI oriented compared to a standard advice-giving method (Lincourt et al., 2002). Reduced levels of drinking and risky driving behaviour in offenders (N = 105) have also been reported following MI treatment (coupled with relapse prevention) compared to standard methods (Stein et al., 2006).

Harper and Hardy (2000) found that offenders coupled with a probation officer trained in MI skills (N = 65) were reported as less antisocial more than a year later, with a significant decrease in self-reported drug and alcohol problems. Furthermore, studies have shown that offenders convicted of domestic violence (N = 123) were more likely to accept blame for their crime and showed signs of wanting to change after receiving MI style treatment (Kistenmacher & Weiss, 2008). In relation to actual offending behaviours, there was a significant reduction in recidivism for a range of offenders (N = 58) who received an MI-oriented treatment compared to a standard treatment, with this effect still significant up to four years after they were released from prison (Anstiss et al., 2011). A more recent study found similar positive outcomes for offenders (N = 330) who received a one year MI intervention, with these individuals having better criminal justice outcomes (e.g., less arrests or convictions) compared to those who did not receive the intervention (Polcin et al., 2018).

The results of these studies indicate that within offender populations, an MI approach to supervising and interacting with offenders can be a powerful means of reducing problematic behaviours and reoffending. However, studies to date have mostly investigated the outcome for offenders when coupled with MI trained probation officers compared to non-MI trained officers. Little research has investigated the quality of the relationship that develops between offenders and probation officers, and how or if this contributes towards enacting positive behavioural change (Chamberlain et al., 2018; Shapland et al., 2012). Some research has found that offenders with more positive perceptions of their probation officer were less likely to reoffend (e.g., Blasko et al., 2015; Chamberlain et al., 2018; Vidal et al., 2013), but these studies did not investigate which rapport-building techniques were effective in probation supervision, or how probation officers conceptualise and use rapport in practice.

Only one study has attempted to investigate probation officers' views and uses of rapport with service users, finding that probation officers value rapport and built rapport

using many of the methods outlined in the MI (Ireland & Berg, 2008). However, this study used only a small sample of US-based probation officers (N = 12), and so their findings may not generalise to a wider UK population. Considering the dual role probation officers have – that is, both meeting service users’ needs and carrying out procedural justice (Alexander et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2006; Skeem et al., 2007; Trotter, 2015) – it may be difficult for officers to build and maintain rapport while carrying out both of these roles. As such, it is sensible to assume that rapport-building tools developed in therapeutic contexts, such as the MI, may be ineffective and/or inappropriate for a probation context.

2.4 Observing rapport-based interviewing techniques (ORBIT)

The ORBIT model is another forensic-based model of rapport building that has been developed by Alison et al. (2013). ORBIT incorporates two major theories of interaction, the first of those being the MI (already discussed in section 2.3) and the second is the interpersonal behaviour circle (IBC). IBC postulates there are two dimensions to the way in which people relate to each other during an interaction. The first lies on a horizontal axis of affiliation, which consists of opposing traits of love and hate (or cooperative vs. challenging behaviours). The second is a vertical axis of control, which consists of opposing traits of power and submission (or authoritative vs. passive behaviours), with each trait creating a quadrant within the circle (Leary & Coffey, 1954).

IBC was later built upon by Birtchnell (2002) who described an interpersonal octagon, whereby adjacent quadrants could also work in conjunction with one another (e.g., one could be both authoritative and cooperative), and each trait consisted of both an adaptive and maladaptive version. For example, one could interact cooperatively in an adaptive manner by being social, warm and friendly, or in a maladaptive manner by appearing over-familiar, obsequious or desperate (see Figure 2 for a detailed diagram of adaptive and maladaptive interpersonal responding). According to Birtchnell (2002), the

truly effective interviewer is one that can adapt and is competent in all styles of interaction, knowing how and when to use each in an adaptive rather than maladaptive manner. Here, high emotional intelligence has also been discussed as important, as the interviewer should be able to read and understand the interviewee's emotional state and their interpersonal stance (e.g., dominant/submissive) in order to effectively manage the interview in an adaptive manner (op den Akker et al., 2013; Risan et al., 2016). As such, there is a clear link between elements of the IBC and components of the MI, such as empathy.

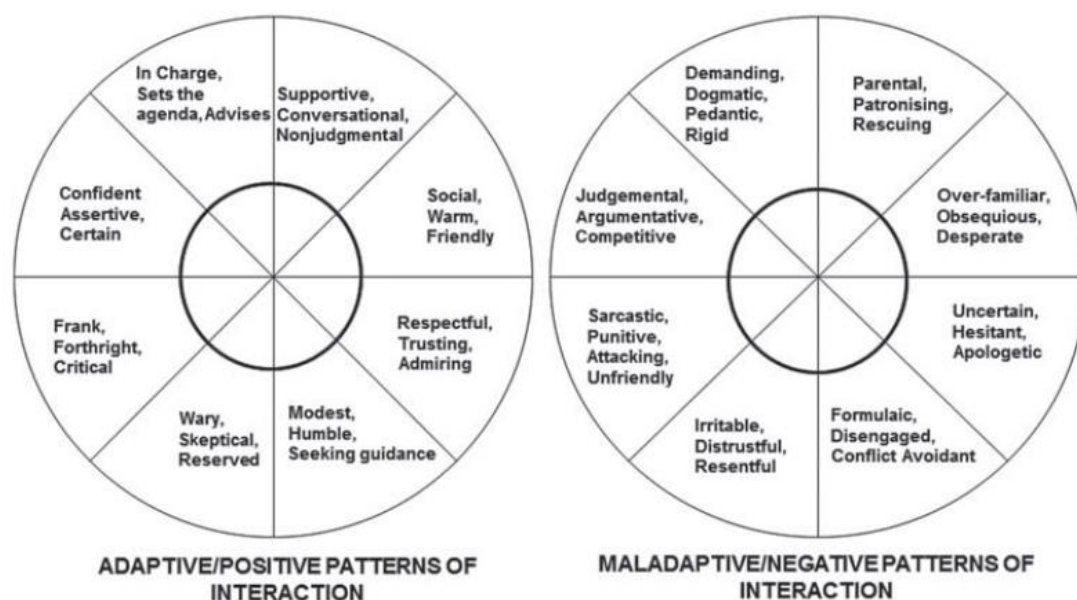


Figure 1. Adaptive (left) and maladaptive (right) interpersonal behavior circles (increasing intensity toward periphery, with center point = behavior absent, first inner circle = mild expression of behavior, mid circle = moderate expression of behavior, outer circle = persistent expression of behavior).

Figure 2. *The IBC model portraying adaptive (left) and maladaptive (right) forms of interacting, as detailed by Alison et al. (2013). The horizontal axis relates to affiliation, with cooperative behaviours on the right and challenging behaviours on the left. The vertical axis relates to control, with authoritative behaviours at the top and passive behaviours on the bottom. Behaviours listed are not exhaustive.*

However, research has shown that errors can often occur when making judgements about someone's interpersonal stance. For example, Bruijnes et al. (2015) recruited adult participants (N = 84) to judge a set of video fragments that depicted mock interviews with a suspect of theft (the suspect was an actor), with suspects portraying one of four interpersonal stances: dominant-positive, dominant-hostile, submissive-positive, or submissive-hostile. Participants were asked to provide several adjectives to describe the suspect, with each adjective being related to one of the four aforementioned interpersonal stances (e.g., being distant/defiant is related to the submissive-hostile stance). A submissive-hostile stance was the most commonly recognised stance by participants, however this was incorrect in many instances and indicated a bias towards identifying suspects as portraying this stance – perhaps due to preconceived biases about suspects being uncooperative (Bruijnes et al., 2015).

These findings by Bruijnes et al. (2015) are problematic. It has been discussed in the literature that the specific interactional stance taken by a person within an interaction can lead to the development of a set of coordinated behaviours between the interacting parties. In relation to the IBC, traits along the dimension of control leads to complementary coordination (e.g., a dominant stance causes the other to take a submissive stance), whereas traits along the dimension of affiliation lead to convergent coordination (e.g., friendly relating leads to further friendly relating; Leary & Coffey, 1954) – this is similar to mimicking and contrasting behaviour discussed by Abbe & Brandon (2014) in section 2.1.3. However, if an interviewer were unable to identify the stance taken by an interviewee, they may in turn adopt the incorrect stance and hinder their ability to effectively engage or build rapport with them (Bruijnes et al., 2015; op den Akker et al., 2013).

Certain offender traits may also need to be considered in relation to choosing an appropriate stance to take. For example, Anderson (2002) found that sexual offenders were more likely to be timid and lack confidence, and so understanding these factors could be

beneficial for suspect interviewers adopting the most appropriate stance in an interview. As such, ORBIT recommends suspect interviewers adopt elements of the MI and the IBC in order to understand the suspect and adopt an adaptive/versatile interviewing style to facilitate the interview process and build rapport (Alison et al., 2013).

2.4.1 Operationalising the ORBIT model

The essence of ORBIT is to observe the techniques of forensic interviewers to build rapport and foster a productive interaction with a suspect. MI is the backbone of the model as it outlines the general approach an interviewer takes during an interview (e.g., being empathetic or accepting of a suspect), and the IBC outlines the more specific interaction style and techniques that are employed by them to do so (Alison et al., 2013). Working in conjunction with one another, high levels of MI and a versatile interviewer (shown by adaptive use of the IBC) were predicted to influence a suspect to also interact using more adaptive styles thereby enhancing the yield of crime-relevant information compared to lower levels of MI and a less versatile interviewer.

To investigate their predictions, Alison et al. (2013) used ORBIT to assess the quality of real-world interviews with those suspected of terrorism. They analysed nearly 300 hours of interview footage with 29 terrorist suspects to assess the interpersonal style of both the interviewer and the suspect (i.e., adaptive or maladaptive behaviours), the MI tactics employed by the interviewers (e.g., summarising, reflective listening) and their general ethos towards interviewing suspects (e.g., being empathetic and accepting; these were formulated into MI scores), as well as measuring suspect information yield in relation to these factors.

Results indicated that both interviewers and suspects tended to interact using adaptive styles, and generally interviewers had high MI scores. Furthermore, MI scores were related to interaction style and information yield, whereby high MI scores led to an

increase in adaptive interaction styles for both interviewers and suspects, and an increase in the information yielded from suspects compared to lower MI scores. However, an adaptive interviewer style did sometimes cause maladaptive responding by the suspect and a decrease in information yield, although these negative effects were far more prevalent when an interviewer was maladaptive in their interviewing style. As such, Alison et al. (2013) concluded that interviewers adopting an adaptive style was favourable to a maladaptive style in most cases, but good use of the MI was considered beneficial in all cases. Using the ORBIT approach, Kim et al. (2020) also found that interviewers who used MI techniques and an adaptive interviewing style led to more adaptive responses by South-Korean victims of sexual assault (N = 86), and increased information yield from them.

In a further study by Alison et al. (2014) they found that rapport-based interviewing, identified using the ORBIT model, was also effective for tackling counter-interrogation tactics (CITs; e.g., staying silent, providing no comment statements) by terrorist suspects (N = 49). Here, the use of MI techniques by the interviewer was associated with reductions in CITs, as well as an increase in adaptive, and decrease in maladaptive interactional stances by suspects. However, they found that adaptive interviewer behaviours led to an increase in some verbal CITs (e.g., providing information about an unrelated topic), although this was assessed as a potentially positive finding as verbal utterances may indicate the suspect is moving away from resistance.

However, there are some limitations to these studies. Firstly, the fact that this was an observational field study meant that there could be no controls in place and this leaves us unable to ascertain which specific methods were effective for building rapport and producing their positive findings, or whether there may be other factors that could be influencing the results (e.g., rapport being built before or in-between interviews).

Secondly, most interviewers showed high levels of MI skills and were generally more adaptive in their interactional style making it difficult to compare them to those with

low levels of MI and those who used maladaptive styles, as there was a lack of data to do so. This may also attest to the officer samples used in these studies. In the UK, the PEACE model of interviewing (see page 22, footnote 9 for a brief description) is used to provide structure to interviewing practice, and training in the use of PEACE is split into 5 tiers: 1) introductory interview training for new officers, 2) interview training for experienced officers tackling volume crime, 3) advanced interview training for experienced officers tackling complex/serious crime, 4) training to monitor and supervise interviews, and 5) training to co-ordinate complex/serious interviews (Griffiths & Milne, 2006). As such, the findings by Alison et al. (2013, 2014) are representative of tier 3+ officers, but do not indicate how less experienced/trained tier 1 and 2 officers operationalise rapport, or what results they may achieve from using rapport.

This is important to consider as there may also be particular skills which are required in order to achieve good levels of ORBIT, and which may be too complex and/or out of the capabilities of some officers – one of the reasons for developing tiers within PEACE was to address the increasing complexity of investigating more serious crime, and an understanding that particular knowledge or skills are needed to conduct advanced interviewing (Clarke & Milne, 2001). As mentioned earlier, effective use of ORBIT requires an interviewer to be versatile and adapt to the interviewee, which ultimately relies on the interviewer's emotional intelligence, such as their ability to appropriately understand and respond to the emotions of the interviewee (Risan et al., 2017; Smith & Milne, 2018). However, this may be something that not all interviewers possess or are able to operationalise – for example, it has been found that some officers find it difficult to employ empathy in investigative interviews (Oxburgh et al., 2012, 2015; Oxburgh & Ost, 2011), and that certain characteristics are predictive of better use of empathy (e.g., gender; (Dando & Oxburgh, 2016). As such, perhaps not all police officers would be able to reach the level of emotional intelligence required to engage effectively with ORBIT, yet still require the ability to build rapport in some manner. As such, ORBIT may not be a viable

method of building rapport for less experienced/trained officers, and so their views and uses of rapport also need to be understood.

These limitations highlight the need for both controlled experimental research on the effects of rapport for forensic interviewing, as well as further exploration of how rapport is operationalised and used in practice by less experienced frontline officers.

2.5 Factors that influence rapport building

There are several factors that have been identified in the literature that could affect the utilisation and effectiveness of rapport building in forensic interviewing, and therefore warrant discussion. For one, as has been reported although not investigated by empirical research, particular interviewer characteristics (e.g., gender) could influence their use of rapport building with an interviewee. For example, Ireland & Berg (2008) found that female probation officers (N = 12) generally considered rapport to be a 'gendered attribute', meaning women were more naturally inclined to build rapport to effectively manage interactions with service users, whereas they reported men to generally take a more dominant and aggressive stance within their interactions. Indeed, this sentiment may have some merit to a certain extent, as female police interviewers have been found to be more adept at displaying empathy towards a source and are generally given more opportunities by a source to do so (Dando & Oxburgh, 2016; Oxburgh et al., 2012). While empathy does not necessarily equate to rapport, it can be considered a tool to build rapport, and so more empathic individuals may be more adept at rapport building in general, and gender may influence this.

Other studies have shown that experience and training received by forensic interviewers may impact their use of rapport. For example, Griffiths and Milne (2006) have shown that UK police officers (N = 15) who received relevant training were more competent in their suspect interviewing than those who did not, and were better able to

utilise open questioning rather than closed and accusatory questioning. Such practices are suggested as potential routes to building rapport (Orbach et al., 2000; Walsh & Bull, 2012) and could indicate that better trained individuals are more adept at building rapport. Furthermore, Russano et al. (2014) found that highly experienced human intelligence gatherers (N = 42) see the importance of building rapport, and many report using rapport-building techniques in their suspect interviews, with this being even higher for those that also had experience of interviewing high-value targets. So the experience of an individual may lead to enhanced rapport building.

Certain crime-specific details may also influence an interviewer's use of rapport. For example, Holmberg and Christianson (2002) found that the severity of a suspect's crime could affect whether an interviewer builds rapport with them, as murderers (N = 43) reported a more humanitarian interview than sex offenders (N = 40), with the latter group reporting a more aggressive and dominant interview. This is not particularly surprising, as it has been reported that sexual offences, especially toward children, are generally more difficult for an interviewer to handle emotionally (Oxburgh et al., 2006). Furthermore, Holmberg (2004) found that female victims of rape or assault (N = 104) also perceived their interviewer as being more dominant compared to male victims (N = 74), implying that police interviewers sometimes have selective preference over who they build rapport with, based on factors such as gender. Although, it is important to note that these findings were gathered from self-report data and may not reflect actual practice.

Finally, characteristics of an interviewee (e.g., gender, personality, culture) could influence the use of rapport by interviewers. Redlich et al. (2014) provided police investigators (N = 93) with crime case vignettes which differed on a number of factors, such as the gender of a suspect or the country a suspect was from. They asked participants to rate the interrogation tactics they would use for each case. They asked participants to rate the interrogation tactics they would use for each case. They found that rapport building was more prominent for a case involving a Pakistani man compared to an Iraqi woman and

an American man, and more confrontational methods were used with the latter suspect. As such, it may be that police officers perceive rapport to be more beneficial for specific suspects based on their culture or gender. However, these vignettes were not well controlled, with multiple factors differing between cases, which makes it difficult to ascertain the reasons why certain tactics were favoured over others.

The findings discussed in this section indicate that police and probation officers' views and uses of rapport can differ based on their skills and characteristics, such as their gender, experience or training), as well as their biases towards certain interviewees, based on factors such as interviewee gender, race, or severity/type of crime. As such, it is important to consider these factors when investigating rapport in forensic contexts.

2.6 Current issues in rapport research

The models and research introduced are beneficial in highlighting what rapport might be in police and probation services, as well as how rapport might be built and what the potential effects are for forensic interviews. However, there are several challenges. Firstly, models such as the TDR model have predominantly been developed in therapeutic contexts, yet they are heavily referenced in the forensic rapport literature. Considering police and probation interviews can often be adversarial in nature and can involve uncooperative interviewees (Clark et al., 2006; Kleinman, 2006), it may not be appropriate to generalise from one context to another. This is also true in relation to the MI which was developed as a counselling tool (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991). While it may be successful for probation services in general (e.g., see McMurrin, 2009), there may be elements that are not appropriate in the contexts relevant for this thesis. For example, it may sometimes be difficult or inappropriate for forensic interviewers to use empathy as suggested by the MI (Oxburgh & Ost, 2011).

Abbe and Brandon (2013, 2014) and other authors (e.g., Alison et al., 2013; Gabbert et al., 2020; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014) have provided a comprehensive account of how these models can be operationalised for forensic interviewing practice, although there is only limited empirical research that shows the effectiveness of these techniques specifically in adult witness (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Sauerland et al., 2019; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011) and suspect interviews (e.g., Alison et al., 2013, 2014). The studies mentioned here also have several limitations, such as using inconsistent or inappropriate methods of measuring rapport and conducting interviews, providing vague or confusing indications of how rapport was built, or being purely observational. As such, it is not clear how rapport can be built and what the direct influence of building rapport is for these interviews. As is apparent from this literature review, there is considerably less indication of what rapport is in a probation context, and there is next to no empirical research conducted in this domain.

2.7 The present research

Due to the clear limitations, the concept of rapport is not well understood in the context of forensic interviews. Throughout this chapter it has been shown that models of rapport do exist, and as such there are some recommendations as to what rapport might be and how to establish it during a forensic interview. However, it is not currently understood whether these models are used in practice by police and probation officers and whether their views align with these models. As these models have often been developed from research in other contexts (e.g., therapy) that can differ in their client populations and interviewing goals/aims, it may not be appropriate to generalise them to forensic contexts. Furthermore, where experimental research exists, there are numerous and significant

limitations and very mixed results to consider, making it difficult to draw any strong conclusions.

Considering that rapport building has been suggested as vital for forensic practice to improve information gain during forensic interviews and motivate offenders to enact positive behavioural change (Clark et al., 2006; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015), it is clear that further research is needed to address these limitations towards filling significant gaps in knowledge. Accordingly, the research reported in this thesis improves understanding by i) exploring the views and perceptions of police and probation officers to identify their understanding of rapport and how they practice rapport building in their respective interviewing contexts, as well as identifying whether these views align with what is currently suggested by the literature, and ii) investigating the efficacy of several clusters of clearly operationalised rapport-building techniques for building rapport, facilitating communication and improving cognition.

2.7.1 Study 1: Investigating the effect of rapport building in witness interviews

Several studies have been conducted regarding rapport building in a witness setting, but there remain significant gaps in knowledge. Study 1 quantitatively assesses the effectiveness of several rapport-building techniques for improving episodic memory using a mock-witness paradigm. Unlike previous research, verbal and non-verbal rapport-building techniques were split from one another to identify their individual effects on witness memory, and they were clearly defined. Interviewer behaviour was also rated by independent coders to assess compliance to rapport-building measures and ensure they were present. Rapport was measured through a questionnaire asking participants to rate their experience of the interviewer and the interview – these experiences are linked to rapport and have been used in other studies (e.g., Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Witness stress and anxiety measures were collected to identify if rapport has positive

effects at limiting these during the interview (as found by Almerigogna et al., 2007; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Quas & Lench, 2007).

2.7.2 Study 2: Investigating the views of UK police officers regarding rapport building with suspects

Some rapport research has been conducted in the realm of police interviewing, with much of this work focused on interviewing witnesses. However, suspect interviews can generally be more adversarial than witness interviews and therefore may require different methods of engagement, but rapport is less well understood in this context. Generalisations from the therapeutic literature may also be less warranted here due to the adversarial nature. Some research has attempted to understand rapport specifically in suspect interviews (e.g., Alison et al., 2013, 2014), although it has been observational and does not indicate how regular police officers view and use rapport in practice – one study did investigate this (i.e., Vallano et al., 2015), but views were conflated with views on witness interviews. As such, it is unknown how police officers themselves define and use rapport in suspect interviewing practice. Study 2 conducted a survey with a selection of UK police officers to understand their definitions of rapport, how they used it with suspects and whether their views and perceptions mapped onto the current models of rapport.

2.7.3 Study 3: Investigating the views of UK probation officers regarding rapport building with service users

Rapport research in a probation context is almost non-existent. While tools such as the MI and SEED have been developed which incorporate elements of rapport, and rapport is suggested as an important tool in this context, there is next to no research that has specifically investigated rapport building here. As such, there is very little information pertaining to what rapport is when interviewing service users or how to build it, and it is

not known whether probation officers see the utility of rapport and/or use it in practice.

Study 3 comprised focus groups and interviews with probation officers to identify their views of rapport building and understand how they conceptualise rapport, use and maintain rapport with service users, and whether their views align with those outlined in the models.

3 Chapter three: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the mixed methods used to conduct the research undertaken for this thesis. First, an explanation of mixed-methods research and the rationale for using this method is provided. Second, the limitations of mixed-methods are discussed. Third, the different quantitative and qualitative methods used are introduced and justification is provided. Finally, the analyses used are explained.

3.1 Mixed-methods research

Mixed-methods research combines or ‘triangulates’ quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate different elements of the same phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Denzin, 1978; Johnson et al., 2007). While certain research questions may be better suited to either a quantitative or qualitative design, both have unique limitations that can hinder understanding of complex real-world phenomena, but also unique advantages that can complement understanding when combined. Triangulation of methodologies can occur within the same study or between studies and enables researchers to gather rich and varied data sets, which can be synthesised into robust and comprehensive practical and theoretical models (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Jick, 1979; Johnson et al., 2007). This also helps to increase the effectiveness of, and improve on the validity of research, as findings from multiple methods ensures “that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact” (Bouchard, 1976, p. 268) – if several methods of investigation that differ in their approach come to similar conclusions, then this can increase confidence in research findings and “serve as the litmus test for competing theories” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 115). As such, mixed-methods research takes a pragmatic approach to research design that considers the utility of different research methods and applies them appropriately to the question at hand rather than sticking rigidly to a specific research design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019).

In quantitative research, a positivist approach to research design is generally favoured, whereby an objective reality is said to exist and can be studied empirically, usually through experimentation and quantifying sensory experiences – here, findings can be used to make generalisations and predictions about phenomena to larger populations and develop our theoretical knowledge, and it is particularly useful when knowledge already exists (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Ryan & Sfar-Gandoura, 2018; Willig, 2013). However, this type of approach has been criticised as reducing multidimensional and complex problems into simple variables without considering how human experience and variation may influence these variables in the real world, which potentially fabricates a static reality that is not reflective of real life (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Plath, 2006). This could limit research into social and communication research where human interaction is key, such as rapport building (Johnson et al., 2007).

Qualitative research on the other hand is not concerned with reducing human experience into variables or making predictions, and instead attempts to understand the lived experience of individuals, or how people interpret or navigate reality based on the context (e.g., social, cultural, political) in which they find themselves – in essence, it aims to understand how people make sense of reality (Fischer, 2006; Willig, 2013). As such, qualitative research is effective for providing a more in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, and can be particularly beneficial where the area is novel or under-researched (Guest et al., 2013). Furthermore, due to the subjective nature of qualitative research, emphasis is put on reflexivity, whereby researchers consider how their knowledge, experiences, and biases impact on how they design, conduct and interpret the research (Elliott et al., 1999; Yardley, 2008). Regardless, it may not be possible to fully remove these biases due to the researcher's active involvement in the research (e.g., interviewing participants). Small sample sizes and the inability to identify whether a participant's account is a true reflection of reality also make it difficult to generalise

findings to wider populations or assess the veracity of the findings (Fischer, 2006; Willig, 2013).

Mixed-methods researchers place themselves in between these positivist and interpretive approaches found within quantitative and qualitative research, respectively, and take a pragmatic approach. They understand that an objective reality exists that can be quantified and empirically investigated to an extent, but also that this reality is perceived through the lens of an individual's subjective reality which also needs to be understood (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). In research with social and communicative elements, such as rapport building, this type of research approach can be highly advantageous. As discussed in previous chapters, rapport is a social phenomenon which is reliant on a two-way communicative process between interacting parties (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). As such, understanding the human experience of building and receiving rapport is key to conceptualising this complex and dynamic phenomenon, highlighting the need for in-depth qualitative research. However, it is also possible to capture rapport as a set of techniques and behaviours that can be operationalised for forensic interviews to test their efficacy (see Gabbert et al., 2020 for a systematic review), and so quantitative research is useful for understanding how rapport can be used in practice.

Furthermore, a range of different qualitative and quantitative methods have already been employed in the limited research on forensic rapport building. For example, qualitative interviewing studies using a thematic analysis (TA) approach have been conducted with police and probation officers to understand their views on rapport and how they build rapport during interviews with offenders (Ireland & Berg, 2008; Russano et al., 2014), and survey-based studies have investigated this by collecting both open-ended and rating scale data (e.g., Chamberlain et al., 2018; Vallano et al., 2015). In the police literature, several quantitative studies have also used experimental research designs to assess the efficacy of rapport behaviours and techniques towards building rapport and

facilitating police interviews (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhafer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Sauerland et al., 2019; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Other quantitative studies have analysed real life police transcripts to understand how rapport is used in practice, and another forensic rapport-building model, ORBIT, was developed from this (e.g., Alison et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2020).

As such, a mixed-methods approach has already been key towards understanding rapport in a police context, and there currently exists a limited but important body of work that has conceptualised and tested the utility of rapport for police interviewing practice; although, limitations with the experimental work in this field highlights the need for further quantitative research (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Gabbert et al., 2021; Vallano et al., 2015)

Other than a small handful of studies in a probation context (i.e., Blasko et al., 2015; Chamberlain et al., 2018; Ireland & Berg, 2008; Polcin et al., 2018; Vidal et al., 2013), which also have several limitations (see Chapter 2, sections 2.3.1 & 2.6), there is next to no research regarding rapport building in this context (Shapland et al., 2012). Due to this, rapport has not been defined nor operationalised in a probation context, and so quantitative research that investigates the efficacy of rapport in this context cannot be conducted. As such, qualitative research appears more appropriate for understanding rapport in a probation context. This is because qualitative research is typically more exploratory in nature and is particularly effective for investigating phenomena that we do not yet have a strong understanding for (Guest et al., 2013). Furthermore, unlike police officers, probation officers need to build and maintain a relationship with their service users over a long period of time (Ministry of Justice, 2015) and are required to discuss topics other than a related offence (e.g., mental health; Clark et al., 2006; Mackenzie et al., 2015). Because of this, probation officers may have stronger and more dynamic views of rapport compared to police officers which need to be explored.

Thus, the research conducted for this thesis adopted a sequential mixed-methods approach (Morse, 1991), whereby individual studies utilised different methods to address their own unique research questions (i.e., to understand rapport specifically in witness, suspect or service user interviewing settings), but are intended to also complement one another when viewed in combination, which is one of the key aims of conducting mixed-methods research (Brannen, 2005). Ultimately, the intention of combining study findings into a cohesive whole is to meet the overarching aim of this thesis, which is to understand and operationalise rapport building in a wider and more general forensic sense.

Furthermore, the sequential (rather than simultaneous) nature of the research, whereby each research study follows on from one another (i.e., study 1: witness interviewing → study 2: suspect interviewing → study 3: probation interviewing) was a means of ensuring study findings combined into a cohesive forensic understanding of rapport. For example, as study 1 was concerned with the use of rapport-building techniques in police interviewing practice (and as will be seen in chapter 4, certain techniques did impact communication), it was decided that an important aspect of study 2 should be to understand how police officers perceived the use and effectiveness of these techniques, which was done through both open-ended and rating-scale questions. Similarly, this is something that study 3 aimed to understand from a probation perspective and so these findings also guided development of focus group/interview questions in this study. Additionally, questions in study 3 were further developed from study 2 findings. For example, study 2 investigated topics such as rapport training for police officers and the types of interviewees that rapport is most/least effective with, with unique and important findings emerging. As such, study 3 also aimed to understand probation officer views on these types of topics and whether they may relate/differ to police officer views.

A simultaneous mixed-methods approach would have not allowed for the studies to influence one another, and while it may have still allowed for unique and important findings to emerge from each study, it may not have produced data that could easily be

compared between the study contexts. For example, if the three studies did not have any focus on verbal and/or nonverbal behaviours related to rapport, then it would not have been possible to compare how the use and effectiveness (actual or perceived) of certain techniques may relate or differ between contexts. By ensuring each study had a focus on this, it was possible to provide understanding of how these techniques may be operationalised for wider forensic practice. As will be seen in Chapter 7, there are many comparisons that can be made between the contexts discussed within this thesis related to rapport techniques and processes, training, and barriers (amongst other things) which can ultimately aid in understanding rapport in a more generalised forensic sense.

3.2 Quantitative methods (police research)

As has been discussed previously, several experimental studies have been conducted focusing on the effect of rapport on witness memory – however, several limitations exist regarding these studies (see Chapter 2, sections 2.1 & 2.6). Furthermore, much of the forensic rapport research has focused on witness interviewing, and there is little indication as to whether frontline police officers regard building rapport as important with suspects, or effective for meeting interview goals. As such, the quantitative research conducted for this thesis aimed to address the current limitations and gaps in the forensic rapport research – the following sections explain the methods used. Study 1 (Chapter 4) conducted an experimental investigation into the efficacy of several different rapport-building techniques for witnesses in a mock-witness paradigm (see section 3.2.1). Study 2 (Chapter 5) surveyed UK police officers to understand how they conceptualised and used rapport in suspect interviewing practice (see section 3.2.2).

3.2.1 Mock-witness paradigm

The mock-witness paradigm involves showing participants a video of a mock-crime event or having them participate in a mock event and then interviewing them for their memory of the event in a police style interview, attempting to emulate a real-life witness interview (Powell, 2002). This research paradigm is often used as the first point of call for research into witness memory and allows for the controlled manipulation of different interviewing techniques to identify how they influence recall. As such, this paradigm has been used in a plethora of witness interviewing studies, for example those investigating the effect of using CI techniques (see Memon et al., 2010 for a meta-analytic review of these studies), phenomena such as the misinformation effect (see Blank & Launay, 2014 for a meta-analytic review of these studies), and novel interviewing techniques such as using sketching as a tool for guiding cognition (e.g., Dando, 2013; Dando et al., 2009b, 2011, 2020; Mattison et al., 2015, 2018), amongst others. This has also been the leading paradigm in the limited research on rapport building (see R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Sauerland et al., 2019; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011).

While field studies have also been used in the study of rapport, that is analysing real-life police transcripts (e.g., Alison et al., 2013, 2014; K. Collins & Carthy, 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Nunan et al., 2020), these studies are only able to identify if and how police officers build rapport in practice. To an extent, it is also possible to assess whether building rapport led to an increase in information yield from an interviewee, but due to there being no control over any of the rapport variables it is difficult to assess how effective rapport was in this regard, and it is not possible to adequately compare different methods. The accuracy of information provided also cannot be fully ascertained as it is difficult to corroborate the information provided by the interviewee with the actual event that transpired (Powell, 2002; Powell et al., 2010). Furthermore, transcripts provide a limited analysis of rapport as they can only indicate what was said in an interview, and they may

miss crucial elements such as how things were said (e.g., tone of voice) and the non-verbal behaviours displayed by the interviewer/interviewee – as discussed in Chapter 2, these nuances are an important element of communication and rapport building (see Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014 & Gabbert et al., 2020 for reviews). As such, this method of research is inadequate for investigating the direct impact, or uncovering the nuanced nature of rapport.

Mock-witness paradigms on the other hand allow researchers to manipulate a plethora of rapport variables (including variables linked to both verbal and non-verbal rapport behaviours), assess their direct effect on information gathering, and compare between controlled conditions. Accuracy of information can also be ascertained as the researcher can confirm details from the video or event that participants witnessed – although, live events are more difficult to control (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015), and so a video may be more effective. As such, study 1, which was interested in investigating the impact of separate verbal and non-verbal rapport-building behaviours, used the mock-witness paradigm with a video as it allowed for the manipulation of several different rapport techniques and to easily assess the accuracy of participants' accounts to ascertain the impact rapport techniques (or the absence of rapport) had on witness memory.

3.2.2 Police survey

Study 2 used an online survey in order to understand the views and uses of rapport during suspect interviews by frontline UK police officers. This method was chosen over an in-depth qualitative method for several reasons. Firstly, due to the fact that conceptualisations of rapport and techniques for building rapport already exist and are recommended by several police interviewing tools (e.g., the CI; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), this study was not concerned with gathering an in-depth understanding of rapport in police contexts. Rather, this study sought to identify whether a general consensus on

rapport in suspect interviews existed and the most commonly used techniques used by police officers in practice using rating-scale questions and brief open-ended questions (analysed using quantitative content analysis, CA; see section 3.2.3).

Second, there are a plethora of organisational barriers in the police services that can make it difficult to conduct research in person with police officers (Reiner, 2000), and police work can be dangerous, stressful and time-intensive (Queirós et al., 2020), meaning officers may not have the time or be willing to participate in research. Hence, conducting an online survey was advantageous as this research design allowed flexibility for officers to participate from anywhere and whenever they had time to do so (Evans & Mathur, 2005), meaning that it did not infringe on their duties – this allowed a larger pool of officers to participate than would otherwise be possible. Furthermore, questionnaire-based research investigating police officers views of rapport (e.g., Vallano et al., 2015) and other related topics (such as empathy or general interviewing techniques; see Dando et al., 2008 & Baker et al., 2020a) has previously been conducted to good effect, and so there is precedence for this type of research.

3.2.3 Content analysis (CA)

CA in quantitative design is a method of turning textual (or qualitative) data into quantitative data. Here, words are grouped into themes or categories that explain the data (Coe & Scacco, 2017; Rose et al., 2015). Unlike qualitative CA, quantitative CA mostly concerns itself with manifest content, whereby the meaning of the content can be directly understood by the words or phrases used, and so can be formulated into clearly defined categories (Coe & Scacco, 2017). Qualitative CA also considers latent content, which involves interpreting the words used and the way they were said in order to extract meaning that is not found directly in the text (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Willig, 2013). While CA provides only a simple analysis of textual data compared to more complex qualitative

methods (e.g., TA), it was considered appropriate for analysing the interview transcripts from study 1 (mock-witness experiment) as it allowed for this data to be quantified for statistical analysis (this method is common practice in research involving mock witnesses; see Memon et al., 1996). CA was also considered appropriate for study 2 (police survey) as the qualitative data gathered from this study was generally short and not very detailed (and so more in-depth qualitative analyses could not be applied), and it also allowed for quantification of this data to highlight the prevalence of particular views of rapport building amongst the target population – this was also the method of analysis used in the study by Vallano et al. (2015), which study 2 is based upon.

In study 1, which is an experimental investigation into rapport building in witness interviews, data were transcribed verbatim and then quantified using CA. This was done by comparing the details provided by participants to those found within the video they watched. Prior to conducting the study, the video was watched several times by the researcher and the main details were noted. However, due to the dynamic nature of the video, there were pieces of information that were not easily identifiable, and so extra details provided by participants were double-checked against the video. Details that participants provided that were present in the video were coded as correct information, details that were present but said with error were coded as incorrect information (e.g., saying a black jacket was red), and details provided that were completely absent from the video were coded as confabulated information (i.e., made up; see Appendix A for an example of this coding process). To ensure consistency with coding, a selection of transcripts were double coded by an independent coder. The coding and CA were conducted with guidance from the literature (e.g., Coe & Scacco, 2017; Memon et al., 1996). Inferential statistical tests were used to analyse the data created by the CA (see Chapter 4, sections 4.5.6 – 4.5.8, Figure 6 & Table 10).

For the police survey (study 2), where open-ended qualitative responses were provided to questions, a CA was employed to analyse these responses. For each qualitative

question, a set of general categories were devised that captured an adequate meaning for the responses. Some of these categories were developed a-priori and were based around ideas that had been suggested within the literature. For example, in response to ‘what is rapport?’, it is common for officers to describe this as being a ‘relationship’ based on ‘communication’ (Vallano et al., 2015). As such, these types of descriptions were also expected to be present in the current data, and so formed some of the categories. Other categories were developed after reviewing participant responses and identifying similar themes that were prevalent across the data (see Appendix B for example coding). These categories were manifest in the data by the specific words that participants used. The prevalence of each category for each question was reported in the findings (see Chapter 5, section 5.3).

3.3 Qualitative methods (probation research)

To date, the research into forensic rapport-building has been primarily quantitative in an aim to understand which techniques are effective at establishing rapport and meeting interviewing goals (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015). However, this research has primarily been conducted in police interviewing settings where models of rapport have been developed and a base of research already exists. The literature on rapport in a probation context is scant (Shapland et al., 2012), and so there is not yet enough information currently available to advise quantitative work. Unlike police settings, interviews between probation officers and service users are also not recorded, and so there is no possibility to analyse interview transcripts as has been common practice in research on rapport in police contexts (e.g., Alison et al., 2013). Furthermore, gaining access to probation settings to conduct observational field research into probation practice is difficult, and to date there is very little precedent for this type of research (only one such study appears to exist and it was conducted in Spain; (Boxstaens et al., 2015).

Due to the limited amount of research investigating rapport in probation settings and the general lack of knowledge in this area, exploratory research is needed to first uncover what rapport is and how it could be built in a probation context, which will aid in the development of more focused and/or quantitative research into rapport. As such, rather than test any notions of rapport, study 3 (Chapter 6) instead aimed to understand what rapport is and how it is used in practice by probation officers, and so a qualitative research method was used to draw out participants' views and experiences, and provide an in-depth understanding of this unexplored topic.

3.3.1 Validity and reliability of qualitative research

Due to the subjective and interpretive nature of qualitative research, several guidelines exist for researchers to follow to ensure the validity and credibility of the data and reporting of the findings. One of these was developed by Yardley (2008) and sets out four criteria that researchers should meet. The four criteria will be discussed below along with additions from a similar set of guidelines developed by Elliott et al. (1999), and it will be discussed how these criteria were met for study 3.

The first criterion is *sensitivity to context*, that is the researcher having an awareness of certain factors – such as the participants views and experiences, the specific wording of questions or where the research took place – and how these can potentially influence what participants will say and the way in which data is interpreted. Elliott et al. (1999) also state that a researcher should describe their participants and provide contextual details in order to evidence the applicability of the findings to the participant population. In study 3, participants were asked open-ended questions about their views of rapport building with service users, and they were encouraged to share and discuss their experiences of building rapport in practice. Furthermore, some demographic details were also provided prior to the focus groups/interviews (e.g., gender, experience; see Table 21

in Chapter 6) and other demographic details were provided spontaneously by participants during these sessions (e.g., some participants had backgrounds in the police). As such, the contextual factors related to participants' views were explored, and these factors formed the basis of a major theme in the analysis of the data (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.2).

Secondly, the researcher must show *commitment and rigor* towards the research process, evidencing their consideration of the previously mentioned contextual factors, a meticulous approach towards study design, data collection and analysis, and their skills and expertise in regards to conducting the research. Here, Elliott et al. (1999) also specify that researchers should check the credibility of their findings with other researchers and provide a clear indication of their specific research tasks. In study 3, all focus/groups and interviews were conducted by the main researcher, as were the verbatim transcriptions of audio files, analysis and dissemination of findings, and so the main researcher was fully engaged in the research process – the aims and procedure of this study are clearly outlined in Chapter 6 (see sections 6.1 – 6.3). Due to the main researchers relative inexperience with qualitative research, guidance was also sought from more experienced qualitative researchers, and from the literature (e.g., Braun & Clarke, 2006; Kitzinger, 1995; Willig, 2013; Yardley, 2008), and the main researchers experience is provided in the reflexivity section (see Chapter 6, section 6.6). Furthermore, a selection of transcripts were double coded by external researchers in order to assure consistency in analysis and interpretation with the main researcher.

Thirdly, researchers should be *transparent and coherent* in the reporting of their research, explaining the rationale for their choice of methods and analysis, and providing a clear and succinct overview of the research findings. For this, Elliott et al. (1999) also state that researchers should ground the findings in examples (e.g., participant quotes) and these should be structured as a coherent narrative. With regards to transparency, this chapter (i.e., Chapter 3) highlights the rationale for using qualitative methods, and the specific methods and analyses used. A methodological (as well as personal) reflexivity section is

also provided in Chapter 6 (section 6.6) to highlight how the researcher's experiences have shaped their views on rapport building and how this may have influenced the findings of study 3. Furthermore, the consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ) was completed by the researcher, which is an extensive checklist that ensures qualitative research is reported in adherence to current best standards (Tong et al., 2007; see Appendix C). Finally, the findings of Chapter 6 are clearly presented in section 6.4 along with exemplar quotes by participants to explain them, and these were structured to present a coherent rapport-building process (see section 6.4 & Figure 12).

Finally, the researcher should consider the real-world *impact and importance* of the findings, and it should be made explicit to the reader how the knowledge generated from the research is useful – these findings should resonate with the reader, providing them with a new or better understanding of the topic (Elliott et al., 1999). As has been highlighted in the prior chapters, rapport is considered to be an important element of probation supervision yet is currently under-researched, and so the importance of this work is readily apparent. The UK Probation service also recognises the importance of this research as they have supported the main researcher by providing guidance, helping with participant recruitment and providing rooms within their premises to conduct this research (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.2) Furthermore, the findings of study 3 were presented and discussed (by invitation) with probation staff in a live webinar (Nahouli, 2020), and discussions ensued regarding how to incorporate the findings into training and practice. As such, there is clear evidence that study 3 provides a novel and important understanding of rapport for both the reader and the Probation service, and this work has clear value and impact for probation practice.

3.3.2 Focus groups

Focus groups were chosen as the main method of gathering data from participants in study 3. Compared to a traditional one-to-one interviewing method, there were several reasons why focus groups were considered more beneficial for the current study. Firstly, focus groups can capture multiple different perspectives on a topic due to participants sharing and discussing their views with one another, and this can lead to extracting viewpoints that participants may not consider in one-to-one interviews (Kitzinger, 1995; Willig, 2013), as well as more detailed responses (Morgan, 1996). Focus groups also allow researchers to identify a consensus regarding the topic of discussion amongst groups of people, which is beneficial when trying to generalise findings to a wider population, and this can improve on the ecological validity of the research (Willig, 2013) – traditional interviews are more attuned to understanding individual views and experiences regarding a topic (Gibbs, 1997). It is possible that participants are less willing to share their true views when in a group (Kitzinger, 1995), however considering the communicative nature of probation work and that no sensitive topics were raised in the study, this was not considered an issue. Finally, focus groups were beneficial in a practical sense as it allowed several probation officers to be interviewed together, reducing the time constraints of both the researcher and the officers.

3.3.3 Thematic analysis (TA)

The audio data was transcribed verbatim and analysed qualitatively using TA (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). TA is a form of qualitative analysis that aims to find patterns within the data and organise them into themes. Formulating data into conceptualisations or themes is also found in other qualitative approaches, such as interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) and grounded theory (GT). However, unlike these other approaches, TA is compatible with several different epistemological and theoretical positions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Willig, 2013).

IPA strictly takes a phenomenological approach and is interested in understanding the subjective experience of individuals in certain contexts or regarding particular phenomena – this is particularly effective when researching topics concerning personal affect, such as living with a debilitating illness or being victimised (McLeod, 2011; Willig, 2013). GT on the other hand is generally used to observe and categorise social processes that occur, and it attempts to generate theory that is grounded in the data rather than through interpretation by the researcher (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Willig, 2013). As such, it can be said to follow a realist approach as it attempts to understand reality as it is, rather than how it is experienced by participants (Willig, 2013) – although, interpretive versions of GT also exist (e.g., Charmaz, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

However, the current research is not concerned with understanding the in-depth lived experience of probation officers, but rather the general views and practices of rapport building amongst probation officers - while an individual officer's experience likely influences their views and practice, individual experience may not be reflective of wider practice. As such, privileging individual accounts would not meet the aims of study 3, and so IPA would be an inappropriate method of analysis here. As well, while study 3 attempts to understand the social process of rapport building, there is already existing theory that underpins the concept of rapport. Thus, study 3 is also not concerned with generating theory, but rather understanding how current theory applies to a novel context (i.e., the probation services), and so GT would also be inappropriate here.

Furthermore, study 3 takes a critical realist approach, acknowledging that while participants may provide some indication of their views and practices of rapport building, there are likely to be factors unknown to the participant that influence how they think about rapport – as such, their accounts do not provide a direct reflection of reality and so some interpretation is required to fully understand their meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Willig, 2013). This epistemological approach is generally incompatible with IPA and

certain types of GT, but is compatible with TA. TA provides a flexible approach that allows the researcher to both describe and interpret participants' views and practices of rapport – allowing both semantic and latent (underlying) themes – and to understand the data in relation to the current theoretical knowledge on rapport. Furthermore, TA is particularly well suited for investigating how people conceptualise social phenomena (Willig, 2013), in this case rapport, and due to its flexibility and simplicity it is also well suited for less experienced researchers new to qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), such as the main researcher (see Chapter 6, section 6.6). Thus, TA was considered to be the most appropriate method of analysis for study 3.

4 Chapter four: Actions ‘speak’ louder than words – effects of rapport-building techniques during witness interviews

It has been argued that building rapport prior to, and during witness interviews can make the interviewee feel more comfortable, which in turn can reduce the cognitive demands of the interview for witnesses (Almerigogna et al., 2007). The corollary being that comfortable witnesses are a ‘better’ witness because they are then able to focus on recalling the witnessed event, rather than worrying about the social context. Indeed, some empirical research has shown benefits of establishing and maintaining rapport during adult witness interviews. For example, making an interviewee feel more comfortable (R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011), less anxious (Kieckhaefer et al., 2014), and protecting them from the negative effects of post-event misinformation (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011), which has resulted in them providing a richer, more complete account of an experienced event. However, contradictory findings have also been found, whereby rapport has had no effect (neither positive nor negative) on memory performance (Sauerland et al., 2019), or has resulted in interviewees recalling more false information for an event (Kieckhaefer et al., 2014).

The aforementioned research studies have used various types of rapport-building techniques (e.g., verbal vs. non-verbal), different methods of measuring rapport, and different interview protocols. Furthermore, they have numerous limitations (as discussed in Chapter 2, sections 2.1 & 2.6), which makes unpacking the impact of rapport building almost impossible. Hence, not only is it difficult to conclude what rapport is, but also how rapport is received by interviewees. The present study moves towards filling this gap in knowledge by investigating the effect of several rapport-building techniques on mock witnesses’ episodic memory performance for a mock crime, and in doing so seeks to move towards addressing some of the limitations of previous research.

First, following a review of the rapport-building theories (see Chapter 2), rapport-building variables have been clearly operationalised, along with a rationale for the types selected for this research. The impact of these variables at building rapport were measured by asking participants to subjectively rate their experience of rapport. Second, the interviewer was video recorded and his verbal and non-verbal rapport-building behaviours were coded in order to provide an objective measure of rapport. Third, the interview protocols are held constant across all experimental conditions and they map directly onto the current best practice guidance to gather witness information for investigating volume crime for criminal justice purposes (e.g., ABE; Ministry of Justice, 2011). Fourth, measures of anxiety and physiological stress were also gathered towards understanding how and if rapport influences stress and anxiety, and if in turn this has an impact on memory performance. Fifth, as is typically the case for non-violent, high-volume crime in the real world (where time delays often occur), interviews were conducted 24-hours post-experiencing the stimulus event. Finally, to limit the impact of interviewer variables, the interviewer was held constant and followed the interview protocol verbatim. These points are discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.1 Addressing the current limitations

There have been several methods of rapport building used by researchers (Gabbert et al., 2021). One of the most prominent ways is using positive non-verbal behaviours, such as making frequent eye contact or having relaxed and open body language (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002). While these behaviours have shown to be useful at establishing rapport, they are often described in a vague manner which make them difficult to replicate. Another popular method of building rapport has been through verbal techniques, most notably through the use of self-disclosure questions or statements (e.g., Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). These techniques have been found to be

successful for establishing rapport and they are easy to replicate. However, these studies rarely specify whether, across conditions, they have controlled for non-verbal techniques that typically accompany verbalisations and it is possible these may have had a confounding effect on their results.

Police officers regularly report using verbal rapport-building techniques in interviewing practice (Dando et al., 2008; Vallano et al., 2015), but these can be carried out with indifference towards the interviewee – that is, unaccompanied by positive non-verbal behaviours – which can make them seem insincere (Walsh & Bull, 2012). As such, investigating the isolated effects of verbal and non-verbal techniques is valuable to understand the efficacy of each for building rapport in the absence of the other, and how this compares to their use in combination. Thus, this study investigated the effect of clearly defined verbal and non-verbal techniques separately from one another (as well as in combination), using techniques both specified from previous empirical research and guidelines from the literature (e.g., Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014; Gabbert et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in many witness interviewing studies, rapport has not been measured directly (e.g., Carter et al., 1996; Davis & Bottoms, 2002). This could be attributed to the fact that rapport is generally not well understood in forensic interviewing, but without these measures it leaves the possibility that some other variables influenced their findings. Other studies have used a range of methods to measure rapport, such as interviewee's providing a short written account of the interviewer (R. Collins et al., 2002) or rating the interviewer and the interaction on several characteristics (e.g., friendliness, attentiveness; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011) – these characteristics are based on well-established factors related to rapport, and so currently provide the most comprehensive method of measuring rapport.

Currently, there is also very little precedent for analysing interviewer behaviours to ensure adherence to rapport protocols, although some studies have attempted this at a basic

level (e.g., K. Collins & Carthy, 2018; Johnston et al., 2019). Due to the lack of consistency in measuring rapport between previous studies, the interviewers' use of rapport and interviewees' perceptions of rapport across studies cannot be directly compared. As such, the current study made use of Vallano and Schreiber Compo's (2011) rapport characteristics to measure rapport as these are currently the most consistently used measure of rapport in previous research (e.g., Kieckhaefer, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Oostinga et al., 2020; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Interviewer behaviour was analysed with guidance from the few studies that exist (i.e., K. Collins & Carthy, 2018; Johnston et al., 2019).

This study used a mock-witness paradigm, as is typically used when beginning to investigate eyewitness cognition in the laboratory (Powell, 2002), and as used in previous studies. Here, participants watch a video of a mock crime event under conditions of intentional encoding and are subsequently interviewed regarding their memory for the event. However, there are some notable differences in the research reported here. Previous studies have often incorporated a free recall phase followed by pre-prepared specific closed-choice questions (e.g., was the shirt red or black?); these questions often include misinformation (e.g., Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). Instead, this study used an interviewing protocol similar to those conducted by UK police officers and following recommendations from the PEACE model of interviewing and ABE guidance (College of Policing, 2013; Ministry of Justice, 2011). Participants were asked to first provide a free recall, followed by open-ended probing questions based on the information verbalised in the free recall (e.g., 'you mentioned seeing a male, please tell me everything you remember about him'). This fits with the goals of information-gathering specified by PEACE and ABE, and is one of the first studies to investigate the effect of rapport on probed recall.

There are several theories regarding how rapport influences memory performance. One idea is that it lowers an interviewee's anxiety, hence freeing up cognitive limitations

that can occur due to being anxious (Almerigogna et al., 2007). Some studies have shown that rapport can reduce anxiety felt by interviewees (e.g., Kieckhaefer et al., 2014), although this did not impact memory performance. Nonetheless, reducing the anxiety of reporting criminal events, experienced either as a witness or a victim, is important and so was also incorporated in this study. There has been very little research investigating rapport-building and physiological stress, although one study showed that a higher heart rate when interviewed without rapport did result in reduced memory performance when recalling a witnessed event (Quas & Lench, 2007). Other studies have shown that physiological stress, measured through autonomic arousal, does generally impact on memory performance (Chen et al., 2000), but here rapport was neither measured nor manipulated. As such, this research also investigated the effect of rapport on physiological stress.

Finally, there are two smaller distinctions between this study and previous research. Firstly, previous studies have often used multiple interviewers that are predominantly female (e.g., Kieckhaefer et al., 2014). This can be problematic due to potential inconsistency between the interviewers when engaging in rapport-consistent behaviours. As well, using only female interviewers may be unrealistic considering that the majority of police officers in the UK are male (Hargreaves et al., 2018). It has also been suggested that female interviewers are given more opportunities to engage in certain behaviours with interviewees (e.g., empathy; Dando & Oxburgh, 2016), and so the ability to, and extent to which one can build rapport may differ based on gender. Consequently, this study used a single male interviewer throughout. Secondly, it has been well established that there are typically significant delays between witnessing an event and being interviewed about it which can impact on memory performance (Read & Connolly, 2007). To more appropriately mirror real life, this study incorporated a 24-hour delay between watching the video and taking part in the interview.

4.2 Study overview

To summarise, this study used a mock-witness paradigm where participants watched a mock crime video and were then interviewed for their memory of the event 24-hours later. A clearly operationalised cluster of verbal and non-verbal techniques were used in two separate rapport-building conditions (verbal only and non-verbal only), while a third rapport-building condition combined both. Each rapport-building condition was compared with a no-rapport control. Interviewee's perceptions regarding the interview were collected post-interview to understand how rapport was received. This research draws on the prevalent empirical and theoretical rapport-building literature to guide the types of rapport behaviours used.

The verbal techniques included interviewer and interviewee self-disclosure, verbal active listening techniques (e.g., summarisation) and empathic utterances. Non-verbal techniques included smiling, nodding, adopting a relaxed posture and body language, and making eye contact (see section 4.4.4 & Table 3 for full details). A further condition used both non-verbal and verbal techniques and acted as a 'full' rapport condition. A control condition was also utilised where no rapport was built. The interviewer was video recorded during every interview to ensure adherence to, and allow for analysis of the rapport-building behaviours. The interview protocol began with a free recall phase followed by a probed recall phase. Furthermore, interviewees' anxiety and physiological stress were measured throughout the study. The memory performance of interviewees was investigated in relation to rapport.

Given a clear paucity of relevant experimental literature, no hypotheses were developed. Instead, the following broad research questions were investigated:

- 1) What is the impact, if any, of various types of rapport building vs. no rapport building on episodic recall of a witnessed crime event during an investigative interview?

- 2) Are some types of rapport building better received by interviewees than others?
- 3) What is the impact, if any, of different types of rapport building on anxiety during witness interviews vs. no rapport building?
- 4) What is the impact, if any, of different types of rapport building on measures of physiological stress during witness interviews vs. no rapport building?

4.3 Ethics

This study was approved by the Psychology ethics committee at the University of Westminster. Participants were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix D) before they participated in the interview. This specified that their data would remain anonymous, that they had the right to withdraw at any point during the interview, that they would receive a participant number that they could use to withdraw their data from the dataset if they wished to do so, that their data would be stored and destroyed in accordance with Data Protection Act (2018) and GDPR (2018) guidelines, and that their data may be used for secondary analyses in the future. Furthermore, they were informed that their electrodermal activity (EDA) would be measured during the interview using a device attached to their hand, and that the interview would be audio and video recorded. If they consented to these terms then they signed two consent forms (one for them and one for the experimenter; see Appendix E). As the participants were blind to the rapport manipulations during the experiment, they were informed of these through both a written and verbal debrief at the end of the interview (see Appendix F).

4.4 Method

4.4.1 Design

This study employed a mock-witness paradigm, with participants watching a pre-recorded video of a mock crime in conditions of intentional encoding and then undergoing a face-to-face interview approximately 24-hours later. During the interview participants were asked to recall the crime event. A between-subjects design was used, with participants randomly allocated to one of four interviewing conditions that differed in their usage of rapport-building techniques, only. In the control condition, the interviewer used no rapport-building techniques. In the behavioural and verbal rapport conditions, the interviewer used exclusively non-verbal or verbal rapport-building techniques, respectively. In the full rapport condition, the interviewer used both verbal and non-verbal rapport-building techniques.

The primary dependent measures were the participants' perceptions of the interviewer and the interaction on multiple factors linked to rapport (measured using a post-interview questionnaire), the amount of correct, incorrect and confabulated information they recalled for the event, and the percentage accuracy of the information recalled. Participants' levels of state anxiety were also measured using the state subscale of the brief state-trait inventory (STAI-S) pre- and post-interview, as well as their levels of EDA (which acts a measure of physiological stress) throughout the interview using a Powerlab GSR amp.

4.4.2 Participants

A total of 80 participants were recruited. Power analysis indicated that this was a sufficient sample size to detect small MANOVA effects (Cohen's $f^2 = .093$, power = .80 and $\alpha = .05$). Sixty-seven were undergraduate students at the University of Westminster. The remainder were members of the general public ($N = 13$). The sample consisted of 68

females and 12 males, with ages ranging from 18 to 47 ($M_{age} = 23.37$, $SD = 6.14$). All participants provided written consent to take part in this study and were debriefed on the study after the interview. Participants were randomly allocated to one of the four experimental conditions.

4.4.3 Materials and equipment

Mock crime video

The video was hosted on Qualtrics and was sent by email to participants 24-hours before they were scheduled to undergo the interview. Participants watched the video remotely to mirror real life where interviewees do not meet the interviewer or others involved in the interview process until just prior to the interview. This also avoids the risk of building rapport with the interviewer prior to the interview – this would confound the experimental manipulations of rapport during the interview. To ensure that all participants had a similar delay between watching the video and taking part in the interview, the link was only made active for one hour. Once it expired, the video was no longer accessible. The link also became inactive after the video had been watched, ensuring that participants only watched the video once. Participants were instructed to watch the video on a computer in full screen mode and with their sound turned on. Furthermore, they were told to pay attention to the video.

The video was 1 minute and 41 seconds in length and depicted a bar fight. It was filmed from a first-person perspective of a woman who enters a pub and meets with a male friend. The male friend goes to the bar to buy them both a beer and then a female friend approaches her. They converse about coursework until the male friend returns, and then the female friend leaves. The camerawoman and the male friend sit down at a table and start having a conversation about a woman named Michelle. In the background, they see two men sitting down and having an argument about one of the men's girlfriend. The two men

stand up and the argument escalates, with one of them eventually pushing the other. The male friend runs over to separate the two men and calm them down, but he gets pushed back. One of the men then punches the other man he's arguing with who falls to the floor unconscious. Sitting next to the two men are the female friend from earlier and another woman who both shout for the men to stop fighting. The aggressor ignores them and proceeds to punch the other man two more times before leaving the pub. The male friend then runs over to the unconscious man to check on him and tells the two women nearby to call an ambulance. One of them gets out her phone and calls for an ambulance and then the video ends.

Brief state-trait anxiety inventory (STAI-S)

This inventory (see Appendix G) was used to measure participants' state anxiety pre- and post-interview. It asked them to rate how they currently feel on six statements, three anxiety-absent statements: '*I feel calm*', '*I feel steady*' and '*I feel comfortable*', and three anxiety-present statements: '*I feel strained*', '*I am worried*', and '*I am tense*'. Ratings were on a 4-point likert scale from 0 (not at all) to 3 (very much so). This scale was developed by C. Z. Berg et al. (1998) and is a shortened version of the original 20-item STAI-S by Spielberger (1983). It has shown to correlate highly with the original inventory ($r = .93$) and shows to have a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .83 - .86$).

Electrodermal activity (EDA)

Participants had a monitor attached to their index and ring finger of their non-dominant hand which measured their EDA (i.e., their galvanic skin conductance). The measurements were gotten using a Powerlab GSR amp and LabChart 3. Before the interview, a baseline measurement of EDA was taken for two minutes while the participant listened to an excerpt of relaxing meditation music on Youtube. This was done for the

purposes of comparing between the participants' baseline tonic skin conductance against their interview level. The EDA data acted as a physiological measure of stress (Boucsein, 2012).

Audio and video recording devices

All interviews were audio recorded using a Homder 8GB digital audio recorder and video recorded using a Canon Legria HFR36 Camcorder.

Post-interview perceptions questionnaires

To measure rapport, participants were provided with a post-interview questionnaire (see Appendix H) that asked them to rate their perception of the interviewer on multiple characteristics related to rapport (e.g., friendliness, attentiveness), as well as their perception of the interaction with him (e.g., cold, engaging). The characteristics were chosen from a set provided by Vallano and Schreiber Compo (2011). However, some were excluded due to later analysis revealing that they were correlated too highly ($r > .80$) or were not correlated ($r < .20$) with other characteristics. Others were further excluded because of them being unclear or too subjective (e.g., the interviewer being smooth). The remaining 9 interviewer and 10 interaction characteristics were rated on a 5-point likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). A list of the interviewer and interaction characteristics are presented in Table 2. Finally, participants were asked to similarly rate 4 statements related to their affiliation with the interviewer (e.g., how connected they felt to him), as well as four separate statements related to their memory retrieval (e.g., how difficult it was to recall information) – these are also presented in Table 2 and were based on questions used by Kieckhaefer (2014).

Table 2. *The 10 interaction and 9 interviewer characteristics linked to rapport, as well as the 4 affiliation and 4 memory retrieval questions.*

	Interaction characteristics	Interviewer characteristics	Affiliation questions	Memory retrieval questions
1	Well-coordinated	Bored	How connected did you feel to the interviewer?	How difficult did you find it to provide accurate and plentiful information?
2	Boring	Satisfied	How much did you feel the interviewer cared about you?	How much pressure did you feel to provide accurate and plentiful information?
3	Cooperative	Awkward	How much did you want to please the interviewer?	How much did you try to guess when providing information?
4	Satisfying	Involved	How much did you feel the interviewer was interested in the information you provided?	How motivated were you to provide accurate and plentiful information?
5	Comfortably paced	Attentive		
6	Cold	Friendly		
7	Engaging	Trustworthy		
8	Involving	Credible		
9	Positive	Respectful		
10	Worthwhile			

4.4.4 Interview protocols

Four distinct interview protocols (see Appendix I) were developed for this research (described in full below). However, every interview (irrespective of condition) was similarly structured, and followed the UK PEACE model, and all included the same four ground rules in the following order, and presented at the same stage of the interview (verbatim): i) ‘please provide *all* the information you can remember in as much detail as possible’, ii) ‘please do not guess information, I only want you to tell me what you actually remember’ iii) ‘please tell me partial and incomplete pieces of information’, and iv) ‘please ask me to repeat any questions that you did not hear or understand’.

Following the ground rules, all interviews commenced with a free recall phase where participants were asked to recall everything they remember from the video. Following the end of their response, the interviewer prompted for more information by asking, ‘Is there anything else you can recall from the video?’. During the free recall account, the interviewer took bullet point notes of the main topics recalled by the interviewee in the order they were recalled. Once the free recall phase had ended, the ground rules were repeated and then the interviewer asked probing questions about each of the topics verbalised during the free recall phase, in turn. The interviewer used open-ended probing questions, for example, ‘You recalled seeing a male, so please think back to the film and tell me everything you remember about him’. Again, the end of each response was followed by an additional prompt, ‘Is there anything else you can recall’. After every topic had been probed, the interviewer asked if there were any additions or alterations participants would like to make to their account. The interview was then complete.

Interview protocols differed across the four conditions only as a function of the presence or absence of rapport, and the type of rapport employed by the interviewer (see below). To reduce the confounding impact of interviewer variability, particularly since this research concerns physical behaviour and verbal behaviour, the same male interviewer conducted all interviews.

Verbal rapport (only). The interviewer engaged in a 5-minute verbal only rapport-building phase prior to explaining the ground rules. Here the interviewer displayed six distinct verbal techniques (see Table 3). Techniques 1 to 4 were used from the offset, whereas techniques 5 and 6 were used where appropriate (i.e., technique 6 only when the interviewee's name becomes known and after the interviewee agrees to be referred to by his/her preferred name, and technique 5 from the end of the free recall and then through to the end of the interview). The interviewer's non-verbal behaviour was identical to the control condition (see below).

Behavioural rapport (only). All 7 behavioural techniques (see Table 3) were employed immediately upon arrival of the interviewee and were continued throughout the interview, as appropriate. The interviewer exhibited none of the verbal techniques.

Full rapport (behavioural + verbal rapport). The interviewer engaged in a 5-minute rapport-building phase prior to explaining the ground rules that included both verbal and behavioural techniques (see Table 3). As in the verbal only condition (above), techniques 1 to 4 were used from the offset, whereas techniques 5 and 6 were used where appropriate. As was the case in the behavioural only condition, all 7 behavioural techniques were employed from the offset and were combined with the verbal behaviours as appropriate throughout the interview.

Control (no rapport). The interviewer did not exhibit any of the behavioural or verbal rapport-building techniques at all throughout the interview. Here, the interviewer did not shake the participant's hand, sat still and in an upright position, spoke monotonously, made little to no eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures or nodding, and exhibited none of the verbal techniques.

Table 3. *The verbal and behavioural rapport-building techniques*

Verbal Techniques
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Evocative prompts (e.g., ‘How are you today?’; ‘How are you feeling about the interview?’)2. Questions/Prompts to elicit self-disclosure (e.g., ‘Where are you from’; ‘Tell me about your job’)3. Interviewer self-disclosure (e.g., ‘I’m from xxxx’; ‘I’m working here at the University as a researcher’)4. Comforting/Empathic statements (e.g., ‘I want to assure you that I’m going to be patient and give you as much time as you need to recall the video scene’)5. Summarises interviewee responses (e.g., ‘So you remember seeing a white male with short blonde hair and wearing dark blue jeans. Is that correct?’)6. Refers to interviewee by name
Behavioural Techniques
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Greets interviewee with a handshake2. Sits relaxed (i.e., both arms on the table and body leaning towards the interviewee)3. Uses hand gestures when speaking4. Maintains frequent eye contact5. Uses a range of facial expressions (e.g., smiling)6. Nods and utters ‘mhm’ when listening7. Speaks in a dynamic tone of voice

4.4.5 Procedure

The study was advertised as investigating eye-witness memory during a mock police interview. However, participants were not made aware of the rapport manipulations. Participants were sent the one-time access link to the video (that was hosted on Qualtrics) by email 24-hours before they were scheduled to take part in the interview. Once they opened the Qualtrics page, they were presented with the instructions. They had to click *next* to continue to the video, and they were made aware that by doing so they were providing their consent for watching the video. After watching the video, they were told to come to a specific room within the University of Westminster the next day to take part in the interview.

Once the participant arrived at the interview room, the interviewing condition immediately commenced, with the interviewer portraying the behaviours consistent with the interviewing condition from the moment he greeted the participant. For example, in the control and verbal conditions, the interviewer did not shake the participants hand when greeting them. Participants were asked to take a seat, read through the information sheet and sign the consent form if they still consented to participate. After doing so, they completed the pre-interview brief STAI-S. Subsequently, their index and ring finger on their non-dominant hand was attached to the EDA device. First, a baseline measurement of EDA was gotten for 2 minutes before the interview. The interviewer left the room while the baseline was being measured.

After the baseline measurement, the interviewer returned to the room and restarted the EDA device. He also turned on the video camera and the digital audio recorder. The video camera was directed towards the interviewer, with him being the only person seen in the video. The video was taken to assess whether the interviewer was consistent with the rapport manipulations in each condition. The audio recorder was placed in the middle of the desk. The interview commenced with the interviewer introducing himself and asking the participant whether they still consented to being audio and video recorded during the

interview, and if they had any questions. Following this, the interviewer stated the five ground rules and then began the free recall phase. When conducting the verbal and full rapport conditions, the interviewer engaged in a 5-minute verbal rapport-building phase before stating the ground rules. After the free recall, the ground rules were repeated and then the probed questioning phase commenced. At the end of this phase, participants were asked if they had any more information to provide or any alterations to the information they provided. This was then the end of the interview.

At the end of the interview, the video and audio recorder were turned off. Following this, the participant was placed back at the computer to carry out the post-interview brief STAI-S and rapport questionnaires. They were told that their responses would be anonymous and that the interviewer would be waiting outside the room while they completed these, and so they should answer the questions as truthfully and as accurately as possible. After completing these questionnaires, the interviewer returned to the room and gave the participant a debrief sheet and a verbal debrief. The debrief explained the different conditions and the purposes of the interview. After the participant left, the audio and video recordings, as well as the EDA measurements were transferred to a secure hard drive and then transferred to a password protected computer within the university.

4.4.6 Memory performance data coding

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and scored for the number of correct, erroneous (e.g., reporting that the man's t-shirt was white when in fact it was black), and confabulated information items (reporting a detail or event that was not present or did not happen) verbalised from the commencement of the *free recall* phase until the end of the *questioning* phase (see Appendix A for example coding). This followed standard coding procedures (Memon et al., 1996). The position within the interview that the information

was verbalised was noted (free recall or questioning), and information items were only coded once (on first mention). The percentage accuracy of the information reported was also calculated by dividing the amount of correct items reported by the total number of items reported (the sum of correct, errors and confabulations).

Sixteen interviews (four from each condition) were randomly selected and coded by the main researcher, and independently by a research assistant who was naïve to the research questions and experimental conditions. This accounted for 20% of the interviews. Intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) analyses, testing for absolute agreement between the main researcher and independent coder using a two-way random model were conducted on the three performance measures (i.e., correct, incorrect, confabulated information reported) and percentage accuracy. ICC indicated good inter-rater reliability for all three measures: total correct, $R_2 = .979$, $df = 15, 15$, $p < .001$; total errors, $R_2 = .867$, $df = 15, 15$, $p < .001$; total confabulations, $R_2 = .911$, $df = 15, 15$, $p < .001$. ICC also indicated good inter-rater reliability for percentage accuracy, $R_2 = .892$, $df = 15, 15$, $p < .001$.

4.4.7 Interviewer behaviour coding and manipulation analysis

Coding

A random selection of 4 interviews from each condition (16 in total, 20% of the sample) were analysed for interviewer behaviour. The literature pertaining to the coding of rapport behaviours by interviewers is scant, and there is very little precedent for coding rapport (but see Sauerland et al., 2019; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). In accordance with empirical interviewing research on the presence/absence of behaviours (e.g., Dando et al., 2015; Dando & Bull, 2011) and with reference to K. Collins and Carthy (2018) and Johnston et al. (2019), a study specific objective rapport coding scheme was developed, as follows.

First, each of the 13 rapport variables (6 verbal & 7 behavioural) were listed, and fully described on a coding sheet. Second, coders were offered three scoring categories for each of the 13 variables listed and described. The categories were absent, partially present, or present (absent = 0; partially present = 1; present = 2). As the verbal and full rapport conditions (only) incorporated a 5-minute verbal rapport-building phase at the start of the interview, the interviews were sectioned (sliced) and coded for interviewer behaviours in both the rapport-building phase and the interviewing phase (which included both the free recall and questioning phases of the interview).

Each phase of all four interviews was individually scored by two independent coders who were naïve to the research questions. Each phase was scored separately as follows: to score 0 the variable in question had to be completely absent, to score 1 the variable had to be present at least once and no more than twice in the relevant phase, whereas to award 2 the variable had to be present at least three times in that. Prior to coding, the coders participated in a training session held by the main researcher during which they practiced coding and discussed any disagreements/misunderstandings to reach a consensus. ICC's indicated good inter-rater reliability for both behavioral, $R_2 = 1$, $df = 27, 27$, $p < .001$, and verbal techniques, $R_2 = .998$, $df = 23, 23$, $p < .001$. The mean scores (for both coders) for each verbal and behavioural technique across interviews as a function of the (relevant) interview phases are displayed in Tables 4–6 (note the behavioural condition did not include a verbal rapport-building phase). Scores for the control condition are not presented in a table or included in the following analyses as every verbal and behavioural rapport technique was coded as absent by each coder, all $M_s = 0$ ($SD_s = 0$).

Manipulation analysis

A series of Kruskal-Wallis tests were conducted to investigate the presence/absence of the six verbal and seven behavioural rapport techniques across conditions as a function of phase, followed by Mann-Whitney post-hoc tests, as appropriate.

The verbal and full rapport conditions (Tables 4 & 6, respectively) were the only conditions which comprised a rapport-building phase, and so were the only conditions included in the analysis for the rapport-building phase. Eliciting self-disclosure from the interviewee and interviewer self-disclosure occurred more frequently in the full condition than in the verbal condition, $H(1) = 6.40, p = .011$, and, $H(1) = 5.250, p = .022$, respectively. The remaining four verbal behaviours (see Tables 4 & 6 for these) did not significantly differ between the verbal and full rapport conditions, all $ps > .05$. All seven behavioural rapport techniques were displayed significantly more frequently in the full condition than in the verbal condition, all $Hs(1) \leq 7.00$, all $ps \leq .013$.

For verbal rapport techniques in the interviewing phase of the verbal, behavioural and full conditions (Tables 4, 5 and 6, respectively), overall the occurrence of evocative prompts, comforting/empathic statements, summarising responses and using the interviewee's name differed significantly, all $Hs(2) \leq 7.00$, all $ps \leq .013$. Post-hoc tests revealed that all four techniques occurred more often in the verbal rapport condition than in the behavioural rapport condition, all $ps \leq .017$. Summarising responses also occurred more frequently in the full rapport compared to the behavioural rapport condition, $p = .042$. Analysis of the seven behavioural techniques in the interviewing phase across the verbal, behavioural and full conditions revealed a significant difference for six of the techniques: relaxed body posture, hand gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, nodding, and dynamic tone of voice, all $Hs(2) \leq 7.00$, all $ps \leq .013$. Each technique was more common in the behavioural and full conditions than in the verbal condition, all $ps \leq .015$. No differences emerged for handshaking in the interviewing phase, all $ps > .05$.

Table 4. Mean coding and Kruskal-Wallis rankings (standard deviations) for the techniques in the verbal rapport condition as a function of the two interview phases. Techniques are presented in order of M_{rank} .

	Rapport-building phase		Interviewing phase	
	M (SD)	M_{rank}	M (SD)	M_{rank}
Verbal techniques			Verbal techniques	
Using names	1.00 (0)	4.50	Using names	2.00 (0)
Summarising	0 (0)	4.50	Evocative prompts	1.75 (.29)
Evocative prompts	1.75 (.50)	4.00	Comforting/Empathic statements	.75 (.29)
Comforting/Empathic statements	1.13 (.25)	3.13	Summarising	1.57 (.13)
Interviewer self-disclosure	1.13 (.25)	2.63	Eliciting self-disclosure	.06 (.13)
Eliciting self-disclosure	1.00 (0)	2.50	Interviewer self-disclosure	0 (0)
Behavioural techniques			Behavioural techniques	
Handshaking	0 (0)	2.50	Handshaking	0 (0)
Relaxed posture	0 (0)	2.50	Relaxed posture	0 (0)
Hand gestures	0.13 (.25)	2.50	Hand gestures	.13 (.14)
Eye contact	0.38 (.48)	2.50	Eye contact	0 (0)
Facial expressions	0 (0)	2.50	Facial expressions	0 (0)
Nodding	0.38 (.48)	2.50	Nodding	.13 (.14)
Dynamic tone	0 (0)	2.50	Dynamic tone	0 (0)

Table 5. Mean coding and Kruskal-Wallis rankings (standard deviations) for the techniques used in the interviewing phase of the ***behavioural*** rapport condition.

Techniques are presented in order of M_{rank} .

	Interviewing phase	
	M (SD)	M_{rank}
Verbal techniques		
Interviewer self-disclosure	0 (0)	6.50
Eliciting self-disclosure	0 (0)	6.00
Evocative prompts	0 (0)	3.00
Comforting/Empathic statements	0 (0)	2.50
Summarising	0 (0)	2.50
Using names	0 (0)	2.50
Behavioural techniques		
Relaxed posture	2.00 (0)	8.50
Hand gestures	2.00 (0)	8.50
Eye contact	2.00 (0)	8.50
Facial expressions	2.00 (0)	8.50
Nodding	2.00 (0)	8.50
Dynamic tone	2.00 (0)	8.50
Handshaking	.13 (.25)	7.00

Table 6. Mean coding and Kruskal-Wallis rankings (standard deviations) for the techniques in the **full** rapport condition as a function of the two interview phases. Techniques are presented in order of M_{rank} .

	Rapport-building phase		Interviewing phase	
	M (SD)	M_{rank}	M (SD)	M_{rank}
Verbal techniques			Verbal techniques	
Eliciting self-disclosure	2.00 (0)	6.50	Summarising	1.50 (0) 8.00
Interviewer self-disclosure	1.88 (.25)	6.38	Comforting/Empathic statements	.56 (31) 7.75
Comforting/Empathic statements	1.75 (.50)	5.88	Using names	1.00 (0) 6.50
Evocative prompts	2.00 (0)	5.00	Interviewer self-disclosure	0 (0) 6.50
Summarising	0 (0)	4.50	Evocative prompts	0.38 (.25) 6.00
Using names	1.00 (0)	4.50	Eliciting self-disclosure	0 (0) 6.00
Behavioural techniques			Behavioural techniques	
Handshaking	1.00 (0)	6.50	Relaxed posture	2.00 (0) 8.50
Relaxed posture	2.00 (0)	6.50	Hand gestures	2.00 (0) 8.50
Hand gestures	2.00 (0)	6.50	Eye contact	2.00 (0) 8.50
Eye contact	2.00 (0)	6.50	Facial expressions	2.00 (0) 8.50
Facial expressions	2.00 (0)	6.50	Nodding	2.00 (0) 8.50
Nodding	2.00 (0)	6.50	Dynamic tone	2.00 (0) 8.50
Dynamic tone	2.00 (0)	6.50	Handshaking	.13 (.25) 7.00

To summarise, all behavioural rapport techniques were more prominent in the appropriate conditions (i.e., the behavioural & full rapport conditions; see Tables 5 & 6) compared to the verbal rapport condition, where they were mostly absent (see Table 4). All verbal rapport techniques were present in the rapport-building phase of the verbal and full rapport conditions (apart from summarisation, a technique more relevant to the interviewing phase), as well as the interviewing phase of these conditions (apart from self-disclosure techniques, which are more suitable to the rapport-building phase; see Tables 4 & 6), and they were more prominent in these conditions compared to the behavioural rapport condition (see Table 5). Verbal techniques were more difficult to control than behavioural techniques, with analyses showing that some verbal techniques were presented to varying degrees between the verbal and full rapport conditions, but they were present to some extent in both conditions while being completely absent in the behavioural rapport condition. As such, the interviewer's manipulations of rapport were successful in bringing about differences in rapport behaviours across conditions.

4.5 Results

4.5.1 Analysis approach

First, the analyses of the participant post-interview questionnaires are reported, which acted as a rapport manipulation check. The perceptions of the interviewer and interaction questionnaires were analysed as follows. A multivariate analysis was conducted on the combination of all the perceptions for the two separate questionnaires. The questionnaires were analysed separately as they relate to different elements of rapport. Significant MANOVAs were then investigated by considering the univariate ANOVA results, followed by Games-Howell post-hoc tests. A MANOVA was used in the first instance to assess whether any differences existed between the four conditions for a combination of the perception ratings, which were all distinct dependent variables. Games-Howell post-hoc tests were employed due to the assumption of covariance being violated

for each questionnaire. For the four affiliation and four memory retrieval statements, univariate ANOVAs were run on each separate statement, followed by post-hocs.

Following the rapport manipulation checks, memory performance was analysed. All interviews were transcribed and coded for correct, incorrect and confabulated information recalled by participants. Multivariate analysis was again used to investigate any overall differences for these three dependant variables in combination across conditions. Significant MANOVAs were investigated further by considering the univariate ANOVA results, followed by Games-Howell post-hoc tests to determine which conditions differed. The interview comprised of two distinct phases, free recall followed by probed recall, and so univariate analyses were subsequently conducted for the correct details recalled within these two phases to assess whether any differences between conditions occurred because of the interview phase. Finally, accuracy of the information recalled between the conditions overall and within the two interview phases was investigated. Accuracy was determined by getting a percentage of how many correct details were recalled in comparison to erroneous information (errors and confabulations) using univariate analyses followed by post-hoc tests.

Finally, participants' levels of anxiety and stress, measured using the brief STAI-S questionnaire and EDA, respectively, were analysed across conditions. Firstly, univariate analyses were conducted on the STAI-S and EDA data to investigate whether there were differences between conditions at time 1 (pre-interview baseline measure) and time 2 (measured post-interview for anxiety and during the interview for EDA) separately. Following this, a repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to investigate if any differences existed generally between the two time points (within-subject factor) or the four conditions (between-subject factor), as well as if there was any interaction effect between them.

4.5.2 Perceptions of the interviewer questionnaire

Mean ratings and confidence intervals for the 9 post-interview perceptions of the interviewer across conditions are shown in Figure 3. A MANOVA was initially conducted on the combination of the variables (all 9 interviewer characteristics), which revealed a significant multivariate effect, $F(68,210) = 3.18, p < .001$, Pillai's Trace = .87, $\eta_p^2 = .29$. Univariate analyses revealed a significant effect of condition for all 9 characteristics (see Table 7). As the assumption of covariance was violated for this data, with a Box's M value of 297.99, $p < .001$, post-hoc Games-Howell analyses were conducted to investigate the locus of effect for the significant findings, as follows.

Participants in the control condition reported finding the interviewer significantly less friendly, less trustworthy, less satisfied, less attentive, less credible and more awkward than participants in the behavioural and full conditions, and they also found the interviewer to be less respectful than in the full condition, all $ps < = .025$.

Participants in the verbal condition rated the interviewer as less friendly, less satisfied, less involved, more awkward and more bored than participants in the behavioural and full conditions, and they also found the interviewer to be less attentive than in the behavioural condition, as well as less respectful than in the full condition, all $ps < = .024$. There were no significant differences between the control and verbal conditions, nor between the behavioural and full conditions, all $ps > .05$, on any of the 9 interviewer characteristics.

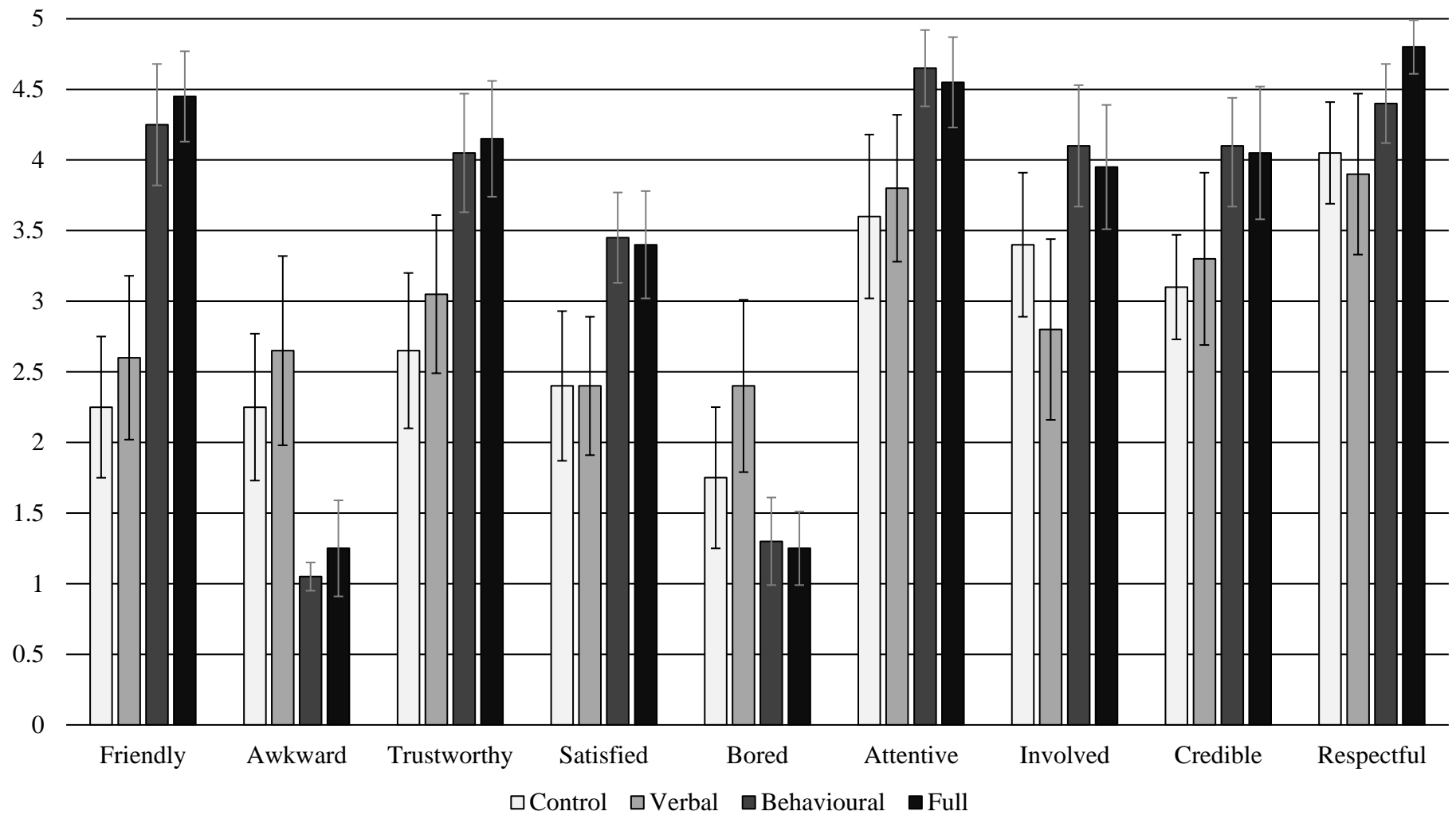


Figure 3. Mean ratings, along with error bars showing 95% confidence intervals, for each of the 9 interviewer characteristics between the four conditions.

Table 7. *The 9 Interviewer characteristics and their resulting univariate F-tests.*

Characteristic	Univariate output
Friendly ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 25.50, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .50$
Awkward ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 12.42, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .33$
Trustworthy ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 10.06, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .28$
Satisfied ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 7.91, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .24$
Bored ^{**}	$F(3,76) = 6.31, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$
Attentive ^{**}	$F(3,76) = 6.27, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$
Involved ^{**}	$F(3,76) = 5.85, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$
Credible ^{**}	$F(3,76) = 5.48, p = .002, \eta_p^2 = .18$
Respectful ^{**}	$F(3,76) = 5.01, p = .003, \eta_p^2 = .17$

** = $p < .01$

*** = $p < .001$

4.5.3 Perceptions of the interaction questionnaire

Mean ratings and confidence intervals for the 10 post-interview perceptions of the interaction across conditions are shown in Figure 4. A MANOVA was initially conducted on the combination of variables (all 10 interaction characteristics), which revealed a significant multivariate effect, $F(67, 207) = 2.36, p < .001$, Pillai's Trace = .76, $\eta_p^2 = .26$. Univariate analyses revealed a significant effect of condition for all 10 characteristics (see Table 8). As the assumption of covariance was violated for this data, with a Box's M value of 349.31, $p < .001$, post-hoc Games-Howell analyses were conducted to investigate the locus of effect for the significant findings, as follows.

Participants in the control condition perceived the interaction as being less positive, less satisfying, less worthwhile, less involving, less engaging, and more cold compared to the behavioural and full conditions, and they perceived the interaction as being more

boring compared to the behavioural condition, as well as less comfortably paced and less cooperative compared to the full condition, all $ps \leq .044$.

Participants in the verbal condition perceived the interaction as being less positive, less satisfying, less comfortably paced, less involving, less engaging, more cold, and more boring than participants in the behavioural and full conditions, and they perceived the interaction as being less worthwhile and less cooperative compared to the full condition, all $ps \leq .026$. There were no significant differences between the control and verbal conditions, nor between the behavioural and full conditions, all $ps > .05$, on any of the 10 interaction characteristics.

Table 8. *The 10 Interaction characteristics and their resulting univariate F-tests.*

Characteristic	Univariate output
Cold ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 18.28, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .42$
Positive ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 15.28, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .38$
Satisfying ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 10.58, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .30$
Comfortably paced ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 8.97, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .26$
Worthwhile ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 8.53, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .25$
Cooperative ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 8.17, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .24$
Involving ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 7.07, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .22$
Boring ^{***}	$F(3,76) = 6.78, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .21$
Engaging ^{**}	$F(3,76) = 6.31, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$
Well-coordinated ^{**}	$F(3,76) = 6.17, p = .001, \eta_p^2 = .20$

** = $p < .01$

*** = $p < .001$

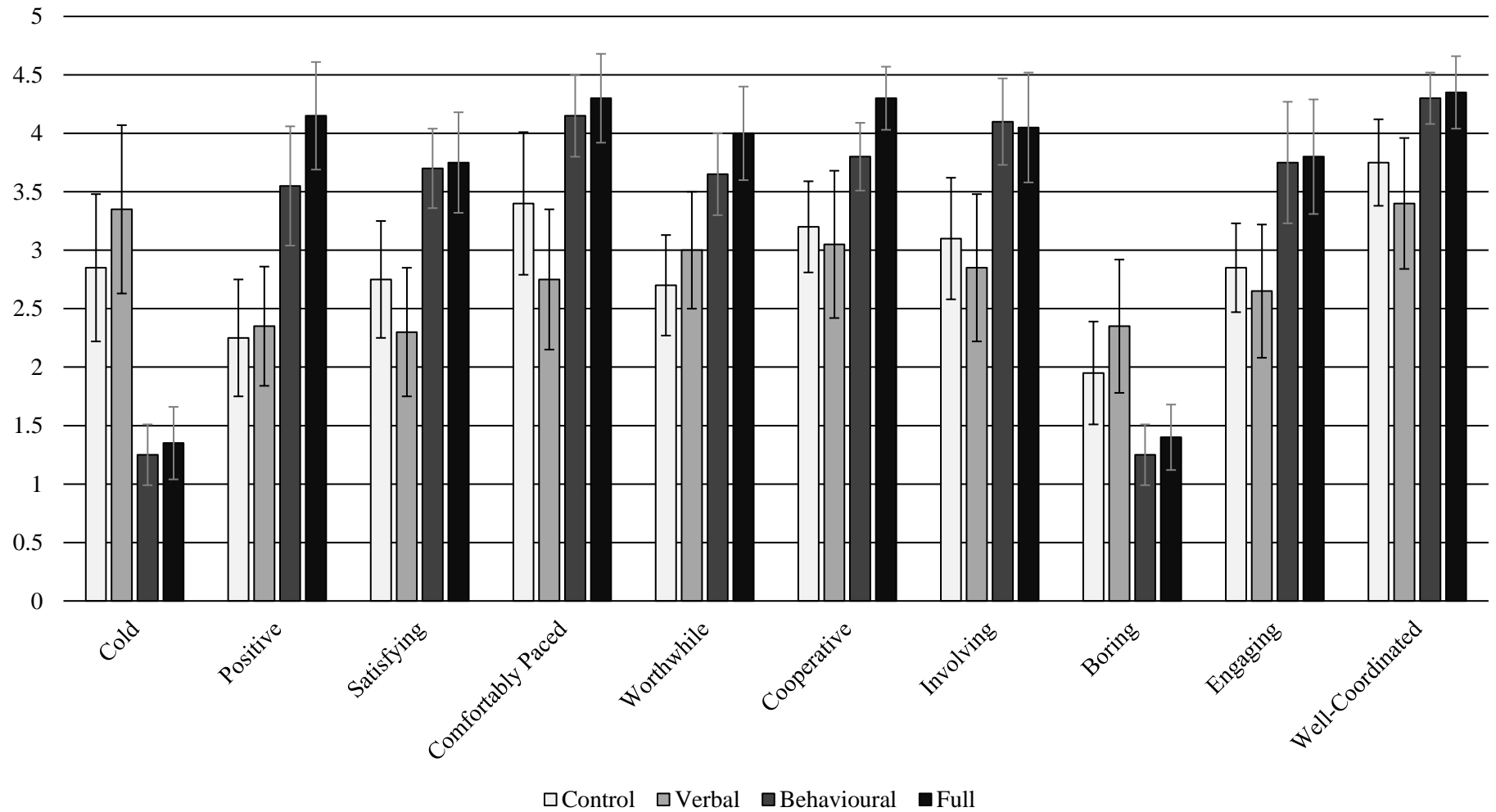


Figure 4. Mean ratings, along with error bars showing 95% confidence intervals, for each of the 10 interaction characteristics between the four conditions.

4.5.4 Affiliation to the interviewer questionnaire

Participants were asked to rate four statements assessing how affiliated they felt towards the interviewer. The means and 95% confidence intervals for these statements across the four conditions can be seen in Figure 5. Univariate ANOVAs were conducted on these which revealed that 3 of the 4 statements differed as a function of condition. These were: how connected they felt to the interviewer, $F(3,76) = 22.00, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .47$, how much they felt the interviewer cared about them, $F(3,76) = 27.26, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .52$, and how interested they felt the interviewer was in the information they provided, $F(3,76) = 8.88, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .26$. There was a non-significant effect for how much they wanted to please the interviewer, $F(3,76) = 2.22, p = .093$.

Post-hoc tests showed that participants in the control condition felt the interviewer was significantly less connected to them, cared for them less and was less interested in the information they provided compared to the behavioural and full conditions. In the verbal condition participants felt that the interviewer was significantly less connected to them and cared for them less compared to the behavioural and full conditions, all $ps \leq .001$. There were no significant differences between the control and verbal conditions, nor between the behavioural and full conditions, $ps > .05$, for any of the 4 affiliation statements

4.5.5 Memory retrieval questionnaire

The final four statements asked participants to rate elements of memory retrieval (see Table 9). Univariate ANOVAs were conducted on each of these separately. Only one of the statements showed a significant effect, with that being how motivated participants were to provide information, $F(3,76) = 3.21, p = .028, \eta_p^2 = .11$, but post-hoc tests revealed no significant difference between conditions. No significant univariate effects were found for difficulty to recall information, $F(3,76) = .72, p = .054$, pressure to recall information, $F(3,76) = 1.76, p = .163$, or for trying to guess information, $F(3,76) = .58, p = .631$.

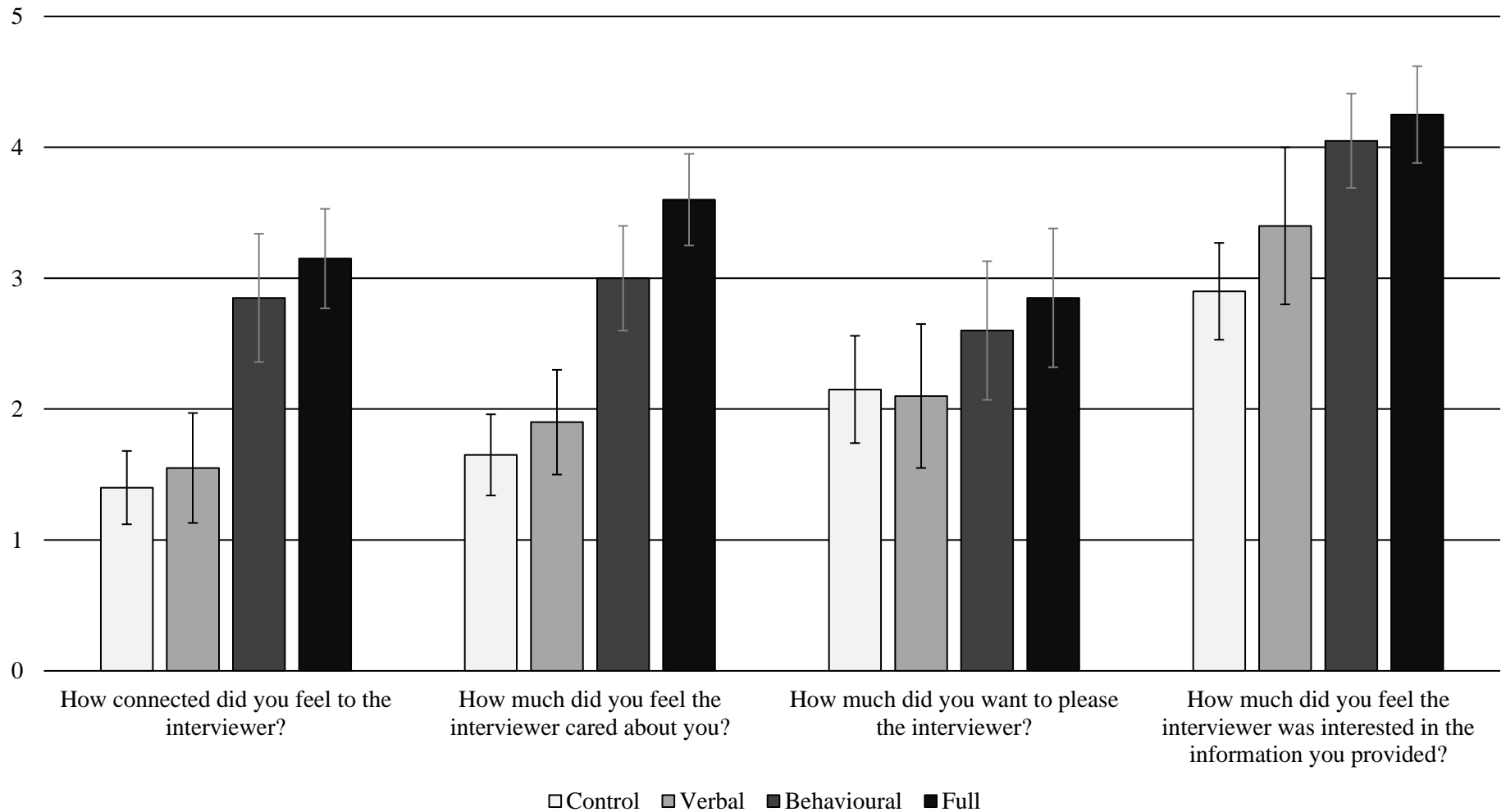


Figure 5. Mean ratings, along with error bars showing 95% confidence intervals, for each of the 4 affiliation statements between the four conditions.

Table 9. Mean ratings, along with standard deviations and 95% confidence intervals for the 4 memory retrieval statements between the four conditions.

		Control	Verbal	Behavioural	Full
		M (SD) [95% CI]			
1	How difficult did you find it to provide accurate and plentiful information?	2.70 (.98) [2.24; 3.16]	3.05 (.95) [2.61; 3.49]	2.80 (.83) [2.41; 3.19]	2.65 (.99) [2.19; 3.11]
2	How much pressure did you feel to provide accurate and plentiful information?	2.85 (1.14) [2.32; 3.38]	3.10 (1.07) [2.60; 3.60]	2.70 (.98) [2.24; 3.16]	2.35 (1.04) [1.86; 2.84]
3	How much did you try to guess when providing information?	2.00 (1.03) [1.52; 2.48]	2.10 (.91) [1.67; 2.53]	2.30 (.98) [1.84; 2.76]	1.95 (.69) [1.63; 2.27]
4	How motivated were you to provide accurate and plentiful information?	4.15 (.67) [3.84; 4.46]	3.60 (1.05) [3.11; 4.09]	4.25 (.85) [3.85; 4.65]	4.30 (.57) [4.03; 4.57]

4.5.6 Overall memory performance

To assess whether the rapport manipulations between conditions affected the overall memory performance of participants during the entire interview, a MANOVA was carried out using the overall correct and incorrect (errors and confabulations) information that participants provided. Results showed that there was a significant multivariate effect, $F(74,180.246) = 2.388, p = .014$, Wilks' Lambda = .76, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. Univariate analyses reported by the MANOVA, applying a Bonferroni corrected alpha of .017 to correct for three comparisons (i.e., correct vs. incorrect, correct vs. confabulations, incorrect vs. confabulations), revealed that there was a significant effect for the amount of correct details recalled, $F(3,76) = 3.73, p = .015, \eta_p^2 = .13$, with no effect for incorrect details, $F(3,76) = 1.53, p = .215$, nor confabulations, $F(3,76) = .40, p = .754$. Games-Howell post-hoc tests showed that participants in the behavioural condition recalled significantly more correct information compared to those in the control, $p = .043$, and the verbal condition, $p = .017$. These results can be seen in Figure 6. The same finding did not occur for the full rapport condition, $p > .05$, and no differences were found between the behavioural and full rapport conditions, $p > .05$, nor between the control and verbal conditions, $p > .05$.

4.5.7 Phased memory performance

Interviews comprised two distinct phases, free and probed recall. Univariate analyses of the free and probed recall phases (analysed separately) for correct, incorrect, or confabulated recall performance (with Bonferroni corrected alphas of .017) revealed no significant differences across conditions as a function of phase, all $F_s \leq 2.84$, all $p_s > .044$. See Table 10 for mean correct, incorrect and confabulated details in the free and probed recall phases.

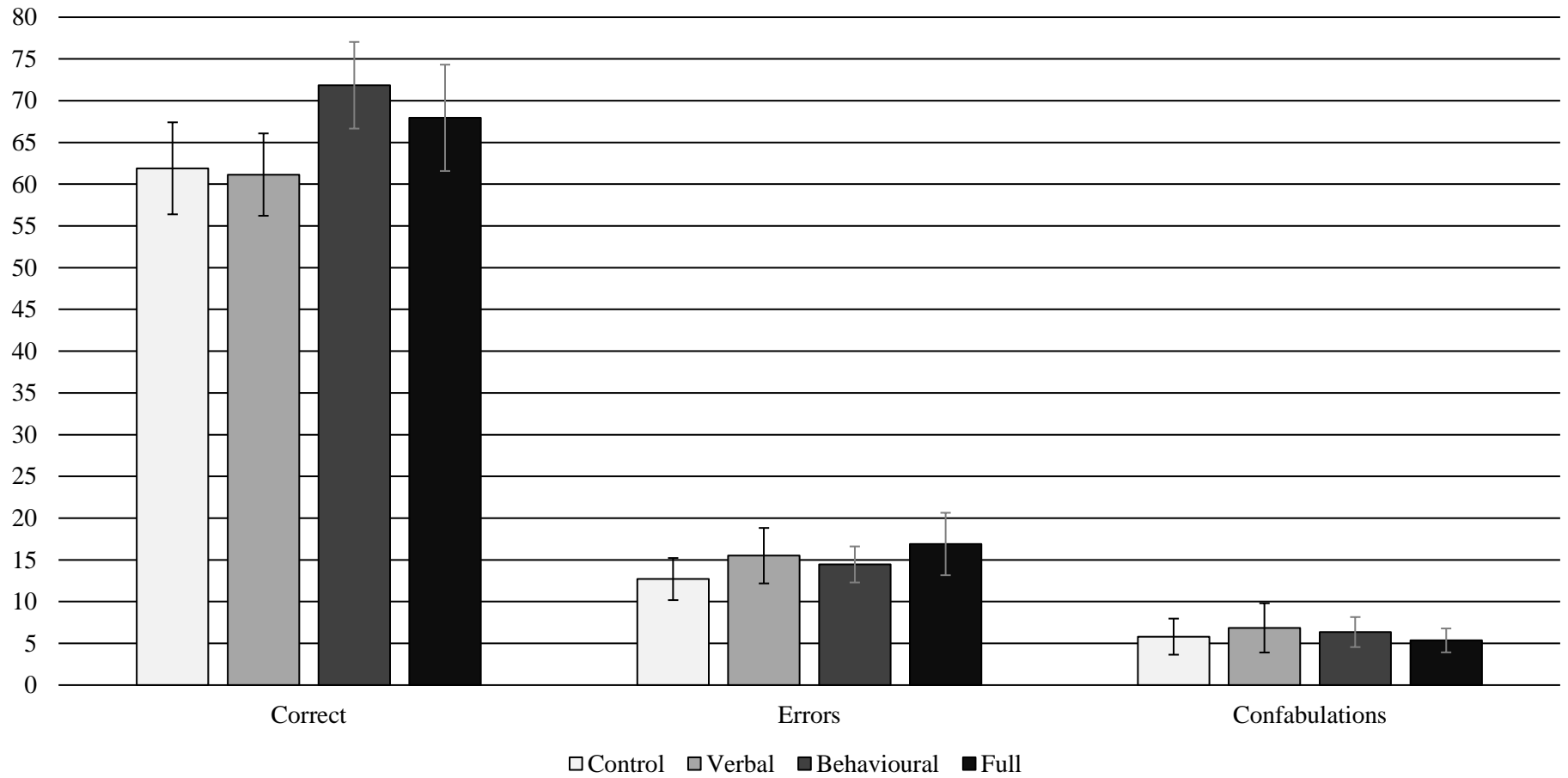


Figure 6. Overall mean correct and erroneous (errors and confabulations) information recalled by participants, with error bars representing 95% confidence intervals, between the four rapport-building conditions.

Table 10. Mean memory performance for the four rapport-building conditions in the two recall phases, along with percentage accuracy.

	Control	Verbal	Behavioural	Full
	M (SD) [95% CI]			
Free recall				
Correct	35.40 (8.06) [31.63; 39.17]	31.95 (8.87) [27.80; 36.10]	39.70 (10.72) [34.68; 44.72]	37.20 (13.55)[30.86; 43.54]
Errors	3.45 (1.85) [2.58; 4.32]	4.15 (2.41) [3.02; 5.28]	3.70 (1.95) [2.79; 4.61]	5.30 (4.92) [3.00; 7.60]
Confabulations	1.35 (1.73) [.54; 2.16]	2.35 (1.79) [1.51; 3.19]	1.95 (2.01) [1.01; 2.89]	2.05 (1.76) [1.23; 2.87]
Accuracy (%)	88.71 (4.95) [86.39; 91.03]	83.40 (7.91) [79.70; 87.10]	87.76 (5.33) [85.27; 90.26]	84.45 (8.62) [80.41; 88.48]
Probed recall				
Correct	26.50 (7.40) [23.04; 29.96]	29.20 (5.80) [26.49; 31.91]	32.30 (5.38) [29.68; 34.72]	31.25 (7.89) [27.56; 34.94]
Errors	9.25 (4.85) [6.98; 11.52]	11.35 (5.32) [8.86; 13.84]	10.70 (4.01) [8.82; 12.58]	11.80 (6.01) [8.99; 14.61]
Confabulations	4.45 (3.76) [2.69; 6.21]	4.50 (5.10) [2.11; 6.89]	4.45 (2.48) [3.29; 5.61]	3.25 (2.29) [2.18; 4.32]
Accuracy (%)	64.92 (14.22) [58.27; 71.57]	66.67 (10.68) [61.67; 71.67]	68.62 (7.76) [64.99; 72.25]	68.99 (10.79) [63.94; 74.04]

4.5.8 Percentage accuracy

As percentage accuracy was not a separate dependent variable, but rather a function of correct, incorrect and confabulated information reported, it was not included in the MANOVA and was analysed using one-way ANOVAs. No significant differences in accuracy emerged across conditions for the information provided during the interview as a whole (control, $M = 78.19$, $SD = 7.25$, 95% CI [74.80; 81.58], verbal, $M = 74.56$, $SD = 7.96$, 95% CI [70.83; 78.28], behavioural, $M = 78.01$, $SD = 5.81$, 95% CI [75.29; 80.73], full rapport conditions, $M = 76.53$, $SD = 6.97$, 95% CI [73.26; 79.79]), $F(3,76) = 1.14$, $p = .337$. Analysis of free recall accuracy showed a slightly significant difference between conditions, $F(3,76) = 2.75$, $p = .048$, although there were no significant post-hoc tests, all $ps > .05$. No significant differences emerged for probed recall accuracy, $F(3,76) = .58$, $p > .05$. See Table 10 for mean percentage accuracy in the free and probed recall phases.

A further analysis was also conducted to identify if there were any differences between the free and probed recall phases in relation to rapport. A 4 (condition: control, verbal, behavioural, full) x 2 (interviewing phase: free recall, probed recall) mixed ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of interview phase, $F(1,76) = 202.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .73$. Participants were more accurate in the free recall phase ($M = 86.08$, $SD = 7.11$, 95% CI [84.5; 87.66]) than the probed recall phase ($M = 67.30$, $SD = 11.01$, 95% CI [64.85; 69.75]), regardless of condition. No significant main effect of condition, $F(3,76) = .66$, $p = .578$, nor condition x time interaction emerged, $F(3,76) = 1.94$, $p = .13$. See Table 10 for the mean percentage accuracy scores between conditions and phase.

4.5.9 Anxiety

Anxiety was measured using the brief STAI-S questionnaire, which comprised 6 statements related to current feelings of anxiety rated from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very much so). The STAI-S was totalled for both pre- (time 1) and post-interview (time 2) anxiety. The minimum score of 6 indicates no anxiety, whereas the maximum score of 24 indicates extreme anxiety. Univariate ANOVAs revealed no significant differences in anxiety across conditions at time 1, $F(3,76) = 1.14, p = .338$, nor time 2, $F(3,76) = 1.02, p = .387$. See Table 11 for mean STAI-S (anxiety) scores between conditions at time 1 and 2.

A 4 (condition: control, verbal, behavioural, full) x 2 (time: time 1, time 2) mixed ANOVA on the STAI-S data revealed a significant main effect of time, $F(1,76) = 6.78, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .08$. Participants expressed higher anxiety at time 2 ($M_{\text{time2}} = 10.75, SD = 3.46, 95\% \text{ CI } [9.98; 11.52]$) than at time 1 ($M_{\text{time1}} = 9.75, SD = 2.79, 95\% \text{ CI } [9.13; 10.37]$), regardless of condition. No significant main effect of condition, $F(3,76) = 1.39, p = .25$, nor condition x time interaction emerged, $F(3,76) = .33, p = .80$.

4.5.10 Stress

Analysis of physiological stress, measured using EDA, revealed no differences in stress across conditions at the baseline measurement (time 1), $F(3,72) = .22, p = .882$, nor over the course of the interview (time 2), $F(3,73) = .33, p = .804$. See Table 11 for mean EDA (stress) measurements between conditions at time 1 and 2.

A 4 (condition: control, verbal, behavioural, full) x 2 (time: time 1, time 2) mixed ANOVA on the EDA data revealed a significant main effect of time, $F(1,72) = 123.92, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .63$. EDA increased significantly from time 1 to time 2, ($M_{\text{time1}} = 5.23, SD = 5.82, 95\% \text{ CI } [3.90; 6.56], M_{\text{time2}} = 11.43, SD = 8.12, 95\% \text{ CI } [9.57; 13.28]$), regardless of condition. No significant main effect of condition, $F(3,72) = .28, p = .843$, nor condition x time interaction emerged, $F(3,72) = .46, p = .709$.

Table 11. Average STAI-S and EDA scores at time 1 and time 2 as a function of condition.

	Condition			
	Control	Verbal	Behavioural	Full
	M (SD) [95% CI]			
STAI-S				
Time 1	9.70 (3.50)	10.65 (2.68)	9.60 (2.56)	9.05 (2.24)
	[8.06; 11.34]	[9.40; 11.90]	[8.40; 10.80]	[8.00; 10.10]
Time 2	10.95 (3.20)	11.75 (3.67)	9.95 (3.20)	10.35 (3.73)
	[9.45; 12.45]	[10.03; 13.47]	[8.45; 11.45]	[8.60; 12.10]
EDA				
Time 1	4.95 (7.08)	4.67 (4.51)	5.16 (3.00)	6.11 (7.69)
	[1.43; 8.47]	[2.56; 6.79]	[3.67; 6.65]	[2.51; 9.71]
Time 2	10.05 (8.84)	11.47 (9.18)	11.32 (6.40)	12.73 (8.11)
	[5.66; 14.45]	[7.17; 15.76]	[8.14; 14.51]	[8.93; 16.52]

4.6 Discussion

This study empirically investigated the impact of different types of rapport building, as well as no rapport on witness memory, self-report anxiety and physiological stress. It was also considered which rapport-building behaviours were best received by mock witnesses by asking for post-interview feedback. The rationale for this research was twofold. Firstly, rapport is often championed as being important for witness interviews (Clarke & Milne, 2001; College of Policing, 2013; R. Collins et al., 2002; Fisher et al., 2011; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011). However, the empirical literature is currently limited regarding the impact of rapport for reducing anxiety and/or stress for an interviewee and helping to guide their episodic memory of an experienced crime event, with only a handful of studies (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014;

Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Nash et al., 2016; Sauerland et al., 2019; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011) conducted to date; these studies also provide mixed findings.

Secondly, there is much to indicate that police officers recognise the importance of rapport building and self-report that they use rapport in interviews with witnesses, but it would appear that rapport building by police interviewers can be weak and inconsistent (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Dando et al., 2008, 2009a; Fisher et al., 2010; Griffiths, 2008; Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012). This led to questioning whether feigned attempts at establishing rapport, devoid of non-verbal cues that commonly accompany verbal communication, for example, might appear disingenuous (see Dando & Oxburgh, 2016 for examples regarding empathy, and see L. K. Miles et al., 2009 for social cognition and rapport). Likewise, when non-verbal techniques are used inappropriately perhaps (Abbe & Brandon, 2014). If so, this may well hinder the rapport-building process, which in turn may weaken memory performance.

Contrary to popular belief, eyewitness memories are not objective ‘recordings’ that can be replayed like a video recording (Simons & Chabris, 2011). Rather, they are reconstructed records of personal experiences. If interviewees feel uncomfortable, anxious or undervalued they may not be prepared to invest the mental energy required to fully reconstruct and verbalise their episodic experiences (Milne & Bull, 1999; St-Yves, 2006).

4.6.1 Memory performance and participant perceptions

The primary finding was that overall participants in the behavioural (only) rapport condition outperformed participants in the verbal (only) rapport and control (no rapport) conditions, recalling over 16% more correct information items without an increase in errors or confabulations. Furthermore, participants in the behavioural condition performed equally to those in the full (verbal + behavioural) rapport condition.

Analysis of percentage accuracy revealed only a slight difference between conditions in the free recall phase, although this was not supported by further analyses. No significant differences between conditions occurred overall or in the probed recall phase. These results are surprising as one would expect significantly higher accuracy scores if there was an increase in correct reporting with no increase in errors/confabulations. No significant findings were found either for the reporting of correct information in the separate free and probed recall phases – again, one would normally expect some significant difference in one or both phases to account for the significant findings in overall memory performance. What this indicates is that the behavioural superiority effect for overall correct details was accumulative – that is, small insignificant differences between phases accumulated to create a larger, more significant difference overall. However, for percentage accuracy, these differences may still have been too small to lead to a greater overall finding. These types of findings are not unusual for applied research of this nature (e.g., see Dando et al., 2009b; Dando et al., 2011; Mattison et al., 2015).

It should be noted, however, that there was a significant difference between free and probed recall phases, with participants being nearly 20% less accurate in the probed recall compared to free recall phase. This is not an unusual finding as other studies have found that accuracy is greatly reduced during probed recall compared to free recall (for example, see Mattison et al., 2018). However, this is the first study investigating the impact of rapport that has used both a free and probed recall phase, with the findings indicating that rapport was not effective for counteracting this issue.

Compared to open-ended free recall questions, more specific probing questions could be considered to be a less appropriate form of questioning, and research has found that inappropriate question types result in less accurate/detailed interviewee responses (Dalton et al., 2020). As such, it could be argued that these issues with percentage accuracy are not due to witness discomfort (of which rapport could alleviate), but rather the type of questioning employed in the probed recall phase. Considering that police officers

(particularly less experienced and less trained frontline officers) frequently use inappropriate probing methods in practice (generally more often than appropriate free recall methods; Dalton et al., 2020; Griffiths & Milne, 2006) and that probed recall is a recommended strategy in ABE guidelines (Ministry of Justice, 2011), it is possible that officers are limiting their ability to gather accurate information in practice. This is not to say that there is no place for probing questions in practice, but rather further work needs to be done to identify their impact, as well as when and how these methods can be employed to best effect in practice.

To continue, the post-interview perceptions data revealed that participants' experiences were more positive when supportive social behaviours were exhibited – the interviewer was rated as warmer, more engaging, and more friendly by participants in the behavioural rapport condition compared to those in the verbal rapport and control conditions. They also reported the interview as being more positive and comfortable. As with the memory performance results, again there were no differences in perceptions between the behavioural and full (behavioural + verbal) rapport conditions.

4.6.2 Anxiety and stress

Both anxiety (measured using self-reports on the brief STAI-S) and physiological stress (measured using EDA) data revealed an increase across all conditions as interviews progressed, lending support to contentions that witness interviews are stressful and anxiety provoking (Almerigogna et al., 2007). This finding was not unexpected given the literature on the interaction between emotion and anxiety and how cognitive tasks can invoke anxiety and stress (see Berggren et al., 2017; Deffenbacher et al., 2004; Hoffman, 2010). These results do not support the claim that rapport reduces levels of stress or anxiety, as has been shown in previous studies (e.g., Kieckhaefer et al., 2014). No differences were found (increases or reductions) in anxiety or physiological stress across conditions as

interviews progressed, indicating that rapport, or the lack of it, may be less effective for reducing anxiety and stress during interviews with adults than is thought.

That said, it should be borne in mind that these measures are not without their limitations, albeit that self-reports and EDA are regularly used by researchers, with the latter being particularly useful for distinguishing between stress and cognitive load (Setz et al., 2009). Equally, a different set of results might emerge in conditions that mimic the real world, and where more exact indicators of stress, such as cortisol, are used. Furthermore, stress and anxiety were not induced in participants prior to the interview, and so levels of both were relatively low in this study - future studies should aim to experimentally induce stress and anxiety to assess the effect rapport has on them.

Considering that both anxiety and stress increased regardless of rapport, it could also be the case that factors independent of the interviewer impacted on the interviewee's experience. R. Collins et al. (2002) manipulated some elements of their interviewing environment, such as placing objects in specific parts of the environment, and they stated that the conditions of the interview environment may influence the establishment of rapport. Other studies have shown that the layout of an environment can have a positive psychological influence on one's mood and feelings (Ricci, 2018). Other factors such as room size, lighting, décor, or temperature can also have an impact on an interviewee's feelings of comfort (see Hoogesteyn et al., 2018). Therefore, the interview environment could facilitate the rapport-building process and alleviate levels of anxiety or stress felt by an interviewee. Future research should investigate the use of environmental rapport techniques, such as using different interview settings or the use and placement of props in the environment.

4.6.3 Implications of verbal and non-verbal rapport behaviours

Findings from other domains have long championed the argument that ‘actions speak louder than words’ (Costa Ferreira et al., 2016; Preisman & Wright, 2018; Windscheid et al., 2016). The results from this study further support these arguments and provides the eyewitness literature with clear evidence of a quantifiable, positive impact of a cluster of pro-social behaviours on cognition in a forensic setting.

These findings concur with the findings of previous research that has used primarily non-verbal behaviours (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002). However, they are counter to the reported positive effects of verbal rapport building (e.g., Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011), where verbal rapport was found to improve the quality of information by reducing errors – although, previous findings for verbal techniques may have been influenced by the inclusion of *unspecified* positive non-verbal techniques. Here, verbal techniques alone were poorly received and did not support witness memory performance. Indeed, participants in the verbal rapport condition performed equally to those who experienced no rapport at all. Considering that verbal techniques are sometimes used inappropriately in practice (Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012), it is possible that in the real world, where witnesses are likely to be more anxious and stressed in a manner that is difficult to replicate in the laboratory, paying ‘lip service’ to rapport (that is saying rather than behaving) may have a negative impact on rapport and a negligible impact on cognition.

The findings for percentage accuracy also contradict other studies that have shown an increase in accuracy rate due to rapport rather than the amount of details recalled (e.g., Carter et al., 1996; Davis & Bottoms, 2002; Roberts et al., 2004). However, these studies concerned child witnesses, a population that has generally been found to make more memory errors than adults (Sauerland et al., 2019), and so may explain why accuracy was not an issue in this study involving adult witnesses. Furthermore, previous studies that have investigated rapport in adult witness interviews (e.g., Kieckhafer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011) have often use a forced-choice questioning phase that

incorporates misinformation rather than an open-ended probed recall phase. It's been well documented that misinformation paradigms increase memory errors (see E. F. Loftus, 2005 for a review). This study did not use a misinformation paradigm which could explain the lack of findings for memory accuracy. Again, this stresses the need for more research in this field that uses methods relevant to real-world practice (at least in the UK), such as using a probed recall phase rather than a forced-choice questioning phase.

Disentangling all of the elements of complex social interactions such as witness interviews to understand the locus of effect is demanding, and given the dearth of research in this domain, speculation is required to a certain extent. These findings might be explained by the inappropriate use of verbal techniques (i.e., saying things while showing little interest/attention through non-verbal means), which resulted in no rapport in the verbal rapport condition whereby the experience was akin to that of participants in the no rapport condition. However, it is less clear why the full rapport condition did not outperform the behavioural rapport condition. One explanation may be that full rapport building (verbal + behavioural) may serve to lengthen the pre-retrieval, social phase of interviews, which could make witnesses more anxious/nervous. Indeed, some studies have suggested that extended rapport building can make the interview process more cognitively taxing (e.g., Davies et al., 2000) and may develop over-rapport, whereby being too friendly or familiar risks being perceived as forced or inappropriate and limits the positive effects of rapport (Abbe & Brandon, 2014; Duggan et al., 2011; S. M. Miller, 1952).

The current findings did not indicate that participants' perceptions of rapport in the full condition were negatively affected by the inclusion of verbal techniques, quite the opposite, and a lack of significant findings for some of the memory retrieval statements (e.g., the difficulty to recall information), or for anxiety and stress implies that participants did not perceive any one condition as being more cognitively taxing than another. However, it must be noted that rapport was only measured post interview. It is possible that if perceptions were also measured after the pre-interview rapport-building phase, a

phase not present in the behavioural condition and where the majority of verbal techniques were present, there may have been some differences in perceptions compared to post interview. The use of verbal techniques here could have been perceived as inappropriate or uncomfortable (akin to findings in the verbal condition) and limited recall to a degree, resulting in no significant differences in memory performance between the full and control/verbal conditions. Behavioural techniques during the interview, however, may have improved perceptions post interview. As such, future research should aim to investigate the change in rapport over the course of an interview, and investigate the effects of over-rapport.

Another explanation for the lack of findings in the full rapport condition may be due to certain techniques that were employed. For example, techniques such as summarisation also serve to lengthen the interview process, breaks the recommended 80%-20% interviewee-interviewer talking rule, and if an interviewer summarises incorrectly, may influence witnesses to agree with, and later report false information introduced by the interviewer (Ministry of Justice, 2011; Snook et al., 2012). As such, verbal techniques such as these could lead witnesses to become disinterested and pay less attention, give them less opportunity to provide information, and distort their memory – ultimately, this would impact their ability to provide plentiful and accurate information. For participants in the full rapport condition, these techniques may account for rapport having no impact on memory recall compared to other conditions.

When considering these findings, it should also be noted that there was some difficulty in controlling the rapport behaviours between conditions, which may have impacted the findings. The coding and manipulation analysis of the rapport behaviours revealed that in the verbal (only) and behavioural (only) rapport conditions the interviewer was generally very successful in excluding the relevant behaviours, although some of the verbal and physical behaviours did appear to occur more or less frequently in the full rapport condition than in the verbal and behavioural rapport conditions (e.g., interviewer

and interviewee self-disclosure were sometimes more frequent in the full condition whereas empathy, summarising, using the interviewee's name and evocative prompts occurred more often in the verbal condition). Previous research has shown self-disclosure to be highly effective for building rapport (e.g., Vallano et al., 2011), and as mentioned previously, summarisation may be a hinderance towards rapport building. As such, these slight disparities for the presentation of verbal techniques between the full and verbal conditions may have had an unintended influence on the rapport-building process, possibly explaining the great difference in rapport between these conditions.

Furthermore, on a few occasions some of the nonverbal behaviours (i.e., nodding, eye contact and hand gestures) were also not entirely absent from the verbal rapport condition. Considering the lack of rapport in the verbal condition, these findings highlight the possibility that some nonverbal behaviours are ineffective or even detrimental towards rapport building in some contexts. Indeed, eye contact can be considered aggressive or rude by some individuals (Al-Krenawi & Graham, 2000; Uono & Hietanen, 2015). Again, the difficulty controlling these behaviours may have had an unintended impact on rapport in the verbal condition. Considering this, it should also be noted that it is not possible to identify which nonverbal behaviours had the most impact on rapport in the behavioural or full rapport conditions – potentially, behaviours such as eye contact also reduced the strength of rapport that could be developed in these conditions. While the current study attempted to separate verbal and nonverbal techniques, future research should aim to fully separate the techniques within these categories and investigate their individual effects, as some techniques may be more important than others for building rapport.

4.6.4 Conclusion

The present study adds to the limited literature on rapport building during witness interviews with adults and has implications for forensic practice and interview training.

This study used the mock-witness paradigm, controlled interviewer variability, and measured stress and anxiety. Rapport behaviours were clearly operationalised to allow replication, and an attempt was made to separate verbal and behavioural rapport so as not to cross contaminate, and they were also combined. However, as with all laboratory studies of this nature, there are limitations, many of which are highlighted throughout the discussion.

Arguably, one of the most challenging aspects of this research was controlling the rapport behaviours. The coding and manipulation analysis of the rapport behaviours revealed that in the verbal (only) and behavioural (only) rapport conditions the interviewer was generally very successful in excluding the relevant behaviours, although some of the verbal and physical behaviours did appear to occur more or less frequently in the full rapport condition than in the verbal and behavioural rapport conditions (e.g., interviewer and interviewee self-disclosure was sometimes more frequent in the full condition whereas empathy, summarising, using the interviewee's name and evocative prompts occurred more often in the verbal condition). On a few occasions some of the behaviours (e.g., nodding) were not entirely absent from the verbal rapport condition.

Irrespective, participants clearly reported different experiences across conditions, hence the rapport manipulation was successful and the pattern of manipulation results should not undermine the primary finding, which is that rapport-building actions (the behavioural only condition) are better received, and were found to improve witness memory performance. Future consideration of how best to code/measure interviewer rapport-building behaviours is needed. One method was developed here, but there is a lack of consensus. Future research should also consider other ways to measure stress/anxiety during the interview, use different interviewers and consider using an unintentional encoding paradigm.

The clear take home message from this study is that non-verbal behaviours appear effective for building and maintaining rapport with adult witnesses – they were well received, akin to the full (behaviour + verbal) condition, and they improved witness cognition. Attempting to establish rapport through verbal communication without accompanying positive non-verbal cues was ineffective for developing rapport or guiding witness cognition, and even when accompanied by non-verbals it did not significantly impact witness cognition. As such, verbal techniques may not be a necessary component of rapport building, and may provide limited (or no) benefits while also being considerably complex to successfully utilise (as seen by our behavioural analysis). Non-verbal behaviours on the other hand do seem necessary for developing rapport and were extremely simple to use. Where time is short, training resources are limited, or interviewers are less experienced, for example, these findings suggest a straightforward way to build rapport through non-verbal behaviours to support adult eyewitness cognition in goal-directed interview settings.

5 Chapter five: Rapport building in suspect interviews – views of UK police officers

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, there is a growing consensus among practitioners and academic researchers as to the importance of rapport-based interviewing for enhancing communication and information gain in forensic interviews (see Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Gabbert et al., 2020; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015 for reviews). Here, rapport is often described as being an operational accord, whereby the interviewer and interviewee develop a “degree of conformity and/or affinity”, as well as an “understanding... for respective concerns, intentions and desired outcomes” (Kleinman, 2006, p.278). The intention of this relationship being to make an interviewee feel comfortable and motivated to provide crime-relevant information (Vanderhallen et al., 2011). As such, building rapport is recommended by the majority of interviewing tools and frameworks that police officers use when interviewing both victims, witnesses and suspects, such as the CI (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), PEACE (College of Policing, 2013), ABE (Ministry of Justice, 2011), and even the more controversial Reid technique most commonly used in the USA, and elsewhere (Inbau et al., 2013). Furthermore, empirical evidence has shown that police officers do recognise the importance of building rapport with both witnesses and suspects and they report regularly using several rapport-building techniques in practice (Dando et al., 2008; Kassin et al., 2007; Redlich et al., 2014; Vallano et al., 2015).

However, while rapport appears to be an integral part of police interviewing, several studies have shown that police officers can sometimes be inconsistent, inadequate or ineffective at building rapport in practice (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Dando et al., 2008, 2009a). For example, Walsh and Bull (2010, 2012) found that many police interviewers were indifferent towards building rapport and did not do so in accordance with best practice recommendations and training when interviewing suspects of tax fraud. It was also shown that even when rapport was adequately built, it was not always maintained over the

course of the interview. Two key studies by Holmberg (2004) and Holmberg and Christianson (2002) found that both offenders and victims of sexual offences often perceived their interviewer to be more confrontational and dominant compared to offenders and victims of other crimes (e.g., assault), with interviewees of these other crimes more commonly perceiving their interviewer as being humanitarian. These studies highlight that what police officers report regarding rapport-building behaviour may not necessarily be consistent with their actual practice.

However, it should be noted that the forensic rapport-building literature is not well developed, and there is currently no real consensus about what rapport is in terms of operationalising rapport in practice. For example, the CI advocates the importance of empathic behavior and personalising the interview to build rapport (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), while others emphasise active listening (Milne & Bull, 1999), being attentive and friendly (R. Collins et al., 2002), being open, interested and approachable (College of Policing, 2013), or some simply describe rapport as a ‘connection’ (Driskell et al., 2013). This lack of consensus and the vague and/or broad indications of rapport provided make it difficult to understand what rapport is in a forensic context, or how officers should build rapport with witnesses and suspects. As such, it is not surprising that officers are sometimes unable to build rapport effectively in practice.

This problem also seems to be particularly prevalent in a suspect interviewing context. While the witness interviewing literature is also underdeveloped, to date there exist several experimental studies that have investigated rapport in a witness interviewing context, and they have identified several methods of building rapport that are effective for reducing witness anxiety and having positive effects on information gain (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhaefer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011; also see Chapter 4). As such, there currently exists a fair body of work that highlights what rapport is and how it can be used within witness interviewing contexts.

However, suspect interviews are qualitatively and quantitatively different to witness interviews, often being more adversarial in nature, typically involving less than cooperative interviewees (Kleinman, 2006). Furthermore, it has been discussed that maintaining positivity (a key component of rapport building; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990) may not be possible in such interactions (Abbe & Brandon, 2013), and may be less important for forensic interviews than other components (e.g., attention; Nunan et al., 2020). Some studies have also shown that police officers do not consider rapport to be effective with suspects, or only effective for the sake of gaining a confession, which differs to general views of rapport with witnesses (Vallano et al., 2015). As such, it may not be appropriate to generalise findings from the witness literature.

To date, little work has been conducted to understand rapport specifically within a suspect interviewing context. Alison et al. (2013) attempted to bridge this gap and analysed transcripts from real police investigations with suspects to identify rapport-building behaviours and techniques, and their findings led them to creating the ORBIT model (see Chapter 2, section 2.4). While a useful tool, this model has so far not been experimentally tested and so its efficacy is not yet known. This model also incorporates elements of rapport that have been developed in therapeutic contexts, such as MI methods that advocate empathy, positivity and acceptance (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991). Again, these methods have been discussed as being potentially inappropriate or ineffective with suspects, especially with those that have committed more serious crimes (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Oxburgh et al., 2006, 2012), and it is currently not known whether police officers agree with and employ these types of rapport-building methods in practice. Furthermore, studies that have investigated rapport building in suspect interviewing contexts have often done so with officers who are highly trained and experienced (e.g., Alison et al., 2013; Russano et al., 2014), and so rapport-building views and practices portrayed by these studies may not be reflective of a general police population.

There appears to be only one study that specifically attempted to understand how a general population of police officers conceptualise and use rapport in their suspect interviewing practice. Vallano et al. (2015) conducted a survey with US based officers that asked them to define rapport and list their rapport-building behaviours, and found that officers do generally recognise the importance of building rapport with interviewees, seeing it as an effective means of motivating them to communicate and provide information, and they reported using several positive verbal and non-verbal behaviours to build rapport (e.g., making eye contact, engaging in personal conversation). However, this study did not make a clear distinction between witness and suspect interviewing, and so it is not clear whether these views and practices directly relate to suspect interviewing. Where distinctions were made, it was found that considerable amounts of participants did not regard building rapport to be important with suspects, or saw it as a means of extracting a confession rather than information.

These results are not surprising considering that the US places great emphasis on extracting confessions, but they may not generalise to a UK cohort where information-gathering is favoured over confessions (College of Policing, 2013; Griffiths, 2008; Kelly & Meissner, 2016). As such, there is still a lack of clarity regarding rapport in suspect interviewing contexts, especially in a UK setting. Considering the importance the literature places on rapport for engaging with suspects, it seems vital to understand how UK police officers conceptualise and use rapport in practice.

5.1 The present study

To date, there exists very little indication of what rapport is in a suspect interviewing context or what techniques are effective for building rapport in this context, and it is generally unknown how police officers view and use rapport in practice – although, there exists some evidence that officers may not build rapport adequately with

suspects, potentially owing to the fact that little is known in this regard. It is also unknown whether their views align with those that have been outlined in the literature. Where research exists in regard to suspect interviewing, studies are often conducted in countries that have different legal systems compared to the UK (e.g., the US), where cultural approaches to interviewing emphasise an interactive approach, or with officers that are not representative of the typical population. As such, these results may not generalise to a general UK police audience.

The present study concerns understanding how UK police officers conceptualised rapport specifically in a suspect interviewing context, as well as how they built rapport with suspects and whether their views and practices reflected what is described by the key models (e.g., ORBIT) and literature (e.g., Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014) on forensic rapport. The present study employed an online survey with active UK police officers, with the aim of answering the following broad research questions: 1) What do police officers understand as rapport in suspect interviews?, 2) How do police officers build rapport with suspects?, and 3) Do police officers views and uses of rapport align with those outlined in the literature?

5.2 Ethics

This study was approved by the Psychology ethics committee at the University of Westminster. Participants were provided with an information sheet and consent form (see Appendix J) upon opening the online survey. This specified that their participation was voluntary and that their data would be collected anonymously, and that they were able to withdraw their participation at any point while they completed the survey. However, due to no identifiable data being collected, they were also informed that they would be unable to withdraw their data once it was collected. Participants were also informed that their data would be stored and destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018) and

GDPR (2018) guidelines, and that their data may be used for secondary analyses in the future. This document also outlined the purpose of the survey and the types of questions that would be asked. If participants consented to these terms then they were asked to continue with the survey, thereby providing implied consent. Once they completed the survey, participants were provided with a debrief sheet (Appendix K) that provided more details related to the survey and how their data would be used in the wider research study, and they were given contact details should they wish to discuss the study further.

5.3 Method

5.3.1 Participants

All participants were active police officers that worked in the UK and engaged with suspect interviewing. In the first instance, participants were recruited by contacting police officers known to the main researcher or their colleagues, as well as through posts on the Police UK Reddit page. Snowball sampling occurred from then on, with participating officers encouraged to recruit other active officers they knew within the UK. While many of the users of the Police UK Reddit page are verified police officers, it is also accessible by non-police officers, and thereby there was a small risk that non-eligible participants took part (e.g., civilians, non-active officers, non-UK based officers). In order to identify non-eligible participants, prior to the main survey questions there was a short demographics section (see Appendix L, section 1) which asked participants to provide their age, gender, current role in the police, their experience within the police, where in the UK they were based, their level of training and details of their training, and the amount of suspect interviews they conducted weekly. If a significant amount of demographic information was missing from participants then they were removed from the sample (demographic details are reported below).

The survey was hosted on Qualtrics and was accessible by a survey link. Overall, the survey link garnered 168 clicks. However, 58 of those who clicked on the survey filled in either none or only a very limited amount of the demographic details, and they completed none of the survey questions. As such, those 58 people were removed from the participant sample. Of the remaining 110 participants, 36 completed the demographic details of the survey and did not provide any responses to the questions regarding rapport building. They too were excluded from the participant sample. This left 74 participants who completed all or a significant amount of the survey (many participants did not answer every question on the survey).¹⁰ Most participants completed all demographic sections of the survey but there was some missing data. In the following demographic report, where percentages do not equal to 100, the remainder is missing data.

Demographic details indicated that participants ranged in age from 19 to 62 ($M_{\text{age}} = 32.15$, $SD = 9.15$, $N = 68$). Participants were majority male (69%, $n = 51$), with 30% of the sample consisting of female officers ($n = 22$). Most officers were at constable rank (82%, $n = 61$), with some Sergeants (8%, $n = 6$), inspectors (4%, $n = 4$) and police constable special officers (PCSO; 4%, $n = 4$), and on average participants were moderately experienced ($M_{\text{years}} = 6.81$, $SD = 6.48$, $N = 64$). Around a quarter of the sample worked for the Metropolitan (MET) police in London (27%, $n = 20$), with the two other notable locations being Surrey (19%, $n = 14$) and Essex (7%, $n = 5$) – 42% of the sample were scattered around other areas of the UK ($n = 31$). Most participants reported having received basic training (e.g., PIP level 1, PEACE tier 1; 66%, $n = 49$), with 20% reporting having received intermediate level training (e.g., PIP level 2, PEACE tier 2; $n = 15$), and 11% more advanced training (e.g., PEACE tier 3+; $n = 8$) – 61% of participants also claimed to have been trained in rapport building ($n = 45$), while 36% of the sample claimed not to

¹⁰ As is often the case in police research, it can be difficult to recruit police participants due to the time-consuming and stressful nature of their work, as well as their general distrust towards “outside” interference (Queirós et al., 2020; Reiner, 2000) – this is likely to have impacted on the recruitment rate for this study. Furthermore, these factors are likely to have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and so recruitment for this study was truncated.

have been ($n = 27$). Finally, participants reported conducting 1.92 interviews with suspects a week on average ($SD = 1.5$, $N = 67$). As such, this data indicates that the sample for this study mostly consisted of less experienced and less trained officers (mostly trained at PEACE tier 1 and 2 level) frontline officers, which differs to much of the research on rapport which has been conducted with officers trained at tier 3 and above (e.g., Alison et al., 2013).

5.3.2 Materials

Online Survey

This study used an online survey that incorporated both fixed-choice rating scale questions, such as rating how important rapport was for suspect interviews, as well as open-ended questions, such as elaborating on why rapport was important, in order to take full advantage of the survey design. See Appendix L for the full questionnaire.

The survey contained three distinct sections, the first of which being the demographic questions already detailed. The second section was related to how police officers conceptualised rapport and what their practices of rapport building were with suspects. This section was adapted from the survey employed with US officers by Vallano et al. (2015). Here, participants were first asked to define what rapport was in relation to a suspect interview, and then they were asked to choose one of four statements regarding rapport that they most agreed with, those being: ‘Rapport is...’: 1) ‘a positive relationship between an interviewer and a suspect’, 2) ‘a negative relationship between an interviewer and a suspect’, 3) ‘a relationship between an interviewer and a suspect – either positive or negative’, or 4) ‘none of the above – rapport is neither a positive or negative relationship’. Following this, they were asked to rate how important rapport was on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely essential), as well as provide their reasons as to why it was important.

Next they were asked to rate how much rapport contributes to the success of an interview from 1 (none at all) to 5 (a great deal), how often they built rapport before and during an interview, from 1 (never) to 5 (always), as well as to specify the techniques they used to build rapport both before and during an interview. As attention and positivity (or respect) are key components of most rapport-building models (e.g., Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990), participants were also asked to elaborate on how they showed attention and positivity/respect towards suspects. Finally, they were asked to specify which suspects they felt rapport was most and least effective with, rate how good they felt they were at building rapport, from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), and to specify how they know when they have been effective at building rapport.

The third section of the survey was concerned with understanding whether participants views aligned with those expressed by the current models of rapport (e.g., ORBIT; Alison et al., 2013) and the literature (e.g., Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014). First, they were asked to rate how much they agree with 20 separate statements, such as ‘an interviewer should use warm verbal and non-verbal cues with a suspect’ or ‘an interviewer should mutually agree upon the goals of the interview with a suspect’. These statements reflect many of the recommendations that are found within ORBIT and its parts (e.g., the MI), and were rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A full list of these statements can be found in Appendix L (section 3) and Table 19.

Following these statements, they were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) how much they agreed that suspect interactions should be: a) authoritative, b) cooperative, c) passive, d) confrontational, as well as to rate from 1 (never) to 5 (always) how often they use each of these four interactional styles. Finally, they were asked to rate from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) how much they agreed with six statements related to commonly discussed positive and negative influences of rapport (e.g., ‘rapport makes suspects more comfortable to talk’ or ‘rapport undermines an

interviewers authority'). A full list of these statements can be found in Appendix L (section 3) and Table 20.

5.3.3 Procedure

Participants were either sent the link to the survey by email or accessed the survey link through the Police UK reddit page. When participants clicked on the link, they were provided with an information sheet that specified the aims of this research and the types of questions that they would be asked (see Appendix J). If they agreed to participate then they were asked to press *continue*, and were explicitly told that by doing so they provided their consent to participate in the study. On the next page, participants were presented with the demographic questions (section 1). Following these, they were provided with questions from section 2 of the survey. Questions were not presented all on one page for two reasons: 1) so as not to overburden the participant, and 2) to account for previous responses. In regard to the latter, several questions only appeared on the survey if participants provided a particular response to previous questions. For example, if participants specified that they never built rapport, either before or during suspect interviews, then they were not asked to specify how they built rapport with suspects. After completing section 2, participants were presented with section 3 – again, questions were not presented all on one page for the same reasons as in the previous section. Upon completion of section 3, the survey was complete and participants were provided with a debrief specifying how the data would be used (see Appendix K).

5.3.4 Data coding and analysis

Where open-ended qualitative responses were provided to questions, a content analysis was employed to analyse these responses. For each qualitative question, a set of general categories were devised that captured an adequate meaning for the responses (see Appendix B for example coding). Some of these categories were developed a-priori and

were based around ideas that had been suggested within the literature. For example, in response to ‘what is rapport?’, it is common for officers to describe this as being a ‘relationship’ based on ‘communication’ (e.g., Vallano et al., 2015). As such, these types of descriptions were also expected to be present in the current data, and so formed some of the categories.

Other categories were developed after reviewing participant responses and identifying similar themes that were prevalent across the data. While many of the categories were manifest in the data by the specific words that participants used, some participants used different words or phrases to explain similar things and so their responses had to be interpreted to fit these categories. In some instances, only a very small minority or one participant mentioned a particular view. While this view may have been important to those officers, the lack of consensus reflects that it may not be something shared by a wider police population. Views that were mentioned by only one participant were not included in the final results as a category.

For forced-choice rating scale questions, simple descriptive statistics were performed on the data to identify the average response by the sample for each of the questions. Due to the varying response rate for each question on the survey, the following results will indicate how many participants from the sample answered every question.

5.4 Results

To recap, open-ended responses were collapsed into distinct categories. For each of these questions, it was identified what percentage of participants mentioned each category in relation to the total amount of participants that responded – as such, participants will commonly be referred to as respondents to indicate that not all 74 participants responded to each question (the number of participants that responded to each question will be indicated). Furthermore, the percentages provided for each question do not total to 100%

as respondents often mentioned more than one category in their response. For rating scale questions, means and standard deviations are presented.

5.4.1 How do police officers define rapport when interviewing suspects?

As can be seen from Table 12, nearly half of respondents considered rapport to be about communication between the interviewer and suspect, and roughly a third of respondents indicated they believed that understanding and developing a relationship (and to a lesser degree, a connection) were key elements of rapport. Smaller numbers of respondents also considered trust, comfort, positivity and respect to be important elements of rapport, as well as finding common ground and humanising one another. Very few respondents provided any negative views regarding rapport, with only 3% of respondents stating that rapport can be faked or does not need to be genuine.

When asked to choose whether rapport was characterised as a positive relationship, negative relationship, neutral relationship or not a relationship, 65% of the 74 participants that responded (n = 48) considered rapport to be a positive relationship with suspects. Fewer respondents expressed rapport to be a neutral relationship (23%, n = 17) or not a relationship (12%, n = 9), but no respondents characterised rapport as a negative relationship.

Table 12. Respondents' definitions of rapport, along with the frequency of the response (*n*) & percentage as a function of total respondents (*N*).

Definitions of rapport	n	% (N = 62)
Communication	29	47%
A relationship	21	34%
Understanding	18	29%
Trust	12	19%
Comfort	6	10%
Positivity	6	10%
Humanising one another	6	10%
Respect	5	8%
Finding common ground	5	8%
A connection	5	8%
Fake/Disingenuous	2	3%

5.4.2 How important is rapport and why?

On average, respondents rated rapport as being moderately to very important for suspect interviews ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .92$, $N = 74$; see Figure 7 for frequency data), and they considered building rapport to contribute a moderate amount to much of the success of an interview ($M = 3.53$; $SD = 1.03$; $N = 72$; see Figure 8 for frequency data). When asked to elaborate on why rapport was important, over forty percent of respondents considered it a way of opening up conversation. Around one fifth of respondents saw rapport as leading to more effective investigations and evidence collection, and saw it as a way of making suspects feel at ease. To a lesser extent, respondents also considered rapport to be useful for making the interview process easier, allowing for a positive or respectful conversation to develop, and for avoiding conflict in the interview (see Table 13). Important to note, 13% of respondents specifically stated that they did not think rapport was important for an interview.

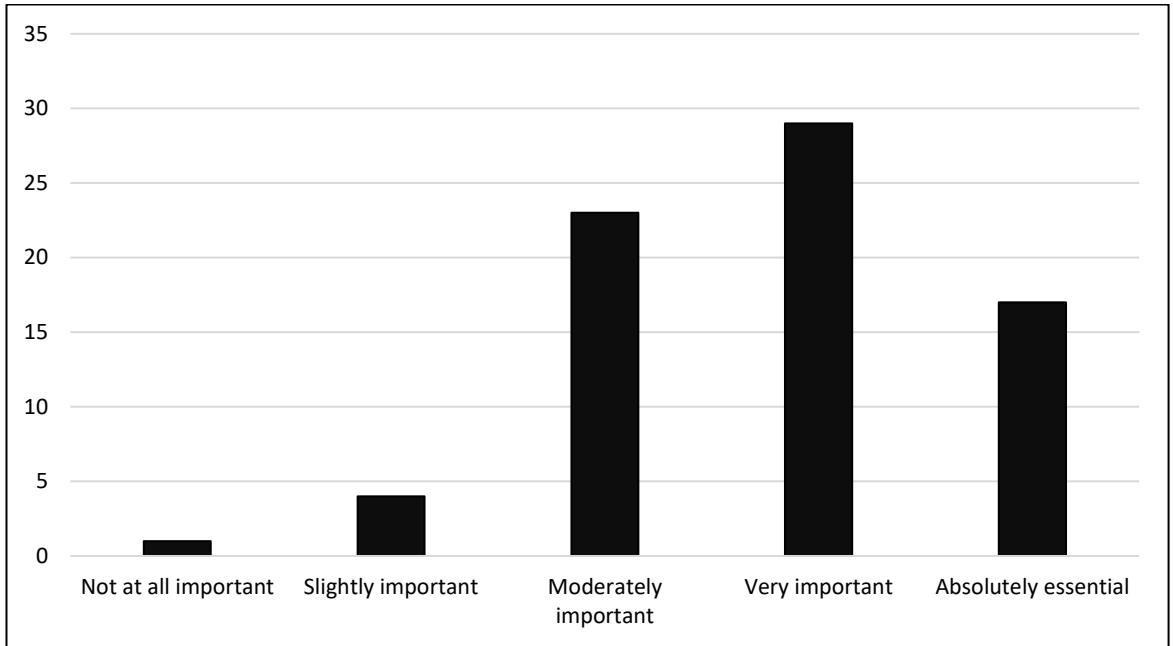


Figure 7. Frequency of participant responses to the question: 'How important do you think it is to build rapport with a suspect?' (N = 74).

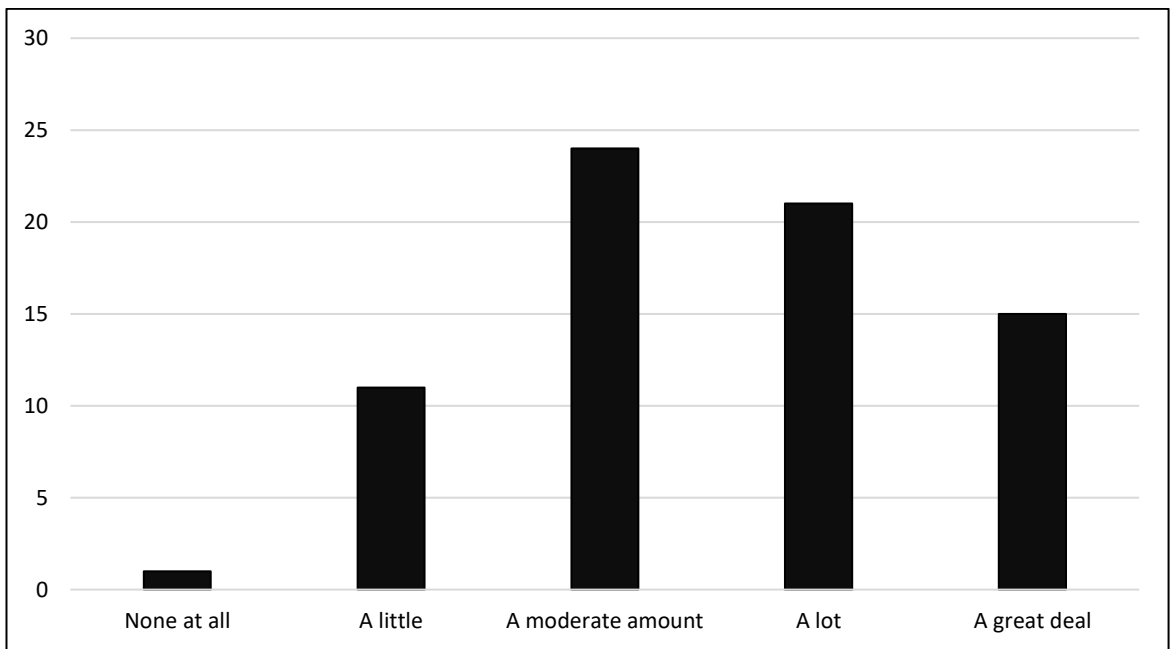


Figure 8. Frequency of participant responses to the question: 'How much do you think rapport contributes to the success of a suspect interview?' (N = 72).

Table 13. Respondents' perceptions as to why rapport was important, along with the frequency of the response (*n*) & percentage as a function of total respondents (*N*).

Reasons why rapport is important	n	% (N = 70)
It opens up conversation	30	43%
It leads to evidence collection	17	24%
It leads to a more effective investigation	13	19%
It puts the suspect at ease	13	19%
It is not important	9	13%
It makes the process easier	5	7%
It leads to a positive/respectful conversation	4	6%
It helps to avoid conflict	3	4%

5.4.3 How do you build rapport?

Respondents rated that they regularly built rapport with suspects both before the start of an interview ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .87$, $N = 72$; see Figure 9 for frequency data) as well as during an interview with a suspect ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.05$, $N = 69$; see Figure 10 for frequency data). Respondents also elaborated on the techniques they used to build rapport with suspects before and during an interview (see Table 14), with the majority stating they attempted to have a personal conversation with suspects and they also offered them drinks, snacks, and other items. Many also mentioned actively listening to suspects, being empathetic, gauging how suspects were feeling, using a series of non-verbal behaviours (e.g., eye gaze, smiling), explaining the interview process, being friendly, and engaging with suspects cooperatively as effective means of building rapport. To lesser degrees, respondents also mentioned showing a genuine interest in a suspect, being honest and/or courteous, collecting the suspect from their cell and setting up the room in particular ways to also be effective.

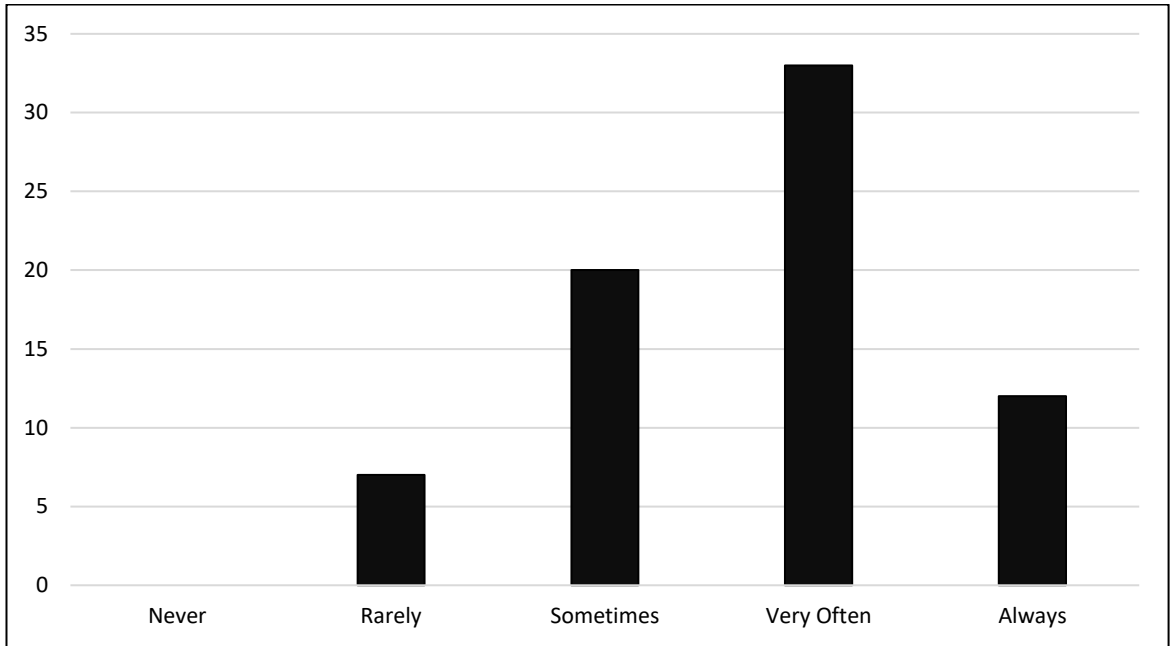


Figure 9. Frequency of participant responses to the question: 'How often do you build rapport with a suspect before an interview?' (N = 72).

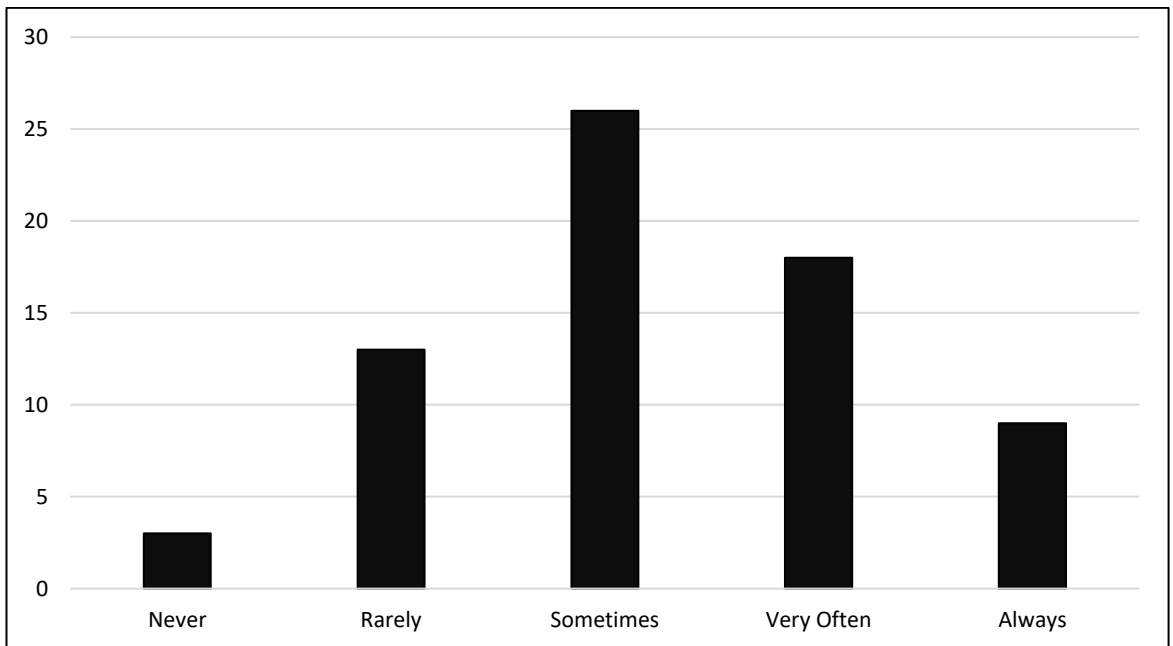


Figure 10. Frequency of participant responses to the question: 'How often do you build rapport with a suspect during an interview?' (N = 69).

Table 14. *Rapport-building techniques reported by respondents, along with the frequency of the response (n) & percentage as a function of total respondents (N).*

Rapport-building techniques	n	% (N = 29)
Having personal conversation	22	76%
Offering things (e.g., drinks, snacks, cigarettes)	18	62%
Actively listening	13	45%
Showing empathy	9	31%
Asking how the suspect is feeling	8	28%
Using non-verbal behaviours	8	28%
Explaining the interview process	8	28%
Being friendly	6	21%
Being cooperative	5	17%
Showing genuine interest	4	14%
Collecting the suspect from their cell	4	14%
Being honest	3	10%
Being courteous	3	10%
Setting up the room	2	7%

When asked how participants showed that they were being attentive towards a suspect, around three quarters of respondents mentioned eye contact as being key, with around a third mentioning that they summarised suspects' responses, used backchannel responding (e.g., saying 'yes', 'mhm', 'aha' while a suspect is talking) and nodded to show attention (see Table 15). Smaller numbers of respondents said that they questioned a suspect's account, took notes, showed they were actively listening, maintained an open posture and explained their notes to a suspect to show attention. Some respondents mentioned using non-verbal and verbal cues but did not specify what they meant.

Table 15. *Techniques reported by respondents to show attentiveness, along with the frequency of the response (n) & percentage as a function of total respondents (N).*

Techniques used to show attention	n	% (N = 56)
Making eye contact	40	71%
Summarising and echoing responses	21	38%
Backchannel responding	18	32%
Nodding	18	32%
Questioning suspect accounts	13	23%
Taking notes	9	16%
Non-verbal cues	8	14%
Actively listening	7	13%
Verbal cues	7	13%
Maintaining an open posture	6	11%
Explaining their notes	3	5%

Table 16. *Techniques reported by respondents to show positivity or respect, along with the frequency of the response (n) & percentage as a function of total respondents (N).*

Techniques to show respect	n	% (N = 50)
Being polite	13	26%
Listen to the suspect	10	20%
Asking how they are	8	16%
Treating them as a person	8	16%
Being honest/open	7	14%
Use their name or way they want to be addressed	6	12%
Offer/get the suspect things (e.g., water, food)	5	10%
Showing understanding	4	8%
Being professional	3	6%
Body language	3	6%
Not being aggressive/confrontational	3	6%

In regards to showing positivity or respect, respondents mentioned being polite, listening to suspects without interruption, asking how a suspect was, treating the suspect as a person, using their name, offering to get them things (e.g., water, food), being honest and open, showing understanding, being professional, using body language and not being aggressive or confrontational as good ways of indicating these (see Table 16).

5.4.4 Who is rapport effective with?

Here, around a third of respondents thought that rapport was most effective with first timers, with lesser amounts mentioning suspects who have a criminal history, suspects who need help with mental health/social issues, suspects that had committed less serious crimes, young offenders, suspects who were similar to the officer in some way (e.g., age, interests), suspects who had no solicitor present, suspects who were intelligent, or those who were suspected of committing a sex offence. Regarding suspects they felt rapport was less effective with, around a third of respondents thought that building rapport did not work well with repeat offenders, with lesser amounts expressing similar sentiments for those suspected of serious or violent offences, suspects who were involved in organised crime, suspects who had no respect for authority or had poor attitudes, suspects suffering from mental health disorders, young offenders, and foreign suspects. See Table 17 for the list of the suspects that rapport was reported as being most and least effective with. From the sample, 7 respondents (13%) stated that they were unable to specify which suspects rapport was effective or ineffective with.

When asked how they knew they had been effective at building rapport with a suspect, the majority of respondents stated that you could tell when rapport had been established as the suspect would talk and answer questions rather than giving a ‘no comment’ response (see Table 18). Some respondents also said that they could tell rapport had an effect based on the amount of information the suspect provided, the suspect engaging in personal conversation, the suspect’s use of body language, the suspect fully

engaging with the interview, and the suspect appearing relaxed and non-hostile. Among the respondents, 12% stated they did not know how you can tell whether rapport influenced the interview, and 8% provided a vague response stating that they could ‘just tell’. Finally, respondents rated that they were acceptable to good at building rapport with suspects ($M = 3.61$, $SD = .69$, $N = 61$; see Figure 11 for frequency data).

Table 17. *Respondents’ perceptions of the efficacy (most effective & least effective) of rapport as a function of suspect type, along with the frequency of the response (n) & percentage as a function of total respondents (N).*

Most effective suspects	n	% (N = 44)
First timers	13	30%
Suspects with criminal histories	5	11%
Suspects who needed help	4	9%
Suspects of lesser offences	3	7%
Young offenders/children	3	7%
Suspects similar to the officer	3	7%
Suspects with no solicitor present	3	7%
Suspects who were intelligent	2	5%
Sex offenders	2	5%
Least effective suspects	n	% (N = 54)
Repeat offenders	19	35%
Serious/violent offenders (including sex offenders)	10	19%
Suspects without respect for authority	6	11%
Suspects with mental health disorders	4	7%
Suspects involved in organised crime	4	7%
Young offenders/children	4	7%
Suspects with poor attitudes	4	6%
Foreign suspects	3	4%

Table 18. Respondent's perceptions of the impact of rapport, along with the frequency of the response (n) & percentage as a function of total respondents (N).

How do you know rapport has been effective?	n	% (N = 26)
The suspect talks rather than giving 'no comment' responses	16	62%
The amount of information a suspect provides	5	19%
The suspect engages in personal conversation	4	15%
Observing the suspects body language	4	15%
Don't know	3	12%
The suspect fully engages with the interview	2	8%
The suspect isn't hostile	2	8%
The suspect is relaxed	2	8%
Can just tell	2	8%

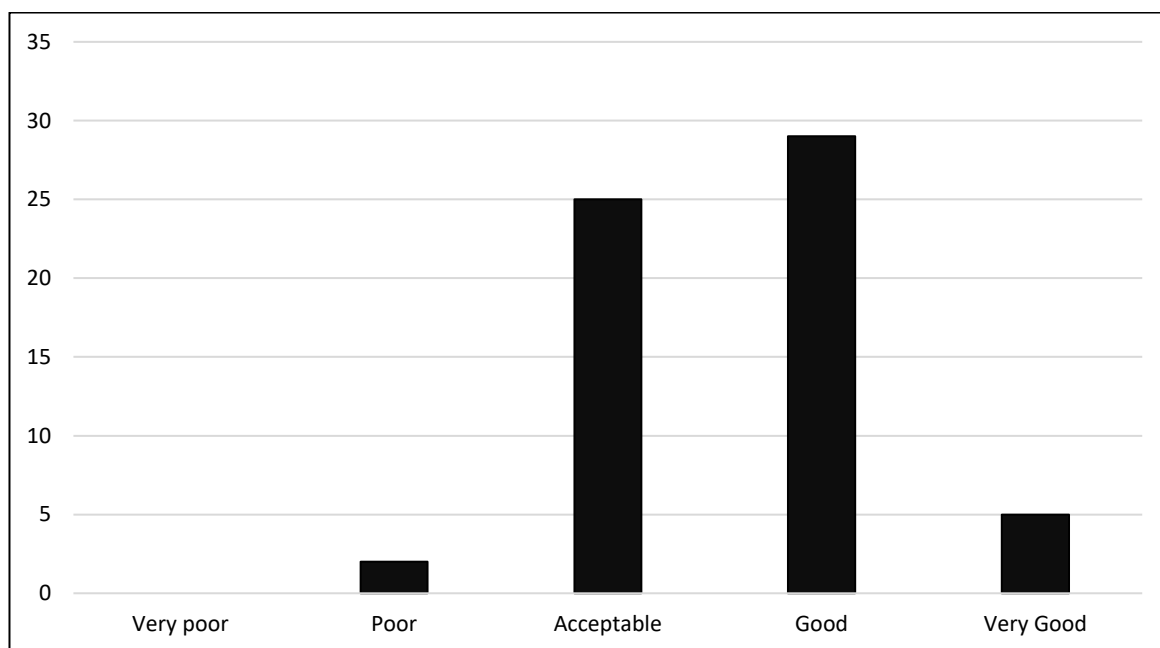


Figure 11. Frequency of participant responses to the question: 'How good do you think you are at building rapport with a suspect?' (N = 61).

5.4.5 How much do you agree that an interviewer should...

When asked whether they agreed with certain interviewer actions and behaviours when interviewing suspects, respondents agreed moderately to strongly that interviewers should treat suspects in a dignifying and humane manner, ensure that suspects fully understand their role, caution and rights during the interview, should invite suspects to explain discrepancies in their account, should adapt their behaviour dependent on the suspect, and should make a suspect feel comfortable. Respondents agreed slightly to moderately that an interviewer should use warm verbal and non-verbal cues with suspects, summarise a suspect's account, probe suspects using open questions, draw out a suspect's thoughts and feelings, be positive and friendly with suspects, and respect a suspect's right to talk or not. Participants generally showed little to no agreement nor disagreement with an interviewer being understanding of a suspect's difficulties and experiences, finding common ground with them, or negotiating with them. Finally, respondents seemed to slightly disagree with an interviewer seeking permission from a suspect to provide opinions and advice, mutually agreeing on how the interview will be conducted with them, mimicking or complementing a suspect's behaviour, or disclosing personal information to a suspect. See Table 19 for the full list of responses to these questions.

5.4.6 What Interactional styles do police officers use?

Respondents slightly to moderately agreed that an interviewer should be authoritative ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 1.13$, $N = 56$) and cooperative ($M = 5.74$, $SD = .95$, $N = 57$) with suspects, but showed little agreement or disagreement with interviewers being passive ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.67$, $N = 57$) or confrontational ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.82$, $N = 56$) with suspects. Respondents also expressed that they were authoritative ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .77$, $N = 57$) and cooperative ($M = 3.72$, $SD = .8$, $N = 57$) with suspects sometimes to often, and more rarely passive ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .99$, $N = 57$) or confrontational ($M = 2.36$, $SD = .86$, $N = 57$) with suspects.

Table 19. Respondent's agreeability with 20 statements related to how an interviewer should interact with a suspect (number of respondents (N), means & standard deviations for each).

How much do you agree an interviewer should...		N	M (SD)
1)	Treat a suspect in a dignifying and humane manner	61	6.59 (1.17)
2)	Invite, rather than demand that a suspect explains any discrepancies in their account	61	6.44 (1.01)
3)	Ensure that a suspect fully understands theirs and the interviewer's role during the interview	61	6.43 (1.35)
4)	Ensure that a suspect fully understands their police caution and rights	61	6.2 (1.17)
5)	Make a suspect feel comfortable	27	6.15 (1.03)
6)	Adapt their behaviour and questioning according to how a suspect behaves or responds	27	6.04 (1.26)
7)	Summarise a suspect's account and reflect it back to them for clarification	61	5.95 (1.3)
8)	Use warm verbal and non-verbal cues with a suspect (e.g., a positive tone of voice, smiling)	26	5.92 (1.41)
9)	Probe a suspect for information using open questioning	60	5.92 (1.37)
10)	Draw out the thoughts and feelings of a suspect	61	5.70 (1.35)
11)	Be positive and friendly with a suspect	27	5.81 (1.04)
22)	Respect a suspect's right to choose when or if they provide information	27	5.04 (1.53)
13)	Be understanding of the difficulties a suspect may be experiencing	61	4.46 (2.06)
14)	Negotiate with a suspect	27	4.19 (2.15)
15)	Find common ground with a suspect	61	4.10 (2.00)
16)	Mutually agree upon the goals of the interview with a suspect	26	3.81 (2.28)
17)	Mimic some or all of a suspect's behaviours (e.g., their body language or tone of voice)	27	3.67 (1.86)
18)	Seek permission before providing their opinions and advice to a suspect	61	3.41 (1.97)
19)	Complement a suspect's behaviour (e.g., express dominant behaviour in response to submissive behaviour and vice-versa)	27	3.37 (1.52)
20)	Disclose some personal information about themselves to a suspect	27	3.07 (2.02)

5.4.7 Do you agree that rapport...

As can be seen from Table 20, respondents generally agreed quite strongly that rapport was a positive element of an interview as it made an interviewer seem more human to a suspect, allowed interviewers to find or create common ground with a suspect, and made a suspect feel comfortable to talk. They also generally disagreed with the criticisms of rapport, as they did not think that rapport undermined an interviewer's authority with a suspect, made an interviewer seem desperate, or allowed a suspect to manipulate the interview.

Table 20. Respondents' agreement with 3 statements concerning potential positive effects, and 3 statements related to potential negative effects of rapport (number of respondents (N), means & standard deviations).

Rapport...	N	M (SD)
1 Makes an interviewer seem more 'human' to a suspect	57	6.35 (.94)
2 Allows an interviewer to find or create common ground with a suspect	57	5.88 (1.14)
3 Makes a suspect feel more comfortable to talk	57	6.28 (.75)
4 Undermines an interviewer's authority with a suspect	57	2.58 (1.59)
5 Can make the interviewer seem desperate	57	2.62 (1.89)
6 Can be dangerous as it gives the suspect an opportunity to manipulate or control the interview/interviewer	57	2.98 (1.88)

5.5 Discussion

This study reports a survey with UK police officers towards identifying their views of building rapport with suspects. A number of important and novel findings emerged concerning: i) officers' definitions of rapport in the context of suspect interviews, ii) the importance they place on rapport and why (i.e., what is the benefit of building rapport), iii)

the techniques they use to build rapport (if they do so), iv) the types of suspects they believed rapport was most effective with, and v) whether officers' views align with recommendations in police interviewing tools/guidelines (e.g., the CI), or the current frameworks (e.g., ORBIT; Alison et al., 2013) and literature on forensic rapport (e.g., Abbe & Brandon, 2013, 2014).

In summary, the findings revealed that respondents generally considered rapport to be important for the success of a suspect interview and rejected a confrontational or more aggressive interviewing approach, specifying that rapport contributed to gathering information and evidence from suspects and supported a smoother interaction. As such, rapport was commonly described as a communicative relationship by participants, but also one based around trust, comfort and humanisation, amongst other things. Participants mentioned using several methods to build rapport, such as active listening techniques (e.g., summarising responses, nodding and making eye contact, backchannel responding), offering things such as drinks or snacks, having some degree of personal conversation, displaying empathy and explaining the interview process, amongst others. They also described several types of suspects they believed these methods were effective with, such as first time offenders, younger or less serious offenders, and those that required help in some way (e.g., with mental health). The suspects they believed rapport were ineffective with were similar, but also included repeat or serious offenders, or those involved in organised crime. Furthermore, respondents generally considered their ability to build rapport to be more than adequate.

5.5.1 Comparisons to the literature and implications of the findings

The current findings are consistent with those reported by Vallano et al. (2015) who also found that US officers considered rapport to be an important element of police interviews for similar reasons, including facilitating communication and gathering more or

better quality information. Respondents in this study also reported using similar methods to build rapport (e.g., active listening, clarity). However, it should be noted that Vallano and colleagues also found that considerable numbers of officers reported rapport to be ineffective with suspects, or only effective for extracting confessions from them. Here, no participant in the current study explicitly reported rapport as important for extracting confessions. This distinction between the two studies highlights the difference in goals between US and UK police interviews, with the former placing emphasis on extracting confessions (Kelly & Meissner, 2016) and the latter on gathering information (College of Policing, 2013; Griffiths, 2008). This distinction highlights the need for specific UK based police research, as highlighted in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter.

In general, the findings of the current study resonate with conceptualisations of rapport found within the literature, such as the CI which describes rapport as a culmination of empathic and personalised interviewing behaviours (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), or authors such as R. Collins et al. (2002) who discussed rapport as the culmination of attentive behaviours. Furthermore, key rapport-building techniques highlighted by Abbe and Brandon (2013, 2014) and Alison et al. (2013) were also reported by officers here, such as active listening, shared understanding, and empathic behaviours. As such, it can be argued that UK officers perceive the benefit of rapport building with suspects, and their views and reported practices emulate those found within the literature and possibly reflect training and *best practice* guidance.

However, there are some notable points of difference with the findings of the current study and the previous literature. For example, while respondents generally stated personal conversation as an effective means of building rapport with a suspect, there was some disagreement as to whether an officer should share personal information with a suspect, and neither agreement nor disagreement that they should move to find common ground with suspects, which runs counter to suggestions by Abbe and Brandon (2014).

Respondents also showed some disagreement with the notion that an officer should mimic/complement a suspect's behaviour, again differing from the literature. This may also suggest an unwillingness of some officers to adapt to a suspect's behaviour, which also runs counter to the concept of a versatile interviewer promoted by Alison et al., (2013) in their ORBIT model, and which has been reported as important for effective interviewing practice (e.g., Alison et al., 2013, 2014; Kim et al., 2020).

Indeed, research has shown that officers are not always versatile in practice (Bruijnes et al., 2015; op den Akker et al., 2013), which appears to be reflected in the current data. The lack of versatility may be attributed to the way in which suspects are commonly perceived. For example, suspects are commonly thought of as being hostile, regardless of whether they actually present hostility or not (Bruijnes et al., 2015), and forensic interviewees, particularly suspects, can often pose a great deal of resistance (Abbe & Brandon, 2014). Forensic interviews are already a cognitively taxing task, requiring interviewers to ask good questions and manage the social environment to ensure a successful interview (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992) – versatility requires officers to monitor theirs and the interviewee's behaviour and ensure they respond in the most appropriate manner, which adds further complexity to this task. While rapport and versatility have shown to be effective for combatting source resistance (Alison et al., 2013, 2014; Kim et al., 2020; also see Knowles & Linn, 2004), officers may not always perceive that to be the case and so may not be willing to expend time and effort towards these practices – this may be the case for officers in the current study.

There was also some disagreement in the current study, or at least neither agreement nor disagreement for using other techniques/behaviours, such as showing understanding for the suspect's experience, agreeing on interview goals, or seeking permission before providing their advice/opinion. These are key elements of the MI which is used extensively in counselling and therapeutic contexts (W. R. Miller et al., 2008; W.

R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991), and which has also been adopted for use in forensic contexts, such as in Probation (Clark et al., 2006; Sorsby et al., 2013) and in suspect interviewing (Alison et al., 2013). While the MI may be a useful tool for suspect interviews, the current findings highlight that some elements of the MI may be inappropriate, and that officers may be unwilling to adopt certain techniques into practice. This can be especially true when interviewing serious offenders (e.g., sex offenders), where officers may be less understanding or empathic (Oxburgh et al., 2006, 2012, 2015).

Indeed, serious offenders (including sex offenders) were commonly mentioned in the current study as a suspect type that rapport is least effective with, and there is evidence in the literature that rapport-based techniques, such as empathy, are not always a common feature of interviews involving suspects of serious offences, such as sexual abuse (e.g., Holmberg & Christianson, 2002; Oxburgh et al., 2006, 2015) – although, recent research has indicated the potential success of an ‘attentive’ or empathic interviewing style for cases involving serious offenders (Baker-Eck et al., 2020b). Interestingly, victims of sexual offences have also reported feeling less rapport when interviewed by police officers compared to victims of other crimes (Holmberg, 2004), although again ‘attentive’ or empathic interviewing styles have shown to be beneficial for these types of interviews (Risan et al., 2017; Webster et al., 2020).

Officers can experience unique challenges when conducting interviews of a sexual nature: that is, they can be stressful and technically difficult. Indeed, research has shown that discussing disturbing or traumatic events (such as acts committed by serious offenders) can lead to officers becoming burnt out, emotionally fatigued, and sometimes developing secondary trauma (Huey & Kalyal, 2017; MacEachern et al., 2011) – attempting to show empathy in these situations can further exacerbate these issues (Baker-Eck et al., 2020b; Oxburgh et al., 2006).

However, there is an important distinction to be made when discussing techniques such as empathy. In the literature, two types of empathy are present, those being affective and cognitive. Affective empathy refers to a vicarious experience and response to another's feelings and emotions, whereas cognitive empathy refers to understanding another's emotional state without internalising and experiencing it yourself (Bull & Baker-Eck, 2020; Oxburgh & Ost, 2011). Baker-Eck et al. (2020a) have also found that police officers generally report using more cognitive empathy techniques when interviewing suspects, although Dando and Oxburgh (2016) found that more cognitive forms of empathy may not always be used effectively in practice. Understanding the suspect's experience could also be considered a form of cognitive empathy, but again this was not rated highly in the current study. To reiterate then, some techniques found within the MI and other rapport-building guidelines may not be considered appropriate by police officers when interviewing suspects, although further emphasis on what these techniques entail and training in their use may be beneficial to change these perceptions and encourage their use.

Furthermore, a sizeable minority of participants in the current study rated rapport as not being important for suspect interviews (see Table 13). Research on rapport is currently limited with very few studies that have empirically assessed the impact of rapport building during suspect interviews. Nonetheless, the studies that do exist report that rapport is an effective means of ensuring cooperation, enhancing communication, and improving information gain in suspect interviewing contexts (Alison et al., 2013, 2014; Kim et al., 2020; Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012), and offenders have subjectively reported that a lack of rapport during their suspect interview made them less likely to provide information (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002). As such, it is possible that some officers are not building rapport in practice due to them perceiving it to be unimportant or inconsequential, but this may be hindering their interviewing practice with suspects. Officers have been found to sometimes build rapport inappropriately in practice (Clarke & Milne, 2001;

Dando et al., 2008, 2009a), such as using verbal behaviours (e.g., empathic utterances) without positive non-verbal behaviours (Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012), and it seems sensible to suggest that officers who do not view rapport building as important would also be more likely to do this.

Empirical research has also shown that while many officers *do* attempt to build rapport, this can often be at a level below that recommended by UK interviewing guidelines (e.g., below PEACE; Griffiths & Milne, 2006), and they may not always maintain rapport after initially building it, which can reduce the success of a suspect interview (Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012). While on average participants reported regularly building rapport during interviews with suspects, a considerable amount of participants stated they never or rarely did – reports of this kind were much smaller for building rapport before the interview (see Tables 9 and 10). This indicates that some officers in the current sample build rapport but do not maintain it. Regardless, participants in the current sample overwhelmingly reported being adequate to good at developing rapport, which highlights a possible discrepancy between officers' perceptions of their rapport-building skill and their actual ability (it is common for police officers to over-exaggerate their skills in other areas as well, such as reflection; Walsh et al., 2017). Considering the link between good rapport building/maintenance and successful interviewing, these officers may then be hindering their suspect interviewing practice.

These findings also differ to those by Alison et al. (2013, 2014), where it was found that police officers were highly capable of building and maintaining rapport, doing so often and mostly effectively. However, it should be noted that Alison et al.'s (2013, 2014) research was conducted with highly trained (PEACE tier 3+), experienced interviewers, while the data in the current study reflect the views of (mostly) frontline police officers who have limited training and experience (the majority reported having received PEACE tier 1 training, and 20% PEACE tier 2). Research has found that less trained officers

commonly stray from good interviewing practice, often asking inappropriate questions (e.g., leading questions) or interrupting interviewees (Dalton et al., 2020). However, the same is not found for interviewers who have undergone more advanced training (e.g., PEACE tier 3+) – instead, these officers appear to employ good questioning strategies and generally good interviewing practice (Griffiths et al., 2011). As such, the same distinction may be apparent for rapport-building skills, whereby officers who have undergone more advanced training (such as those in the study by Alison et al., 2013) are more adept at being versatile and developing rapport compared to less trained officers (such as those in the current study).

Another important factor to consider is that of emotional intelligence. It has been postulated that officers require emotional intelligence to be able to adapt their communication style to match the needs or characteristics of an interviewee (Risan et al., 2016), and perhaps engage in complex rapport-building skills as laid out by models such as ORBIT. It would make sense that officers who display versatility and good rapport skills possess a good degree of emotional intelligence (e.g., officers in Alison et al.'s, 2013 study), however it is not clear whether this is developed through advanced training or through innate ability (for example, research shows that some people may be naturally more adept at using skills related to emotional intelligence, such as showing empathy; Dando & Oxburgh, 2016). Evidence suggests that emotional intelligence can be trained to an extent (Serrat, 2017), and training has been shown to positively impact interpersonal communication in contexts such as health practices (e.g., Libbrecht et al., 2014), but to date there is next to no training for police officers in the use of emotional intelligence, especially those at lower levels of PEACE training (Risan et al., 2016).

This is a particularly important point to consider in cases where interviewees may be vulnerable or in distress, and where being able to rapidly understand and respond to their needs is necessary for cohesive engagement (Risan et al., 2017). Interestingly, some

participants in the current sample reported that rapport was least effective with individuals who had mental health problems and with young offenders, suspect types which arguably have the most pronounced vulnerabilities and difficulties in interviewing contexts (Farrugia & Gabbert, 2019; Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999), and where rapport may be most important for engaging with them effectively. Again, emotional intelligence may be an important factor towards building rapport with these types of suspects, yet the current data suggests that some officers may not have the emotional intelligence capacity, or may simply be unwilling to meet the needs of these types of suspects, which potentially hinders their ability to build rapport with them.

Future research is needed that investigates emotional intelligence in police officers and how it impacts interviewing practice, particularly in cases that involve suspects with complex needs. The discrepancies in emotional intelligence and rapport-building skills between high level suspect interviewers and less experienced/trained frontline officers also needs to be understood, which can highlight the difficulties the latter group may face and how these difficulties can be alleviated (potentially through training).

5.5.2 Limitations and future directions

There are several clear limitations to the current study that need to be addressed in future research. Firstly, survey data can sometimes be inaccurate as participants may consciously or unconsciously misrepresent their actual views if they are socially unacceptable (Krumpal, 2011). Considering that rapport building is recommended in most police interviewing guidelines (e.g., the CI, ABE, PEACE; College of Policing, 2013; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Ministry of Justice, 2011) as ‘good practice’ in suspect interviews, some respondents in the current study may have paid ‘lip service’ to rapport to portray adherence to these recommendations. Furthermore, this study had a relatively low response rate with the final respondent sample consisting of 74 participants, and there were

varying response rates for the individual questions. Due to the difficulties of police work (Queirós et al., 2020; Reiner, 2000), the general difficulty of recruiting participants for survey-based research (Nix et al., 2019), and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (which has truncated recruitment), it has not been possible to recruit further respondents, and this has clearly impacted on interpreting and understanding the current ‘state of play’ regarding rapport in the UK Police Services.

Most respondents in the current sample were also male and from the South-East of England. As such, their views may not be representative of a wider population of UK officers. While the majority of UK police officers are male (Hargreaves et al., 2018), female officers have been found to both receive and capitalise on empathic opportunities, for example, more than male officers (Dando & Oxburgh, 2016; Oxburgh et al., 2012). As such, a different pattern of results may have emerged if more female participants were included in the sample perhaps. Indeed, probation officers have also reported that female officers may be more attuned to building rapport (Ireland & Berg, 2008). Thus, future research should recruit larger samples and a wider diversity of officers in order to explore rapport in more depth.

Finally, no research has yet attempted to experimentally test the use of rapport techniques in conditions that emulate suspect interviewing conditions. While survey-based studies are useful for understanding how police officers conceptualise and report using rapport, they do not highlight whether officers actually use them in practice, whether they are effective for building rapport, or whether they truly impact suspect interviews. To date, a handful of studies have found clusters of verbal and non-verbal rapport behaviours to be effective for building rapport and leading to increased information gain or more accurate accounts from witnesses (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Kieckhafer et al., 2014; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011; also see Chapter 4). As such, future research should aim to conduct similar research using well-defined clusters of

rapport behaviours highlighted from the current study and the literature (e.g., Vallano et al., 2015) to assess their efficacy in scenarios that emulate suspect interviews.

5.5.3 Conclusion

To conclude, this study investigated the views of UK police officers regarding rapport building with suspects, and largely participants considered rapport to be a positive relationship that is important for enhancing communication and ensuring a smooth and successful suspect interview. They also highlighted several rapport behaviours and techniques they used to build and maintain rapport with suspects (e.g., active listening), and these largely echo what is suggested by the literature. However, some discrepancies between the current findings and the literature were highlighted, as well as some limitations with the current study. As such, future research should aim to address these discrepancies and limitations through more in-depth and diverse survey or qualitative work, observational research that assesses whether officers use rapport in practice and how, and experimental research to assess the efficacy of rapport building for meeting the goals of a suspect interview.

6 Chapter six: The rapport-building process with offenders in probation supervision – views of UK probation officers

As previously introduced, several models of rapport-building have been developed to try and explain the intricate nature of rapport, such as the TDR model (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990) which describes rapport as being the culmination of three inter-related components: *positivity*, *attention* and *coordination*. Such models have been influential towards developing forensic-based models of rapport building, especially for police interviewing settings. Here, models such as ORBIT (Alison et al., 2013) and the HI (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014) elaborate on the components of the TDR model and explain how they could be operationalised in practice to build rapport effectively with witnesses and suspects. Further, some experimental research has shown the efficacy of using these operationalised rapport-building methods for meeting interview goals, as they create a comfortable environment which facilitates communication with witnesses (e.g., R. Collins et al., 2002; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2011), victims (e.g., Risan et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2020) and suspects (e.g., Alison et al., 2013; K. Collins & Carthy, 2018), hence aiding information-gathering in these contexts. As such, rapport building is advised by police interviewing guidelines (e.g., the CI; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992).

Interviews in a probation context, between a probation officer and a service user share some qualities of a police interview. Generally, probation officers aim to gather as much good quality information from service users as possible, but are often required to do so with individuals who may be unwilling to share information (akin to an uncooperative witness or suspected offenders) – this also generally occurs in environments that can be naturally adversarial, which can be stress and/or anxiety inducing for both service users and probation officers (Clark et al., 2006). Rapport-based interviewing methods have similarly been suggested as being effective in a probation context as they can help foster a

comfortable atmosphere for sharing information and therefore enhance cooperation (Clark et al., 2006; Ireland & Berg, 2008; Shapland et al., 2012; Chamberlain et al., 2018).

However, there are also distinct differences between police and probation interviewing contexts which make it difficult to simply generalise findings from police interviewing research. Firstly, the information that probation officers seek to gather generally differs from a police interview. Probation officers are concerned with enacting positive behavioural change in their service users, and so often they seek to draw out personal information related to their family life, accommodation, substance abuses and motivations for change (Clark et al., 2006; Ministry of Justice, 2015) or information related to their mental well-being and self-harm/suicidal behaviours (Mackenzie et al., 2015). As such, it is often suggested that POs take a counselling style approach to supervision that aims to draw out these issues, and POs are usually tasked with guiding service users towards addressing them (Clark et al., 2006). Addressing these problems is important for guiding service users towards positive behavioural change. While counselling methods have also been suggested for use in police interviewing contexts (e.g., the MI is part of the ORBIT framework; Alison et al., 2013), there is much less emphasis for police officers to identify such issues and little obligation to address them (except in circumstances such as working with victims; Risan et al., 2017; Winkel et al., 2006), and they are more interested in gathering crime-related information. In this regard, the way in which rapport must be developed and its utility may differ between these contexts.

Secondly, unlike police interviews which consist of a limited number of interactions between a police officer and an interviewee (except again in special circumstances, such as when police officers gather information from covert human intelligence sources over long periods of time; Nunan et al., 2020), probation supervision is sustained over a long period of time (Ministry of Justice, 2015). As such, probation officers not only have to establish rapport with their service users in a single or limited

amount of interactions, but be able to do so over a prolonged period of time and also be able to maintain that level of rapport with their service users for the full extent of supervision.

Due to differences such as these, it is important that rapport is understood specifically within a probation context. The MI is a tool generally used in therapeutic and counselling settings to help guide positive behavioural change through the use of accepting, empathetic and collaborative communication between a therapist and patient (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991). Again, rapport is emphasised as being integral for facilitating such communication and there is considerable evidence that using the MI leads to positive behavioural change, such as curbing alcohol/substance abuse and offending behaviours (McMurran, 2009; Moyers et al., 2009; Polcin et al., 2018; Rubak et al., 2005). Elements of the MI, including rapport building, have also been adopted by probation specific interviewing guidelines, such as the SEED framework (Sorsby et al., 2013). Thus, rapport building appears to be a valuable tool in Probation and is emphasised as key to having effective communication with service users.

While tools such as the MI and SEED outline what rapport is and recommend building it with service users, these frameworks are multi-faceted and consist of several methods of engaging with interviewees, and so rapport building is not the only focus of these tools. Furthermore, like police interviews, the nature of probation work can differ in key ways to therapeutic settings (Shapland et al., 2012), and so tools such as the MI may not be appropriate in this context. There also currently exists very little research that investigates how probation officers conceptualise and use rapport in practice, and whether their views align with those outlined in the interviewing guidelines.

As evidenced previously, only one such qualitative study exists that investigated probation officers' views of rapport building in service user supervision. Ireland and Berg (2008) interviewed a US-based cohort of probation officers and found that they generally

considered rapport to be an important element of supervision for gaining cooperation and facilitating communication with service users, and they built rapport by being respectful and engaging with them on a personal level. They also considered rapport building to be gendered (i.e., a tool primarily used by female officers and neglected by male officers). However, the participant sample consisted of only 12 female officers from the US, and so these views may not reflect wider probation practice, or views in a UK context. As such, it is currently not clear how UK probation officers view rapport or whether they build it in a consistent or effective manner when interviewing service users. Considering that rapport is regarded as an integral element of probation supervision, it is important to understand whether probation officers consider the utility of rapport and how they implement it in practice.

6.1 Study overview and design

The current study investigated the views of a cohort of UK probation officers and probation service officers (from here on until the end of the analysis, both are referred to as POs) from (what was then) the London National Probation Service (NPS) regarding rapport building when supervising service users. A qualitative design was used, with a series of semi-structured focus groups and one-to-one interviews conducted and analysed using a TA framework, and with reference to four research questions:

- 1) What do POs understand by the term ‘rapport’?
- 2) How and when do POs build and maintain rapport?
- 3) What facilitators and barriers exist for building rapport?
- 4) What are the views and practices of POs regarding the current rapport-building literature?

6.2 Data collection

POs' views and experiences of rapport building were explored via a series of focus groups and one-to-one interviews which were carried out between June and November 2019 with POs working in London branches of the NPS. The COREQ checklist (Tong et al., 2007) was used to ensure this study adhered to current standards (see Appendix C).

6.2.1 Participants

POs were recruited via advertisements in NPS publications and newsletters, and by snowball sampling – participants were unknown to the researcher. The only criteria to participation was that participants were active officers in one of the London NPS branches. Twenty-two POs responded and participated overall, with 17 taking part in a focus group and 5 in one-to-one interviews. On arrival for the focus group/interview, participants completed an anonymous demographic questionnaire (see Appendix M) asking them to provide their age, gender, current job role and where they were normally stationed (e.g., community, prison), and how long they had worked in Probation (years/months). No personal information that could identify them was provided (e.g., names). There was a mixture of backgrounds and experience represented within this participant sample (see Table 21).

6.2.2 Focus group/Interview agenda

The focus groups lasted approximately 60-120 minutes and were conducted in person by the main researcher within NPS offices. A semi-structured interview format was used with set questions that the researcher would ask, but it also allowed for flexibility to delve into relevant topics that participants naturally brought up themselves, with probing questions used to gain elaboration on a particular topic. The questions used in the focus

groups were based on discussions with NPS staff members and by the gaps in the literature. During the focus group sessions, the researcher was not an active member in the discussion and instead facilitated the conversation. The focus group agenda, questions and possible prompts are presented in Appendix N.

As in accordance with Kitzinger's (1995) focus group guidelines, the number of participants in each focus group was kept between 4 and 6 participants, which is considered the ideal amount of participants for effective discussion. It is also suggested that researchers carry out focus groups until the data becomes saturated, that is until very few or no new pieces of data arise. However, due to the time constraints that POs have to work around, it was only possible to conduct four focus groups, and one focus group had only 3 participants – although, this focus group ended up being one of the longer sessions. After four sessions, very little new information was being drawn out and so data saturation was achieved, and so the aforementioned limitations did not seem to disrupt the success of the current study.

Contemporaneous research notes were also taken during the sessions. The audio device failed during one focus group session and so a short follow-up interview (approximately 10-15 minutes) was conducted over the phone with each participant to clarify and confirm the research notes (thereby, 4 follow-up interviews were conducted). Five participants were unable to attend one of the organised focus groups due to time limitations. As such, one-to-one interviews that lasted between 30-60 minutes were conducted over Skype with 3 of these participants, and in-person with 2 of these participants. The agenda for the interviews was the same as the focus groups. The agenda, questions and prompts for the one-to-one interviews were the same as the focus groups (minus any group interactions).

Table 21. Participant demographics with means and standard deviations (SDs) at the bottom, as well as indication of participants' focus group (FG)/interview (Int.) number and participant pseudonyms

	FG/Int. No.	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Role	PO type	Experience
Focus group	1	Anna	32	Female	PO	Community	8y
	1	Bethany	38	Female	PSO	Community	8y
	1	Carl	62	Male	PSO	Community	1y 6m
	2	Danielle	41	Female	PSO	Court	19y
	2	Ethan	53	Male	PSO	Court	8y
	2	Fiona	32	Female	PO	Community	8y 5m
	2	Gemma	39	Female	PO	Community	12y
	3	Harry	33	Male	PO	Prison	5y
	3	Isabel	30	Female	PO	Prison	7y 6m
	3	Jasper	46	Male	PO	Prison	15y
	3	Kevin	37	Male	PO	Prison	12y
	4	Lydia	29	Female	PO	Community	4y 5m
	4	Mark	27	Male	PSO	Community	6m
	4	Nicole	27	Female	PSO	Community	1y 8m
	4	Owen	55	Male	PSO	Community	6m
	4	Peter	28	Male	PO	Community	4y 6m
4	Qianna	28	Female	PO	Community	5y 3m	
Interview	1	Rita	39	Female	PO	Manager	17y
	2	Simon	27	Male	PSO	Community	1y 4m
	3	Tina	41	Female	PSO	Court	13y
	4	Ursula	29	Female	PSO	Community	1y
	5	Veronica	54	Female	PO	Manager	14y
Mean			37.59				7.38y
SD			10.5				5.74y

6.2.3 Ethics and ethical considerations

This research study was approved by the NPS and the University of Westminster ethics committees, and adhered to the British Psychological Society's (BPS) code of conduct, as well as GDPR in regards to the handling of data.

Ethical considerations were made in regard to the population tested in this study. POs work in high stress positions with heavy workloads, and they work with vulnerable populations on a daily basis (Shapland et al., 2012). These factors had to be taken into account when formulating the research questions and deciding on how to conduct this study. Initially the study was survey-based, however, after attending a meeting with several NPS staff and discussing the study with members of their ethics committee, it was decided that focus groups would be more productive. This was because POs regularly receive invitations to participate in surveys and they are generally considered a nuisance and not worth taking time out of their workload to conduct, whereas focus groups are more engaging and therefore more likely to gauge interest. Focus groups can also be more effective for areas that are exploratory in nature, and where there currently exists little knowledge or literature, and so can be considered more ecologically valid for certain topics (Kitzinger, 1995; Willig, 2013) – but see Chapter 3 (section 3.3.2) for a more in-depth discussion regarding this.

Furthermore, focus group sessions could take place on NPS premises, thereby making it easier for POs to attend and limiting disruption to their regular duties. NPS premises are also secure facilities with security and CCTV, and so provide a safe environment for both the participants and the researcher. Due to the research being conducted off campus, a risk assessment was conducted as part of the ethics application (see Appendix O). Participants that could not attend a focus group took part in a one-to-one interview either over Skype or at the University of Westminster, again to limit disruption and ensure a safe interviewing environment.

All focus groups and interviews were digitally audio recorded using a secure hand-held device. The recording was then transferred to a secure data repository in the University of Westminster and deleted from the hand-held device. Furthermore, standard ethical procedures were followed in regards to ensuring that participants were fully aware of their participation in the study. Prior to the focus group/interview, participants were provided with an information sheet that outlined the background and methods of the research, and how the data would be disseminated (see Appendix P). Participants had to explicitly express consent to participate by signing a consent form (see Appendix Q). This form outlined the anonymity and confidentiality of the information they provided, with this only being broken if issues regarding safe-guarding were raised, as well as their right to withdraw from the study. Participants were also provided with pseudonyms to further anonymise their data. In cases where participants were interviewed by Skype, they were read the consent form and asked to verbally consent to participate. Participants were given a debrief sheet at the end of the study further outlining the aims of the study and how the data will be used (see appendix R). The information, consent and debrief documents for one-to-one interviews were identical to the focus groups, only indicating the difference in interviewing method.

6.3 Analysis (TA)

The audio data for both focus groups and interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed qualitatively using an inductive TA (see Braun & Clarke, 2006) and using Nvivo 12. Here, a six step process was followed. In the first step, the researcher became familiarised with the data, which was done by transcribing the data and re-reading the transcripts several times – during each read, brief notes were made related to the patterns that were apparent both within and between the transcripts. In the second step of the process, the researcher generated initial thematic codes (both semantic and latent) that

explained elements of the data set, both through a final re-read of the transcripts as well as using the initial notes that were made in step 1. The amount of participants that mentioned a particular code was also noted for future use, although at this stage no codes were discarded. Following this, step 3 was conducted whereby the generated codes were compared both within and between transcripts to find recurring patterns that emerged between them. These patterns were then organised into overarching themes that explained them, as well as subthemes which allowed for more specific explanations to emerge within those themes.

Once the themes had been established, step 4 consisted of reviewing them, and constituted the most influential part of the analysis. Here, themes, subthemes and codes within those themes were compared between transcripts to check for consistency. During this process, codes that were not shared between transcripts were discarded as they represented individual views rather than a shared understanding of rapport between all, or a significant amount of participants. Where codes were similar to others, these were merged together to create larger codes (this was generally how subthemes were developed within themes) – in some instances, codes were also moved into different themes where they appeared more appropriate. As such, this step resulted in a refinement of the data into a smaller number of focused themes and subthemes. During this step, a sub-selection of the data (2 focus groups and 2 interviews) were also double coded and checked for consistency by two other researchers. This was to ensure that the interpretation of the data was appropriate and consistent, and to limit the influence of the main researcher's biases and assumptions towards the data. Through this review and rearrangement, as well as double coding process, the themes were identified as forming a rapport-building process model that participants were commonly reporting following (this process is explained in section 6.4; see Figure 12). After identifying this model emerging, themes were further refined to fit within this model.

After these themes and subthemes had been refined and sorted into the rapport-building process model, they were properly defined and given their final names which were appropriately explained them (step 5), and they were then written up for this chapter (step 6; see section 6.4). See Appendix S for the codes, themes and subthemes that were emerging at each step of the TA process and how these were refined into the findings within this chapter.

6.4 Findings

Five overarching themes emerged, which have been labelled: 1) What is rapport?, 2) Perceptual influences of rapport, 3) Techniques for initial rapport building, 4) Adapting to the service user, and 5) Maintenance and barriers to rapport – most of the themes were also split into subthemes to highlight further nuance in the expression of these themes. Furthermore, these themes were conceptualised as a general rapport-building process that POs reported following when supervising their service users. See Figure 12 for an overview of the themes and subthemes, and how they were organised into the rapport-building process.

Within the rapport-building process lies the POs knowledge and understanding of rapport, as well as their perceptions of themselves and their service users, which develop through experiential learning – this was considered to be the PO's rapport knowledge base and consisted of themes 1 and 2. This knowledge then fed into the PO's practice of building and maintaining rapport with service users, and three distinct stages of rapport building were identified here – these stages were considered to be the process of rapport building and consisted of themes 3, 4 and 5. In stage 1, POs engage in simple immediacy behaviours and develop clear expectations to ease service users into the process of communication and develop an initial relationship. Then, POs attempt to tailor their

supervision to meet the needs and interests of the service user, aiming to develop a deeper relationship (stage 2). Finally, POs maintain this level of rapport over an extended period through consistent and reflective practice (stage 3). These reflections then feed back to their knowledge of rapport which in turn refines the process for future use, and so this is an iterative process. However, it must be noted that this process is not necessarily followed in a linear fashion, as POs can shift between stages to carry out supervision strategies that are relevant or appropriate for a particular moment, and elements of each stage may be present in tandem. It must also be considered that participants recalled a myriad of barriers to following this process effectively.

To provide a more in-depth understanding of these themes and how they merge to create a rapport-building process, each theme is explained within this section accompanied by exemplar quotes from participants for support.

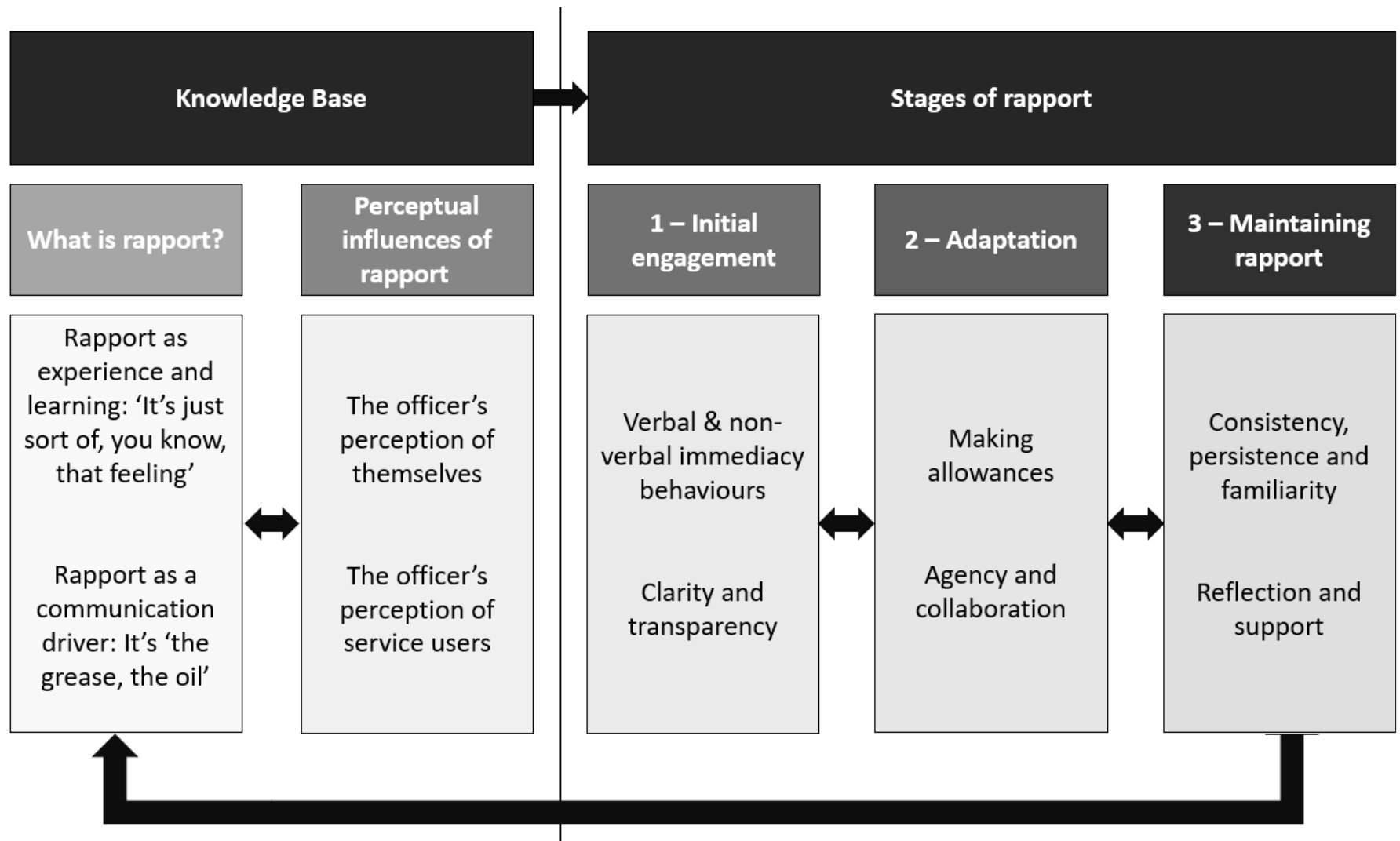


Figure 12. *The Probation rapport-building process*

6.4.1 What is rapport?

Participants reflected on their understanding of rapport and its importance in service user supervision. Generally, rapport was defined as “*a positive, collaborative working relationship*” (Veronica) between a probation officer and service user and “*an enabler to gaining as much information as you possibly can*” (Qianna). To achieve this, participants reported having to establish “*some kind of connection*” (Ursula) by “*finding common ground*” (Fiona), developing “*mutual trust*” (Mark) and creating a “*relaxed... environment*” (Simon) that ultimately leads to the interacting parties feeling “*personal comfort*” (Jasper) in the interaction. Even so, participants also commonly reported that rapport was a largely undefinable concept, often claiming that while techniques towards building rapport exist (these will be presented and discussed in later themes, such as ‘6.4.3 Techniques for initial rapport building’), officers had to develop their rapport-building skills through experience and understanding what works for them. Regardless, all participants perceived rapport as an integral element towards fostering a communicative relationship with service users, and regarded this communicative relationship to ultimately *be* rapport. As such, two subthemes emerged here, the first regarding rapport building as an experiential process, and the other describing rapport as a driver for communication.

Rapport as experience and learning: “It’s just sort of, you know, that feeling”

Rapport building was frequently described as a mysterious process, or “*just sort of, you know, that feeling*” (Ursula), with participants saying they mostly developed the skills whilst doing the job and over time as they met various types of service users (e.g., of different ages, cultures, backgrounds). Participants generally felt that rapport was a skill that developed with practice and experience, and the mysterious nature of rapport was viewed positively by some because it *forced* them to adapt and try new things. For

example, Carl described rapport as a trial and error process that allowed officers to learn best practice:

“...sometimes you’ll do things and you’ll think bloody hell that was a cock up, and other times you’ll be like, you know what that was really good, I’m going to use that again.” (Carl)

Carl was a less experienced officer and so this trial and error process may have been more pronounced for him while he got to grips with the role. However, other participants expressed similar sentiments and believed that rapport skills should develop naturally and experientially, rather than by simply following a set of rules. In this way, officers develop an understanding of what techniques, methods and interaction styles work for them, as well as what does not, and over time they learn to tailor their style to engage with different types of people:

“...just keep on doing it until you meet all the different type[s] of people you think you could meet, and then you meet someone who could really throw you off work and you relearn how to deal with those type[s] of people.” (Lydia)

Due to the experiential nature of developing rapport skills, most participants reported that they did not *“think they [rapport-building techniques] are skills that you can teach in a classroom”* (Isabel). However, participants mentioned that they could learn to build rapport by observing the practices of other officers:

*“...it’s always good to see how someone else does it, because there’s always going to be that client who my style doesn’t work for, but I’m savvy enough to use ****’s style”* (Danielle)

As such, while participants generally claimed that rapport was a mystery and could not be trained, there were several indications of how rapport-building skills could be trained indirectly, such as through observational practice. However, there was disagreement

regarding this mysterious trial and error process amongst some of the participants, claiming that instead good preparation and a planned strategy are the essential keys to good engagement with service users:

“...this isn't mystical, do your homework, know their attachment issues, know their relationships with other people... go in knowing their story so that they feel listened to, understood, known...” (Veronica)

Although, participants such as Veronica were highly experienced probation officers and so may not have considered the experience of newer officers that did not have the same wealth of knowledge, such as Carl, and she did also admit that it is *“a practice that comes with time”* (Veronica).

Rapport as a communication driver: It's “the grease, the oil”

Participants overwhelmingly agreed that establishing rapport with a service user was *“the bread and butter”* (Veronica) of successful supervision, and *“the grease, the oil”* (Ursula) of effective communication – rapport was regarded as a tool to help service users feel *“some level of trust, some level of personal comfort”* (Jasper). By developing this level of comfort, participants claimed it motivated service users to disclose personal and sensitive information concerning criminal behaviour or mental health problems, and this level of communication was claimed to ultimately be rapport:

“...they may not be telling you things I want to hear but the fact that they're coming out and maybe disclosing to you the things they've done is rapport.”

(Danielle)

However, rapport (defined here as the established communicative relationship) was often described by participants as a two way street that required the officer to also share their

own life experiences with service users in order to develop trust and motivate them to open up:

“For you to actually be open enough to have these conversations, I need to also give something as well, a bit of genuineness and a bit of like, “alright this happened to me, I’ve been through that with my daughter” ... and just little things like that...” (Lydia)

For some participants, this communicative relationship was said to be similar to that which develops during common social settings, which ultimately makes it appear natural to the service user:

“...you don’t want to alter it too much, it’s very much about having a personal relationship with someone. So I try to present myself as I usually would present myself to anybody and I feel if you try and twist that too much then it’s going to come across as contrived.” (Mark)

However, these views generally came from less experienced officers. Considering experience was commonly discussed as a key factor towards effective rapport building, this may highlight a limited understanding of the rapport-building process within these participants compared to those with more experience. For example, more experienced officers tended to have the complete opposite view:

“Building rapport for my cases looks very different to building rapport with my friends or prospective new friends.” (Isabel)

As such, it is likely that once probation officers have interactions with a greater number of service users (that vary on factors such as offence, gender, race, mental and physical health, personality etc.), they develop a more context specific rapport-building process that differs to how they would build rapport in their day-to-day lives. However, it should also be noted that participants such as Isabel worked in a prison setting, while participants such

as Mark worked in a community setting. Considering prison settings are generally considered to be a more adversarial environment, conversations here may be, or appear to be less normal, which may have influenced participants' views on rapport building. Although, this could also further highlight the need for context specific rapport – perhaps the rapport-building process needed in prison differs to that needed in a community context.

6.4.2 Perceptual influences of rapport

Participants considered how theirs and the service user's characteristics, biases and life experiences "*can potentially change the rapport, the way you deal with people*" (Carl), and they recognised how these factors could influence both the officer's and service user's perceptions of one another – it was mentioned that sometimes these factors can act as "*straight barriers*" (Nicole) to building rapport. As such, participants reflected on officers needing to be aware of these factors to ensure they do not hinder rapport building and supervision, and so they can engage in effective engagement:

"So I see it as two people entering the room with a backpack, I need to know what rocks are in my service users backpack and what rocks I'm carrying... a bad session is when both of you sit there throwing rocks at each other, a good session is when you take off your backpacks and you put them on the floor and you have an easy flowing conversation." (Veronica)

This theme highlights participants' reflections of themselves and how service users may perceive them, as well as their perceptions of service users, and describe the ways in which these perceptions may disrupt rapport, but also the ways in which they may facilitate rapport.

The officer's perception of themselves and the service user

Participants mentioned sometimes developing negative biases from reading service user case notes, which can cause officers to unfairly pre-judge service users:

“...I went away and read his file and thought there is nothing positive about this guy... because he had that label and those negative sort of experiences and those negative hand overs, it was very much that's what he is...” (Bethany)

Some participants suggested tackling this issue by not reading case notes prior to the first meeting and instead *“seeing someone at face value... without prejudice or ideas of them”* (Lydia). Although, it was usually more experienced participants that reported not always reading case notes, with less experienced officers reporting that they recognise the value of this approach but that *“it's always a bit nerve-racking as you never know who's coming through the door”* (Mark). As such, this may be an approach more suited to officers who already have a broad knowledge of different service users, but could potentially be detrimental for less experienced officers.

Participants also recognised that service users often hold negative biases as well, such as being *“very racist... sexist... homophobic”* (Qianna), and based on the background or characteristics of the probation officer, this could cause service users to *“resent the fact that I am sitting on the other side of the fence”* (Rita). As such, participants reported having to be aware of how they may exacerbate these biases so as not to disrupt the rapport-building process. One of the most prevalent biases service users held were sexist views, owing to the high prevalence of female POs and male service users in Probation:

“...when we get domestic abuse clients... the sort of toxic masculinity they can hold over female practitioners can be very difficult to challenge when you are short and little, and you know wearing like maybe a dress or something.” (Qianna)

These biases were also reported the opposite way around, whereby female service users could have negative biases towards male officers as well, although for different reasons:

“...female service users may not want a male probation officer because they may have been victims of serious abuse by men.” (Qianna)

Participants generally agreed that *“we are not going to take a prejudice away from somebody”* (Owen). However, they also reflected that by challenging these biases, the officer can at least show that they are *“running that session”* (Qianna), which allows for the development of respect for the officer, regardless of the service user still holding their views). Female officers agreed that respect was key for ensuring their safety with male service users.

Participants also discussed how some officer characteristics (e.g., age) could actually work in their favour and facilitate the rapport-building process:

“...age works for me... they're either going to see me as a mother figure, I'm not going to be a girlfriend figure... My best place is Auntie because your auntie is very rarely someone you hate so much that you're going to get into an attachment loop with, and it's someone you might take advice from, someone who might take care of you.” (Veronica)

One of the most discussed factors that participants discussed in this regard revolved around attire, which was perceived by all participants as playing a fundamental role in rapport building. Most participants felt that dressing too formally could damage the relationship between the PO and service user. They recognised that service users have often had *“people in authority telling them what to do”* (Harry) throughout their lives, and many *“have been victims to trauma”* (Anna). As such, formal wear could make the officer seem unrelatable and highlight a power imbalance, therefore disrupting rapport building. Formal

wear was also considered by these participants to further exacerbate a service user's already existing distrust towards POs and authority in general:

"If I've got a service user who's street homeless, who's been back and forth on drugs whatever, and I'm sat there dressed in a suit, they're going to be like... "they don't know about my life, they've got no idea"..." (Bethany)

According to these participants, informal wear instead allowed officers to highlight that the service user was an equal individual in the supervision process and showed understanding towards them. However, a minority of participants promoted formal attire, believing that informal wear gave the wrong impression to service users, whereas formal wear presented service users with a positive role model and inspired positive behavioural change:

"...my view is how bloody difficult is it to wear a tie and shirt to work... you should be inspiring confidence... when I see officers in jeans, trainers and a t-shirt, wandering in scruffy as hell, hair everywhere, who sit in front of offenders and say, you know, "you really need to be like me"... really?!" (Carl)

It should be noted that the small number of supporters of formal wear were primarily male, less experienced in Probation and reported coming from backgrounds such as the Police, whereas the vast majority of supporters of informal wear were primarily female with many years of experience in Probation or other social work backgrounds. As such, the decision of what to wear may be more influenced by gender, background and experience than a true reflection of how it impacts rapport building.

However, one participant reported that a PO's preferred dress code may not necessarily have the direct impact that participants discussed but rather made the officer feel more comfortable, and that *"when you feel comfortable you behave more comfortably, don't you?"* (Simon). While this view was not reported by other officers, it is an important point to consider as it highlights that the clothes themselves may not necessarily be the

contributing factor towards building rapport, but rather that an officer's feeling of confidence, comfort and motivation (which participants reported representing through their clothing) that may have the true impact on building rapport with service users.

6.4.3 Techniques for initial rapport building

Using their knowledge of rapport, participants reported the ways in which they built (or attempted to build) rapport with service users when engaging with them for the first time, or in the early stages of every interview. Participants recognised that at the beginning of the supervision process, "*some people can be really scared of what's happening... resistant and hostile*" (Bethany), and so officers have to "*get to know that one service user as quickly as possible to understand how to work with them*" (Lydia). As such, participants reported that rapport building with service users was critical in these early interactions for "*humanising... normalising the situation*" (Veronica), which helps put service users "*in a nice little comfortable zone*" (Ethan) that is conducive for communication.

In this regard, they reported personal engagement through simple verbal and non-verbal techniques/behaviours as key towards making service users feel at ease and building rapport in the first instance (which emerged as the first subtheme). Participants also reported that "*clarity... boundaries... open, honest working relationships*" (Isabel) were important to establish in the initial stages of supervision (as well as throughout supervision) to ensure service users understand the expectations of probation supervision – being clear and transparent were also highlighted as putting service users at ease and developing trust, and so was considered another means of establishing rapport in the first instance (this emerged as the second subtheme).

All participants reported that if an officer fails to have some level of personal engagement with service users then it makes the supervision process feel like "*a tick box exercise... which makes the service user feel like a number*" (Bethany), and failing to

establish clarity and transparency was reported as making service users “*feel that you’ve misled them*” (Danielle). Failing to do both was reported as having extremely negative repercussions for establishing rapport with service users, which ultimately limited the effectiveness of probation supervision.

Verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviours

Most participants reported non-verbal behaviours, such as handshaking and smiling, as well as verbalisations, such as greetings and personal conversation, being important for engaging with service users in the first instance as they help to reduce anxiety and make service users feel comfortable to communicate. For example, simple greetings were said to provide opportunities for communication:

“...people underestimate how important it is just to say, “hello, good morning, how are you?”, because once I’ve done that they’ll either smile or they’ll grunt or they’ll do something... and that allows me a way in.” (Tina)

Past the initial greetings, it was implied that engaging in two-way personal conversation is necessary to encourage ‘deeper’ communication with the service user:

“I’m going to expect you to tell me, “how is your mum and dad’s relationship, how is your relationship, how do you masturbate sometimes?”... I need to also give something as well, a bit of genuineness...” (Lydia)

Service users were reported to have spent large parts of their life incarcerated and outside of general society, and therefore they “*haven’t had a lot of experience with people showing an interest in them*” (Irene) or engaging with them positively. Due to this, participants also considered it vital to equip service users with transferable communication skills for future use:

“...I will ask my guys to stand up when I come into the room and sit down because I want them to be able to represent themselves well in the world, I want them to have these little nuances that other people do naturally because they’ve been trained to have them but they haven’t... if he goes for job interviews I want him to stand up, be confident, hold his hand out...” (Veronica)

A minority of participants reported being wary of engaging in certain behaviours with service users however, because they may sometimes be considered inappropriate by the service user and damage rapport, but also because some service users may try to use certain behaviours to manipulate supervision. For example, it was claimed that some service users may use non-verbal behaviours to intimidate officers:

“I find with, especially DV peeps [domestic violence perpetrators], they’ll shake your hand but they’ll use it a little bit too hard or it’s a way of them trying to establish power almost.” (Bethany)

Similar sentiments were expressed for verbal behaviours as well, such as personal conversation. Some participants felt that giving service users personal information about themselves could be dangerous as it could be used for nefarious means:

“... don’t deal them anything, nothing... the female officers they go in and they have an engagement ring, a wedding ring and a maternity ring... they immediately know you’ve got children, so they can work on this... It’s a dangerous game to give those people anything...” (Owen)

However, these points may reflect the biases these participants have towards service users rather than conscious attempts by the service user to manipulate supervision. As expressed earlier, many service users do not *“have these little nuances that other people do”* (Veronica), and so may not understand the symbolic meaning behind particular verbal and non-verbal behaviours.

These points may also reflect the different ways in which POs build rapport with service users who have committed different types of offences. It may be that rapport behaviours such as having personal conversation are more dangerous with more serious and high-risk offenders, but not necessarily so with less serious offenders. Indeed, some participants touched on this slightly, for example sex offenders can often present a “*masked compliance*” (Simon) and so may be more likely to use these behaviours against an officer. While an important point to consider, there was very little discussion between participants in the current sample related to how type of offence may impact on the rapport-building process.

Clarity and transparency

All participants discussed the importance of fully explaining the probation process to service users from the offset, which includes the officer explaining their aims and expectations, supervisory style, and boundaries. Setting clear expectations was said to establish mutual understanding and avoid later problems:

“I liken it to a game of chess... everyone’s got moves to make but you do them in a particular set of rules... as long as you follow those rules and stick to the rules of that game, you start to build rapport. It’s when I start moving my pieces on the board in ways that are completely unpredictable, that’s when you start getting problems.” (Carl)

Establishing clear boundaries and transparency was said to clear up any ambiguity that service users may have regarding their supervision, and this was reported as making it easier to challenge service users and carry out enforcement without damaging rapport, as the service user could predict the consequences of their actions:

“Things like recall, it’s like I don’t recall you, you recall you. You know what you’re meant to be doing here, if you don’t do that you know you’re going to be recalled or breached, and that’s on you... you’ve done it to yourself.” (Bethany)

Participants also agreed that service users *“will respect the honesty and the openness”* (Qianna), and therefore it will help develop a trusting relationship. Without clarity, it was reported that you could do irreversible damage to the relationship:

“If you shave things over and don’t say the actual facts on the table, that actually what you did has got serious consequences... I think in my history of offenders, they don’t like being misled and if they feel that you’ve misled them either by admission or not being direct it will ruin every relationship that you’ve got with them from now on.” (Danielle)

As such, being clear and transparent from the offset of supervision was overwhelmingly regarded as a necessary element towards developing a strong relationship with a service user and limiting the disruption that other elements of supervision (e.g., recall) may have on the relationship. Considering the dual nature of probation work, – that is, a probation officer both has a duty of care towards their service users while also having a legal duty to the courts – establishing clarity and transparency with service users is potentially the key factor that allows probation officers to navigate this highly complex role effectively.

6.4.4 Adapting to the service user

Participants discussed that after initially building rapport with their service users, they attempted to develop a deeper relationship with them. All participants reported that in order to achieve this, officers needed to understand their service users and *“recognise exactly where he is [the service user]... in the process, what the service users concerns are...”* (Danielle). As such, they reported adapting their supervision to meet the needs,

desires and abilities of their service users. Within this, they reported that service users can often present behaviours or characteristics that appear detrimental to supervision, but officers have to recognise when allowances need to be made for these behaviours/characteristics in order to encourage positive engagement overall – this type of adaptation was reported as also being highly influential towards building rapport and emerged as the first subtheme.

In addition, participants highlighted that service users may have completely different expectations of supervision than probation officers. What officers considered an important issue to address and work on may be secondary or negligible for the service user compared to other issues they may face:

“...he [the service user] ain't got somewhere to live tonight or he also has a serious heroin problem... so him drinking and driving is not serious for him”

(Danielle).

As such, participants reported also adapting their supervision by identifying things the service user wanted to work on, discussing them and then incorporating these into the supervision process – giving service users autonomy in supervision and working collaboratively with them was considered an effective means of ensuring future positive behavioural change and ultimately a key element of rapport building, and this emerged as the second subtheme.

Making allowances

While officers have a duty to the court and the power to recall service users for engaging in certain maladaptive behaviours, most participants reported that for many of their cases *“enforcement can actually set you back a bit”* (Mark), which may end up disrupting the rapport building process, effective supervision and positive behavioural change. As such,

these participants commonly stressed the importance of looking past maladaptive behaviours that are often presented by service users (e.g., swearing, substance misuse, time mismanagement) and which could be grounds for recall. These behaviours, while being disruptive to the supervision process and posing legitimate grounds for recall, were recognised by participants as often being *“the subconscious way that they [service users] have always lived their life”* (Qianna). These maladaptive behaviours may be a service user’s natural behaviour, with enforcement most likely not changing them but potentially exacerbating them. Making allowances for some of these behaviours then was highlighted as beneficial towards making progress in other areas where change may be possible instead:

*“...someone in reception will be like, “oh **** is in to see you, he’s in a very bad way” ... I’ll say, “oh right, okay great”, go downstairs and he’s [the service user] having a bit of a wobble, he’s very unkempt, probably spilt half a can of Guinness down him just before he came in, but you know this is the best you’ll ever get from him... this is him trying really hard...”* (Owen)

The example above highlights an enforceable offence, that is arriving to supervision meetings under the influence of substances. However, the participant recognised that the service user at least turned up to the meeting, whereas he normally would not, which meant that the participant was able to address these maladaptive behaviours which would not be possible if the service user was turned away. As such, regardless of the service user’s state, the participant chose not to use enforcement and have the meeting with the service user. These types of allowances were considered a means of paving the way for future change, and participants noted that *“working at their pace, recognising their strengths... and the most smallest achievement”* (Rita) highlighted to service users that change was possible, making them feel comfortable in the supervision process and ultimately leading to rapport being developed.

Even so, participants stressed that officers should make service users aware that while these behaviours may be accepted within supervision, the officer did not necessarily condone them, and service users had to be conscious of how these behaviours may come across to people in their regular day-to-day lives:

“I had this guy... for him to express himself, swearing was part of that. In here, I’m happy for you to express yourself that way, but outside you need to remember this will get you in trouble... I wanted him to be able to express himself but also be aware of how that came across when he was trying to make amends and trying to make change.” (Anna)

As such, while making allowances for maladaptive behaviours was commonly reported as beneficial, participants equally highlighted using caution in this regard so that those behaviours do not appear normalised and/or encouraged. Ultimately, this further reiterates the need for clarity and transparency with service users (as discussed in section 6.4.3) so that they are aware of what is acceptable and what is not. This may ensure that rapport is not damaged should enforcement need to be taken when service users overstep the mark.

However, making allowances for maladaptive behaviours was reported by some participants as also having negative impacts for POs, regardless of them being beneficial for service users in the long run:

“...one of my guys, he’s a young fella, he’s been through a lot, and he treats his supervision a bit like therapy, and he’s exhausting, absolutely exhausting... He comes in every week, regardless of whether I want him to come in... with certain service users, you do almost allow it, because it’s beneficial for them... it may be a complete pain in the backside for you...” (Bethany)

It was commonly reported by participants that *“we’re [Probation] a dumping ground for the agencies that are failing, so housing, mental health services”* (Carl). As such, allowances such as those mentioned above (e.g., therapeutic help) may not be something

that officers actively want to engage in, but rather something they must do due to the service user not being able to receive this support elsewhere – providing this support however was reported as being outside of the remit of a PO’s role, and could negatively impact on their workload and wellbeing (this issue is explored further in section 6.4.5).

Furthermore, these participants also expressed apprehension towards making allowances with some service users as they felt they could sometimes be abused:

“...you’d be surprised how many people think it’s okay to give us a call two days before and say, “oh it’s okay, I’m moving here”, and they’ve already signed the lease... Maybe sometimes the rapport is working against you, maybe it’s, “oh my probation officer is relaxed and personable, he’s not going to worry so much that I found this” ... maybe I give off the impression that I’m maybe a soft touch.”

(Simon)

These participants highlighted that perhaps allowances with some service users or for certain behaviours may actually cause problems in supervision, and lead to the officer having to revoke such allowances – this may inevitably damage rapport. However, as mentioned in section 6.4.3, if *“you shave things over and don’t say the actual facts on the table”* (Danielle) then you will incur problems with service users, and so it may be that these officers have problems because they neglect to clearly outline the terms of their allowances.

Participants also mentioned needing to take caution when making allowances to ensure that the officer does not promise the service user anything that cannot be achieved or maintained:

“You can really damage that relationship if you promise to bring them something... and then you turn around the next time and they’re waiting for this big bit of help and you’re like, “oh yeh, maybe we’ll do that next week”” (Owen).

Breaking promises was considered to be one of the most detrimental factors towards rapport building, and could completely damage the relationship an officer has with a service user, and so it was reported that officers had to only make allowances where they could ensure they could be met.

On a final note, it should be mentioned that while allowances were often discussed in relation to maladaptive behaviours by participants, a smaller subset of participants also discussed the need to make allowances for disorders, disabilities or neurodivergent qualities that service users may present. For example:

“...if you’re working with someone with ADHD, meet them outside, walk while you’re talking so that their sensory motor issues are not undermining your capacity to build rapport... fresh air, gives a sense of being connected back to the world if that makes sense.” (Veronica)

Other participants had similar sentiments towards younger service users and those who have ASD:

“...a teenage young person’s brain doesn’t stop developing until 23, and young males especially are further up the autistic spectrum, so they’re harder to engage with and interact with and they’re not the most talkative. So you kind of have to use different ways and be patient with them and understand that they’re not adults...”
(Kevin)

As such, participants needed to understand how these factors play into supervision and adapt their methods to build rapport with them. In this regard, they often mentioned allowing supervisory meetings to take place in environments that service users found comfortable and non-threatening, such as going *“for coffee”* (Simon), taking *“them on walks”*, or meeting them in home environments where they can get to *“know the people in their life, the family”* (Kevin).

Agency and collaboration

Participants discussed tailoring supervision towards the interests of the service user and making them feel like an active agent in the probation process, as often they “*don’t feel part of that decision making*” (Rita). As such, participants reported making an effort to include the service user’s hobbies or interests into supervision tasks, giving them autonomy and making them an active agent in the supervision process:

“I always make sure that they have some personal things on there, such as get back into football as a hobby or get my driver’s licence or something, and I always say to them, “this is your sentence, we both have to be here, but you can do it the way you want to do it”...” (Lydia)

In this regard, participants reported that service users were the ones who had responsibility for their risk and actions, and were the only ones who could change their lives, but it was important for POs to guide them and keep them on the path towards change. By making service users accountable to the activities they want to engage in and the changes they want to make, it highlights that the PO is interested in them, thus helping to build rapport:

“Making them accountable to the things they told you, because they might have these big pipe dreams of this, that and the third which they’ve discussed with someone, but nobody has ever been interested enough to hear it and follow on with questions... Everyone likes to feel someone’s interested in what they’re doing...”
(Danielle)

As such, participants discussed making supervision feel like a collaborative process for service users, and within that they reflected on a number of novel ways by which they included service users in supervision. For example, many participants reported getting service users to teach or explain to them something they are interested in and that has meaning to them, which “*boosts their self-esteem... they get a bit of power back in the situation*” (Ursula). Ethan recalled a particularly interesting example in this regard:

“...it came up that he [one of Ethan’s service users] was a member of the magic circle, and that he used to know Paul Daniels, and he could do magic tricks... so I said, “next time you come bring a pack of cards”... his eyes lit up and he actually seemed to be smiling and engaging whereas usually he would sit there looking like he wanted to kill himself... So I tried to encourage him to go back to something he used to enjoy and used to make him feel good about himself...” (Ethan)

Participants also mentioned that for the supervision process to have a feeling of collaboration then the service user should be able to relate to the PO in some way, and it was commonly reported that officers should highlight to service users that they are not vastly different from one another:

“...when you’re kind of admitting your own flaws and saying I might be a bit late, we’re both human beings, shit happens, it means that it’s just kind of developing a more personal relationship... as opposed to previously where it’s been very one way, I think that will probably help to build that rapport and get them out there.”
(Mark)

These types of engagement were reported as *“being able to humanise”* (Peter) the PO to the service user, making them also appear as a collaborative partner in supervision rather than an authoritative figure with ultimate power. By weaving a collaborative nature into supervision, all participants reported it as having a hugely positive influence on service user wellbeing and engagement, and considered it to be a key element towards developing a strong relationship with them.

6.4.5 Maintenance and barriers to rapport

As POs supervised service users for extended periods of time, participants considered how to maintain the rapport they had established. Here, they discussed that the key to effective

rapport maintenance was for a PO to be consistent in their approach, persist even when things get tough and to become a familiar presence to the service user:

“I think generally just staying sort of calm is important and not just sort of drastically or suddenly altering the way you’re speaking to somebody, or you’re demeanour, or... you know your physicality, because then I think you’re taking a step that is hard to come back from” (Ursula)

Through consistency, persistence and familiarity, participants reported being able to overcome resistance and pave the way for positive behavioural change (this emerged as the first subtheme).

In order to achieve consistency and persist in supervision, participants reported the need to engage in reflective practice to assess *“how we are handling a case”* (Harry) and what *“the dynamics in that relationship [with a service user] are”* (Rita), as well as needing support and guidance from colleagues and the organisation. Through reflection and support, participants reported being able to deal with difficult situations and *“go back in and try again”* (Anna) – this emerged as the second subtheme.

However, participants reported several organisational barriers that leave them with little time, motivation or energy to engage in consistent and reflective practice, which they reported inevitably disrupts their ability to build and maintain rapport with service users – these are discussed within the subthemes.

Consistency, persistence and familiarity

Participants reported that building a strong rapport with a service user can be a long process and officers need to recognise that it may take time before any real change can be seen in a service user. As such, most participants reported that officers need to be persistent and become familiar with their service users to aid longer-term supervision:

“For that person who doesn’t have any stable relationships, doesn’t have accommodation, doesn’t have anything really meaningful going on for them, why are they gonna invest in all these, what we would call legitimate social norms, when there’s no meaning attached to them? Try and recognise that that change for that individual is gonna be so gradual that actually we may not be successful during this course of the sentence. It might take them about 3 or 4 times for them to come round the block so to speak.” (Rita)

By making themselves familiar to those service users, participants highlighted that the service user will eventually see them as a constant positive influence in their lives, and while it may take time for that realisation to become apparent, when it does they will have a level of trust with their PO that will make them comfortable to disclose information. That familiarity was discussed as being particularly important with service users who had experienced traumatic or unstructured lives, which was mentioned as being common with many of their service users. For these service users, participants reported that the PO may be the only constant thing in their life, and so it was important that the PO was consistently present and someone the service user felt they could depend on:

“...a lot of our clients, they’ve not had consistency throughout their lives, they’ve got a lot of attachment issues... if they’re lucky to have an OM [offender manager] that can be there for more than two years then that is a positive for them... I think they buy into that a bit more knowing there’s someone there for them.” (Gemma)

However, participants overwhelmingly agreed that there were a plethora of organisational problems that hindered their ability to stay consistent in supervision. Most barriers revolved around staffing issues, as high workloads and a perceived lack of support led the organisation to “haemorrhaging staff” (Qianna). This was reported as leading to service users frequently being shifted between POs, which discouraged them from fully engaging with supervision:

“I had one guy right and he had six different officers in two years, he didn’t want to tell me nothing... cause he’s been raw for somebody already, he’s already exposed himself to somebody and that person has disappeared... he’s like, “what’s the point? There’s no point, you don’t care, I’m going to have someone else next week”” (Anna)

In terms of rapport, this may have been established between these service users and their previous POs, but a lack of consistency and care to maintain that rapport through their supervision process was reported as making them feel as if they were not cared for, thus damaging the relationship these service users could establish with future POs. This was also reported as being problematic for service users who were making positive behavioural change, as shifting between POs may cause them to revert back to more maladaptive modes of behaviour:

“I have taken over cases that... were on monthly reporting, so I can’t say, “well I want you every week now, yeh, so I can get to know you”, they’re going to turn around say, “well hang on a minute... I’ve done all this, I’ve earned my spurs now, you know I’m on monthly because I’ve been a good boy” ...” (Carl)

POs were reported as having different supervisory styles, and so service users being shifted between POs was not reported as always making service users feel uncared for, but rather that these service users had grown used to a certain style and then had to adapt themselves to another PO. As such, they mentioned that it could make service users feel as if they were starting their supervision again from scratch which could make them disillusioned with the supervision process. As highlighted in 6.4.4 however, participants reported that the PO should be the one to adapt their supervision to the service user, but it seems as if some officers may expect that adaptation to occur the other way around. Thus, while participants reported consistent supervision as being key to effective rapport maintenance, this was something they were not always able to do in practice (due to organisational

barriers), but may also be something POs disrupt themselves. Regardless, all participants considered inconsistent supervision to have a significantly damaging impact on rapport with their service users, as well as limiting the rapport that could be built with future officers as well.

Reflection and support

Reflection and support from colleagues/the organisation was also considered important for maintenance, as POs could gain insight into their “*own approaches which might actually be creating barriers*” (Harry) and improve on their supervisory practice. Participants said this allowed them to persist in the demanding job role of a PO, especially with difficult service users:

“...sometimes it’s a lot to have someone come in, actually all the time with difficulties and attitude... if you’re able to get out of that room, reflect and regroup with people who have an understanding, so you don’t feel it’s you, you know that it’s just the complexities of that person, you’re able to go back in and try again...”

(Anna)

All participants considered reflection to be a key element for understanding their supervisory practice, and reported that these reflections fed back into their knowledge base of rapport and their understanding of how they influenced rapport building in practice (themes 6.4.1 & 6.4.2).

Furthermore, participants also reported support and guidance from more experienced colleagues to be beneficial towards building and maintaining rapport (and also reported this as another means of updating their knowledge base of rapport), as they often learned new skills which they could incorporate into their own supervision:

“...we might be individually skilled but we also have a skill pot in our teams... And with that co-working on that level there’s never a judgement or you’re doing it wrong, it’s just for this particular client at this particular point, when you’re asking this question you might want to try this aspect.” (Danielle)

However, several participants also stated that reflection could sometimes lead POs to the realisation that they are not the right fit for a service user, perhaps due to their supervisory style or characteristics. While this contradicts the principle of consistent supervision, some participants recognised that their continual presence could actually be more damaging towards their relationship with some service users compared to being inconsistent, and negative feelings that may develop with that service user may also bleed into other cases and have a negative impact beyond that service user. As such, these participants mentioned that sometimes shifting service users to more suitable officers was beneficial:

“...you start thinking about that difficult client from the night before... and that can make you anxious and infect all your other caseloads as well... and I’ve had three clients tell me, “naa, me and you ain’t going to work”, then you know what that is completely fine, I just need to talk to my colleagues about their caseload and talk to the manager and we will see if we can swap over.” (Danielle)

Unfortunately though, participants again recalled a myriad of organisational problems that made it difficult for them to engage in reflective practice and gain support, with high workloads leaving officers with little time to reflect or help guide other officers. Probation was often described as *“a dumping ground for the agencies that are failing, so housing, mental health services”* (Carl), meaning that POs had to take on extra duties which left them with less time, energy and resources to develop their relationship with service users. Some expressed that *“the training isn’t sufficient, the training is crap, it is crap!”* (Anna), and did not believe that they were well-equipped to manage all of the responsibilities a PO has to engage with. As such, participants generally felt let down by the Probation services:

“...the organisation itself doesn’t have a good rapport with its staff and in turn that affects the rapport we have with service users... It becomes this cycle of just ill feeling almost you know, and people come in try and fix it, break it a little bit more and move on... we should be rehabilitating and we should be doing offender focused work.” (Bethany)

This lack of support from the Probation service was felt by most participants, and this was overwhelmingly considered a major hinderance towards building and maintaining rapport with their service users, or engaging in effective supervision overall.

6.5 Discussion

The current study investigated the views of UK probation officers from several of the NPS branches in London regarding rapport building with service users, in an attempt to understand what they thought rapport was, how they used it and whether these views aligned with the literature on forensic rapport building. To the researchers knowledge, this is the first study to investigate this topic using a cohort of UK probation officers. Findings suggest that probation officers consider rapport to be essential for successful supervision and they use several methods to establish and maintain rapport with service users, which can be conceptualised as a rapport-building process (see Figure 7) – interestingly, this process is very similar to that reported by police officers when interviewing victims of trauma (Risan et al., 2017).

It is evident from the findings that a one-size-fits-all approach to rapport building in this context does not exist (a sentiment shared by the literature, e.g., McNeill, 2009), as officers use their unique experiences and knowledge to follow the general stages of the process. This can partly be attributed to rapport-based supervision largely being neglected in probation research (Shapland et al., 2012), resulting in little guidance or training on how

to consistently build rapport – this lack of guidance was reported by participants. Participants also viewed rapport as being, by its very nature, a dynamic and mysterious interactional process. They know rapport when they experience it but cannot explain the nuanced way in which it develops. However, some participants reported that the mysterious nature of rapport allowed them to use their natural capacity to build rapport rather than it being a simple tick-box exercise, a robotic activity which has previously been criticised as accounting for the majority of probation work (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2011). Yet, participants reported that it was possible to learn rapport-building skills by reflecting on their experiences, as well as through support and discussion with colleagues that had similar or differing experiences. This indicates that probation officers could be trained to build rapport in some capacity, such as by teaching reflective skills and engaging in peer shadowing.

Probation officers work with diverse service users that differ in age, race and mental capacity, and many have had traumatic life experiences which have left them with poor mental health (Mackenzie et al., 2015; Sirdifield et al., 2020) or difficulties socialising with others (Shapland et al., 2012). Accordingly, officers quickly gain experience of different types of service users which participants believed was fundamental for understanding and meeting the specific needs of both current and future service users. There is evidence that taking a needs-based, client-centred approach to supervision leaves service users feeling valued and that they are deriving something beneficial from supervision (Bottoms & Shapland, 2011; Farrall, 2002; Sturm et al., 2020), whereas they feel processed and unvalued when their needs are not considered (Leibrich, 1993) – some evidence shows that a client-centred approach can also lead to a reduction in reoffending (e.g., Anstiss et al., 2011; Blasko et al., 2015; Chamberlain et al., 2018; Florsheim et al., 2000; Harper & Hardy, 2000; Kistenmacher & Weiss, 2008; Polcin et al., 2018; Vidal et al., 2013; see McMurrin, 2009 for a review).

Here, participants mentioned that using this approach and being transparent in their methods allowed them to develop strong and trusting relationships with service users, making them feel valued and comfortable to disclose information. Participants reported being able to use that information to guide their service users towards positive behavioural change and they observed significant (positive) differences in service users' behaviour when using this approach. Thus, a client-centred approach was considered integral to the rapport-building process, and this approach shares many similarities to the therapeutic, counselling and social work literature on rapport (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991; Shapland et al., 2012).

In certain countries, such as the UK and Ireland, probation supervision has historically been based upon social work and included similar training (Healy, 2010; House of Commons Justice Committee, 2011) which explains their links here. However, while the client-focused approach to supervision is still viewed by probation officers as effective (as seen by the current data), the Probation service has, for the past few decades, been moving away from a social work framework to one based on “enforcement, rehabilitation and public protection” (House of Commons Justice Committee, 2011, p. 15). In the past decade, Probation has also transitioned from a national to a partially privatised service (Robinson et al., 2016; S. Walker et al., 2019); although, this has recently been overturned. Due to these many shifts, the focus in Probation has tended to take a target-driven, utilitarian approach that is reflected by probation research focused around rates of reoffending, with less on rapport and relationship-building (Shapland et al., 2012). This also reflects the approach taken in other areas of the criminal justice system – for example, prisons are more interested in “safety, security and conformity” (p., 115) than understanding staff/prisoner relationships and how this may benefit positive behavioural change (Bullock & Bunce, 2020). Although, it must be noted that meeting the complex

needs of service users are still considered important by the Probation services (Ministry of Justice, 2015) and probation staff (Annison et al., 2008).

These regular shifts and confusion regarding the aims of probation supervision can cause a disconnect between the aims and expectations of the officer and the service user (Shapland et al., 2012), as well as increase workloads, stress and job dissatisfaction for officers (S. Walker et al., 2019). Participants in the current study expressed similar frustrations and stress due to their unclear job role and increased workloads. For example, they mentioned that due to the relative failure of other organisations (e.g., mental health or accommodation services), they often had to take on the burden of securing housing or even acting as a therapist at times. Generally, participants agreed that they would help service users with these problems and saw them as means of building rapport with them. However, some participants expressed discontent with taking on these extra responsibilities as they were time-consuming and fell outside of the remit of what they thought officers should be doing. Participants also expressed a lack of support, guidance, or training from the Probation service towards meeting these service user needs, which is echoed by the literature (Mackenzie et al., 2015; Shapland et al., 2012; S. Walker et al., 2019).

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that discussing certain issues, such as mental health or suicide, can develop secondary trauma for probation officers (Lewis et al., 2013; Rhineberger-Dunn et al., 2016), especially if they are untrained or unsupported in how to tackle these issues (Mackenzie et al., 2015). As such, some of these extra duties that participants reported having to undertake, such as being a therapist, may be harmful for the officer and hinder their ability to build rapport and effectively supervise their service users (Lewis et al., 2013). Considering the link between rapport-based supervision and service users discussing/making positive behavioural change (e.g., Florsheim et al., 2000; Kistenmacher & Weiss, 2008), and even reducing reoffending (e.g., Chamberlain, 2018; McMurrin, 2009), the current barriers to rapport building in Probation indicate that

officers may not be able to effectively guide their service users towards positive behavioural change, and this may leave the service user, the officer and the wider public at risk of harm.

Aside from organisational barriers, participants also discussed barriers to rapport building emanating from theirs or the service user's character, such as the biases each can bring into supervision. Here, it was explained that officers can have pre-conceived ideas about their service users which may cause them to unfairly judge them, but also that service users can often have negative views towards certain types of people based on factors such as race or gender, or a general distrust towards authority. These biases can have a negative impact on the way service users engage and communicate with the officer - although, these biases were discussed as not necessarily being conscious. Unconscious bias is well documented and it has been shown that these biases can have a large impact, particularly negatively, on how we behave and make decisions (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

In the police literature, biases towards suspects (e.g., due to the crime committed) can influence whether police officers build rapport or engage in empathic behaviour (K. Collins & Carthy, 2018; Dando & Oxburgh, 2016; Redlich et al., 2014). For example, sex offenders in particular tend to consider their interview to be confrontational and lacking in rapport (Holmberg & Christianson, 2002), and where rapport was deemed absent information yield was lower (K. Collins & Carthy, 2018). Furthermore, there is evidence that UK judges disproportionately convict BAME offenders compared to white offenders, showing a potential unconscious racial bias that influences court decision-making (Sporer & Goodman-Delahunty, 2009).

Similarly, participants in this study expressed that biases can creep into their supervision and so they stressed the importance of reflective practice to understand them. Furthermore, they reflected on how elements of their character, such as their gender or

attire, could impact on how service users engaged with them – they attempted to limit elements that exacerbated service user biases (e.g., formal attire), but also attempted to capitalise on elements that facilitated rapport (e.g., their age). In a sense, this is similar to the concept of the *looking glass self*, which is the tendency for individuals to shape their identity or develop a ‘role’ based on how others perceive them, and this perception is based on previous interactions and experiences with people (Cooley, 1902). As such, probation officers appear to craft a role that matches their experiences with service users and that they consider to be effective for engaging with them. Interestingly, other research has found that certain probation officer characteristics (e.g., gender, experience) can have a tangible impact on the quality of the relationship developed with service users (Sturm et al., 2020), supporting the idea that probation officers should develop and hone their role.

Developing a role to facilitate rapport building may also be true of service users, at least those who have made the commitment to change. For example, Maruna (2001) discusses offender’s developing ‘redemptive’ scripts when attempting to desist from crime, which is a narrative that pits the previous ‘bad’ self in opposition of, but also a vital precursor to the future ‘good’ self. Again, these scripts are also based on perceptions of what the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ self are and how other’s perceive these identities. As such, it is possible that offenders who are committed to change also develop a role to facilitate positive engagement with their probation officer (as well as prison staff, employers etc.) as this is conducive to enacting their redemptive script. However, this has not yet been investigated in the literature. This also highlights a limitation with the current study, which is that only the views of probation officers are provided here. As is often the case in forensic or criminological research, the voice of the offender is often missing which can greatly limit our scope of understanding in these areas (Aresti et al., 2016; Darke et al., 2020). Given that rapport is considered to be a two-way process between interviewer and interviewee, it would be important for future research to understand how service users

conceptualise and engage in rapport building, and provide a more in-depth picture of the rapport-building process in Probation.

To continue, there may be factors that participants did not reflect upon or consider important, such as their gender or background, which may also influence their supervisory style or rapport-building practices with service users. In regards to attire for example, officers who favoured informal clothing were more likely to report having worked in Probation for a long time or having also worked in social work related roles, and were primarily female – female officers have been shown to perceive themselves as more attuned towards rapport building (Ireland & Berg, 2008). Proponents of formal clothing however were male and reported having experience in the Police, which is generally seen as a more authoritative role (Thompson et al., 2017). Some participants also reported that they were cautious of using certain rapport-building methods (e.g., personal conversation) in supervision, and while they generally discussed this in relation to serious or dangerous offenders, they tended to generalise this to service users in general – this perhaps highlights these officers' biases towards certain service users which then may impact their supervision practice with all service users. As such, the role that probation officers create and adopt may not always match the experiences they have had with service users, but might instead be based on factors and biases that the officer is not consciously aware of.

Regardless, it is evident that participants considered reflective practice to be important, and this matches recommendations in the literature where reflection is described as a key element of rapport building and effective probation practice (Clark et al., 2006), and it is also found in therapeutic tools such as the MI (W. R. Miller & Rollnick, 1991). As such, it should be recommended that all officers engage in reflective practice to improve their practice. However, again participants reported feeling a lack of support from the organisation to engage in reflective practice, which may hinder their ability to build rapport

with service users, and so further guidance, training and support should be provided in order to allow officers to engage in reflection.

To conclude, this study investigated the views and uses of rapport by probation officers when interviewing service users. The findings indicate that officers follow a multi-faceted process towards rapport building, however, each individual officer has their own specific techniques for building rapport within that process. There were disagreements between participants regarding what clothes to wear during supervision, what allowances to make for service users, or whether an officer should share personal information or not, amongst others, but these data do not give indication regarding which of these techniques are appropriate or effective for building rapport in practice. Rather, these data show that every officer crafts a unique role in Probation that works for them based on their characteristics and their previous interactions and experiences with both service users and other officers, and they attempt to reflect on practice where possible in order to refine that role. Thus, this study provides a useful first-step towards understanding the general process of rapport building in this context. Considering the reported benefits of rapport for guiding positive behavioural change in service users, and the potential this has for ensuring offender and public safety, several recommendations have been made for officers, the Probation service and researchers to consider to facilitate the rapport-building process and help these outcomes come to fruition.

6.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a common exercise conducted within qualitative research due to the interpretative nature of this type of research – as such, understanding one’s experiences and biases is beneficial towards the interpretation of the data (Elliott et al., 1999; Yardley, 2008). Thus, this section provides an overview of my experience, knowledge and potential

biases and how these factors may have influenced my undertaking of the current research and interpretation of the findings.

To note, this section often appears within the methodology section or prior to the presentation of study findings. However, as I discuss some of the findings of study 3 within this section, it seemed most appropriate to present it after presenting and discussing the findings.

6.6.1 Methodological reflexivity

I have studied for a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with Criminology, as well as a Master's degree in Psychology and Law, both of which have lent to my interest in forensic psychology and have been instrumental to the basis of this PhD. However, what I realised is that most of the topics covered in these degrees revolved around police and prison contexts, with next to no focus on probation contexts. Over the course of my PhD, I have also been teaching on several modules in Psychology, including forensic psychology, and again I noticed a considerable lack of content related to a probation context.

From my extensive reading on Probation, I have also come across very little research that investigates the process of probation supervision for meeting their goals of rehabilitating offenders, reducing crime and ensuring public safety. Studies exist that statistically show if you do *a* (e.g., use MI techniques), you can achieve *b* (e.g., information gain), but there is next to no research that qualitatively assesses the process from *a* to *b*, that is how the techniques are employed, how they are received, and why they work. Research in other contexts (e.g., business, therapy, police) has shown that building positive relationships are key to these outcomes, and the same is likely true in Probation. But what is clear is that that Probation is overlooked in the realm of forensic psychology yet is an integral part of the criminal justice process, and this influenced my decision to conduct qualitative research in a probation context as part of the current thesis.

In the past, my research has primarily focused on using experimental and quantitative methods, and I have had very little experience with using qualitative methods. In retrospect, my experience with quantitative methods may have had a large impact on choosing a critical realist position and the way in which I interpreted the results of study 3. Here, I recognised the individual experiences and views probation officers have, but ultimately conceptualised the findings into a *general* rapport-building process that outlines distinct stages of building and maintaining rapport with service users, and that could fit to most probation officers. The benefit of such a conceptualisation is that it provides a solid background for future experimental/quantitative work, as potentially elements of this process can be set as variables and manipulated to assess their efficacy for building rapport.

Potentially, my experience as a quantitative researcher has undermined the value of my qualitative findings – perhaps there was more exploration that could have been done if it had not been for my line of thinking. However, focus group/interview transcripts were double-coded by two other researchers whose research strengths lie more with qualitative than quantitative design, and there was overall agreement with this conceptualisation between them and myself. Furthermore, due to my inexperience with conducting qualitative research, I attempted to read around the topic as much as possible and sought advice and guidance from more experienced researchers. As such, while my experience has no doubt influenced my approach to the data, I am doubtful that it would have been a hinderance. In some ways, my inexperience with qualitative methods may have also enhanced my approach to qualitative methods as I tried to be as thorough and meticulous in my method and analysis as possible in order to achieve the same quality and standard as my quantitative work.

6.6.2 Personal reflexivity

During my PhD, I have undertaken a voluntary role as a teaching assistant on a project in Pentonville Prison. This project takes undergraduate students from the University of Westminster into the prison on a weekly basis to study criminology alongside a selection of prisoners. As such, I have had some first-hand experience of working with offenders in a forensic setting. From discussions with prisoners, I gained an understanding of the hardships many of them have faced in their lives, such as abusive childhoods, poverty and substance abuse, as well as hardships they face currently due to their loss of freedom. While such problems do not necessarily excuse criminal actions, it does give perspective on why these individuals may have engaged with criminality – I wrote an article for The Guardian about my reflections on this experience and what I learned (Nahouli, 2019). I also heard their views of probation officers and the way they are treated by them, and these views/experiences were generally negative. As such, prior to undertaking the research I was biased towards seeing the probation services and probation officers as ultimately flawed in their approach to offender engagement.

However, from undertaking my research and analysing the data, it is evident that police and probation officers also recognise the problems that offenders face as this was a common theme brought up in my data, and they discussed the importance of tackling these problems to enact positive behavioural change. Although, for probation officers at least, a myriad of organisational barriers limited an officer's ability to positively engage with their service users and build rapport with them, which inevitably leaves service users feeling let down by the officer and the system. After conducting my research and hearing both sides, I gained an appreciation for the difficulty of a probationer officers' job, and wondered whether it was the organisation which created these problems with offender engagement. Probation officers work with individuals who often do not trust them and do not want to talk to them, but they still have to find ways to draw out important information related to

criminal behaviour – they also have to draw out sensitive personal information to guide service users on a path towards behavioural change. As such, I realised how important tools such as rapport building can be for meeting these goals, and I gained an appreciation for the work I was conducting for this thesis, as well as a want to understand how rapport works in practice.

Furthermore, I used to work as a salesperson, which I feel has been a beneficial experience for undertaking research in rapport. One of the key things you learn when doing sales is how important it is to build rapport with your clients as it aids with communication and makes the client feel you are invested in them, which inevitably increases sales. From my own experience, building that rapport also makes the salesperson feel more comfortable in the interaction and increases their confidence. Having a good rapport with a client makes it feel less like a personal failure when a sale is not achieved as it is apparent it is not due to you but rather that the client does not currently need your product, and it helps keep them focussed on you and your product if they need it in the future. As such, my experience in sales allowed me to reflect on the importance of rapport for communication and appreciate the value of rapport in other settings, such as forensic interviews.

In study 3, probation officers reported similar views on rapport to what I reported, such as that building rapport may not necessarily lead to an effective outcome initially, but it can help build familiarity and possibly influence future interactions with service users. However, probation officers work with an extremely complex population and their role carries a huge duty of care. As such, while some similarities may exist in regards to our views on rapport, I cannot claim to fully understand the intricacies of a probation officer's role and the dynamic nature of rapport in this context. Building rapport here also serves a much more important role than in sales, whereby it has the potential to limit risks of harm to the service user, officer and the public in general. As such, reflecting on these

differences between contexts (i.e., between sales and probation) made me appreciate the rationale for this thesis – that is, it may be inappropriate to generalise from one context (e.g., therapy/counselling) to another (e.g., forensic contexts). Each context poses its own unique challenges that need to be understood (and the findings of study 3 indicate there are many), and so there is an obvious need to conduct context-specific research into rapport, as has been done in this thesis.

7 Chapter seven: General discussion

Rapport is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic social process that occurs between interacting parties (Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990). Yet, rapport is a difficult behaviour to define and operationalise. It is similar to other concepts, such as love, in this regard. When in love, there is a noticeable change in behaviour, and there are proven impacts to human physiology and neuropsychology which are observable in all individuals who feel this emotion – however, the way in which love is expressed and received, and the way in which it is defined can differ significantly between individuals (Tobore, 2020). Much like love, feeling rapport has been found to incur neuropsychological changes (Barnett et al., 2018), but the way in which it is expressed, received and defined differs between individuals and is a matter of debate (as has been discussed and evidenced throughout this thesis). In its most basic sense though, rapport might be described as people getting along or ‘clicking’ with one another. Most people can ‘see’ when rapport has been established because the social interaction is smooth and effective, and conversation appears to flow easily between parties. Likewise, most people would be able to recognise when rapport is absent. Interactions are less smooth, and conversations might appear challenging, staccato, and perhaps less social.

As a species, humans are hardwired to seek a connection with others in order to successfully navigate their social world (Lieberman, 2014) – rapport can be considered to be that ‘connection’ and so is one of the most integral aspects of human interaction. In developing rapport, we often use verbal and non-verbal behaviours that appear deceptively simple – we smile, nod and share personal information (key rapport-building behaviours) on a regular basis with friends, family, work colleagues, and even strangers we meet in our social environments, and we often do so naturally and without much conscious thought (Sperber, 1995). Hence, rapport is important. However, in attempting to unravel the process of rapport, it becomes apparent that these behaviours have to be used appropriately

– that is, in combination with one another, in positive ways, and at the right time – in order for them to resonate and be received well (Jones & LeBaron, 2002). Thus, while isolated behaviours may appear simple, the rapport-building process is complex.

This overarching complexity becomes more challenging across different contexts. This is particularly so when attempting to develop rapport in contexts that do not occur naturally, that involve interacting parties with differing goals, or occur in environments that are stressful or anxiety-inducing (Abbe & Brandon, 2013; Gabbert et al., 2021). In such circumstances, standard rapport-building methods may not be as effective or may need to be adapted. Contexts such as these include therapy and counselling, as well as the forensic contexts that were investigated throughout this thesis (i.e., Police and Probation). Here, the cost of not building rapport effectively can be high (e.g., reduced cooperation or information gain, or an increased risk of reoffending; Alison et al., 2013; Chamberlain, 2018), and so it is vital that the concept of rapport and the ways to effectively build it in practice are understood so as not to hinder communication in these contexts.

Regarding therapy and counselling, a fair amount of research has already been conducted towards understanding this complex phenomenon, including defining it and evidencing its utility (see Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Martin et al., 2000; Moyers et al., 2009; Rubak et al., 2005 for reviews). In these contexts, forging a therapeutic alliance (which encapsulates rapport) is also ingrained within their practice (Ardito & Rabellino, 2011; Bordin, 1979). In forensic contexts, such as during interviews conducted by police officers with witnesses and suspected offenders, or when probation officers meet with service users, rapport research is less well developed and conceptualisations are often drawn from non-forensic contexts (although, see Alison et al., 2013; Gabbert et al., 2020; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Ireland & Berg, 2008; McMurrin, 2009; Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015). Regardless, rapport building is generally accepted as being *good practice* here and is variously recommended in the forensic literature (e.g., Abbe & Brandon, 2013,

2014; Shapland et al., 2012) and in official police and probation interviewing guidelines (e.g., Clark et al., 2006; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Ministry of Justice, 2011; Sorsby et al., 2013).

Consequently, there is little information detailing what rapport actually looks like or how to go about building rapport in police or probation interviewing contexts. As well, while some research does exist in police settings, there is next to none in probation settings (Shapland et al., 2012). Much of the research is also descriptive, with research attempting to experimentally test the utility of rapport towards meeting the goals of forensic interviews being sparse, at best, and the research that does exist poses several limitations that make it difficult to understand the true nature of rapport. As such, the programme of mixed methods research presented in this thesis sought to understand: 1) what rapport is in forensic contexts, 2) how rapport is operationalised in forensic interviews, and 3) what the impact of rapport is in forensic interviews. These questions were answered by:

- Exploring the views and perceptions of police and probation officers to identify their understanding of rapport and how they practice rapport building in their respective interviewing contexts, as well as identifying whether those views align with what is currently suggested by the literature;
- Investigating the efficacy of several clusters of clearly operationalised rapport-building techniques for building rapport, facilitating communication and improving cognition.

7.1 Contribution to knowledge

The research presented in this thesis offers an original contribution to the forensic rapport literature. Study 2 and 3 (Chapters 5 & 6, respectively) are the first to investigate the views of UK police officers regarding rapport building specifically when interviewing suspects,

and the first to qualitatively investigate the views of UK probation officers when supervising service users, respectively. As such, they provide a novel insight into how rapport is conceptualised and used in practice by forensic interviewers. It would appear that there is both good and less good practice in both contexts. Consequently, it was possible to offer some tentative recommendations with potential for improving practice, and to suggest directions for future research. Following from the research conducted in study 3, the researcher was also invited by (what was then) the NPS to present a webinar sharing the study findings to probation officers and other staff members (Nahouli, 2020), and discussions ensued around how to implement these findings into future training and practice – hence, the implications and novel contribution of this research for probation practice are clear.

Additional knowledge emanated from the experimental study presented in this thesis (study 1; Chapter 4), which identified clusters of rapport-building behaviours that were efficacious, as well as those that were not, for building rapport and facilitating witness interviews. Here, novelty is found in the study method, with a unique separation and combination of rapport-building techniques, and an effort to analyse interviewer behaviours, providing original contributions to the witness interviewing literature. Findings from this study also indicate how rapport might be used in police practice, particularly when teaching interviewing skills to less experienced frontline officers, perhaps. It is entirely possible that the clusters of rapport-building behaviours may also be effective in other forensic interview contexts (e.g., suspect interviews, probation supervision), and so these findings highlight directions for future research.

The implications of the results of each of the discrete pieces of research have been summarised and elaborated on within each of the separate study chapters (see Chapters 4-6). While each study investigated different research questions with different methods and in different forensic contexts, together they contribute to a more general investigation of

forensic rapport building, and the thread that connects them is a desire to understand rapport as a communication aid in complex interview contexts. As such, a brief summary of each study can be found below (see Table 23) alongside a general discussion for the results in relation to one another, and the implications they have for wider forensic settings and towards meeting the overarching research aims. Overall limitations and directions for future research are also introduced.

7.2 Implications of rapport for wider forensic interviewing practice, future directions and limitations

The research presented in this thesis all concerned better understanding rapport in a forensic sense, but differed in terms of research questions, methodologies, and forensic/interviewing contexts. This novel programme of research used a mixed-methods approach to investigate rapport in ways that have hitherto been ignored. As such, when considered together the findings presented in this thesis offer an explanation for the overarching research questions, which are: 1) What is forensic rapport?; 2) How can rapport be operationalised for forensic practice?; and 3) What is the impact of using rapport in forensic practice? When considering these overarching research questions, exciting implications for wider forensic interviewing practice emerge, and areas for further scientific enquiry and training can be suggested.

Table 22. *A brief overview of the three studies conducted and the general discussion, highlighting their aim, their key findings, and some recommendations based on these findings.*

	Aim	Findings	Recommendations
Study 1	Investigate the isolated and combined effect of verbal and non-verbal rapport behaviours on witness perceptions, memory performance and anxiety/stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The interviewer was (mostly) effective and consistent in his use of condition relevant rapport behaviours - Non-verbal behaviours were effective for building rapport and improving witness memory performance - Verbal behaviours were ineffective at building rapport alone, and had inconsequential or negative effects on memory performance - Rapport did not impact anxiety or stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-verbal rapport behaviours are easy to use and beneficial, and so should be used in witness interviews - Verbal rapport behaviours are difficult to employ and potentially not useful, or even damaging. Caution should be exercised when building rapport this way - Research is needed to further understand these rapport behaviours, how best to measure rapport, and how to investigate anxiety/stress in a more ecological manner
Study 2	Investigate the views of UK police officers regarding rapport building with suspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants mostly considered rapport beneficial for suspect interviews and reported using many behaviours to build rapport with a variety of suspects, and believed they were generally good at building rapport. - Some participants did not consider rapport important or effective, particularly with certain types of suspects (e.g., serious offenders), and disagreed with using some rapport behaviours (e.g., personal conversation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some officers may find rapport difficult to employ in practice and generally have little guidance on rapport building, highlighting the need for training and support - Some officers may have biases towards some suspects (e.g., sex offenders) or find it distressing to build rapport with them. Training on empathy and emotional intelligence may be key to overcoming these barriers - Observational and experimental research is needed to understand how police officers use rapport in practice, and the impact of rapport in suspect interviews

Table 22. Continued.

	Aim	Findings	Recommendations
Study 3	Investigate the views of UK probation officers regarding rapport building with service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants considered rapport beneficial for communication, effective supervision and guiding positive behavioural change - Participants reported following a rapport-building process, with knowledge, experience and perceptions guiding their rapport-building methods. They developed a role that worked for them and this was refined through experience, support and reflection - Organisational problems (e.g., high workloads), and a lack of support, guidance and training created barriers towards following this rapport-building process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Probation officers need to engage in reflective practice to understand how they influence rapport and to develop a role that benefits their service users - The Probation service needs to identify and alleviate organisational problems, particularly relating to support and training - Qualitative, observational and experimental research is needed that includes service user voices, understands how probation officers use rapport in practice, and investigates the impact of rapport in supervision
General discussion	Provide an overview of study findings in relation to one another	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study 1 provides a novel understanding of rapport behaviours in witness interviews, and Studies 2 and 3 provide unique insights into how police and probation officers conceptualise and use rapport. There are some similarities between these populations, and they also report using behaviours from study 1, indicating the importance of rapport for general forensic practice - There are several significant differences between police and probation practice which make generalising findings across contexts difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are many factors that could influence the use or reception of rapport behaviours (e.g., gender, culture, virtual interviews). Future research needs to investigate these by using more diverse samples of interviewers and interviewees, and using different methods of interviewing. - Each forensic context poses its own unique challenges, highlighting the need for context-specific rapport guidelines and research in other contexts (e.g., Prison)

7.2.1 Understanding and operationalising rapport in forensic interviews

The studies presented within this thesis highlight a number of ways in which forensic interviewers (i.e., police and probation officers) define and operationalise rapport in their respective contexts, and while some disagreement existed, there was also much agreement which indicates that a forensically relevant conceptualisation of rapport can be developed. Findings from study 2 indicated that UK police officers generally conceptualised rapport with suspects as a positive communicative relationship that consisted of trust, understanding and respect between the officer and the suspect and could be developed through a number of verbal and non-verbal techniques and behaviours (e.g., engaging in personal conversation, active listening, explaining the interview process). Generally, that rapport-building process was considered essential towards ensuring good communication with suspects, greater information gain and an effective investigation.

Similarly, UK probation officers (study 3) conceptualised rapport as an essential element of probation supervision, conceptualising it as a driver for communication that also consisted of a number of techniques and behaviours to develop a strong relationship with service users and facilitate good supervision. Both police and probation officers also recognised the importance of versatility in their interviewing practices, and being able to adapt to their interviewee's needs. As such, both conceptualisations generally align with what is recommended by forensic interviewing guidelines and literature (e.g., MI & ORBIT; Miller & Rollnick, 1991; Alison et al., 2013).

Furthermore, many of the verbal and non-verbal techniques that were highlighted by police and probation officers as ways to build rapport were tested in study 1 with mock witnesses, and at least for the non-verbal behaviours tested (e.g., nodding, eye contact), they appeared to be highly effective for building rapport and enhancing communication in forensic settings – these 'doing' behaviours were also fairly straightforward and easy to manipulate, and they are behaviours common to both social and professional

communication settings. Verbal techniques (e.g., self-disclosure, empathic utterances, summarisation) on the other hand appeared to have a negligible effect on rapport building and facilitating communication, and where positive non-verbal behaviours were absent, they were ineffective towards building rapport. However, verbal techniques without accompanying positive non-verbals could be considered a disingenuous form of rapport building, or pseudo-rapport (DePaulo & Bell, 1990), whereby officers say things and ask personal questions but have no motivation and/or provide little indication that they are interested in the interviewee's response – this disconnect between verbal and non-verbal behaviours has been found to occur in practice and may highlight officers attempting to simply pay 'lip service' to rapport (e.g., Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012).

Pseudo-rapport may be an even more pertinent issue to consider in a probation context as probation officers conduct more than a single or small handful of interviews with their service users. Rather, supervision is conducted over a long period of time (spanning months to years; Ministry of Justice, 2015). As such, faked rapport here may negate an officer's ability to engage with service users over the course of supervision, and may also cause distrust towards the probation services and disrupt rapport they have with other officers.

Important to note however, these verbal techniques (as well as non-verbal techniques) are recommended in the tools and guidelines that both police and probation officers follow (e.g., CI & MI; Clark et al., 2006; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), and so can be considered 'best practice'. Considering the potential ineffectiveness of these techniques however, it is possible that officers are hindering their ability to effectively build rapport in police and probation settings. Although, this may be a bigger issue for less experienced officers. It has been found that experienced and well trained police officers are more likely to both use and report using rapport in practice, and appear to be competent at building rapport while also showing good skill in other areas of interviewing practice (Alison et al.,

2013; Griffiths & Milne, 2006). The same can be said for probation officers who have been trained in motivational interviewing skills, for example (McMurran, 2009; Sorsby et al., 2013). However, less experienced officers (such as the majority of participants in study 2, and a handful of participants in study 3) have been found generally to be less competent in their use of interviewing skills (Dalton et al., 2020; Griffiths & Milne, 2006), and so it may be that their limited experience/training also impacts their ability to use certain rapport-building techniques effectively.

This is important to consider as study 1 showed that the ‘saying’ (or verbal) behaviours were more difficult to use consistently compared to ‘doing’ (or non-verbal) behaviours, and their continuation often depended on the responses provided by the interviewee. As such, while non-verbal behaviours can be weaved seamlessly into the general structure of an interview, and therefore appear natural and genuine, verbal behaviours may instead come across as forced, unnatural or disingenuous, and potentially make interviewees feel uncomfortable. It may not necessarily be the case that verbal techniques have no impact on rapport, but rather they are more cognitively complex to use effectively. Thus, officers who are less experienced/trained or less confident may be unable to use these techniques effectively due to the already cognitively taxing nature of an interview (Dando et al., 2016; Dando & Oxburgh, 2016; Milne & Bull, 2016), and so these officers may be better suited to building rapport using simple non-verbal behaviours, at least initially – these behaviours could also be easily trained.

On this note, it may also be that verbal behaviours benefit an interview at different stages. For example, some participants in study 3 stated that verbal techniques were ineffective in the early stages of an interview due to the initial distrust service users have. These behaviours may be received better later in an interview or supervision process. Indeed, some research has shown that different elements of rapport may be more important and/or effective at different stages of a relationship, such as once familiarity has been

established (see Nunan et al., 2020) – although, it is unclear whether the timing of behaviours used in study 1 potentially impacted their effect.

It is also unclear exactly which techniques may have been impactful towards rapport building and which were not – it may be that some verbal behaviours are effective for building rapport (e.g., personal conversation, as highlighted by Vallano et al., 2011), while others have a disruptive effect (e.g., summarisation, as highlighted by Griffiths, 2008). It is possible then that further separating verbal techniques may incur different effects than study 1. For example, a recent study found that some verbal techniques (e.g., discussing commonalities) were effective at building rapport only when other verbal techniques were absent (e.g., mirroring language; Novotny et al., 2021). The same may also be true of non-verbal behaviours. For example, some research has found non-verbal techniques such as eye contact could be considered rude or aggressive within certain contexts or with particular types of people (Uono & Hietanen, 2015), and so it could be the case that techniques such as these limit the impact of other rapport-building behaviours.

Thus, it is not necessarily the case that verbal techniques are ineffective for rapport building, but rather that more work needs to be conducted to understand how verbal techniques, as well as non-verbal techniques, impact rapport and forensic interviews. It is useful to understand the impact of *clusters* of rapport-building behaviours (as was tested in study 1), particularly because this is how rapport behaviours are expressed in real-life settings – that is, it is unlikely that one would encounter certain rapport-building behaviours in real life without others also present, such as an individual nodding without also using back-channel responses, facial expressions or hand gestures for example. As such, separating behaviours into individual components (as in the study by Novotny et al., 2021) could be considered unnatural. However, it is still worth understanding the impact of individual behaviours to inform which behaviours are necessary to include within verbal

and non-verbal behavioural clusters and which are not, which would inevitably enhance the the impact of those clusters.

As such, future research should aim to separate verbal and non-verbal behaviours further to understand their individual effects. Future research should also aim to understand at what points in an interview verbal and non-verbal techniques may be used to best effect (such as in initial engagement with an interviewee or later in an interview), how inexperienced/less trained officers use verbal and non-verbal rapport behaviours in practice (and their impact), and the impact of faked or pseudo-rapport for forensic interviewing practice. On that note, there is also a need to understand how certain behaviours can be used to effect, and what their impact is in different forensic interviewing contexts and/or with a diverse range of interviewees (which will be explored next).

7.2.2 Rapport with diverse interviewees and within different interviewing contexts

It should be considered that the experimental research conducted for this thesis that investigated the impact of rapport only concerned mock witnesses, and the interviewing context was not particularly anxiety or stress inducing – in fact, anxiety and stress were measured and found to be higher at the end of the interview regardless of rapport, highlighting investigative interviews as potentially stressful encounters anyway. As such, these findings may not generalise well to situations in which interviewers interact with interviewees who are vulnerable, in distress, or pose cognitive and/or physical impairments, which may make up a significant proportion of forensic interviewees, especially when interviewing offenders (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2021) – these interviewees can pose high levels of stress and/or anxiety, at least initially. Suspect and service user interviews can also be adversarial in nature (Clark et al., 2006; Kleinman, 2006), and so again may be anxiety or stress inducing. Thus, while some rapport behaviours were found to be ineffective towards rapport building in study 1, this may be

due to participants already feeling comfortable in the interview, and so these techniques simply extended their interview and/or may have seemed out of place. In cases where stress or anxiety are elevated however, use of verbal techniques such as personal conversation may be an effective means of making an interviewee feel comfortable and relaxed, and so may benefit these interviews.

To date, there is little experimental research that investigates the operationalisation or impact of rapport in interviews with distressed witnesses, suspects or service users – these types of interviews are difficult to simulate in the laboratory due to them involving interviewees which cannot be used as participants in research. However, experimental bases for developing this type of research is not without precedent. For example, recent studies have conducted research involving mock suspects using actors. These actors are provided with scripts and are then interviewed by real police officers, thus emulating real-life suspect interviews to an extent (Beek et al., 2021; Richardson et al., 2014) – although, these studies have been used to investigate the ways in which officers use rapport or engage with suspects, rather than the impact rapport may have on an interview. Regardless, future research may be able to experimentally manipulate verbal and non-verbal clusters in experiments where mock suspects are incentivised to withhold information and only disclose when rapport is felt with the interviewer – this could also be extended to investigate rapport with mock service users in probation supervision settings.

A further point to consider regarding the interviewees in study 1 was that they were recruited both from the general population and an undergraduate university population, although the latter population were the primary sample of participants. Hence, participants were primarily young and well-educated, and female. This is a problem common to social science research in general (Gosling et al., 2004), but can impact on the ecological validity of the study – these findings may not generalise to a wider and more diverse population.

It should also be noted that study 1 did not gather ethnicity data and did not investigate the impact of culture on rapport building – although, considering the study was conducted in London, where 40% of residents identify as Asian, Black, Mixed or Other (Office for National Statistics, 2020), it is expected that there would have been a diverse mixture of participants in this sample. Rapport building with cross-cultural populations has largely been neglected in the literature, but there is evidence to suggest that some rapport-building behaviours may be received differently cross-culturally. For example, research has found that key rapport-building behaviours such as eye contact are considered to be disrespectful in some East Asian cultures (e.g., Japan) and less importance is placed on these behaviours during social interactions, as compared to Western cultures (Uono & Hietanen, 2015). Other differences have also been found between Western and East Asian cultures, with the former showing greater empathic concern for people in distress than the latter, although the latter are generally more accurate in judging someone's emotional state (Atkins et al., 2016) – again, empathy is a key rapport building behaviour. Some differences within Western cultures are apparent as well. For example, hypothetical questioning has been found to be more confusing for French compared to North American individuals (Deutscher, 1978, as cited in Willig, 2013). While not necessarily a rapport-building behaviour, misunderstanding questioning could potentially disrupt rapport.

Furthermore, there is indication within the forensic literature that police officers may build rapport differently with suspects depending on their cultural background. For example, Redlich et al. (2014) found that US police investigators reported building rapport more often with a Pakistani suspect compared to an Iraqi or American suspect, and more confrontational methods were used with the American suspect. Important to note, other contextual features were also provided regarding the suspects, such as their gender, age and previous cooperation, amongst others. As such, it would be wrong to claim that culture is the main or only factor that influences an officer's use of rapport, but it highlights the

need to investigate this further. Indeed, some participants in study 2 reported rapport to be effective with suspects similar to the officer (perhaps culture factors into that similarity), and ineffective with foreign suspects – although, these views were in the minority. Participants in study 3 also mentioned being aware of factors such as culture, race or ethnicity when building rapport, as different approaches may need to be considered based on these factors.

It is difficult to conclude whether cultural differences impact on the use and reception of rapport in forensic contexts, but the literature suggests that this is an important avenue to investigate in future research. Investigating cultural differences was not within the scope of the current thesis, but some limitations of the research can be considered on this topic. All interviews for study 1 were conducted by the same interviewer (the main researcher), who is mixed race (British/Arab) and white – these factors may have influenced how the interviewer used rapport-building behaviours or how they were received by participants. No data was gathered related to the ethnicity of participants, which may have also influenced the use and reception of rapport behaviours. In studies 2 and 3, again no data related to the ethnicity of police and probation officer participants were gathered. Future research should aim to gather data related to interviewer and interviewee ethnicity and assess how this factor may impact the use and reception of rapport-building behaviours.

There are a plethora of other interviewee factors that may also be influential to rapport. For example individuals with developmental disabilities (e.g., ASD) or personality disorders (e.g., psychopathy) may have limited social cognition or empathy (Blair, 2008), and so rapport building may be different with these interviewees. In particular, children with ASD may present varying degrees of verbal and non-verbal communicative abilities (Distefano et al., 2016), and so recommendations made in study 1 for the use of simple non-verbal behaviours to build rapport may not be appropriate when interviewing these

individuals. As such, novel methods of interviewing populations with ASD or other disorders are needed (e.g., see Mattison et al., 2015; Mattison et al., 2018 for a novel drawing method of communication).

Study 3 also found that probation officers considered ASD, ADHD and age to be important factors to consider when building rapport, as participants reported that these factors could impair social cognition and communication, and so they had to use novel methods and adapt them to the service user's needs to build rapport. However, participants in study 2 reported they found rapport be least effective with individuals who have mental health disorders or young offenders, populations whereby rapport may be most beneficial (Farrugia & Gabbert, 2019; Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999), highlighting that police officers may not always consider vulnerabilities of interviewees or adapt their methods to meet their needs, which may disrupt their ability to build rapport with them and limit the success of their interviews. Future research needs to consider these factors and how they influence forensic interviewers' use of rapport building, investigate what techniques/behaviours are effective for building rapport with a diverse range of interviewees, and the impact these techniques/behaviours have with them.

As well as interviewees, there are also a range of interviewing contexts which must be considered when evaluating rapport in forensic settings. One of the most significant interviewing contexts to consider in the contemporary world regards forensic interviews conducted remotely. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, socialisation and communication has mostly moved to being done remotely through telephone or video (Nguyen et al., 2020), and this has impacted the Police and Probation services, whereby witness/suspect interviews and supervisory sessions with service users are also allowed to occur remotely by phone or video (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 2020; The Law Society, 2020). While the impact of conducting interviews/supervision remotely in Police and Probation settings is not currently known, in the webinar presented by the researcher to the

NPS (Nahouli, 2020), remote supervision was reported by several probation officers as disrupting their rapport-building process with service users. As such, while remote interviewing/supervision is currently a necessity, the question arises as to whether remote interviewing/supervision is as effective as face-to-face, and whether rapport building differs when interacting through different mediums.

To date, there is very little research that investigates the impact of conducting forensic interviews remotely, but a recent study by Taylor and Dando (2018) found that interviewing adult mock-witnesses (N=38) online using virtual avatars increased the amount of accurate details they provided compared to when they were interviewed face-to-face in real life. While promising results, this study did not investigate the best methods of building rapport during online interactions, or what the impact of doing so was when using this medium – although, previous research has found that rapport can be built easily over video through simple non-verbal gestures (Bailenson & Yee, 2005), similar to what was found in the current thesis for face-to-face interviews (i.e., study 1).

What might be a more pressing issue is how rapport can be built by telephone. Here, there is no opportunity for interviewers to use non-verbal behaviours, and so they have to rely only on verbal behaviours. However, as shown in study 1, verbal behaviours may be difficult to use and may be ineffective, thus potentially hindering telephone interviews/supervision. However, a recent study found that the TDR components of rapport (i.e., attention, positivity & coordination) could be developed over the telephone with human intelligence sources (N = 7) through the use of verbal active listening techniques, establishing common ground and explaining the interview process – rapport also correlated with increased information yield (Nunan et al., 2020). Furthermore, the risk of using verbal techniques is that they may not be accompanied by positive non-verbal behaviours, which can make them appear disingenuous. However, as non-verbal behaviours cannot be seen over the phone, it is possible the negative impact of verbal

rapport seen in study 1 can be limited or nullified, and so may make the use of verbal techniques less cognitively taxing and/or easier to use effectively. These are promising findings, but further work is needed that investigates the use and impact of rapport in remote interviews/supervision, which will also help navigate current forensic practice during the pandemic.

Finally, there are other forensic contexts that should be considered when investigating rapport building in future research. While this thesis primarily focused on Police and Probation settings, there are other areas of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) where rapport has been suggested as beneficial, such as in prison settings. Similar to probation service users, prisoners also have important information they can disclose regarding their motivations for change and mental wellbeing (Clark et al., 2006), and here building rapport (e.g., by prison officers) is also suggested as being important for encouraging these disclosures (Pinizzotto & Davis, 1996, as cited in Vanderhallen et al., 2011). Prison culture in the UK also seems to be shifting away from ‘hard’ power, that is prison officers exerting authoritative control over prisoners, towards ‘soft’ power, whereby prison officers instead attempt to develop positive relationships with prisoners and encourage them to take an active role in changing their behaviour (Crewe, 2011). As such, rapport may be an important element to good staff-prisoner relations and guiding prisoners towards positive change in this context – however, research has so far failed to understand staff-prisoner relationships, or the prisoners perspective in relation to changing behaviour (Bullock & Bunce, 2020; Darke et al., 2020).

The research conducted for study 2 and 3 also only concerned views of forensic interviewers, giving no indication of how forensic interviewees (i.e., the individuals who ‘receive’ rapport in the interview) conceptualise rapport – as such, it is unclear whether service users agree with the rapport-building process highlighted in study 3 for example. This is a limitation common to research in psychological and criminological research, and

it greatly limits our understanding of rapport (Aresti et al., 2016; Darke et al., 2020). While study 3 provides indication of a rapport-building process for example, it may be that this is ineffective in practice, but by gathering views of forensic interviewees, this process model could be strengthened. Thus, in order to expand the forensic rapport literature, future research needs to address this disparity in knowledge by including the voices of forensic interviewees, but also conducting observational research that assesses how this process is used and received in practice (a sentiment that is shared within the literature and is seeing some traction; see Boxstaens et al., 2015).

7.2.3 Rapport as a mindset

The previous sections mostly discussed rapport as being operationalised through a set of techniques and behaviours. However, there is an important question to consider when thinking about rapport: is rapport simply a set of techniques to be employed or is it a mindset that interviewers must possess in order to appear genuine and interested? For example, the poor findings for verbal techniques in study 1 suggest that if officers attempt to build rapport without motivation or willingness to do it well, they will ultimately damage rapport – building and maintaining rapport then may be more about the actual mindset one has, rather than the specific techniques themselves. This idea was touched on slightly in study 3, whereby probation officers claimed that their choice of attire was a technique they could use to build rapport, although it was highlighted by others that it was not necessarily the clothes that built rapport but the way in which participants felt while wearing them, as it put them in a positive mindset to build rapport.

A common criticism of rapport research is that it is often reductive in nature, attempting to split rapport into a set of behaviours or techniques that relate to rapport, but do not adequately explain the nuanced nature of rapport (Alison et al., 2013; Neequaye & Giolla, 2021). Similarly, measuring rapport simply through a limited set of characteristics

(as was done in study 1 and in other research studies, such as Vallano et al., 2011) also does not explain what is actually occurring in that rapport-building process. Again, these authors argue that rapport is a mindset, as while rapport-building techniques exist, it is how one uses them which has the impact, and effective use of these techniques is related to a positive and open mindset. Without this mindset, officers build rapport for the sake of doing so rather than a genuine interest to do so, and so those rapport techniques/behaviours could appear as disingenuous or fake, thus disrupting rapport building and hindering communication.

Interestingly, the findings from probation officers in study 3 suggest that they consider having an open, reflective, and positive mindset as key to rapport building. While participants did report simple behaviours that could be used to build rapport with service users, participants said that officers needed to employ these with genuine interest and consistency, but also reflect on what works and what does not in order to adapt them to the needs, wants or abilities of the service user. As such, the techniques and behaviours themselves were not necessarily reported as the key towards good rapport building, but rather the way in which they were employed. Further, the officers ability and motivation to reflect and truly understand themselves and their service users was how they became aware of how to employ these techniques effectively. Through reflection and gaining experience with different service users, they reported eventually developing a specific role that worked for them within the remit of their supervision. Interestingly, there does not appear to be a one-size-fits all role, and officers need to find what works for them, but again it is through that open and reflective mindset that they are able to do this – an inability or unwillingness to learn and adapt was considered detrimental to supervision and rapport building. As such, it can be inferred that, at least for probation practice, rapport is better conceptualised as a mindset rather than a set of specific techniques.

The same findings did not emerge from participants in the police survey (study 2), although this may have been due to the limitations of conducting a survey – there were no specific questions related to mindsets or reflection and there was an inability to extract in-depth data on this matter compared to study 3’s method. However, other studies have found that police officers report following a similar rapport-building process to that reported by probation officers in study 3. For example, Risan et al. (2017) found that when interviewing traumatised victims, Norwegian police officers first planned their method of rapport building through reflection and thinking about their knowledge of rapport (akin to themes 1 and 2 in study 3), then established rapport through immediacy behaviours and clarity to make the interviewee feel comfortable (akin to theme 3 in study 3), and finally maintained rapport by attempting to understand the interviewee and adapt their interview style to meet their needs (akin to themes 4 and 5 in study 3). Due to the reflective and adaptive nature of this process, it could be inferred that (at least with certain interviewees) a similar mindset to that discussed with probation officers is necessary here.

However, there was a proportion of the police officer sample in study 2 which reported rapport as being ineffective with suspects overall, and disagreed with using some rapport-building techniques with suspects, such as empathy or sharing personal information. They also reported rapport as being ineffective with some suspects, such as serious offenders (e.g., violent/sexual offenders), young offenders and offenders with mental health disorders – although, these may be suspect types where building rapport is most pertinent (Farrugia & Gabbert, 2019; Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999). A small proportion of the probation officer sample in study 3 also reported taking caution when building rapport with serious offenders, as they may be less receptive to rapport techniques/behaviours and may use them against the officer. Thus, it appears that forensic interviewers may use rapport selectively, and it highlights that they may not have the same open and reflective mindset with every type of interviewee.

With that being said, there are various challenges that forensic officers face when interviewing suspects that could explain some of their reluctance to keep a positive mindset and use rapport techniques in certain situations. Firstly, interviews can be a cognitively taxing task for interviewers, already requiring them to follow a stringent interview protocol (i.e., PEACE; College of Policing; MI; Miller & Rollnick, 1991), ask the right questions at the right time, and manage the interview environment so as to ensure a productive interview (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992). Adding another layer of complexity to interviews through rapport building, while also only providing vague and unclear indications of what rapport is and how to build it, may feel burdensome to some interviewers and cause them to be less open or reflective (which are also cognitively taxing processes; Griffiths & Walsh, 2018), inevitably leading them to use rapport ineffectively or abandon it.

While not explicitly apparent in the current data, there is evidence to suggest that the culture of police is one based on characteristics such as masculinity and dominance (B. Loftus, 2010) – as such, officers may also be wary of appearing too ‘nice’ with offenders that have committed heinous acts (e.g., sex offenders), and so may avoid rapport behaviours with these types of suspects. This may be exacerbated due to prejudices and biases that officers can have towards sex offenders and other serious offenders due to the nature of their crimes (Baker-Eck et al., 2020b; Minhas et al., 2017). As such, using rapport behaviours could be considered inappropriate in interviews with these types of offenders, especially where the nature of the crime could trigger negative emotions, stress or even secondary trauma for officers (which can regularly occur in offences of a sexual nature; Huey & Kalyal, 2017; Lewis et al., 2013; MacEachern et al., 2011; Rhineberger-Dunn et al., 2016), and so the officer may be unwilling to have a positive mindset or build rapport here.

Interestingly, probation officers in study 3 who reported not using, or specifying caution when using some rapport techniques (such as self-disclosure and personal conversation) also reported having a background in the police, and they were also more likely to specify taking a professional/authoritative style in their supervision – this was in contrast to the majority of officers who expressed regularly using these techniques and taking a more informal approach to supervision. As discussed earlier, police culture often perpetuates ideas of masculinity, authority, and dominance (B. Loftus, 2010), and that culture can make it difficult for officers to share their weaknesses and limitations (Oxburgh et al., 2015). As such, rather than attempt to overcome their biases or emotional distress that arise from complex and difficult interviews, officers may instead shield themselves from them by taking a more authoritative mindset and limiting their use of rapport behaviours – attempting to show empathy with serious offenders for example could make the officer vulnerable to developing negative emotions (Baker-Eck et al., 2020b), and so they may avoid displaying this behaviour. Thus, this culture may have been influential to the mindset that some police and probation officers possess and how they build rapport in practice.

Interestingly, this debate around mindsets does not only relate to rapport but also other key elements of interviewing. For example, as mentioned earlier in this thesis (Chapter 1, section 1.2), US police officers can often have a guilt-presumptive and accusatorial mindset when interviewing suspects, primarily due to the recommended method of interviewing in the US being the Reid technique (Meissner et al., 2014). The UK on the other hand is more focused on information-gathering, and tends to take a more humanitarian mindset to interviewing. Similar differences in mindset also emerge between UK and US probation services (Phillips, 2010).

However, this is changing, as the Mendez principles were recently published that is focused on moving away from coercive practices in the US to one focused on obtaining

accurate and reliable information and respecting human rights (Mendez, 2021). In this regard, it sets out 6 main principles, which is that investigative interviewing should: 1) be based on sound scientific and empirical foundations, 2) be concerned with gathering plentiful and accurate information, 3) identify interviewee vulnerabilities and address them, 4) be based on rigorous training, 5) be a process held to account, and 6) be implemented through national standardised measures. Ultimately, these principles aim to ensure best practice in investigative interviewing, and highlights the need for rapport building, amongst other things, which may be useful in shifting the mindset away from guilt presumption to one of building rapport and humanitarian interviewing. It could be that this shift is already occurring, considering that the sample of US police officers in the study by Vallano et al. (2015) considered the importance of rapport in interviewing practice (although, some highlighted it's utility for extracting confessions).

With this being said, it has been highlighted many times throughout this thesis that while UK police officers may report rapport building as important, and in some cases show competency and a willingness to build rapport in practice (e.g., Dando et al., 2008; Alison et al., 2013), there are many instances whereby rapport is ignored by police officers or practiced ineffectively (e.g., Walsh & Bull, 2010, 2012). As highlighted by study 2 and 3, and by other UK-based studies looking at empathy for example (e.g., Oxburgh et al., 2006, 2012, 2015), there are also certain offenders and situations whereby officers are unwilling or incapable of using rapport behaviours. As such, while the mindset in UK policing revolves around information-gathering which necessarily includes rapport building, this mindset may not always be present by officers in practice, or is selectively used based on the type of offender being interviewed. This highlights that some officers may be hindering their ability to build rapport, as well as limiting the information they are able to gather and the success of their interviews. With that being said, it must be questioned then how

officers can be trained or encouraged to take on good mindsets and engage in rapport building.

7.2.4 The need for reflective practice

One of the key findings that emerged from study 3 was that probation officers saw reflective practice as a key element of building and maintaining rapport – this allowed officers to understand what went well and what did not in supervision, and led them to understanding what rapport is and how they could use it. It also led to them thinking about what factors about themselves and the service user may influence that rapport-building process and supervision in general, and through reflection participants understood how they could adapt their supervision to meet the needs of different service users, whether they differed due to the crime committed, or other factors such as gender, race, age, or disabilities, amongst other things.

It was not uncovered from study 2 whether police officers in the sample also valued reflective practice. However, other research has found that police officers do report engaging in reflection to learn and improve on their practice (Wingrave, 2011), but that they do not always receive consistent or adequate support or training in order to engage in reflective practice. It is unclear whether participants in study 2 received training in reflective practice or whether it was effective – although, nearly 40% of participants stated they had not received training in rapport, so it is likely they also have not received training in reflection (reflection may also be part of rapport training). Regardless of reflection being a key element of the rapport-building process highlighted by participants in study 3, they mostly highlighted their training to be insufficient and lacking in general, but also in areas such as reflective practice and rapport building.

Reflection could be considered a core element of the PEACE model of interviewing, whereby the evaluation stage of an investigation is meant to be where

officers assess their performance and further develop their skills (College of Policing, 2013; Walsh et al., 2017). Reflection is also recommended as an area of development when training in PEACE by analysing mock interviews and feedback, as well as assessing competencies (Griffiths & Milne, 2006; Griffiths, 2008). Even so, it has been found that officers often do not self-reflect and engage in this process, or do so inadequately (Clarke & Milne, 2001; Walsh et al., 2017; Walsh & Bull, 2011; Walsh & Milne, 2007). Furthermore, people tend to over-exaggerate their ability to engage in reflection and often focus on the things they feel they are good at rather than those that could be improved (Roy & Liersch, 2013). In particular, experienced police detectives often rate themselves as skilled in reflection, with none admitting to being poor (Bull & Cherryman, 1996), but they tend to over-rate their performance in interviews (Walsh et al., 2017) – as such, experience does not necessarily equate to better skill, but rather higher confidence.

As reported by Griffiths & Walsh (2018), engaging in reflection is a cognitively demanding task, and most officers engage with it at a descriptive level. They may not have the motivation or the articulation to be able to engage in an analytical form of reflection, and this gets worse with more complex reflective tasks. For example, in their study they found that officers were better able to reflect on simple practices, such as their planning and preparation. However, less officers were able to reflect on practices such as their cognitive interviewing skills and their ability to weave rapport into an interview. Officers who were assessed as having higher interviewing skills in general were found to be better at engaging in reflection than less skilled officers, but this was not always the case for more complex skills. Rather, officers seemed better able at reflecting on the things they were good at, potentially because this is less cognitively taxing.

There are also potential barriers that cause officers not to reflect. For example, participants in study 3 highlighted that due to high workloads, lack of time, and a perpetually changing probation service, they did not feel adequately equipped or supported

to engage in reflective practice, which they felt negatively impacted on their rapport-building process. Indeed, the recent shifts from a national probation service to a partially privatised service and back again has caused anxiety amongst probation staff regarding their role and created some distrust towards the service they work for (Robinson et al., 2016; S. Walker et al., 2019). Furthermore, due to the failure of other services (e.g., mental health services), the onus of these services can often fall on probation officers, and there are accounts of officers becoming further stressed and also developing secondary trauma after dealing with issues related to their service users' trauma or abuse (Lewis et al., 2013; Rhineberger-Dunn et al., 2016); especially as officers are not always trained or supported to handle these issues (Mackenzie et al., 2015).

Similar problems may exist in police work, where again high workloads, lack of time and stress may negatively impact on their job (Queirós et al., 2020) and leave them with little capacity or motivation to engage in activities such as reflection (Wingrave, 2011). As such, both police and probation services need to be aware of these barriers and ensure they alleviate them in order for officers to be able to engage in reflective practice. However, training in forensic settings is often criticised as being too focused on expediency and outcome, rather than facilitating competence and skills (Walsh et al., 2017). As well, while training is important, this also needs to be continual – once training is received, officers can often revert back to less skilful patterns of interviewing that go against their training, and so refresher courses are needed (Griffiths & Milne, 2006). Furthermore, training does not always equate to complete competence, as higher trained officers have also been found to sometimes become less skilled in certain areas (such as adaptiveness), potentially due to inadequate training, but perhaps also due to a lack of retraining which causes them to deskill (Beek et al., 2021).

Thus, it is clear that reflective practice is a key factor towards rapport building and good investigative interviewing skills. Furthermore, there is a need for more focused

training and monitoring to help officers engage with this. While training is important here however, there remains a question of whether all individuals will be able to engage in these practices, or whether individual factors play a role in an interviewer's ability to build rapport and engage in reflection.

7.2.5 Interviewer factors that influence rapport building and reflection

There are several factors which may influence how rapport, as well as reflective practice is engaged in. This was a major factor discussed in study 3 by probation officers, as they highlighted both mutable and immutable factors, such as their gender, race, attire (amongst other things) as being influences towards rapport building. This is an important point to consider, as it highlights that while training may be useful towards building rapport and reflecting, there may be factors that facilitate or limit someone's ability to do these things, and potentially training cannot overcome all of these.

For example, metacognition may be a key element of effective reflection. Metacognition is described generally as thinking about thinking, whereby an individual monitors and regulates their thoughts to understand how they have come to particular knowledge (e.g., what previous experiences have influenced it) and how they can apply that knowledge to a particular task or goal (Flavell, 1979, 1987). Metacognition is a key element of effective learning and future success, as engaging in metacognitive processes allows individuals to reflect on their performance (both good and bad) and understand what led to the outcome, in which case they are then able to apply successful, as well as ignore unsuccessful strategies in the future, thus enhancing their performance (Bransford et al., 2000). As such, metacognitive processes may be key to good reflection, and so officers who have the capacity to engage in these processes might be highly successful at engaging in reflective practice.

However, it should be noted that experience and expertise can cause individuals to become biased in their role and not consider alternative information, although they remain confident in their knowledge and abilities (Keestra, 2017). This has also been found to occur with police officers. For example, police officers (as well as the general public) often consider themselves to be more competent than laypeople at detecting deception, however research shows they are generally as accurate (and in some instances less accurate) than laypersons, but they are more confident in their ability (Akehurst et al., 2004; Garrido et al., 2004). This was also discussed earlier regarding reflection, whereby officers often claim they are good at engaging in reflective practice, but are often found to perform poorly in this task (Bull & Cherryman, 1996; Griffiths & Walsh, 2018; Walsh et al., 2017), and potentially officers who are less able to engage in metacognitive processes are likely to overstate their ability. However, findings by Keestra (2017) suggest that metacognition is not a static factor, as expertise appeared to change metacognitive ability, albeit negatively in that study. As such, it may be possible to train metacognition in police officers to help improve their ability to reflect and build rapport.

Another factor to consider here is psychopathic traits. Psychopathy is often mischaracterised, with ‘psychopaths’ considered in popular media to be violent and dangerous individuals who are often linked to offending, in particular violent offences and serial murders – however, these are misconceptions (J. M. Berg et al., 2013). While psychopathic individuals present traits which may be considered negative (such as lower empathy, superficial charm, and poor impulse control), there is growing literature that identifies these traits as potentially beneficial when interacting in difficult or risky environments, or when making difficult decisions. As such, there is a significant prevalence of psychopathic individuals in job roles that require these skills (e.g., surgeons, CEOs, lawyers, civil servants; Sanz-garcía et al., 2021).

Interestingly, police officers are another group in which psychopathic traits are assumed to be adaptive, and there also appears to be a significant prevalence of psychopathic individuals in police forces (Moore, 2020; Sanz-garcía et al., 2021). However, considering the importance of empathy in relation to rapport building, this raises the question as to how effective psychopathic individuals may be at building rapport – this has not been investigated, but it could be hypothesised that these individuals may be less able at building rapport. With that being said, other research has found that psychopathy and empathy are not necessarily exclusive, with some subtypes of psychopathy, as well as individuals with only mild psychopathy potentially still being able to feel and express empathy (Mihailides et al., 2017). Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that psychopathy has an environmental influence and is not necessarily static (J. M. Berg, 2013), and can even be temporarily induced (Mihailides et al., 2017). In regards to police officers, psychopathic traits may also change based on age and experience, with younger and less-experienced officers showing the highest levels of psychopathic traits (Moore, 2020). As such, much like metacognition, it may be possible for psychopathic individuals to be trained in rapport building skills, and potentially there is room to look at certain adaptive psychopathic traits and how they could be incorporated into forensic training – however, future work should first aim to understand the impact of psychopathic traits for forensic practice as this is not yet well understood.

To come back to empathy, this alone may be an important factor to consider when understanding an officer's ability to build rapport. It has been found in the literature that some officers find it difficult to use empathy in investigative interviews, particularly where they involve interviewee's such as sex offenders (Oxburgh et al., 2012, 2015; Oxburgh & Ost, 2011). However, the literature makes clear that there is a difference between affective empathy, which is characterised as vicariously experiencing the feelings and emotions of another person (and is related to developing negative emotions; Baker-Eck et al., 2020b),

and cognitive empathy, which is characterised instead as understanding the other person's perspective or emotional state without internalising it (Bull & Baker-Eck, 2020; Oxburgh & Ost, 2011). Regardless, officers who have lower levels of empathy may also have difficulty engaging in cognitive empathy. Furthermore, emotional intelligence is linked to empathy, and so individuals who have lower emotional intelligence may also have more difficulty with rapport building (Risan et al., 2016).

Gender may be another important factor to consider in relation to this. For example, it has been found that female police officers are provided with more opportunities by suspects to display empathy and appear more attuned towards doing so than male officers (Dando & Oxburgh, 2016). In Probation, female probation officers also report that rapport building is a skill more often engaged in by female officers, and report that male officers generally prefer more confrontational methods (Ireland & Berg, 2008) – although, these were self-reported views. While this view was not shared by probation officer participants in study 3, there was some indication that male officers sometimes take a more formal/authoritative approach to supervision – however, this could also have been attributed to other factors (e.g., background in the Police). Female participants in this study also reported it sometimes being difficult to build rapport with male service users due to their gender, and that this may be similar between male officers and female service users.

As such, it is possible that gender also has an impact on a police/probation officer's use of rapport-building behaviours or the interviewee's receptiveness of rapport. It was not within the scope of the current thesis to investigate this, but limitations regarding the studies can be considered regarding gender. Study 1 was conducted solely by a male interviewer and participants were overwhelmingly female, police participants in study 2 were primarily male (although, the gender split roughly emulates the gender split within the UK Police services; Hargreaves et al., 2018), and probation participants in study 3 were primarily female (although, again the gender split reflects that within the UK Probation

services; Ministry of Justice, 2018). Thus, it is possible that gender had an influence on rapport throughout these studies, but it was not possible to investigate this in the current research due to the limitations with the participant samples. It is also possible that other factors mentioned in this section had an impact, but again it was not within the scope of the thesis and the studies were not designed to investigate these factors.

Regardless, these are important points to consider and factors that future research should investigate. It may be that some of the factors mentioned are key elements of rapport building, but it may also be likely that some forensic interviewers do not possess the natural capacity to utilise them. As such, while they may be able to engage with investigative interviewing to an extent, it is possible that some officers will not be able to reach more advanced stages (e.g., PEACE tier 3+) due to this. That is not to say that skills cannot be trained, for example it has been shown that both empathy and metacognition can be trained and improved in individuals (Callender et al., 2016; van Berkhout & Malouff, 2016), but considering the difficult and cognitively taxing nature of forensic interviewing, it is possible that officers without at least some natural affinity towards these tasks may have difficulty employing them in practice.

Thus, there is room for training in many of these areas, such as empathy and metacognitive training, as well as educating officers in identifying and limiting biases, and providing further clarification regarding concepts such as empathy and what it means in an investigative sense. However, future research is needed that investigates the impact individual factors have for forensic interviewing, and identifies the extent to which certain factors can be trained or require a natural affinity to employ effectively – this research may have important implications for police and probation recruitment strategies to ensure a diverse range of officers that are able to meet all the challenges of forensic interviews.

7.2.6 The toolbox of rapport

As discussed in the previous sections, there are several ways in which the findings of the three distinct studies (i.e., witness, suspect, and probation interviewing) can inform one another, indicating how rapport can be conceptualised and built across a wide forensic perspective, and providing recommendations for future research and practice to accommodate these. However, there are also distinct differences that need to be considered between these contexts. As was specified earlier in this thesis, conceptualisations and operationalisations of rapport developed in therapeutic/counselling settings may not generalise to forensic settings. Similarly, it can be concluded that what works in one forensic context (e.g., probation) may not be appropriate, beneficial, or easy to generalise for other forensic contexts (e.g., police interviewing) either. As such, while the current research can work somewhat towards developing a forensic framework of rapport building, future research should aim to conduct more focused research into these distinct forensic contexts and understand how rapport can be operationalised specifically for each.

Regardless, what can be concluded from this discussion is that rapport is a toolbox that practitioners have at their disposal, much like other forensic toolboxes (e.g., CI; Fisher & Gieselman, 1992). While it may be reductive to discuss rapport as a set of verbal and non-verbal behaviours, study 1 highlighted clear differences in interviewee rapport and memory performance based on the types of techniques/behaviours employed by the interviewer, and so to an extent rapport can be conceptualised simply as a set of techniques. On the other hand, describing rapport as a mindset can be vague and open to interpretation, but it is clear from the current research that having an open, positive and reflective mindset is necessary for interviewers to effectively engage with interviewees and build rapport – without this mindset, attempts to build rapport may fall flat or appear disingenuous. Thus, what is clear from this thesis is that both of these elements are important when attempting to understand rapport, as it appears to be the culmination of

good technique and an open mindset which allows officers to engage in effective rapport-building practices. As such, rapport can be considered a toolbox. Within this toolbox are a number of techniques/behaviours (i.e., tools), and the mindset is the knowledge of how to use those tools effectively – this knowledge is developed through experience, training and reflection. The successful forensic interviewer is one who can choose the right tool at the right time to build rapport effectively with different types of interviewees and in different contexts/settings. Ultimately, the interviewer's ability to understand their toolbox and how to use it could be conceptualised as *rapport*.

7.3 'What is rapport?' Revisited (conclusion)

This thesis sought to provide a better understanding of rapport than is currently available in the literature. Currently, there is very little indication of what rapport actually is outside of complex or vague descriptors that do not lend themselves to practice, nor do they support understanding on how to train rapport-building skills in suspect interviews and interviews that occur during probation supervision. In witness interview settings there is a lot of noise, but very little signal – the published research suggests what rapport might look like and gives some indication of good vs. bad rapport-building practice, but there remains only a vague understanding of how to manipulate behaviours to develop rapport and guide witness cognition. Most people can appreciate when rapport is absent and when it is present during an interview, but operationalising rapport remains a challenge.

The question of 'what is forensic rapport?' remains to an extent, but this thesis has gone some way towards meeting this challenge. It provides the first in-depth investigations into the views of rapport by UK police and probation officers, and provides a novel indication of a cluster of rapport-building behaviours that can effectively build rapport and guide witness cognition in interviewing practice, and these behaviours can easily be manipulated in future research; albeit, there are some limitations. What is apparent from

this work, however, is that rapport is a dynamic and nuanced social phenomenon, and that some rapport techniques may work with some people some of the time, but may not work with other people or in different situations. As such, this thesis provides a unique first step towards improved understanding of rapport in two complex forensic settings (i.e., Police and Probation services), but future research is needed that utilises different methods, more diverse participant populations and includes a wider range of forensic settings (e.g., Prison services), as well as further focus on how to train forensic practitioners in rapport building. These developments will help work towards fully answering the overarching question of ‘what is forensic rapport?’, and towards developing a clear and comprehensive framework of forensic rapport building that can be trained and employed in interviewing practice.

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9 Appendices

Appendix A: Sample coding for study 1

This coding is from a participant transcript, with coding explanations below:

Okay, so it was a boy (1) and a girl (2) going through (3), it looked like a student union (4) bar (5), to have a drink (6). The boy had a girlfriend (7) but they weren't getting along (8), and it looked like they were going on a date (9), or more than friends drink. And they got two becks (10), pints I think. And they went and sat down (11) in a booth (12), after a friend came up (13) and talked to them (14), I think about an assignment (15).

Green is correct information, red is incorrect information, purple is confabulated information.

1. This is correct as one of the main characters was male.
2. This is correct as one of the main characters was female.
3. This is incorrect as only the female character came into (or was going through) the bar, the male character was already waiting there.
4. This is confabulated as it is not possible to identify this as a student union.
5. This is correct as they were in a bar.
6. This is correct as they did get a drink.
7. This is correct as the male character did talk about his girlfriend.
8. This is correct as the male character did mention he was arguing with his girlfriend.
9. This is confabulated as there was no indication they were on a date.
10. This is a separate piece of correct information as it specifies the type of drink.
11. This is correct as after getting the drinks, they went to sit down.
12. This is incorrect as they sat at a small table on chairs, not in a booth.
13. This is correct as another person (a female character) did come over.
14. This is incorrect as the new character only talked to the main female character, the male character was not there when this occurred.
15. This is correct as the new character and the main female character talked about a coursework assignment.

Appendix B: Sample coding for study 2

Below are five participant responses to the question, 'How do you build rapport?'. For each are the categories that were derived from these responses to give an indication of the coding process:

1. **“Approach them in a friendly manner [a], explain my role [b] and ask if they would like a drink [c]”**
 - a. Being friendly
 - b. Explaining the interview process
 - c. Offering things (e.g., drinks, snacks, cigarettes)
2. **“Set the room up - lights & equipment [a]. Get a glass of water [b]. Check custody record to see if they have been interviewed before [c]”**
 - a. Setting up the room
 - b. Offering things (e.g., drinks, snacks, cigarettes)
 - c. Only this participant mentioned checking records, so it didn't become a category as our requirement was for 5% of the sample to mention it.
3. **“I'll collect them from their cell [a], I'll explain the process beforehand [b], offer them a drink [c], ask them how they're feeling and if they're ready to go [d]. I'll also be honest with them with any (non case related) questions they ask [e]. This helps them believe I'm not there to catch them out or trip them up, even if I actually am trying to test their honesty later”**
 - a. Collecting the suspect from their cell
 - b. Explaining the interview process
 - c. Offering things (e.g., drinks, snacks, cigarettes)
 - d. Ask how the suspect is feeling
 - e. Being honest
4. **“Empathetic [a] and active listening [b], eye contact [c]”**
 - a. Showing empathy
 - b. Active listening
 - c. Using non-verbal behaviours
5. **“Get onside, talk about family or sport etc [a] or if they want food or drink [b]”**
 - a. Having personal conversation
 - b. Offering things (e.g., drinks, snacks, cigarettes)

Appendix C: The COREQ (Tong et al., 2007) (study 3)

COREQ (Consolidated criteria for REporting Qualitative research) Checklist

A checklist of items that should be included in reports of qualitative research. You must report the page number in your manuscript where you consider each of the items listed in this checklist. If you have not included this information, either revise your manuscript accordingly before submitting or note N/A.

Topic	Item No.	Guide Questions/Description	Reported on Page No.
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity			
<i>Personal characteristics</i>			
Interviewer/facilitator	1	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	138
Credentials	2	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g. PhD, MD	171
Occupation	3	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	171
Gender	4	Was the researcher male or female?	197
Experience and training	5	What experience or training did the researcher have?	173-177
<i>Relationship with participants</i>			
Relationship established	6	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	137
Participant knowledge of the interviewer	7	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research	141, 257
Interviewer characteristics	8	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	170-175, 197
Domain 2: Study design			
<i>Theoretical framework</i>			
Methodological orientation and Theory	9	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	57-58
<i>Participant selection</i>			
Sampling	10	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	137
Method of approach	11	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	137
Sample size	12	How many participants were in the study?	137
Non-participation	13	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	N/A
<i>Setting</i>			
Setting of data collection	14	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	138
Presence of non-participants	15	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	138
Description of sample	16	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	139
<i>Data collection</i>			
Interview guide	17	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	138, 255
Repeat interviews	18	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	140
Audio/visual recording	19	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	141
Field notes	20	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	140
Duration	21	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	138, 140
Data saturation	22	Was data saturation discussed?	138
Transcripts returned	23	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or	N/A

Topic	Item No.	Guide Questions/Description	Reported on Page No.
		correction?	
Domain 3: analysis and findings			
<i>Data analysis</i>			
Number of data coders	24	How many data coders coded the data?	142

Description of the coding tree	25	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	261-264
Derivation of themes	26	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	58/142
Software	27	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	142
Participant checking	28	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	N/A
<i>Reporting</i>			
Quotations presented	29	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number	144-161
Data and findings consistent	30	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	143-163
Clarity of major themes	31	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	143-163
Clarity of minor themes	32	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	143-163

Developed from: Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*. 2007. Volume 19, Number 6: pp. 349 – 357

Once you have completed this checklist, please save a copy and upload it as part of your submission. DO NOT include this checklist as part of the main manuscript document. It must be uploaded as a separate file.

Appendix D: Information sheet (study 1)

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

Memory recall during an eye-witness interview

Investigators: Mr. Zacharia Nahouli – z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk
Professor Coral Dando – c.dando@westminster.ac.uk

This study is being conducted as part of a research project run by the University of Westminster. The first part of this study will require you to watch a short video, from which you should try and remember as many details as you can – this will take around 5 minutes. Approximately 24 hours after watching the video you will be required to come to the University of Westminster to take part in a face-to-face interview regarding your memory for the video, which will be conducted by the investigator – this will take around 45 minutes.

During the interview, your middle and index finger will be attached to two small electrodes that will measure your skin's electrodermal activity (i.e., skin perspiration) – you should not feel any pain or discomfort from this. Before and after the interview, we will ask you to complete an anxiety questionnaire. After the interview, we will also ask you to complete several questionnaires asking you to rate certain elements of the interview. Finally, the interview will be audio and video recorded. However, the video camera will be directed towards the interviewer and you will not be seen in the frame.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you can terminate your participation at any point during the interview. When your data is input for analysis, it will be anonymised and any identifying features will be removed so that your contribution will not be identifiable when reporting this research. You will be provided with a participant number that you should keep. If you decide that you would like to withdraw your data from this study, then you may do so by contacting one of the researchers and quoting your participant number. However, it will not be possible to withdraw your data once it has been published or submitted as part of the research project. Your data will be stored and destroyed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Audio and video data will be stored securely on a password protected, encrypted data storage system, and paper documents will be stored in a locked drawer within the University of Westminster. Only the researchers will have access to your data. The data from this study may be used for future research and undergo secondary analyses. Future research may focus on a topic related to, or unrelated to the goals of this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study or wish to raise any concerns regarding how it is run, then please contact one of the research investigators.

Appendix E: Consent form (study 1)

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

Memory recall during an eye-witness interview

Investigators: Mr. Zacharia Nahouli – z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk

Professor Coral Dando – c.dando@westminster.ac.uk

I agree to participate in the research ‘**Memory recall during an eye-witness interview**’.

The research has been explained to my satisfaction and I am aware that:

- My participation in this research is on an entirely voluntary basis.
- I am able to stop at any point during data collection.
- Once I have taken part, I am still able to withdraw **my data** at any point until the research has been published/submitted as part of this research project.
- In order to withdraw my data, I will need to contact the researchers and quote my individual ID number, which has been provided to me.
- My skin conductance will be measured throughout the interview.
- I will be audio and video recorded throughout the interview.
- My data will be anonymised and all identifying features will be removed so that my contribution will not be identifiable when reporting this research.
- My data will be securely stored and destroyed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- My identity and contact details will not be stored by the researchers.
- I agree that my data from this study may be used for future research and may undergo secondary analysis. Future research may be related or unrelated to the goals of this study.

Participant No. _____

Participant Signature _____

Researcher Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix F: Debrief sheet (study 1)

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

The effect of building rapport during eye-witness interviews

Investigators: Mr. Zacharia Nahouli – z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk
Professor Coral Dando – c.dando@westminster.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this study which formulates part of a research project investigating rapport-building during forensic interviews.

Rapport has been described as a “harmonious, empathetic, or sympathetic relation or connection to another self” (Newberry & Stubbs, 1990, p.14). In communicative professions such as therapy, establishing rapport between an interviewer and an interviewee has been suggested as a key element for a successful interview as it facilitates a comfortable environment for cooperation and the sharing of information (Ardito & Rabellino, 2011). In forensic interviews, such as those conducted by police officers with witnesses, building rapport during an interview is recommended as a means of motivating an interviewee to cooperate with the interviewer and provide critical crime-relevant information (Vallano, Evans, Schreiber Compo, & Kieckhafer, 2015). However, there is currently limited research investigating how to effectively build rapport in a forensic interview, or what the effects of doing so are – e.g., can it lead to more or better quality information being extracted from an interviewee?

This study aimed to investigate the effect of rapport-building during witness interviews – that is, whether building rapport affects the information an interviewee provides for a video scene they watched. As such, you were randomly assigned to one of four conditions:

- **Control condition:** The interviewer conducts the interview in a professional manner but does not use any behavioural or verbal cues that establish rapport with the interviewee. This condition acts as a baseline level of interview performance in the absence of rapport.
- **Rapport-Building conditions:** The interview follows a similar format as in the control condition. However, the interviewer now uses specific rapport-building techniques in an attempt to make the interviewee feel more comfortable and/or motivated to provide information. This is done in three separate conditions:
 - **Behavioural:** The interviewer attempts to build rapport using only behavioural and non-verbal cues that indicate attention or interest towards the interviewee. These include smiling, nodding, leaning forward, maintaining eye gaze and using open body language.
 - **Verbal:** The interviewer attempts to build rapport using only verbal utterances that aim to draw out the interviewee’s thoughts and feelings (e.g.,

“how are you feeling about the interview?”) and elicit self-disclosure of personal information from the interviewee.

- **Full rapport:** The interviewer attempts to build rapport using both behavioural and verbal rapport-building techniques.

In this manner, we are able to assess the effectiveness of two separate elements of rapport-building (i.e., behavioural vs. verbal) on an interviewee’s performance during a witness interview, as well as their effect in combination with one another. The audio recordings of the interview will be transcribed and analysed for differences in the information provided by participants between each of the conditions. To measure whether the rapport manipulations were effective at building rapport, we had you complete post-interview questionnaires regarding your perceptions of the interview and interviewer on a number of factors (e.g., friendliness, cooperativeness, comfort). We also measured your anxiety levels pre- and post-interview, as well as your skin conductance throughout the interview. These act as further measures to assess whether rapport-building influenced you during the interview, and act as potential explanations for why rapport may affect information-gathering – e.g., building rapport could reduce an interviewee’s anxiety level, hence making them feel more comfortable to talk with the interviewer. Finally, the interview was video recorded primarily for the researchers to be able to check that the interviewer followed the protocol of each condition properly.

By collecting this data, we are able to assess which elements of rapport are effective at building rapport and examine the ways in which they influence a witness interview. This will add valuable knowledge to the current literature on rapport-building which is currently very limited. As such, we expect this research could lead to further investigations that look at the effectiveness of other elements of rapport, as well as the effectiveness of these techniques in other forensic contexts (e.g., suspect interviews). Furthermore, this data will allow us to develop evidence-based guidelines of how and why rapport should be built in forensic interviews, which can eventually be provided to police officers to help facilitate the interviews they regularly conduct.

Please do not share the details of this study with any of your peers as they may also participate in this study. We do not want participants to be aware of the rapport manipulations before taking part as this could influence their performance during the study.

If you would like any more information about this study or would like to contact the researchers for any reason, then please contact them using the details provided.

Appendix G: The brief state-trait anxiety inventory (STAI-S; C. Z. Berg et al., 1998) (study 1)

State Anxiety Questionnaire

Age: _____

Gender: _____

❖ Rate the following items based on the extent to which they are true for you right now:

1. I am relaxed	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 Moderately	4 Very much so
2. I feel steady	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 Moderately	4 Very much so
3. I feel strained	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 Moderately	4 Very much so
4. I feel comfortable	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 Moderately	4 Very much so
5. I am worried	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 Moderately	4 Very much so
6. I am tense	1 Not at all	2 Somewhat	3 Moderately	4 Very much so

Appendix H: Post-interview perceptions questionnaires (study 1)

Interviewer Questionnaire

❖ Please rate what you thought of the interviewer on the following characteristics:

1. Friendly	1 Not friendly	2 Slightly friendly	3 Moderately friendly	4 Very friendly	5 Extremely friendly
2. Awkward	1 Not awkward	2 Slightly awkward	3 Moderately awkward	4 Very awkward	5 Extremely awkward
3. Trustworthy	1 Not trustworthy	2 Slightly trustworthy	3 Moderately trustworthy	4 Very trustworthy	5 Extremely trustworthy
4. Satisfied	1 Not satisfied	2 Slightly satisfied	3 Moderately satisfied	4 Very satisfied	5 Extremely satisfied
5. Bored	1 Not bored	2 Slightly bored	3 Moderately bored	4 Very bored	5 Extremely bored
6. Attentive	1 Not attentive	2 Slightly attentive	3 Moderately attentive	4 Very attentive	5 Extremely attentive
7. Involved	1 Not involved	2 Slightly involved	3 Moderately involved	4 Very involved	5 Extremely involved
8. Credible	1 Not credible	2 Slightly credible	3 Moderately credible	4 Very credible	5 Extremely credible
9. Respectful	1 Not respectful	2 Slightly respectful	3 Moderately respectful	4 Very respectful	5 Extremely respectful

Interaction Questionnaire

❖ Please rate what you thought of the **interaction** on the following characteristics:

1. Well-Coordinated	1 Not coordinated	2 Slightly coordinated	3 Moderately coordinated	4 Very coordinated	5 Extremely coordinated
2. Boring	1 Not boring	2 Slightly boring	3 Moderately boring	4 Very boring	5 Extremely boring
3. Cooperative	1 Not cooperative	2 Slightly cooperative	3 Moderately cooperative	4 Very cooperative	5 Extremely cooperative
4. Satisfying	1 Unsatisfying	2 Slightly satisfying	3 Moderately satisfying	4 Very satisfying	5 Extremely satisfying
5. Comfortably Paced	1 Not comfortably paced	2 Slightly comfortably paced	3 Moderately comfortably paced	4 Very comfortably paced	5 Extremely comfortably paced
6. Cold	1 Not cold	2 Slightly cold	3 Moderately cold	4 Very cold	5 Extremely cold
7. Engaging	1 Not engaging	2 Slightly engaging	3 Moderately engaging	4 Very engaging	5 Extremely engaging
8. Involving	1 Not involving	2 Slightly involving	3 Moderately involving	4 Very involving	5 Extremely involving
9. Positive	1 Not positive	2 Slightly positive	3 Moderately positive	4 Very positive	5 Extremely positive
10. Worthwhile	1 Not worthwhile	2 Slightly worthwhile	3 Moderately worthwhile	4 Very worthwhile	5 Extremely worthwhile

Affiliation to the Interviewer Questionnaire

❖ The following questions ask about how affiliated you felt to the **interviewer**:

1) **How connected did you feel to the interviewer?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not connected	Slightly connected	Moderately connected	Very connected	Extremely connected

2) **How much did you feel the interviewer cared about you?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal

3) **How much did you want to please the interviewer?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal

4) **How much did you feel the interviewer was interested in the information you provided?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal

Memory Retrieval Questionnaire

❖ The following relate to retrieving information from memory during the interview:

1) **How difficult did you find it to provide accurate and plentiful information?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not difficult	Slightly difficult	Moderately difficult	Very difficult	Extremely difficult

2) **How much pressure did you feel to provide accurate and plentiful information?**

1	2	3	4	5
No pressure	A little pressure	Moderate pressure	A lot of pressure	Extreme pressure

3) **How much did you try to guess when providing information?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal

4) **How motivated were you to provide accurate and plentiful information to the interviewer?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not motivated	Slightly motivated	Moderately motivated	Very motivated	Extremely motivated

Appendix I: Interview protocols (study 1)

Standard Procedure:

1. Consent form → Anxiety form – Attach EDA – Get baseline (2 mins).
2. **Interviewer** begins with a short introduction:
 - a. “Thank you for coming today. My name is xxxx, and I will soon ask you questions related to the video you watched yesterday. Firstly, I want to remind you that you have already consented to this interview being audio and video recorded. Is that still okay with you?”
 - b. “Do you have any questions before we start the interview?”
3. **Interviewer** sets out the interview ground rules before beginning the interview:
 - a. “I want you to tell me everything you can remember for the video in as much detail as possible.”
 - b. “I want you only to tell me what you actually remember. Don’t try to guess and please say if you do not know the answer to my question.”
 - c. “If you can only remember partial information or small pieces of information, please provide these as they are still valuable.”
 - d. “If you don’t understand what I’m asking, please say so and I will try to rephrase the question.”
 - e. “Finally, please don’t move your hands too much during the interview as this can affect the skin conductance device.”
 - f. “Is this all clear?”
4. Free recall phase begins:
 - a. **Interviewer**: “Please can you tell me everything you remember for the video in as much detail as possible.”
 - b. At the end, **interviewer** prompts: “Is there anything else you can remember?”
5. **Interviewer** repeats the ground rules (step 3) and then begins the probed questioning phase:
 - a. For each of the major topics the participant mentioned in the free recall, the **interviewer** asks: “You mentioned seeing xxxx. Please tell me everything you remember about xxxx.”
 - b. Repeat for each topic.
6. **Interviewer** closes the interview:
 - a. “Thank you. I think I now have a good idea about what has happened. Just before we finish, is there anything else you want to add to your account?”
 - b. “And is there anything you would like to alter in your account?”
7. That is the end of the interview.

Verbal rapport-building phase:

In the verbal and full rapport conditions, prior to the first set of ground rules the **interviewer** carried out a 5-minute (approximately) rapport-building phase. The **interviewer** used several verbal rapport techniques, such as evocative prompts, self-disclosure, empathic statements and using the interviewee’s name. The **interviewer** also attempted to match the interviewee’s responses in tone and content.

1. **Interviewer** begins with a short introduction:
 - a. “Thank you for coming today xxxx. Is it fine that I call you xxxx? Okay, my name is xxxx, and I am soon going to ask you some questions related to the video that you watched yesterday. Firstly, I want to remind you that you have already consented to this interview being audio and video recorded. Is that still okay with you?”
 - b. “Do you have any questions before we start the interview?”
2. **Interviewer** says: “I realise that wearing the skin conductance device during the interview may be somewhat of a nuisance. But I’d like you to try to sit comfortably and please just let me know if you are uncomfortable.”
3. **Interviewer** asks: “How are you today xxxx?”
 - a. **Interviewer** responds accordingly (e.g., “I’m also doing well/my day has also not been great today”).
4. **Interviewer** asks: “Were you able to find the room okay?”
 - a. **Interviewer** responds accordingly (e.g., “okay, good/yeh it can be confusing to find”).
5. **Interviewer** asks about the participant’s experience studying at University (if a student) or in their job (if not a student):
 - i. **Interviewer** responds by talking about either their own role as a PhD student (if a student participant) or teaching as an employee at the University (if a non-student participant).
6. **Interviewer** asks the participant about their future plans with their studies/work:
 - a. **Interviewer** responds accordingly (e.g., “That sounds like a good plan, I hope it works out”/“I wouldn’t worry too much, it can be difficult to think that far ahead.”)
7. **Interviewer** asks: “Where are you from xxxx?”
 - a. **Interviewer** asks about their experience living in London.
 - b. **Interviewer** shares where they are from and their experience living in London.
8. **Interviewer** asks: “How was your commute to the University today?”
 - a. **Interviewer** responds accordingly (e.g., “oh, that’s quite quick/oh, that’s a long journey”) and shares their own commute.
 - b. **Interviewer** says: “I appreciate you making that commute to come and participate in the study today.”
9. **Interviewer** asks: “Have you ever taken part in research before?”
 - a. If yes, they are asked about other studies they have participated in.
 - b. If no, **interviewer** says: “Okay, no problem. Hopefully you find today’s research interesting and take part in more in the future.”
10. **Interviewer** asks: “How are you feeling about taking part in the interview?”
 - a. **Interviewer** says: “I’d just like to assure you that I’m going to be patient and give you as much time as you need to remember the video scene, so try not to worry too much about it.”

During the interview, the **interviewer** also summarised the interviewee’s responses, used the interviewee’s name, and used evocative prompts/empathic statements where appropriate.

Appendix J: Information sheet & Consent form (study 2)

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Rapport building in suspect interviews

Investigators: Mr. Zacharia Nahouli - z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk
Professor Coral Dando - c.dando@westminster.ac.uk

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my programme of PhD research, being conducted at the University of Westminster. I am interested in your personal opinions and practices of rapport building when interviewing suspects. If you have any questions regarding the research, please contact one of the investigators (mentioned above).

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any point **until** you have completed the survey and submitted it. The information you provide is completely anonymous, and no information will be collected that will enable me to identify you. Once you have submitted the survey I will not be able to remove your data, which will be added to a larger data set for analysis. Your data will be stored securely on a password protected computer within the UK and will only be shared between the investigators of this study, as in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Furthermore, the data from this study may be used for future research and may undergo secondary analysis. Future research may focus on a topic related to, or unrelated to the goals of this study.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions asked and you do not have to answer any/all of the questions. It is important that you answer the questions in a manner that fully reflects your true thoughts and practices - this will help me to understand when and if you use rapport, as well as how you and your colleagues build rapport.

This survey comprises of a series of sections: 1) About you, 2) What is rapport?, and 3) Methods of rapport-building.

If you agree to take part in this survey please select **continue** to move on to the questions. If you do not agree to take part, then please select **quit** and the survey will be terminated.

Appendix K: Debrief sheet (study 2)

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Rapport building in suspect interviews

This is the end of the survey. Thank you very much for taking part.

The purpose of this survey was to investigate police officers' understanding of rapport within suspect interviews. In this context, rapport-building is recommended by many police interviewing guidelines (e.g., PEACE; College of Policing, 2013) and by police officers (e.g., Vallano, Evans, Schreiber Compo, & Kieckhafer, 2015) as a useful tool for influencing a suspect to cooperate. However, apart from these recommendations, there is very limited information and research detailing what constitutes rapport within a suspect interview and what the most effective methods of building rapport with a suspect are, or whether there are even benefits of building rapport with a suspect (Vallano & Schreiber Compo, 2015).

The aim of this survey was to address these gaps in our understanding by finding out what you and your colleagues think rapport is, how you build rapport, and whether you think it benefits suspect interviews. We were also interested in whether factors such as your gender, age, experience or training may influence your views of rapport-building. Furthermore, we also wanted to assess how your views align with two current theoretical models of rapport-building, the humanitarian interviewing model (Holmberg & Madsen, 2014) and the Observing Rapport-Based Interpersonal Techniques model (ORBIT; Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib, & Christiansen, 2013).

By gathering such information, we can identify what the most important elements of rapport are, and this will form the basis for our further investigation into rapport-building within suspect interviews. For example, we hope to eventually test a number of rapport-building techniques to assess what influence, if any, they have over a suspect's cooperation. Eventually, we intend to collate all of this information together and develop a framework of rapport-building that we can share with police officers and enhance their suspect interviewing practices.

If you would like any more information about this study or would like to contact the researchers for any reason, then please contact either Mr. Zacharia Nahouli (z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk) or Professor Coral Dando (c.dando@westminster.ac.uk).

Appendix L: Rapport-building survey (study 2)

Section 1

About you: The following questions ask for demographic and background information about you, such as your age and gender, as well as your police experience and training.

- 1) How old are you? _____
- 2) What is your gender? Male ____ Female ____ Other (**please specify**) _____
- 3)
 - a. How long have you been a police officer (**please specify years or months**)?

 - b. What is your current job title?

 - c. What police service do you work for?

 - d. On average, how many interviews with suspects do you conduct on a weekly basis? _____
- 4)
 - a. What police training have you undergone for conducting interviews with suspects (**please list**)?

 - b. Did your police training explain how to build rapport? Yes ____ No ____

Section 2

What is rapport? The following questions ask about **your** personal views and perceptions of rapport during suspect interviews, as well as how and when **you** generally build rapport with a suspect.

5)

a. What do you think rapport is?

b. Which of these statements do you think is the **best** representation of rapport?

- i. A positive relationship between an interviewer and a suspect _____
- ii. A negative relationship between an interviewer and a suspect _____
- iii. A relationship between an interviewer and a suspect – either positive or negative _____
- iv. None of the above – rapport is neither a positive or negative relationship _____

6)

a. How important do you think it is to build rapport with a suspect?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Absolutely
important	important	important	important	essential

b. Please explain why:

c. How much do you believe rapport contributes to the success of a suspect interview?

1	2	3	4	5
None at all	A little	A moderate amount	A lot	A great deal

7)

a. How often do you build rapport with a suspect **before** an interview (**please circle one**)?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always

b. How often do you build rapport with a suspect **during** an interview?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always

c. What techniques do you use to build rapport with a suspect **before** or **during** an interview? *Please list any rapport-building techniques you use (including verbal, non-verbal or environmental preparation techniques).*

8) How would you show a suspect that you are **paying attention** to them?

9) How would you show **positivity/respect** towards a suspect?

10)

a. What types of suspects do you believe rapport building is **most** effective for (**please list**)? *The types of users could be based on gender, cooperativeness, crimes committed, previous criminal records, or anything else you can think of.*

- b. What types of suspects do you believe rapport building is **least** effective for **(please list)**? *The types of users could be based on gender, cooperativeness, crimes committed, previous criminal records, or anything else you can think of.*

11)

- a. How good do you think you are at building rapport with a suspect?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good

- b. How do you know whether you have been effective at building rapport with a suspect?

Section 3

Methods of rapport-building: The following questions ask about **your** views and attitudes towards a number of specific rapport and relationship-building methods and techniques within suspect interviews.

- 12) Using the following statements, how strongly do you agree with the following -
*During a suspect interview, an interviewer **should**:*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

(Provide your rating in the space provided)

- a. Treat a suspect in a dignifying and humane manner _____
- b. Use warm verbal and non-verbal cues with a suspect (e.g., a positive tone of voice, smiling) _____
- c. Be understanding of the difficulties a suspect may be experiencing _____

- d. Ensure that a suspect fully understands theirs and the interviewer's role during the interview
- e. Summarise a suspect's account and reflect it back to them for clarification _____
- f. Probe a suspect for information using open questioning _____
- g. Find common ground with a suspect _____
- h. Ensure that a suspect fully understands their police caution and rights _____
- i. Seek permission before providing their opinions and advice to a suspect _____
- j. Draw out the thoughts and feelings of a suspect _____
- k. Invite, rather than demand that a suspect explains any discrepancies in their account _____
- l. Negotiate with a suspect _____
- m. Mutually agree upon the goals of the interview with a suspect
- n. Be positive and friendly towards a suspect _____
- o. Adapt their behaviour and questioning according to how a suspect behaves or responds _____
- p. Make a suspect feel comfortable _____
- q. Disclose some personal information about themselves to a suspect _____
- r. Mimic some or all of a suspect's behaviours (e.g., their body language or tone of voice) _____
- s. Complement a suspect's behaviour (e.g., expressing dominant behaviour in response to submissive behaviour and vice-versa) _____
- t. Respect a suspect's right to choose when or if they provide information _____

13)

- a. How much do you agree with the following *statements* – *In certain suspect interactions, an interviewer is most effective by being:*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

- i. Authoritative _____
- ii. Cooperative _____
- iii. Passive _____
- iv. Confrontational _____

b. When interacting with a suspect, how often are you:

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always

- i.** Authoritative ____
- ii.** Cooperative ____
- iii.** Passive ____
- iv.** Confrontational ____

14) The following statements are about using rapport-building methods in suspect.

How strongly do you agree with them:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree

- a.** It makes an interviewer seem more “human” to a suspect ____
- b.** It allows an interviewer to find or create common ground with a suspect ____
- c.** It makes a suspect feel more comfortable to talk ____
- d.** It undermines an interviewer's authority with a suspect ____
- e.** It can make the interviewer seem desperate ____
- f.** It can be dangerous as it gives the suspect an opportunity to manipulate or control the interview/interviewer ____

Appendix M: Participant demographics questionnaire (study 3)

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Questionnaire

15) How old are you? _____

16) What is your gender (**tick one**)?

Male _____ Female _____ Other _____ Prefer not to say _____

17) How long have you worked in the Probation services (**years/months**)? _____

18) What is your current job title? _____

19) Where are you normally stationed (e.g., community, prison)? _____

Appendix N: Focus group/interview agenda (study 3)

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
 - a. Introduce myself and the topic of my PhD. Contextualise the area of discussion and give information regarding the aims of this study: to understand what rapport is, how to establish and maintain it, and what its use is within the context of a service user interview.
 - b. Tell participants that when discussing their views, they should try to think about it in relation to their experiences of interviewing service users.
 - c. Ground rules:
 - i. Confidentiality/anonymity
 - ii. Respect one another
 - iii. Listen to one another
 - iv. Anything else?
2. What do you think rapport is? (10 minutes)
 - a. Often described as a relationship, so ask them to elaborate on that.
3. How do you establish rapport with a service user? (20 minutes)
 - a. What non-verbal or verbal techniques are effective for developing rapport?
 - b. How do you maintain these behaviours throughout the interview?
 - c. What elements of the interviewer influence the rapport-building process?
 - d. What elements of the service user influence the rapport-building process?
4. How does rapport impact a service user interview? (20 minutes)
 - a. How can you judge whether you have effectively developed rapport?
 - b. How does establishing rapport facilitate supervision goals?
 - c. How does establishing rapport hinder your ability to achieve these goals? (if they mention it can be a hinderance).
 - d. What are the risks of building rapport?
5. What are the barriers to building rapport with service users? (20 minutes)
 - a. How do you overcome those barriers?
 - b. What facilitators exist to help you build rapport?
6. What training have you received in regard to rapport building? (10 minutes)
 - a. How has your training influenced your use of rapport during interviews?
 - b. How can your training better support your rapport-building skills?
7. Is there anything else that I've missed regarding rapport building that you think would be valuable to discuss today? (5 minutes)

Appendix O: Risk assessment form (study 3)

GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Activity:	Research with probation officers	Brief description of work activity: I will be conducting focus groups and interviews with probation officers within their premises. The topic of discussion will be their views of rapport building when they interact with offenders on probation.	Assessed By:	Prof. Coral Dando
Dept./School:	Psychology Department, School of Social Sciences		Date:	03/04/2019
Location:	University of Westminster, 115 New Cavendish Street, London, W1W 6UW		Review Date:	

1. What are the hazards?	2. Who might be at harm and how? <i>E, C, S, Md, V, Em, Mp, Dp *</i>	3. Current control measures	4. Initial Risk Rating: <i>H/M/L *</i>	5. Additional control measures (if required)	6. Action by whom?	7. Action by when? (Date)	8. Date done	9. Residual risk rating. <i>H/M/L</i>
None outside of my normal daily activities (e.g., I will travel to and from premises by public transport, conducting research in a safe and secure environment, and interacting with professionals).	I am a Postgraduate student, but I cannot envisage any potential harm.	My supervisor (Professor Coral Dando) has my contact details and will know of my whereabouts should any issues arise.	L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	L
I will be in the National Probation Service premises and using one of their rooms to conduct the focus groups.	Me – I am unfamiliar with their rules on fire safety and evacuation, or use of first aid should anything happen while on the premises.	I will be with trained probation officers who know what to do during emergencies on their premises. I am in contact with two members of the NPS already who can brief me on anything I need to know while on their premises.	L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	L
I will be conducting focus groups and interviews with probation officers.	Probation officers – There is a risk that they provide identifiable information about themselves.	Participants will not be asked to provide any identifiable information (e.g., names, addresses) and if they do so spontaneously, these will be censored when transcribing the audio data. As such, they are kept anonymous.	L	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	L

* Please see overleaf for guidance on completion

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Appendix P: Information sheet (study 3)

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Rapport building in Service-User Interviews

Investigators: Mr. Zacharia Nahouli – z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk
Professor Coral Dando – c.dando@westminster.ac.uk

This research is being conducted by the University of Westminster as part of my PhD research programme. We are interested in your personal and professional views and practices of rapport building when conducting one-to-one interviews with probation service users.

What will I be asked to do?

If you are interested in taking part in this research I will ask you to take part in a focus group with several other probation officers to discuss what rapport is, how you build rapport and what purpose you believe rapport serves during an interview with a service user. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions asked during the sessions, but it is important that you answer the questions in a manner that truly reflects your thoughts and practices - this will help us understand when and if you use rapport, as well as how you and your colleagues build rapport.

The session will run for approximately 60-90 minutes and will be digitally audio recorded to allow me to fully understand what has been said. You will be invited to provide a contact detail (e.g., email address) if you wish to take part future studies.

Additional Information

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can decide whether to participate or not. You will be given a group number and any future reference to your participation will be under that number. The recordings of the focus group session will never be shared with your employers nor anyone else outside the research team. The information you provide will therefore be kept confidential. However, this confidentiality may be broken if issues around safeguarding arise. You will also remain anonymous, and only referred to by your first name during the session. Any identifying features/comments will be deleted from the transcripts of the session.

You are able to stop and withdraw at any point without giving a reason. If you decide to provide us with a contact detail post session, we will store it separately to protect your anonymity. As the data will be anonymous and be part of a wider dataset, it will not be possible for us to withdraw your data once the session is complete. The data will be input and stored securely on a password protected, encrypted data storage system with only the researchers having access to the data and documents, as in compliance with the GDPR

2018 and Data Protection Act, 2018. The data from this study may be used for future research and undergo secondary analyses. Future research may focus on a topic related to, or unrelated to the goals of this study.

If you have any questions regarding this research or wish to raise any concerns regarding how it is run, then please contact one of the research investigators.

Appendix Q: Consent form (study 3)

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Rapport building in Service User Interviews

Investigators: Mr. Zacharia Nahouli – z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk

Professor Coral Dando – c.dando@westminster.ac.uk

I agree to participate in the research '**Rapport building in Service User Interviews**'. I confirm that I have read through the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask the researcher questions, and the research has been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that:

- My participation in this research is on an entirely voluntary basis.
- I am able to terminate my participation at any point during data collection.
- I will be audio recorded.
- Once I have taken part, I will not be able to withdraw my data
- The information I provide will be confidential, with this only being broken if issues around safeguarding arise.
- My data will be anonymised and any identifying features will be removed so that my contribution will not be identifiable when reporting this research.
- My data will be securely stored and destroyed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- I agree that my data from this study may be used for future research and may undergo secondary analysis. Future research may be related or unrelated to the goals of this study.

Group No. _____

Participant Signature _____

Researcher Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix R: Debrief sheet (study 3)

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Rapport building in Service-User Interviews

Thank you very much for taking part in this research.

The purpose of this research was to investigate probation officers' understanding of rapport in service user interviews. In this context, rapport building is recommended by many interviewing guidelines used in probation, such as the Motivational Interview (MI; Miller and Rollnick, 1991) and the Skills for Effective Engagement Development (SEED) framework (Sorsby, Shapland, Farrall, McNeill, Priede, & Robinson, 2013), as a means of developing a positive relationship with a service user and motivating them to enact behavioural change (Clark, Walters, Gingerich, & Meltzer, 2006). Regardless of these recommendations, there has been no research investigating what the most effective means of building rapport is in this context, or what the direct impact of doing so is. This is difficult to study as it is also not truly understood what constitutes rapport in this context, or how rapport is used by probation officers during service user interviews.

The aim of this research was to address these gaps in our understanding by finding out what you and your colleagues think rapport is, how you build rapport, and whether you think it benefits service user interviews. By gathering such information, we can identify what the most important elements of rapport are, and this will form the basis for our further investigation into rapport-building in service user interviews. For example, we hope to eventually test several rapport-building techniques to assess what influence, if any, they have over an interviewee's cooperation. Eventually, we intend to collate all this information together and develop a framework of rapport building that we can share with probation officers and help facilitate their interviews with service users.

If you would like any more information about this study or would like to contact the researchers for any reason, then please contact either Mr. Zacharia Nahouli (z.nahouli@my.westminster.ac.uk) or Professor Coral Dando (c.dando@westminster.ac.uk).

Appendix S: Sample coding for study 3

Conducting thematic analysis consists of a 6 stage process which is detailed below.

Stage 1: Transcribing the data and reading the transcripts several times.

Stage 2 & 3: Generating initial codes that explain the data and then organising these into themes and subthemes based on recurring patterns. Highlighted in the table below are all of my initial codes, and in the brackets are the number of transcripts that this code was present in and the number of specific quotes that were associated with it. Just a note on the number of transcripts here: there are a total of 12. This includes 3 focus group transcripts, 5 one-to-one interview transcripts, and due to the failure of the audio recorder for one of the focus groups, four follow-up interview transcripts to account for the participants in this focus group. Presented are also the initial groupings of these codes. The groupings can be considered themes/subthemes, but these changed considerably upon a more focused arrangement of the codes in stage 4.

Initial themes	Initial subthemes	Codes (# of transcripts – # of quotes)
Barriers to rapport building	Organisational barriers	High staff turnover (3-18); hiring inexperienced officers (5-8); insufficient training (6-18); lack of diversity (4-11); lack of support (6-15); lack of time (5-18); moulded by the system (2-3); strict rules (1-2); shifting organisational structure (2-11); technical problems (2-3); too risk averse (2-7)
	Probation duties	Enforcement (2-3); exhaustion (3-3); power dynamics (2-2); robotic process (3-12); room setup (2-5); translators (1-1); unclear job role (3-10)
	Probation officers	Can't communicate effectively (2-3); judgement (4-18); lacking experience (3-4); personal characteristics (4-7)
	Service users	Their age (3-4); difficult service users that maintain innocence (3-8); domestic abuse perpetrators (3-6); their environment (1-2); experience with the system (5-19); feeling out of control (2-2); feeling judged (4-11); lacking confidence (1-1); long term offenders (1-1); psychological problems (4-12);

		sex offenders (1-3); substance abusers (1-1); victims of trauma or abuse (2-8)
Benefits of rapport		Helps challenge/change behaviour (3-14); helps challenge views or opinions (1-6); instils comfort (7-19); improves communication (7-21); improves compliance (5-22); humanises the service user or officer (5-7); helps keep tabs (1-1); motivates service users (2-8); develops respect (3-8); ensures safety (2-3)
Building rapport		Active listening, attention and interest (5-13); being genuine (6-16); building a persona (1-1); building trust (1-1); challenging views and behaviour (4-19); clarity and transparency (5-37); show confidence (2-4); consistency and familiarity (4-13); empathy and understanding (6-44); equality, control and collaboration (6-31); officer experience (1-2); flexibility and lenience (4-25); greetings (1-2); home visits, innovations and checkups (3-8); humour (1-1); matching officers to the client (1-1); miscellaneous (2-3); nonverbal behaviours (5-12); personal conversation (5-21); officer presentation (4-12); probation officer characteristics (3-10); professionalism (3-7); service user characteristics (5-11); taking risks (1-1); using the service user's language (1-3); using power as guidance (3-11); using the environment (2-3)
Damaging rapport		Being ingenuine (2-6); being too forward (1-1); challenging behaviour and enforcement (3-10); inconsistent or inappropriate supervision (5-24); judgement (3-6); lack of training or supervision (3-7); lack of trust (1-3); no boundaries (2-4); nonverbal behaviours (2-4); presentation (5-8); probation officer characteristics (3-11); rapport isn't mutual (1-7)
Developing rapport-building skills		Innate skill (2-6); training and mentoring (5-17); work and life experience (4-14)

Disadvantages of rapport		Feigned rapport (5-11); engagement becomes too friendly (2-3); manipulation (3-15); too much personal disclosure (3-8); you are used (2-4)
Overcoming barriers		Giving autonomy (1-1); boundaries (3-7); compartmentalisation (1-1); diversity (3-5); empathy and understanding (2-10); flexibility and changing approaches (5-12); realising you're not the right officer (1-2); reflection and support (6-12); resilience (1-2)
Rapport is...		A connection (1-1); a mystery (3-9); a process (3-7); a professional working relationship (3-9); clarity and openness (1-3); communication (2-4); giving back control (1-1); humanising someone (2-4); inspiring confidence (2-4); instinctual and natural (3-6); the first point in a relationship (6-13); trust (2-3); using your power for support (2-2)

Stage 4: Codes were reviewed and rearranged several times to further refine them. Codes which were not mentioned often were removed, those that were similar were merged, some larger codes were split up into more focused ones, and some codes were moved into different themes where it seemed appropriate. This resulted in a smaller number of focused themes and subthemes which largely explained the data. These new themes and subthemes roughly map on to the final rapport-building process developed in stage 5. The table below highlights the new themes and subthemes (again, with # of transcripts – # of quotes).

Themes	Subthemes (# of transcripts – # of quotes)
Organisational barriers to rapport	Lack of support (7-64); recruitment issues (6-32); unclear and robotic work (6-33)
Stage 1 – Preparation for rapport	Awareness of officer flaws and abilities (7-35); awareness of service user experience (6-41); building a persona (6-27); setting up the environment (5-12)
Stage 2 – Engaging with service users	Clarity and transparency (6-69); immediacy behaviours (7-25); mutual interest and understanding (7-124)
Stage 3 – Adapting to service users	Agency and collaboration (7-34); making allowances and being flexible (7-78)

Stage 4 – Maintenance and reflection	Compartmentalisation (2-4); Consistency, persistence and familiarity (6-58); Reflection and support (7-33)
What do I define as rapport...	A lot of buzzwords (7-25); it's just sort of, you know, that feeling (6-11); you learn things that work, things that don't (5-22)

Stage 5: Themes and subthemes were further refined and given appropriate names – this was helped through a double coding process by other researchers. The themes were conceptualised into the final rapport-building process presented in chapter 6. Some of the themes from stage 4 were found to not necessarily be stand-alone themes but actually heavily related to other themes. For example, organisational barriers linked very much with rapport maintenance and reflection (in the sense that barriers hindered these activities particularly) and so these became an element of that theme. Similarly, within the preparation theme, all quotes here seemed to relate to how the officer perceived themselves and their service users, and so we merged all subthemes together to make the larger theme of perceptual influences. Themes were also given more appropriate names and reorganised in other respects. See the table below for the final themes and subthemes (again, with # of transcripts – # of quotes).

Main Overarching Themes	Subthemes (# of transcripts – # of quotes)
1) What is rapport?	Rapport as experience and learning: “It’s just sort of, you know, that feeling” (10-38); rapport as a communication driver: It’s “the grease, the oil” (12-31)
2) Perceptual influences of rapport	The officer’s perception of themselves and the service user (12-134)
3) Techniques for initial rapport building	Verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviours (11-96); clarity and transparency (10-78)
4) Adapting to the service user	Making allowances (11-96); agency and collaboration (12-82)
5) Maintenance and barriers to rapport	Consistency, persistence and familiarity (10-78); reflection and support (11-93)

Stage 6: Reporting the findings with quotes, as has been done in chapter 6.