

**Research Outline Qualitative Information on
Drug Abuse Situation in Hong Kong**

Research Report No. 6

**Semi-Structured Interviews with Substance Abusers
in Hong Kong: An Operations Manual**

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Executive Summary of Report 6

1. Preface and Acknowledgement

This manual provided comprehensive information and guidance on using the constructed interview guideline for substance abusers in Hong Kong. It included details on the background, rationale, framework, development, and application of the interview guideline, and basic interview techniques and data analysis methods. The primary aim was to explore Hong Kong's drug issues in depth, with empirically based interview questions developed by the research team through interviews with 120 participants, including drug abusers, dealers, social workers, and law enforcers.

2. Chapter 1. Theoretical Background and Rationale

2.1 Qualitative Research: Definitions and Concepts

- Qualitative research methods encompassed a diverse array of techniques such as ethnography and focus groups, used to develop deep insights and theories across various social phenomena. Data from these methods were categorised into discourses and visual data, enabling comprehensive analysis and knowledge construction.

2.2 Methods of Doing Qualitative Research

- In-depth interviews and focus groups were pivotal for collecting rich data about personal experiences, commonly utilised in research and counselling to understand complex human perspectives. These methods facilitated detailed discussions among participants, providing a broad understanding of specific topics or issues.

2.3 Drug Abuse and Drug Recovery as a Journey: Importance of Using Qualitative Interviews

- Qualitative research offered in-depth insights into the multifaceted journey of drug abuse and recovery, revealing personal and social factors that influenced individual experiences. This approach highlighted the complexity of drug addiction, stressing the need for holistic, contextual understanding beyond quantitative metrics.

2.4 Use of Narrative Inquiry to Inquire into the Journey of Drug Abuse and Recovery

- Narrative inquiry provided a framework for understanding individual experiences of drug abuse within their broader social and environmental contexts, using personal stories to delve into the complexities of drug use and recovery. This method focused

on the participant's perspective, emphasising the importance of their narratives in understanding drug-related behaviours.

2.5 *A Framework for Understanding the Drug Abuse Experience*

- A five-stage framework was developed to articulate the cyclic nature of drug addiction, from onset to desistance, incorporating biological, psychological, social, and structural factors. This comprehensive approach facilitated a deeper understanding of the patterns and characteristics of drug abuse, emphasising the necessity of multiple treatment episodes and strategies.

3. Chapter 2. Before The Interview: Designing An Interview Study

3.1 *Foundational Understanding of Research Design*

- Designing a qualitative study was recognised as a complex process, distinct from traditional quantitative methods, allowing for the flexibility to reevaluate and modify the design in response to new insights.

3.2 *Components of the Research Design Model*

- Setting research goals involved selecting a problem and justifying the study's worthiness, guiding the design and execution of research components. The conceptual framework linked theoretical concepts and assumptions, requiring a deep understanding of the topic, which was crucial for constructing the research framework and ensuring the alignment of the study's goals with its framework.

3.3 *Online Ethnography: A Research Design for Investigating the Drug Trends*

- Online ethnography utilised e-technology to study virtual interactions, providing insights into human behaviours and social dynamics in digital environments. This approach was especially useful for accessing hard-to-reach populations like drug abusers, allowing researchers to overcome geographical and temporal barriers and engage with participants in a more open and anonymous setting.

4. Chapter 3. Administering the Interview Guideline: Using A Narrative Interview

4.1 *Epistemology of Semi-Structured Interviews*

- The epistemology of semi-structured interviews is founded on social constructivism, suggesting that knowledge is historically and culturally contingent, shaped through social interactions. Researchers and participants collaboratively engage in the research process, influencing each other's understandings, necessitating reflexivity

about the impact of the researcher's biases on data interpretation.

4.2 *Features of Semi-Structured Interviews*

- Semi-structured interviews blend structured and flexible questioning, allowing adaptation to emerging themes while maintaining consistency across interviews. This format supports a person-centred approach, prioritising participant narratives and enabling in-depth exploration of individual experiences within their social and cultural contexts.

4.3 *The Interview Settings*

- Choosing an interview location involves considering participant comfort and privacy, with options ranging from personal spaces like homes to public areas ensuring neutrality and confidentiality. The interviewer's role is crucial in establishing a trusting environment, maintaining a non-judgmental stance, and being conscious of power dynamics that might affect the participant's comfort.

4.4 *Constant Comparative Method*

- The constant comparative method involves simultaneous data collection and analysis, allowing researchers to develop and refine categories through an iterative process of comparing data across different cases. This method enhances the depth and richness of the findings by grounding the analysis in empirical data and adjusting the theoretical framework as new insights emerge.

4.5 *Conducting Interviews*

- Effective interviews begin with a clear opening that sets expectations, explains the study's purpose, and secures informed consent. Techniques like active listening, probing for clarity, and managing silence encourage participants to share detailed and honest accounts, thereby enriching the data quality.

4.6 *Closing the Interview*

- Concluding an interview smoothly requires a strategy that allows participants to reflect and decompress, often involving final questions that give them control over the last information shared. Post-interview, debriefing helps confirm understanding and allows participants to clarify or add to their responses, ensuring the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information collected.

4.7 *Data Saturation*

- Saturation is achieved when no new information is forthcoming from further data collection, suggesting that the data are sufficient to develop a robust and comprehensive theoretical framework. This stage is crucial for ensuring that the

research findings are well-substantiated and reflect a deep understanding of the studied phenomenon.

4.8 *Considerations for Applying and Adapting the Interview Guide*

- Flexibility in using the interview guide is essential, allowing researchers to tailor questions to specific research needs and contexts without being overly restrictive. Ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality, are paramount in conducting interviews, especially with sensitive populations.

5. Chapter 4. Data Analysis

5.1 *Transcribing Interviews*

- Transcription of interviews, whether as verbatim or summary reports, is critical for researchers to develop a deep familiarity with the data, capturing essential verbal and nonverbal cues for accurate analysis.

5.2 *Hunting Meanings in Verbatims*

- Through a detailed and iterative process, researchers actively engaged with semi-structured interviews to extract deep meanings, focusing on subtle references and the emotional context of participants' responses.

5.3 *Coding*

- The coding process involved systematic categorization of verbatim data using various methods, such as Straussian and Glaserian methods, to identify core themes and insights from the qualitative data.

5.4 *Analytic Methods*

- Integrative analytic methods like content, thematic, and narrative analysis were employed throughout the research to systematically dissect and interpret data, ensuring a rich, contextually grounded understanding.

6. Chapter 5. Epilogue

Conducting semi-structured narrative interviews with substance abusers provides deep insights into the complexities of drug use and recovery, informing effective interventions and policies. Researchers must develop their qualitative research skills and ethical sensibilities to effectively gather and interpret these insights. It is crucial for researchers to engage with broader literature and seek mentorship to enhance the credibility and depth of their findings.

Preface and Acknowledgement

This manual offers information and cautions for understanding and using the constructed interview guideline for substance abusers. The manual includes information on the background, rationale, framework, development, and use of the interview guideline, as well as basic interview techniques and data analysis methods. The primary aim of the interview guideline is to help users explore Hong Kong drug issues comprehensively and in-depth. This interview guideline contains empirically based interview questions for substance abusers developed by the research team. 120 interviewees, including drug abusers, drug dealers, rehabilitative and social workers, and law enforcers, were interviewed to construct this interview guideline.

The constructed interview guideline is divided into different stages of substance misuse, including 1) social and psychological reasons for substance misuse, 2) accessibility to drugs, 3) drug treatment, 4) drug treatment-relapse-treatment cycle, and 5) desistance. Further, several special focuses had emphasised outlining the Hong Kong drug situation as well, such as I) an overview of Hong Kong drug situation, II) drug trafficking (including online drug trafficking), III) cannabis use, IV) hidden drug abuse and V) Chemfun – Drug use of Sexual Minority (LGBT+). Additionally, the interview guideline involved optional questions to enrich the understanding of substance use. Researchers are welcome to adopt parts of and even modify the guideline to conduct their qualitative data collection.

It is worth emphasising that the interview guideline is not a one-size-fits-all tool and may require modification to suit the specific research context. While this guide provides fundamental research knowledge and skills, the majority of its content is based on the study conducted by our research team. Hence, researchers should exercise caution when using the guideline and ensure it is appropriate for their research aims and objectives. Verification, modification, and other review works may be required before applying the interview guidelines in other regions or contexts. Moreover, it is essential to highlight that the interview guideline is not a standalone tool for conducting qualitative research. Rather, it should be used in conjunction with other data collection methods, such as ethnographic observation and document analysis, to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The interview guideline is intended for frontline workers and researchers to collect information from substance abusers. To be eligible to use this guideline, users should have a

certain degree of knowledge of the drug field and relevant terms. It is better to administer the guideline to individuals who have graduate training in a relevant discipline, such as social work, psychology, and relevant social sciences. These individuals should also have years of experience in drug services and interviewing substance abusers and dealers. These requirements ensure that the interviewers can carry out the interviews in which the interviewees feel comfortable, secured, and accepted, and the interviewers have the appropriate skills to handle unexpected events during the interview. Trainees under the supervision of a qualified professional or experienced worker may also qualify to use this guideline with the institution's or agency's approval.

To administer and interpret the data properly, users should have a thorough knowledge of the procedures and cautions presented in the manual. It is important to note that this information is crucial for ensuring the data collected is accurate and reliable. Besides, it is important to ensure that the data is used appropriately and complies with ethical codes and guidelines. Obtaining informed consent from participants before conducting the interview is required, including an explanation of the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits of participation, and the participant's right to withdraw at any time. Users should also take steps to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants, such as using pseudonyms and codes to conceal real names and storing data in secure locations. It is important to inform participants of the measures taken to protect their confidentiality and to obtain their consent for the use of their data in the study.

To ensure a smooth and effective interview process, users have to familiarise themselves with the interview guide. This involves studying all the questions in the guide and developing a prompt or a sequence of questions that facilitate a coherent and meaningful conversation with the participant. Pilot testing of the interview guide is highly recommended as it provides valuable opportunities for researchers to refine the application of the guide, revise their research questions, and gain practical experience in conducting interviews. This allows them to identify any ambiguities or potential issues in the wording of questions or prompts. Simultaneously, being prepared to adapt and follow the participant's narratives allows them to share their story in their own words.

The guideline is not intended to serve as a clinical assessment or test to make diagnoses or generate intervention insights. No question on the guideline should be equated with any particular assessment item or diagnosis-inferred disorder. Instead, the guideline can be used to

collect qualitative data to supplement quantitative data and offer explanations from the interviewee's perspectives. Responsible users are expected to analyse the data obtained from this guideline together with data from other sources, such as academic books, journals, official statistics figures, and studies.

Furthermore, users should be aware of potential ethical issues that may arise during the interview, such as the risk of causing harm or distress to the participants. In such cases, it is important to take steps to minimise harm and to provide appropriate support and referrals if needed. Finally, users should ensure they have obtained all necessary ethical approvals and comply with relevant laws and regulations governing research with human participants, such as institutional review boards or ethics committees. Using this manual for commercial purposes is forbidden, and users should adhere to the ethical codes of the American Psychological Association or qualified institutions.

Lastly, we would like to thank all stakeholders for the development of the interview guideline. The research team received assistance and advice from various stakeholders, including colleagues, interviewees, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), religious organisations, frontline social workers, rehabilitative workers, and law enforcers. This collaborative effort ensured that the interview guideline was developed using an empirically based approach and is a valuable tool for exploring Hong Kong drug issues. In particular, the work has been supported by the Beat Drugs Fund Association, a non-profit limited company chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Security to decide on the applications to the Fund on the advice of the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN).

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Chapter 1. Theoretical Background and Rationale

7. *Qualitative Research: Definitions and Concepts*

Qualitative research methods have been widely adopted as a new trend in research and studies to deeply investigate an issue, topic, and social phenomenon across disciplines and contexts. The methods vary in the academic field depending on the focuses of studies and innovation of authors, such as graffiti studies, photo-voices, vox pops, ethnography, interviews, and focus groups. In general, the data from various methods can be categorised into discourses (e.g., interviews, vox pops, and texts) and visual data (photos, videos, and graffiti). Some methods contain both types, such as photo voices and ethnography. Through analysing these data, researchers can develop knowledge and even construct theories for the issue, topic, and social phenomenon (Merriam, 2009; Vyhmeister et al., 2022).

Traditionally, qualitative research was simply assumed to be “not quantitative research” but has developed several key features to be identified, including notions and epistemology (Flick, 2007, p. ix). For example, the understanding, knowledge, and explanations of social phenomena are rooted “from the inside” rather than specialised in certain research settings (Flick, 2007, p. ix). By analysing the individual or group experiences, interactions, communications, or existing documents (e.g., texts, photos, videos, and even music), researchers are able to reveal, organise, categorise, describe, specialise, and connect similar traces, stories, practices, natures, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, descriptions, motives, behaviours, and patterns to conceptualise how people construct their world, life, and interpretations. Hence, qualitative research is specifically apt to study cultures, subjective perceptions, and meanings because it creates rich insights and meanings into how people experience things happening around them (Fossey et al., 2002; Rusinova et al., 2009). Based on these explanations, researchers are supported to develop empirical models, typologies, and theories for certain social issues (Morse et al., 1996).

8. *Methods of Doing Qualitative Research*

The in-depth interview and focus group are two common qualitative research methods, which are powerful tools for collecting rich, detailed data about people's experiences, perspectives, and worldviews. An in-depth interview is common among research, counselling, services, briefing/debriefing, and case studies to evaluate the service users, students, and

participants (Barbour, 2018). A focus group involves gathering a small group of individuals to discuss a specific topic or issue from their perspective, experience, and cognitive framework in an in-depth manner, allowing researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject through which they interpret and make sense of the topic or issue at hand. It is commonly used to gain insights, opinions, and perceptions from participants regarding a particular subject matter (Barbour, 2018). Focus group participants are typically selected based on specific criteria related to the research topic. The group size can be varied based on the research design and objectives, normally 6-10 people per group (Lehoux et al., 2006).

Conducting an interview or focus group is actually the conversation of perspectives between researchers and interviewees (Luff, 1999). Through interaction or group dynamics, participants can build upon each other's responses, leading to a deeper exploration of the topic (Farnsworth & Boon, 2010). In the case of substance abusers, the in-depth interview and focus group can reveal valuable insights into the complex and often stigmatised world of drug use and can help researchers better understand the factors influencing drug use, the impacts of this issue on individuals and communities, and barriers to treatment and recovery (Fischer & Neale, 2008; Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1997; Paquette et al., 2018).

9. Drug Abuse and Drug Recovery as a Journey: The Importance of Using Qualitative Interviews

Research on drug abuse has been largely quantitative studies which find out the factors of drug abuse in comparison to those who do not take drugs (Frisher et al., 2007; Rhodes et al., 2003), while for the research on drug recovery, quantitative studies has operationalised the stages of recovery and investigated the relationship between factors contributing to recovery (e.g., motivation of clients), therapy/treatment, and treatment outcomes (e.g., amount of drug use, clients' functioning) (e.g., Best et al., 2018; Simpson & Joe, 2004). However, the nature of drug abuse and drug recovery is complex (Jadidi & Nakhaee, 2014; Martinelli et al., 2023). Regarding drug abuse, it is a "progressive development" starting from preliminary "experimental exposure" to drugs to "uncontrollable adherence" to drugs, resembling an "intricate love-hate relationship" (Hsieh et al., 2017, p. 49). During this process, it involves various factors, including individual attributes (e.g., personality), family factors (e.g., parental supervision), peer influence, and community/neighbour, and how the individual perceives and copes with his life events (e.g., perceived sense of control over adverse events) (Irving, 2011; Jadidi & Nakhaee, 2014). Regarding drug recovery, this concept is not simply reduced drug

use or drug abstinence but “an individually unique” and “socially negotiated process (instead of an outcome), characterised by improvements on a variety of personal, functional, and societal life domains” (Martinelli et al., 2023, pp. 857-858). It involves various factors which facilitate and hinder treatment from the perspective of the drug rehabilitants (e.g., Copeland, 1997; Dekkers et al., 2021; Neale et al., 1998). This suggests that drug abuse and recovery is a long, developmental journey. Hence, qualitative research is necessary to uncover this journey and achieve a holistic, contextual understanding of phenomena (Lincoln, 1992).

Qualitative research focuses on how individuals perceive and make meanings of the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Using qualitative research to investigate drug-related phenomena helps investigate the process of drug abuse and drug recovery experienced by drug abusers and drug rehabilitants and how they make meaning of their experiences (e.g., Martinelli et al., 2023; Nakhaee & Jadidi, 2009; Neale et al., 2005; Stokes et al., 2018). More importantly, it enables an in-depth understanding of the drug-related phenomena “in the full context of people’s lives” (Martinelli et al., 2023, p. 858). As pointed out by van der Stel (2020), how the professionals define recovery and what they do to facilitate recovery have been much more well-known than the needs of experiences of the drug rehabilitants. Such understanding of the individuals’ perspectives and experiences will benefit the formulation of policies and services in order to maximise the support for drug rehabilitation (Martinelli et al., 2023).

10. Use of Narrative Inquiry to Inquire into the Journey of Drug Abuse and Recovery

Philosophy of Narrative Inquiry

A narrative inquiry is a methodology which studies human experience as stories (Clandinin, 2006). It is based on the premise that people understand or make sense of their lives through narratives (Bruner, 1990). Narratives are discourses “in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot”; they generate meanings by “noting the contributions that actions and events make to a particular outcome and then configures these parts into a whole episode” (Polkinghorne, 1995, pp. 5-6). The understanding of human experience involves the understanding of individuals in relation to the environment; as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated, “People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context.” (p. 2). As such, the understanding of the stories involves three dimensions: 1) “the personal and social (interaction)”; 2) “past, present and future (continuity)”; and 3) “place (situation)” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47). In other words, “experience happens in a place or

places over time, and in a relationship, which may be within oneself or with others” (Lindsay & Schwind, 2016, p. 15).

In the context of drug abuse and drug recovery, narrative inquiry enables the in-depth understanding of the individuals’ stories and experiences in terms of the processes, events, and circumstances which are related to drug abuse and drug recovery (Jadidi & Nakhaee, 2014). As Bruner (1990) argues, narratives are central to how individuals construct meaning and understanding. A narrative inquiry approach allows for a deeper exploration of drug abusers’ experiences, their interactions with others, and the impact of their environment. It enables the understanding of why individuals take drugs and how they “conceptualise” and feel about their drug-taking behaviour (Hsieh et al., 2017, p. 48; Riessman, 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Example 1

Q： 你想好了和大麻的關係和意義沒有？

A： 推動自己和別人一起工作，即是那個連繫（Bonding）。

Q： 同事？

A： 朋友，一起合作做事的朋友。連繫（Bonding）及甚至大家工作的那個衝勁。

Q： 為什麼會有這個想法？

A： 可能是因為我自己建立了這個事情出來，因為大家習慣工作完之後也會一起吸食大麻（Smoke）來慶功、開心或慶祝都會吸食大麻（Smoke）。漸漸大家就會覺得吸食大麻（Smoke）是一種獎勵。除獎勵以外，我會覺得是連繫（Bonding），因為沒有了這東西會悶很多。

Example 2

Q： 當然就不是說那種物質，因為現在是一個意義(meaning)。

A： 我會覺得是可以幫助到發掘自己更多的事情，在這一方面有幫助的個人發展。

Q： 只要有一些是幫忙到你更加去挖深一點你自己的？

A： 是的，挖深一點自己的長處。認知、學識、知識庫。

Performing Narrative Inquiry

To perform narrative inquiry, semi-structured interviews (i.e., researcher having a guideline which includes particular areas of interest rather than specific questions) (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015) or unstructured interviews (i.e., researchers not having any guidelines but asking questions solely based on the flow of the conversations) can be performed to understand the interviewees' narration of their life events and experiences. A person-centred approach is adopted, placing "the people being studied at the heart of the study process and privileges the meanings that they assign to their own stories" (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015, p. 1). Instead of upholding a fixed agenda for the interview, the interviewer prioritises the viewpoints of the interviewee, seeing the interviewee as the "storyteller" and letting him decide what to share and "control the direction, content and pace of the interview" (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015, p. 2; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007, p. 464). To facilitate the narration process and understand the interviewee's stories, the interviewer builds rapport and trust with the interviewee, asks open-ended questions ("what", "how, and "why" questions), observes and listens to the interviewee, and respects the interviewee's narratives in an open-minded attitude (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015, pp. 1-2; Clandinin, 2006; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

Example:

Case 1

Q: 好的我們可以開始聊一下，不如你可不可以告訴我多一點關於你自己，現在的狀況，或者你想從一開始很小的時候開始講也可以。

A: 其實，都可以的。那就由很小的時候開始講吧。

Case 2

Q2: 剛剛 Q1 有說，大概會訪問你們整個吸毒經歷，過程中你們就盡量記起情境。

A: 好的。

Q1: 其實也是聊一下天。

Q2: 對，輕鬆一點聊天就可以了，沒所謂的。

Case 3

Q: 好的(okay)，我們當成聊天就可以了，其實可以不用太理會我問甚麼的，主要我們是想聽你的故事和你的感想，是一個這樣的取向，未必需要很根據我的題目去答的，你覺得有甚麼相關想說的都可以說的。一直想的時候是不是真的會忘記了你剛才所說的不開心？

A: 是的，是會忘記了。不過，用完這樣東西之後第二天起床都是有少許那一種可能你們稱之謂 stone 的感覺還在持續當中，第二天需要上班，都覺得自己有點目瞪口呆，專注(focus)不到，好像這樣東西帶來的一些副作用。

Specifically, narrative interviews involve four parts: First, the interviewer gives an introduction and illustrates the research procedures to the interviewee (e.g., obtaining consent for audio recording). Then, the interviewee narrates their life stories, in which the interviewer takes on the role of the active listener and encourages the interviewee to share freely using verbal (e.g., “hmm”) and non-verbal signs (e.g., giving a smile), not interrupting the storytelling. After that, the interviewer enquires deeper into the interviewee’s stories, asking for further details about the interviewee’s stories (e.g., “What happened then/before/after” or “Can you say a bit more about...?”) based on the interviewee’s language. Finally, the interviewer ends the interview, and explains any other further steps when appropriate (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015, p. 2). In the context of drug abuse and drug recovery, the understanding of the individuals’ drug-taking and recovery experiences can be acquired through open-ended questions such as “Why is it difficult for you to refuse illicit drugs?” “What constitutes the essence of the event and what is your lived experience?” and “Do healthcare workers deeply understand your addiction world?” (Hsieh et al., 2017, p. 52).

Example:

Case 1

Q： 所以你覺得這個福音戒毒對哥哥的影響是不是很大呀？

A： 是，幸好他有吸毒。

Q： 可不可以說多一點這個「幸好」？

A： 幸好他有吸毒，我覺得是他做錯過，錯過了才找到一個真正的自我，真正的自己，即是有個目標。

Case 2

Q： 剛才你說可卡因會有「Dee」的感覺，你可不可以解釋一下「Dee」的感覺？

A： 通常我聽他們說，吃完好像一些電流通過自己，刺激了他們一種很愉快的感覺，好像他們叫「上電」，通常他們形容那一刻很爽的。但因為來得快去得快，可能十五分鐘就沒有了那種感覺，可能就很想又追了，所以會持續地吃。

11. A Framework for Understanding the Drug Abuse Experience

According to Anglin et al. (1997), drug abuse and drug treatment “broadly encompass the complexity of addiction patterns”, representing “the chronic, relapsing nature of addiction, its correlates, and its consequences” (p. 309). Researchers have underscored the imperative to thoroughly investigate early vulnerability factors that contribute to the initiation of drug abuse, as well as to comprehend the intricate interactions between individuals engaging in drug use and the health and social service providers who support them (Hser et al., 2007; Perry & Carroll,

2008; Teruya & Hser, 2010). Due to the complexity of drug abuse and drug rehabilitation, it is emphasised that successful drug recovery often requires multiple treatment episodes, “which can be understood as cyclical, incremental, and interactive in nature rather than as discrete episodes” (Anglin et al. 1997, p. 39). Treatment should be viewed as a cyclic process of recovery with stages, such as treatment entry, relapse, and abstinence (Anglin et al., 1997), which can also be named a “drug use career,” “dependence career,” or “addiction career” by researchers (Hser et al., 1997). Throughout the drug use career, users encounter multiple service systems, including treatments, correctional services, mental health, welfare, and primary health care, but may still require long-term care or management (Hser et al., 2007).

Research findings showed that people with extensive histories of prior treatments demonstrated more dysfunction across multiple domains, including mental health, physical health, history of criminal behaviour, and social functioning (Anglin et al., 1996; Dennis et al., 2005). They also noted that most drug abusers did not seek help until they were deeply involved in drug use. This highlights the importance of considering the onset and persistence of drug use in understanding the drug journey.

Therefore, to fully understand drug addiction and recovery, the focus should not only be on treatment, relapse, and desistance but also on the factors that contribute to the onset and persistence of drug use. Against this backdrop, a five-stage framework is built upon Anglin et al.'s (1997) cyclic process of recovery model to uncover the dynamics throughout the drug use journey. This framework views substance abuse as a complex phenomenon that often follows a trajectory through multiple stages. Rather than solely focusing on individuals in the recovery phase, this five-stage research framework comprehensively takes into account the diverse array of factors (biological, psychological, social, and structural) that contribute to the onset, persistence, treatment, relapse, and desistance of drug abuse. To capture the full continuum of drug abuse and recovery, the framework proposes five stages namely 1) onset of drug use (social and psychological reasons), 2) persistence of substance abuse (accessibility to drugs), 3) drug treatment, 4) drug treatment-relapse-treatment cycle, and 5) desistance. Each of these stages is illustrated as follows.

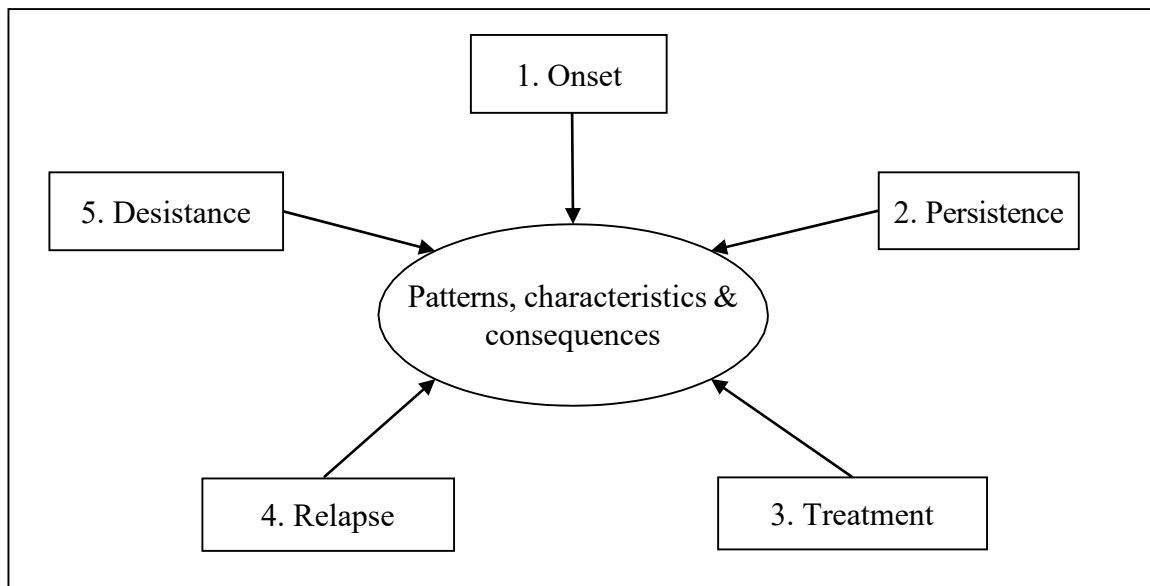


Figure 1. Five-Stage Research Framework: The Cycle of Drug Abuse

The Five-Stage Research Framework on The Drug Abuse Journey

The first stage is the onset of drug use, induced mainly by social and psychological reasons. Myriad intertwined factors at the individual, interpersonal, and psychological variables can precipitate experimentation and start substance abuse. Key influences often include peer pressure, especially among youth seeking to fulfil social belonging needs within their peer groups (Laidler et al., 2004; Zhong et al., 2008). Dysfunctional family environments characterised by conflict, emotional distance, abuse, or neglect can also contribute to the initiation of drug use as an avoidant coping mechanism (Mallett et al., 2005; Tam, 2011). Trauma and post-traumatic stress exacerbate the risk of using substances as a means of coping with distress (Dass-Brailsford & Myrick, 2010). Innate personality factors like sensation-seeking and impulsivity can lead to experimentation without adequate consideration of consequences, particularly among males (Fehrman et al., 2019). Poor academic performance often precedes adolescent drug use, which subsequently maintains a cyclical relationship with continued poor achievement (Cox et al., 2007). Importantly, initiation of drug use is often motivated by false perceptions and misconceptions regarding the putative benefits of substances, ranging from self-medication to weight loss to sexual enhancement (Cheung et al., 2011; Laidler et al., 2004).

The second stage, accessibility to drugs, centres on the entrenchment of persistent heavy substance abuse. The chronic, relapsing nature of addiction is facilitated by multiple factors across levels of analysis. Abusers often view drugs as a temporary pseudo-solution to life problems, which leads to dependence and negative health and psychosocial consequences

(Laidler et al., 2004). The affordability and ubiquity of substances in certain socioeconomic environments promote continued access and abuse (Bachman et al., 2008; Sung, 2001). Integration into party subcultures and rave scenes strongly links drug use with leisure pursuits, making cessation difficult (Lee, 2001; Tam et al., 2018). Neurobiologically, avoidance coping neural circuits are activated and reinforced through substance use (Sinha, 2001).

Treatment as the third stage consists of interventions for drug abusers. Many abusers only seek help after extensive drug involvement, posing challenges for early interventions; as such, these abusers are typically involved in cycling through multiple modalities over time (Dennis et al., 2005; Legislative Council Panel on Security, 2021). However, exposure to multiple modalities such as inpatient, outpatient, medication-assisted, and counselling can have cumulative positive impacts leading to abstinence or desistance (Anglin et al., 1997; Gibbs & Lytle, 2020). Integrated counselling approaches are applied to address comorbid psychiatric disorders, teach coping skills, and modify dysfunctional thinking patterns underlying addiction (Wojciechowski, 2020). Culminating evidence supports personalised, culturally attuned treatment planning as critical for optimising outcomes (Bernal et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2020).

The frustratingly high rates of relapse construct the fourth stage, which follows even more rigorous treatment. Contributing factors span multiple levels, including deficient self-efficacy, dysfunctional social circles that model and enable substance use, co-occurring mental illnesses, stress-related changes, and altered reward processing pathways (Bowen et al., 2014; Bradizza et al., 2006; McKay et al., 2006; Sinha 2007). Neurobiologically, chronic drug use alters reward processing pathways in the brain, undermining self-control (Bowen et al., 2014). Relapses are often triggered by stressful situations that activate substance cravings and abuse as an avoidance coping response (Sinha, 2001). Dysfunctional social circles that model and provide access to substances remain a powerful predictor of relapse (Binswanger et al., 2012). Premature dropout from treatment also heightens relapse vulnerability (Brorson et al., 2013). Co-occurring psychiatric illnesses like depression and trauma-related conditions increase the likelihood of relapse (Bradizza et al., 2006).

Desistance counts as the final stage, in which the definition varies, ranging from reduced use to indefinite abstinence (Hser et al., 2007). Sustaining desistance is challenging but promoted by several key factors. Enhancing motivation by correcting faulty beliefs about the benefits of drug taking aids in commitment to abstinence (Cheung et al., 2011). Building therapeutic communities provides the needed mutual support and shared values to maintain

drug-free lifestyles (Nixon, 2020). Anti-drug public messaging helps counteract social pressures on drug use and model effective resistance strategies (Shek et al., 2003). Deterrence through law enforcement crackdowns can interrupt drug use in high-risk environments (Zhong et al., 2017). Boosting life satisfaction via stable employment and housing deters the substitution of substances for healthy rewards (Cheung & Lee, 2020). Finally, comprehensively addressing health sequelae like HIV and the risk of overdose is critical for recovery (Scott et al., 2011).

In summary, the five-stage framework systematically analyses the multidimensional factors shaping the full journey of substance abuse and recovery, from onset to desistance. This framework allows researchers and professionals to dig deep into each stage and reveal meaningful explanations from participants. By adopting this comprehensive approach, researchers and professionals can effectively capture the patterns, characteristics, and consequences associated with drug use.

The Interview Guideline Was Developed Based on the Five-Stage Framework

Based on the aforementioned framework, questions are organised according to the five stages and several special focuses, including 1) social and psychological reasons for substance misuse, 2) accessibility to drugs, 3) drug treatment, 4) drug treatment-relapse-treatment cycle, and 5) desistance. Further, several special focuses have emphasised outlining the Hong Kong drug situation as well, such as I) an overview of Hong Kong drug situation, II) drug trafficking (including online drug trafficking), III) cannabis use, IV) hidden drug abuse, and V) Chemfun – Drug use of Sexual Minority (LGBT+). After that, the interview guideline additionally involved optional questions to enrich the understanding of substance use (see Appendix). Researchers are welcome to adopt parts of and even modify the guideline to conduct their qualitative data collection with regard to their research questions and objectives for a more accurate and reliable finding.

The development of this interview guideline warrants careful consideration. The research team diligently formulated empirically grounded interview questions, drawing upon the lived experiences of substance abusers. The guideline's construction was informed by in-depth interviews conducted with a diverse cohort of 120 participants, including drug abusers, drug dealers, rehabilitative and social workers, and law enforcers. Notably, the invaluable support of the Beat Drugs Fund Association proved instrumental in underpinning this

endeavour. The association played a pivotal role in overseeing the review and endorsement of funding applications, ensuring the integrity and rigour of the project.

Chapter 2. Before The Interview: Designing An Interview Study

1. Foundational Understanding of Research Design

Designing a qualitative study is a complex process that differs from traditional quantitative research design. Due to the widespread of quantitative research, traditional research design models demonstrated a deficit in capturing the logic and process of qualitative research (Maxwell, 2009). In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research provides researchers with the flexibility to reevaluate and modify the design in response to emerging insights, developments, or changes while conducting the study. Becker et al. (1961) pointed out a reflexive and flexible approach to qualitative research designs in a very early stage. A broader concept of qualitative research design, emphasising order, system, and consistency rather than a fixed, sequential process, needs to be embraced. Following this understanding, Maxwell (2009) suggested an interactive model of design, highlighting the components of a research study and their interconnectedness (Figure 1).

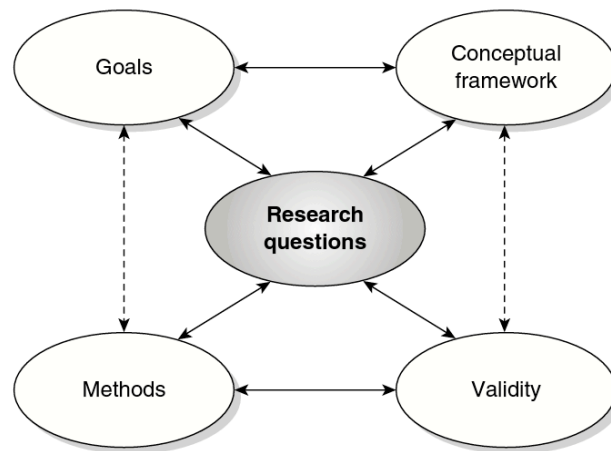


Figure 2. An Interactive Model of Research Design (Maxwell, 2009)

This model aims to help qualitative researchers understand and plan studies more effectively by treating research design as a concrete entity rather than just a theoretical concept. Maxwell (2009) conceptualised five components that address different aspects crucial for a coherent study.

- Setting goals: clarifying the purpose of your study and its potential impact.
- Establishing a conceptual framework: drawing on theories, prior research, and personal experiences to understand the subject of study.

- Formulating research questions: specifying what you want to answer, learn or understand.
- Determining the methods and techniques for data collection and analysis: creating an integrated strategy.
- Considering validity: acknowledging potential alternative interpretations and addressing threats to validity.

This model emphasises the integrated and interacting nature of the components rather than a linear or cyclical sequence. In this model, the research questions serve as the central hub connecting all components. Other factors such as research skills, available resources, ethical standards, and the research setting also shape the design but are considered external to this model (Maxwell, 2009).

It is important to admit that there is no universally definitive model for qualitative research design. However, this interactive model may solely offer insights for identifying key components in a research design, assisting researchers in facilitating systematic decision-making and minimising oversight rather than emphasising the absolute model for qualitative research (Maxwell, 2009). Also, it reminds researchers to emphasise the interactivity and interconnections among components. By embracing the dynamic nature of qualitative inquiry, researchers can enhance the coherence and effectiveness of their studies and construct the best research designs with sound and valid justifications. While this section provides essential insights, users are encouraged to explore and consult additional resources for a more comprehensive understanding of research skills and knowledge.

2. Components of the Research Design Model

Setting Goals

Setting goals in research involves choosing a research problem or question for the study and justifying that the study is worthy of performing (Maxwell, 2009). It guides the design of the research and the execution of the subsequent research components (Maxwell, 2009). In the context of drug research, examples of goals and objectives to be set could be “To investigate the overview of Hong Kong's drug situation” and “The likelihood of relapse after drug treatment”.

Establishing a Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework could be understood as a literature review which links up the theoretical concepts and assumptions that support the study (Maxwell, 2009, p. 223). Developing a conceptual framework for a study requires researchers to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, which in this case is drug abuse. For instance, as part of this project, a review of research literature and documents of the Action Committee Against Narcotics was conducted to identify key issues in contemporary drug issues in Hong Kong. Familiarising with the field's nuances and trends and acquiring familiarity with the terminologies enables one to gain a fundamental understanding of drug fields, which facilitates the conduction of the subsequent components of the research. For example, "one drop" (一滴) indicates approximately 0.5-0.7 grams of cocaine, while "one key" (一條匙) refers to 1kg of ketamine. Additionally, terms like "Doctor" (醫生) or "Chef" (廚師) are used to signify individuals involved in the manufacturing and processing of drugs in a drug production site known as a "kitchen" (廚房). Furthermore, the drugs may be distributed in a location or by an individual referred to as a "pharmacy" (藥房), commonly found in clubs and entertainment venues. Another example of conceptual framework in drug research is the life course framework, which investigates one's drug use in terms of the contributing social systems (e.g., individual factors like self-control, family, peers) and events along the life span (e.g., stressors in life) (Hser et al., 2007). By acquiring an in-depth understanding of the research field and the relevant theories, researchers can make informed decisions when constructing their research framework. It also aids the subsequent research works in later stages, including facilitating meaningful conversations, establishing rapport, accurately interpreting gathered information, and maintaining a focused and informed perspective within the field. Ultimately, it helps users assess the alignment between their studies and research framework and ensures a proper and effective response to their research questions.

During the building of the conceptual framework, researchers are inevitable to bring their own knowledge and background to their research endeavours since they are not empty vessels devoid of history or background (Cutcliffe, 2000, p.1481). However, this background knowledge not only widens the researcher's ability to understand and adapt to phenomena within their context but also facilitates the emergence of new understandings and explanations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It also allows researchers to creatively explore and articulate theoretical connections through an interactive process with the collected data (Cutcliffe, 2000). However, Cutcliffe (2000) advises researchers to avoid imposing a preconceived framework

or reading too much into the data, as it may potentially limit the emergence of fresh insights and hinder the research process. *Reflexivity* plays a significant role in qualitative research. It refers to researchers being an integral part of the data rather than remaining separate from it (Lipson, 1991). Qualitative methods inherently involve the researcher's perspective and influence on the theories derived from the data (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). The researcher's daily observations and interpersonal interactions are integral to the research process (Hutchinson, 1993).

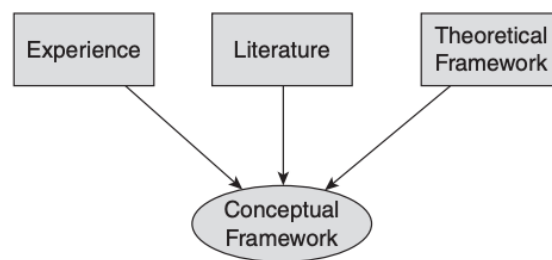


Figure 3. Sources of Establishing Conceptual Frameworks (Crawford, 2020, p.43)

To clarify the conceptual relationships and provide context in descriptive and conceptual writing, researchers should cultivate a quality known as "*theoretical sensitivity*". The theoretical sensitivity refers to both insights during the investigation and prior knowledge of the research area (Heath & Cowley, 2004). Theoretical sensitivity, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), refers to the insights gained during the investigation and the researcher's prior knowledge of the research area (Heath & Cowley, 2004). Researchers should openly acknowledge and consider their prior knowledge and its influence during the process of *constant comparison method* (will be discussed in the following chapter).

Formulating Research Questions

A research question aims at specifying what researchers “want to learn or understand” through doing the study (Maxwell, 2009, p. 228). The formulation of research questions may not be the starting point of the design but should be developed in conjunction with the study's goals, conceptual framework, and other design elements.

Research questions should be responsive because they serve two primary functions: first, they direct the investigation to align with the goals and conceptual framework; second, they provide guidance for selecting methods and ensuring validity (Maxwell, 2009). However, it is crucial to strike a balance between being overly general or prematurely precise in framing the research questions. Questions that are too general (e.g., “Treatment of drug abuse”) may

lead to difficulties in conducting the study and connecting findings to goals and existing knowledge. On the other hand, prematurely specific questions may overlook relevant theories, previous experience, and areas of exploration (Maxwell, 2009). For instance, "How do domestic violence influences relapse rates?", this question narrowly focuses on domestic violence as the determinant of relapse rates, neglecting the influence of other factors such as co-occurring mental health disorders, social support networks, and environmental triggers.

A major threat in formulating research questions is the presence of presumptions or assumptions embedded within them (King & Horrocks, 2010). For instance, as quoted by Maxwell (2009), "How do elementary school teachers deal with the experience of isolation from their colleagues in their classrooms?" assumes that teachers experience isolation (pp. 229-230). These presumptions can limit the objectivity and validity of the study if left unexamined. Therefore, when developing a research question in drug research, researchers must engage in a critical examination and justification of their research questions prior to conducting the study (Maxwell, 2009).

By carefully examining the presumptions, researchers can ensure that their questions align with the study's goals and objectives. The research questions should be designed to contribute meaningful insights and avoid redundancy or irrelevance. This also requires a thorough understanding of the existing knowledge and theories related to the research topic, as well as a clear articulation of the goals and intended outcomes of the study. For instance, as quoted by Maxwell (2009, p. 230), "How can I improve this program?" is not a good research question, as it is necessary to understand the phenomena prior to the generation of practice implications.

In qualitative research, there is often a dilemma between formulating research questions that focus on variance questions and process questions. Both types of questions have their own merits and can contribute valuable insights to the research (Maxwell, 2009).

Variance questions are focused on differences and correlations, aiming at exploring variations, patterns, and relationships among different variables or factors. This type of research question begins with "Is there (a relationship between)", "Does", "How much", and "To what extent", trying to uncover differences or similarities in individuals, groups, or contexts. An example of such questions in the context of drug research is "Is there a significant relationship between university environment and drug abuse among university students?" (e.g.,

Florence et al., 2016). These questions are particularly useful when researchers want to identify factors that influence certain outcomes or behaviours or when they want to compare and analyse different cases or contexts (Maxwell, 2009, p. 232).

On the other hand, process questions delve into understanding the underlying mechanisms, motivations, and dynamics that drive certain phenomena. These questions focus on exploring the intricacies of “how” and “why” things happen the way they do, rather than “whether” there is a relationship between variables or “whether” there are any significant differences. They are valuable for gaining in-depth insights into the processes, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups under study (Maxwell, 2009, p. 232). An example of such questions in the context of drug research is “Why do students consume drugs?” (e.g., Florence et al., 2016).

Examples from the reference list:

Variance questions

1. Drug addiction and treatment careers among clients in the Drug Abuse Treatment Outcome Study (DATOS)
2. Female drug offenders reflect on their experiences with a county drug court program
3. Hidden drug abuse in Hong Kong: From social acquaintance to social isolation
4. “Surfing the Silk Road”: A study of users’ experiences
5. Prevalence of Drug Abuse Amongst University Students in Benin City, Nigeria

Process questions

1. Early life poly-victimisation and differential development of anxiety as risk factors for the continuity of substance dependence in adulthood
2. The role of impulsive behaviour in drug abuse
3. Surviving drug addiction: The effect of treatment and abstinence on mortality
4. The role of stress in addiction relapse
5. What is the addiction world like? Understanding the lived experience of the individuals' illicit drug addiction in Taiwan

The choice between variance and process questions depends on the research interests, objectives, and the nature of the phenomenon being investigated. For instance, within the research area of substance abuse, a variance research question could be "What are the differences in effectiveness between group therapy and individual therapy in supporting individuals with substance abuse disorders?" Meanwhile, a process research question might be, "What specific steps and processes are involved in implementing a harm reduction approach within substance abuse treatment programs?". Researchers may find it necessary to include a combination of both types of questions to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the research

topic. By considering both variance and process questions, researchers can explore both the "what" and the "how" aspects of their study, enabling a richer and more nuanced analysis of the data (Maxwell, 2009).

In conclusion, formulating research questions that are free from presumptions, align with study goals, and avoid redundancy or irrelevance is crucial for conducting rigorous and meaningful research. Researchers should also consider the balance between variance questions and process questions, depending on their research interests and objectives. By carefully designing research questions, qualitative researchers can enhance the validity and depth of their studies, leading to valuable contributions to the field.

Data Collection

1) Recruitment and Sampling

Effectively recruiting, engaging, and retaining drug abusers always poses a significant challenge in drug abuse research (Jozaghi et al., 2018; Strickland & Stoops, 2019). The sampling process in qualitative research plays a critical role in ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. By rigorously selecting relevant samples, researchers can enhance the accountability and representativeness of the data, allowing for more accurate analysis and formulation of explanations or theories for social phenomena (Maxwell, 2009).

One sampling method which is the most commonly employed is purposive sampling (Patton, 1990). Different from probability sampling or convenience sampling, purposeful sampling involves intentionally selecting specific settings, individuals, or events that can offer the richest or the most specific information that cannot be obtained as effectively through alternative choices (Birks & Mills, 2015; Cutcliffe, 2000). In the context of drug research, a typical example of purposive sampling is targeting drug abusers in institutions like rehabilitation centres, prisons, hospitals, and schools, as well as recruiting participants through frontline practitioners or law enforcement. Purposeful sampling serves several important functions. Firstly, it can be used to achieve representativeness or typicality of the selected settings, individuals, or activities. The credibility of the selected settings, individuals, or activities is rooted in the researchers' knowledge and understanding of the research field and existing literature. In this sense, a small sample that is systematically chosen for its typicality and relative homogeneity may instil greater confidence that the conclusions accurately represent the average members of the population compared to a sample of the same size that incorporates significant random or accidental variation (Maxwell, 2009). Secondly, purposeful

sampling allows for capturing the heterogeneity present in the population with the particular intention of revealing the under-researched issues. The aim is to ensure that the conclusions adequately reflect the entire range of variation rather than just the typical members or a subset of that range (Maxwell, 2009). Thirdly, purposeful sampling enables the selection of cases that are critical for the theories guiding the study or that have emerged during the research process. This approach allows researchers to focus on specific cases that are instrumental in examining and validating their theoretical framework. Lastly, purposeful sampling can facilitate targeted comparisons that shed light on the reasons behind differences observed between settings or individuals, which is particularly valuable in multi-case qualitative studies (Maxwell, 2009). However, one limitation of purposive sampling is that it tends to exclude certain populations, such as unidentified or hidden drug abusers (Waters, 2015). Additionally, institutional or treatment-based samples introduce biases that limit our understanding of the broader phenomenon (Kemmesies, 2000). These samples may only represent drug abusers who have expressed an intention to desist from drug use, thus overlooking those who are still actively engaging in substance abuse.

The recruitment of hidden or marginalised populations can also be done through the internet, such as using internet forums/chatrooms or online advertisements targeting drug abusers using particular websites (Miller & Sønderlund, 2010). By employing innovative recruitment strategies, researchers can gain access to hidden or marginalised populations and encourage more candid and authentic responses. However, there may be limitations. While the aforementioned methods can get access to the participants related to research interest, using internet forums/chatrooms may be intrusive and subject to the issue of representativeness (e.g., limited to those who use the internet), whilst using online advertisements may need larger costs and also subject to the issue of representativeness (e.g., confined to those who use websites only) (Miller & Sønderlund, 2010). In qualitative research, researchers are flexible in employing various new methods to investigate sensitive issues as long as the research procedures and justification are sound and valid (Perez et al., 2022).

Particularly, drug abusers are a covert and hard-to-reach population due to the potential legal and social sanctions, limited number of accessible people, and the hidden or low visibility nature (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). For example, Lankenau et al. (2005) suggested researchers recruit participants by exposing them to the relevant spots to gain trust, “hanging out” at different times to identify suitable participants and dividing the interviews multiple times.

Inevitably, these methods are time-consuming and resource-intensive (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Higginbottom, 2004; Lankenau et al., 2005). In terms of the variations in fundamental philosophical approaches among different recruitment and sampling techniques, inadequate integration of various qualitative methodologies can result in "method slurring" and compromise the rigour, even when seemingly interchangeable techniques like purposive and theoretical sampling are used (Higginbottom, 2004, p. 14). Therefore, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive understanding of each technique when adopting or combining them.

It is important to note that sampling decisions should not be made in isolation from the rest of the research design. Drug abusers are a broad category, and it is necessary to consider the specificity of the sample within this category. Further considerations should be given to identifying the most appropriate target group within the broader population of drug abusers. For instance, if the objective of the study is to investigate the overview of Hong Kong's drug situation, as this project did, it is necessary to include a diverse range of drug abusers in their sampling. Depending on the research questions, the target group could be narrowed down to specific subgroups, such as ketamine users, cocaine users, or cannabis users. Alternatively, if the research questions primarily focus on relapse, participants who have undergone multiple rehabilitation treatments would be relevant, irrespective of the specific types of drugs they have abused. Also, researchers should consider their relationship with study participants, the feasibility of data collection and analysis, validity concerns, as well as the overall research goals and conceptual framework. Coherently, sampling decisions often require a deep understanding of the study setting, and adjustments may be necessary as researchers and professionals gain more insights into what sampling decisions will yield the most relevant and informative data (Maxwell, 2009).

2) Strategies for Maximising the Effort of Recruitment

To maximise the effort of recruitment, motivation plays a pivotal role in enhancing participant engagement. During the recruitment phase, it is imperative to emphasise the rewards as a strategy to attract potential participants. When considering substantial rewards, researchers can explore various incentives that are appealing to drug abusers and encourage their participation. Common practices include offering gift cards, vouchers, or monetary compensation as a token of appreciation for their time and contribution. These tangible rewards can serve as strong motivators (Best & Harrison, 2009) (Please refer to the next chapter, "Administering the interview guideline: Using a narrative interview", for further details).

Besides, researchers can provide access to valuable resources that directly benefit the participants. For example, workshops or support services related to rehabilitation and social support can be offered to address the information gaps that drug abusers often face. By reinforcing these aspects, researchers can enhance the attractiveness of participation (Best & Harrison, 2009).

In terms of non-substantial rewards, acknowledging and recognising participants' contributions may also enhance motivation. Highlighting their role in advancing scientific knowledge and making a positive impact in their field of interest can be a powerful incentive. Emphasising how their involvement shapes research outcomes and the potential benefits for society can further enhance motivation. Emotional release and support may also probably be obtained when interviewers hold a non-judgmental attitude and are posited in a neutral position, which further motivates the participants' engagement in the research/interview process (Best & Harrison, 2009).

To summarise, researchers should tailor these strategies to the specific needs and preferences of drug abusers, ensuring a respectful and empathetic approach throughout the research process. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of active and meaningful engagement throughout the research process.

3) Triangulation

Moreover, the relationship between the interviewer and interviewees in traditional research methods is often tenuous. Interviewees, who may be strangers to the interviewer, may lack a sufficient level of trust, thereby inhibiting open and in-depth disclosure (Waters, 2015). Consequently, the findings derived from these conventional approaches may not accurately reflect the true realities of drug abuse. To cope with this issue, triangulation can be performed by combining data from various sources, such as data collected from participants recruited through different sampling techniques and administrative documents (van Hasselt, 2021). (Please refer to the chapter "Data analysis" for further details)

Regarding data collection using narrative interviews, data analysis and the issues of validity, these components will be illustrated in the subsequent chapters in detail.

Beyond the components in the research design model, Maxwell (2009) further warned of the potential influences of environmental factors on the research design (shown in Figure 4). Considering the complexity and inevitability of these environmental confounders, a well-defined and solid articulation of the study design is indispensable. By clearly outlining the design, its strengths, limitations, and implications have to be thoroughly examined and understood. This enables researchers to have a comprehensive evaluation of the design's impact and relevance.

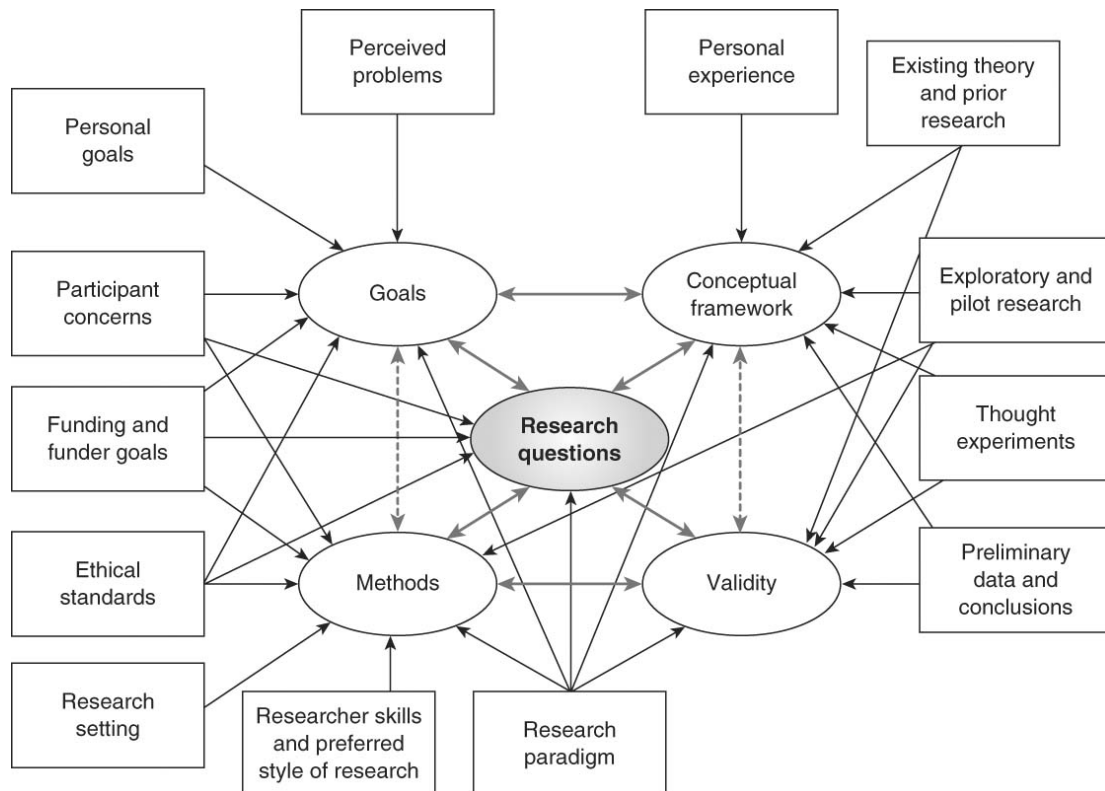


Figure 4. Contextual Factors Influencing a Research Design (Maxwell, 2009, p. 218)

Project Experience:

Although the components are presented in sequence for better illustration, they are not necessarily stepwise. Each component is interconnected in the research design, as shown in Figure 1. Users may need to consider the research design based on their specific circumstances. For instance, if a funder mandates the use of qualitative research, users may, therefore, have to adjust the other components based on the requirement of methods.

Setting goals: In this project, the research team has set the goals into 3 research objectives: a) to develop a framework for collecting qualitative information on the pattern, characteristics, and consequences of drug abuse; b) to implement the collection of qualitative information on the pattern, characteristics, and consequences of drug abuse and demonstrate its usefulness; and c) to integrate and analyse the information collected from the qualitative module with currently available quantitative data.

Establishing a conceptual framework: In order to achieve the first objective, the research team reviewed the existing literature and identified gaps in knowledge, leading to the development of the five-stage framework to guide the subsequent research design. Particularly, the lack of understanding of the evolved Hong Kong drug situation after the law enforcement crackdown efforts is noted, and the rise of new technology drives the need for in-depth research on the overview of the Hong Kong drug situation. It calls for a systematic analysis of the multidimensional factors shaping the full journey of substance abuse and recovery, from onset to resistance.

Formulating research questions: Furthermore, the identified gaps of knowledge led the research team to pay more attention to 4 specific research areas: Hidden drug abuse, Cannabis use, Drug dealing and Online drug dealing and subculture. Scarce studies are found on these 4 areas during the literature review, driving the team to formulate a variance research question to explore the gaps in knowledge rather than explain or identify causal relationships among variables.

Determining the methods and techniques: Regarding the explorative approach, the research team adopted qualitative research methods and further decided to use narrative interviews. Narrative interviews allow researchers to obtain rich information from the perspective of participants, which matches the explorative nature of this project. The method is also beneficial for the second objective to develop this manual and the semi-structured interview guide for the subsequent qualitative research. (Please refer to the next chapter, “Administering the interview guideline: Using a narrative interview”, for further details of narrative interviews)

Considering validity: To ensure the accurate representation of the qualitative data, various techniques have been adopted, such as constant comparative method, triangulation, memos, and audit trail. These methods helped researchers to stay in a secure credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. (Please refer to the chapter, “Data analysis”, for further details)

3. **Online Ethnography: A Research Design for Investigating the Drug Trends**

Alongside Internet advancement, virtual drug marketplaces have become attractive to young people due to factors like anonymity, convenience, and product variety, which largely replaced traditional street-level drug dealing (Van Hout & Bingham, 2013). Platforms like Silk Road facilitate anonymous and untraceable purchase of illicit drugs, increasing the risk of substance misuse among young people (Krauss et al., 2017; Whitehill, 2020).

Online ethnography utilises technology to study cultures and interactions in the virtual world, providing a diversified and open approach (Murthy, 2008; Postill & Pink, 2012). Given the increasing virtual interactions and the internet population, online ethnography is essential for researchers to expand their knowledge in various fields.

Online ethnography allows researchers to understand and study the complexities of human behaviour and social interactions in digital environments with a unique lens. Through

systematic observation, analysis, and interpretation of online, researchers can immerse themselves in these digital contexts and gain rich insights into the social dynamics, cultural norms, and individual experiences that unfold within online communities and platforms (Murthy, 2008; Postill & Pink, 2012; Wang & Liu, 2021).

Firstly, online ethnography allows researchers to overcome geographical and temporal limitations, enabling the study of diverse communities and cultures that may be otherwise inaccessible for traditional fieldwork. It provides a means to understand the complexities of global interconnectedness and the formation of digital identities (Wang & Liu, 2021).

Secondly, online ethnography offers opportunities for naturalistic observation and the collection of abundant qualitative data. Researchers can engage in participant observation, document analysis, and interviews conducted through digital platforms, capturing the multifaceted nature of online interactions and the rich tapestry of narratives and meanings that emerge within virtual spaces (Behrendtz, 2011).

Moreover, online ethnography enables the exploration of unique phenomena that are specific to digital environments, such as online communities, virtual gaming, social media platforms, and online activism. It offers insights into the ways in which individuals navigate and negotiate their identities, relationships, and social interactions in the digital realm, shedding light on emergent social practices, power dynamics, and the construction of online cultures (Behrendtz, 2011).

However, it is important to acknowledge the ethical considerations and challenges associated with online ethnography, such as issues related to informed consent, privacy, and the potential for misrepresentation. Researchers must adhere to ethical guidelines and exercise caution when conducting research, always prioritising the well-being and privacy of participants. It is important to ensure that participants are fully informed about the study and their rights as participants, including confidentiality and the option to withdraw at any time. Approval from the relevant ethical review board must be obtained before initiating the study (Behrendtz, 2011).

Online ethnography is helpful in accessing hard-to-reach populations, such as drug-using populations, through the use of a more comfortable and anonymous platform for participants to share their experiences (Berning & Hardon, 2019). Meanwhile, researchers are enabled to engage in interactive engagement and communication with participants in a

longitudinal way of how certain mechanisms and practices evolve within the community (Berning & Hardon, 2019). This approach is particularly beneficial for studying individuals who may experience drug-induced memory impairment (Im & Chee, 2006). By leveraging online platforms, researchers can overcome barriers to access, facilitate open and honest discussions, and gain valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of drug abusers (Berning & Hardon, 2019).

Project Experience:

In this project, the research team employed online ethnography as a method to engage participants. Two team members were assigned specifically responsible for handling the online outreach, and two mobile devices were used to ensure clear separation and maintain the security of our constructed virtual identities. Accounts were created on various social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, websites (forums and chatrooms), and mobile applications (dating apps), all linked to the designated mobile device. Invitation to participate in the face-to-face interview was sent to potential interviewees who demonstrated a certain level of active involvement on the online platform.

During participant recruitment, the research team constructed two distinct virtual identities for their ethnographic study. The first identity portrayed a knowledgeable and experienced substance abuser, actively sharing content related to high-quality substances, safety precautions for substance use, and empirical evidence of drug effects, as well as engaging in rational discussions. This character successfully connected with experienced substance abusers and dealers, allowing us to conduct in-depth investigations and gather qualitative data on various topics, such as methods of maintaining drug abuse without detection, drug trafficking practices, consumption locations, and drug networks.

The second identity represented a young and novice substance abuser who displayed curiosity and exploration in the virtual world. This character followed a wide range of substance-related content and engaged with online substance abusers by asking other users for more information, expressing interest, and replying to comments. This identity proved more accessible to junior, functional, and hidden users, providing factual information and straightforward explanations. The research team found this character suitable for framework testing and theory verification.

By employing these two different character profiles, the research team was able to reach a diverse range of respondents and gather qualitative data to achieve their research objectives. Regular supervision and reporting involved summarising observations with proper evidence and triangulating observations and comments to verify and cross-check validity.

This approach proved valuable in accessing participants who would have otherwise been difficult to reach through traditional recruitment methods. It was particularly effective in addressing the growing trend of hidden drug abuse, where individuals engage in drug use discreetly. By utilising online platforms, the research team successfully connected with over a hundred participants, shedding light on a previously understudied phenomenon. This experience highlights the effectiveness and power of online ethnography in reaching and studying populations that are challenging to access through conventional means.

Chapter 3. Administering the Interview Guideline: Using A Narrative Interview

Based on narrative inquiry, narrative interviews are performed to inquire into the participants' life stories and drug-related experiences (Murray, 2018). To facilitate the participants' story-telling and the data collection, how the interviews are conducted is crucial. The performance of narrative interviews involves the establishment of interview settings as well as the skills and techniques employed by the researcher to perform the semi-structured interviews/unstructured interviews with the interviewee (e.g., rapport building, using open-ended questions, active listening) (Murray, 2018). This chapter will provide additional guidance on conducting narrative interviews, complementing the research design with actionable steps in order to acquire rich qualitative data.

1. Epistemology of Semi-Structured Interviews

Epistemology refers to *the philosophical theory of knowledge*, offering a foundation for people to answer *how we know what we know* (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 8). The epistemology of semi-structured interviews is based on the principles of social constructivism, which asserts that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and is dependent on the social context historically and culturally instead of being a fixed or static "truth" (Burr & Dick, 2017). In other words, individuals' experiences and perspectives are shaped by their unique social and cultural contexts. From this perspective, knowledge is subjective and contextual, while individuals are constantly evolving and changing their understandings through their interactions with others and the world. Birks (2014) believes that each individual has a unique conceptualisation of existence and reality. Thus, interviews are a valuable tool for exploring how individuals construct and make sense of their experiences. Particularly, semi-structured interviews enable researchers to retain "sufficient flexibility to explore the issues in depth and to follow up the responses" to how individuals construct and make sense of their experiences, striking a balance between structure and flexibility during the interview (Scapens, 2004, p. 267).

The epistemology of semi-structured interviews also acknowledges the role of the researcher in the research process. The researcher and the participant are both active agents in the research process. The interviewer's questions and interactions with the participant can influence the participant's responses, and the participant's responses can influence the interviewer's understanding of the research topic. Thus, interviews are a collaborative process

between the researcher and the participant, and both parties actively contribute to the construction of knowledge. In view of the above, researchers must be aware of their own biases and be reflexive about how their own experiences and perspectives may influence their interpretation of the data. As Braun and Clarke (2019) assert, "*The researcher's own values, beliefs and experiences will always be implicated in the research process and will have an impact on the interpretation of the data*" (p. 16).

In summary, the epistemology of semi-structured interviews emphasises the importance of understanding knowledge as interpretive, socially constructed, subjective, and constantly evolving (King & Horrocks, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are a valuable tool for exploring how individuals construct and make sense of their experiences within their social and cultural contexts, and researchers must be reflexive about their own biases and interpretations.

Project Experience:

In this project, the research team employed a combination of semi-structured interviews and narrative methods to conduct a comprehensive exploration of the drug abuse situation in Hong Kong. This approach aimed to address the existing knowledge gap by providing participants with the opportunity to share their detailed stories and experiences in an open and unrestricted manner, going beyond the limitations of predefined questions.

Example:

A : 我可以的，這些我經常會說。

Q : 喔，是之前在港大那邊？

A : 是的港大那邊，我經常重複又重複、重複又重複都是問我這些問題。

Q : 都是這些問題嗎？

A : 大概都是這些吧，如果再仔細一點，他們真的逐歲逐歲問我，由二十歲說到三十歲，真的每一年都要詳細地說。

2. Features of Semi-Structured Interviews

Adaptive Flexibility

One fundamental characteristic of semi-structured interviews is adaptability and flexibility in the questioning process (King & Horrocks, 2010). Unlike structured interviews, which rely on predetermined, closed-ended queries or unstructured interviews, which have a completely open-ended format, semi-structured interviews strike a balance between these two extremes. Researchers can prepare a set of core questions or topics beforehand, ensuring a degree of consistency across interviews. However, interviewers retain the flexibility to diverge or rephrase from default questions and follow up on interesting responses or explore new

themes that emerge during the interview. This adaptive flexibility facilitates a more encompassing understanding of the interviewees' experiences, viewpoints, and beliefs (Ruslin et al., 2022).

To ensure adaptive flexibility, interviewers are encouraged to possess specific knowledge and experiences in the research field, which can be acquired through personal first-hand experiences, second-hand accounts, narratives, and scholarly literature. Meanwhile, pre-conceptions of the researcher should be carefully considered in order to minimise potential biases (Ruslin et al., 2022).

Person-Centred Approach

Semi-structured interviews prioritise the participants' viewpoints and experiences, making them well-suited for research aiming to capture the complexity and diversity of human experiences. By allowing participants to share their narratives and express their thoughts without constraints, researchers can gain deeper insights into the social and cultural contexts shaping individuals' realities. This participant-centred approach recognises the value of unique voices and provides a platform for marginalised or underrepresented perspectives to be heard. Despite being informed about relevant knowledge, values, or existing cognitive frameworks, the interviewer maintains an open and non-judgmental stance. Upholding this attitude allows the researcher to fully honour the participant's voice rather than superimposing external presumptions or frameworks. Ultimately, semi-structured interviews can obtain a rich, contextualised understanding of individuals' lived experiences articulated in their own words (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Example:

Q： 我曾經聽過一個朋友說大麻是一些山草藥，跟吃中藥沒有什麼分別。

A： 你想想你吃人蔘也會暈，我這個也會暈這樣。

Q： 你又說得對。你有沒有研究過它後面，就是你吸完大麻之後其實會不會對身體有什麼的影響？

A： 有的，它說大量，或者過量會死。之後長期吸食可能會對腦部造成傷害，所以我自己也會減少，但是不會完全斷絕它。它是我一個好朋友，但不是常常聯絡。

Q： 是一個損友，但我會跟它保持距離。

A： 有空見一下他。

Probing for Clarity

The purpose of conducting qualitative interviews is to capture participants' narratives and experiences rather than simply gathering specific question-based responses akin to a survey. Semi-structured interviews enable researchers to delve deeper and seek clarity during the interview process. When responses necessitate further expansion or when there is a need to better understand their perspectives, researchers can initiate follow-up questions or ask for examples. Probing enables extensive exploration of participants' thoughts and experiences, helping to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, and emotions. Such depth and clarification are often hard to achieve in structured interviews, where responses can be confined to predefined options (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Example:

Q2：我想再問，你剛才提及用藥的事，你說同時用 5 種藥，其中麻古及 Foxy 是我沒有聽說過的。

Q1：麻古是冰渣。Foxy 是甚麼？

A：Foxy 的演生很有趣，原本是一粒藥丸，有幾種用法，可以濕乾，可以就那樣吃，比較大粒，有兩截手指頭那麼大，啡紅色的。到後期演變至在淘寶可以訂，那好像一支針筒那樣的藥，沒有針的，內裡全是啫哩。原來是將 Foxy 液態化(liquidity)，成為液體。可以注射去肛門，副作用沒有服吃 Foxy 那麼強。

Generating Rich Qualitative Data

Semi-structured interviews are particularly effective in generating rich qualitative data. The open-ended nature of the questions allows participants to provide detailed and contextualised responses, providing insights into their subjective experiences, beliefs, values, and social interactions. Researchers can capture the nuances, complexities, and contradictions inherent in social phenomena, which may not be fully captured by quantitative methods alone. The qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews can be analysed using various techniques such as thematic analysis, content analysis, or discourse analysis, providing a deeper understanding of the research topic (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Adapting to Different Contexts

Semi-structured interviews can be adapted to different research contexts and participant populations. Researchers can tailor the interview questions and approach to suit the specific characteristics of the participants and the research objectives. The knowledge and insights gained from former interviews should inform subsequent ones. For instance, you may discover a probing question that is proven to be particularly effective or helps you realise that an aspect of participants' lives, initially overlooked, holds significance for the phenomenon under study.

As long as you remain conscious of how your interviewing techniques evolve throughout the project, you can prevent any changes from distorting the analysis of the collected data. This iterative process ensures the integrity of the research and enhances the richness of the findings. This adaptability makes semi-structured interviews suitable for a wide range of social science research, including exploratory studies, case studies, cross-cultural research, and studies involving sensitive topics (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Project Experience:

During the data collection process, the research team noted that distinctive patterns and characteristics in drug abuse were reported by sexual minority participants. For example, these individuals exhibited a propensity towards the misuse of more potent and potentially perilous substances, often resorting to riskier methods such as the injection of drugs in the context of sexual encounters, commonly known as "slamming". Consequently, the team decided to investigate their substance abuse patterns as separate from the broader population of drug abusers.

Honest Expression

By allowing participants to express themselves openly and providing a non-threatening environment for dialogues, semi-structured interviews facilitate the establishment of rapport and trust between the researcher and the participant. This rapport-building is essential for creating a comfortable space where participants feel safe to share their experiences and perspectives honestly. Building trust enhances the quality of the data collected, as participants are more likely to provide accurate and detailed responses (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). More information is discussed in the next section, "The interview settings".

In conclusion, the flexibility in questioning, participant-centred approach, ability to probe and clarify, generation of rich qualitative data, adaptability to different contexts, and the establishment of rapport and trust are all compelling features of semi-structured interviews, which are advantageous. Semi-structured interviews provide researchers with a powerful tool to explore the complexities of human experiences, uncover diverse perspectives, and gain in-depth insights into the social phenomena under investigation.

3. The Interview Settings

Choosing the Interview Location

Before conducting the interview, it is advisable to ask participants for their preference, which is often in a place familiar to them, such as their workplace or home (Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1996). In participants' homes, the presence of family members or friends can pose

challenges. You should consider in advance whether you and the participants are comfortable allowing another person to be present during the interview. If it is unacceptable, clearly communicate this to the participants beforehand. If another person's presence is permissible, explain the level of participation allowed. Safety considerations are important when conducting interviews in participants' homes and should be discussed with supervisors or colleagues (Murray, 2018).

Sometimes, participants may prefer to be interviewed outside their homes or workplaces due to privacy concerns. In such cases, options include finding a suitable room in your university or workplace or selecting a public space (indoor or outdoor) that offers comfort and neutrality. In public spaces like cafes, be mindful of the possibility of being overheard and inform the owners or managers about your interview activities. Outdoor spaces like parks can provide a relaxing environment with less risk of overhearing, but recording conversations effectively may be challenging, and the weather should also be taken into consideration.

The Role of the Interviewer

The individual attributes associated with conducting interviews play a pivotal role in ensuring the credibility of qualitative research, given the intense involvement in data analysis and the commitment to the research topic. “Self-awareness, clarity of purpose, commitment to hard work and internal motivation to do research are examples of these characteristics” (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 35). Just as in semi-structured interviews, in narrative interviews, the researcher should uphold a friendly and non-judgmental stance and attitude (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Most importantly, the researcher should be aware of the power relations with the interviewee in order to prevent the interviewee from experiencing discomfort (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). As the researcher and the interviewee are in a dual, collaborative process, the researcher has to reflect on himself and his potential impact on shaping the narratives (Murray, 2018). Individuals with drug-related experience have life stories of a sensitive nature (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2023a); they may feel insecure and less comfortable when taking part in an interview. Hence, labelling and stigmatising stances and language should be avoided. For example, instead of using “addict”, “person with substance use disorder” can be used in order to show that the person is the focus and drug abuse is not “their only identity” (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2023b).

Establishing Rapport

The significance of rapport relationships with participants in qualitative interviews cannot be ignored. Establishing rapport is a multifaceted process that requires careful consideration of various factors. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, researchers must employ effective strategies to foster a positive and trusting relationship with participants (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1997).

Rapport, in this context, pertains to the cultivation of trust and the creation of an environment wherein participants feel at ease divulging their thoughts and experiences. Foremost, building rapport should not be misconstrued as an attempt to ingratiate oneself with the participant. Overzealous efforts to be liked can inadvertently lead to biased responses and subtly influence the participant's perspective (King & Horrocks, 2010; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Instead, rapport fundamentally revolves around trust—an enabling factor that engenders a sense of comfort and openness in participants.

Particularly, the relationship between researchers and participants begins prior to the interview, indicating that the establishment of rapport extends beyond the point of direct contact (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Rapport can be done before the interview by the researcher breaking the ice and letting the interviewee share their reasons for joining this study (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Clear and transparent communication about the research purpose, participant selection criteria, and the voluntary nature of participation is essential. Providing comprehensive information and addressing any questions or concerns not only serves as an administrative mechanism to secure informed consent and ensure interviewee availability, but it also shapes participants' expectations, which, in turn, significantly impact the evolution of the researcher-participant relationship throughout the interview process. Prior to the official interview, it is prudent to allocate time to ensure that participants possess a comprehensive understanding of the forthcoming proceedings and the underlying rationale. As the interview commences, researchers should strive to establish a positive impression throughout the entire process of the research. The appearance and demeanour also impact participants' impressions, so researchers should be mindful of their professional attire and non-verbal cues. With respect to verbal cues, the use of language (e.g., avoiding using jargon and being too formal, adopting a “warm and conversational tone”, being aware of the cultural factors when doing the interviews, listening to the interviewee in a respectful and attentive attitude) help build rapport and trust (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019, p. 6). These facets do not merely convey personal qualities, such as warmth or aloofness, but, more crucially, they

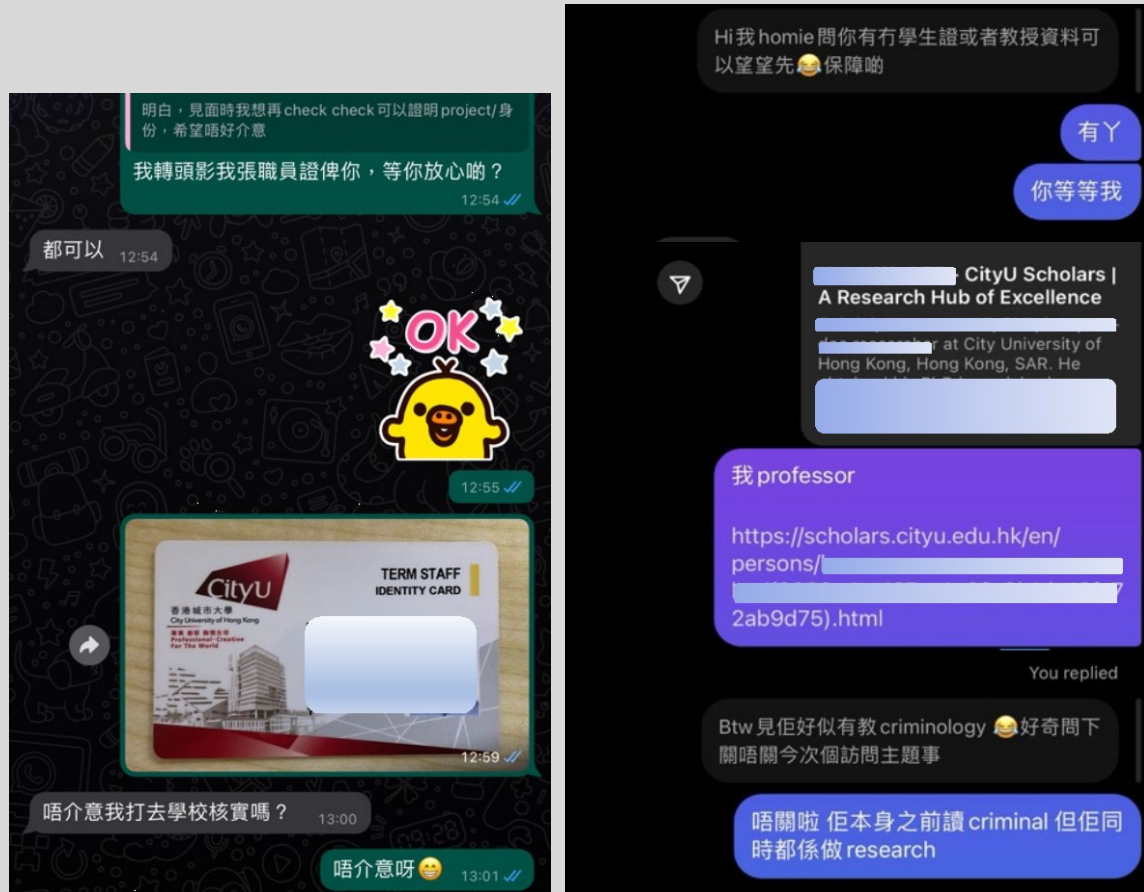
communicate information about the researcher's identity. Particularly for drug abusers, an identity apart from law enforcers, governmental agencies, and rehabilitation workers significantly reduces their suspicions.

Deceiving participants in scarce studies for specific research purposes has been observed to have a detrimental impact on the trust between researchers and participants (Jamison et al., 2008). It is important to note that missteps in rapport-building can have detrimental effects. Inconsistent or misleading information, a lack of attentiveness, or any behaviour that is perceived as inauthentic or untrustworthy can undermine participants' trust and willingness to engage openly (Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1997). Researchers must be aware of these potential pitfalls and strive to ensure that their actions and words align with the principles of authenticity, transparency, and respect.

Project Experience:

Some participants requested the research team to provide a photo of the staff card or a biography of the researchers before giving their consent to participate. Furthermore, some participants mentioned that they had browsed the researchers' profiles on the university website and explored publications to check whether we had conducted relevant studies.

Example:



Project Experience:

During the implementation of this project, the research team took an extra step to enhance participant motivation and establish trust by organising consultation sessions to address the life challenges of participants in need. These sessions provided a supportive environment where participants could seek guidance, emotional support, and assistance in navigating their personal difficulties. Equipped with training in social work and counselling, research team members were able to offer social welfare services and engage in discussions pertaining to life planning. By actively engaging in these interactions, the interviewers were able to foster a sense of trust and rapport with the interviewees. This increased the likelihood of participants being willing to disclose information openly and honestly during data collection and facilitated potential referrals to other prospective participants.

The incorporation of these consultation sessions not only benefited the participants by providing invaluable support but also enhanced the overall quality and depth of the research findings. The strengthened researcher-participant relationship engendered a more nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives, leading to richer insights and more comprehensive conclusions. Moreover, this approach exemplifies a commitment to the well-being and empowerment of the participants, transcending the confines of the research study itself.

In the following example, the participant was facing multiple complex life adversities, such as low income, drug problems, family conflict, and emotional struggles. Additionally, the participant disclosed that her daughter experienced sexual harassment while in foster care. Given the gravity of these circumstances, the interviewer made the decision to prioritise alleviating the participant's emotional distress, assisting with life planning, and accessing social welfare over continuing with data collection. To ensure confidentiality, any potential identifying information about the participant was removed, resulting in breaks or gaps in the dialogue.

Example:

S: 你自己不照顧她?

Q: 是的, 為甚麼?

A: 怎樣自己照顧? 我沒有房屋, 我本身也想著我自己去照顧的。但是沒有了, 去了緊急寄養。

Q: 但是如果你有一個女兒會容易很多去安排任何種類的屋給你。

A: 這麼多年了。其實我又沒有家人, 甚麼都沒有。如果是會安排的話一早就符合資格了, 是不?

...

S: 其實他 [跟進社工] 那時候有很多東西可以申請的。第一, 這樣的情況會給你一些臨時屋去住; 第二, 就是你申請的錢, 其實你不要計算你到酒吧上班那一份錢, 其實當是沒有收入的。我不是教你去欺騙, 只不過是解決你的燃眉之急而已。例如你可以去申請關愛基金, 那些是房屋津貼來的。那些一切的東西你是全部都沒有, 我就奇怪你就兩個社工跟進你的情況, 其實你沒有理由不知道這些福利是給你的。這樣事情我就是覺得奇怪。

A: 因為一直都是可能跟也說很穩定, 其實有時候可能我未必 OK 的。其實都很久沒有試過這麼不 OK 了。其實一直都是穩定的, 可能我又覺得沒有必要跟他們說要這些服務。因為如果我真的支撐不住的時候, 或者是可能我真的申請綜援是會影響女兒的。因為我的行為或者我的所有事情是會影響到我可不可以接回女兒。

Q： 你拿綜援和你去拿回女兒是…

A： 但是她那邊社工不是這樣認為，因為我們是分日開兩個社工跟進的。最慘的是我社工是很疼愛我，而我的女兒寄養家庭的社工就很…

Q： 其實你是她原生的媽媽，其實你有權去要求拿回女兒。

A： 那麼不就是我不行了？

Q： 不是，不是這樣的。

A： 不是這樣看的？但是他們真的這樣看。

Q： 不要緊，所以其實你是可以用你自己的方法去爭取女兒回來的，而不是你拿綜援而覺得你不行，很多人都拿綜援的，沒有那麼多…

S： 我都是單親家庭的。

A： 他覺得我不行嘛。

Q： 不是，就是正正就是你有一個意願，「我想做回一個全職媽媽，我很想照顧我的小朋友」，其實你這件事情已經是大有道理的了。然後社會在不同的機構都會給你一些穩定的資助去生活、去撫養你的小朋友。所以難聽點說一句，你的女兒是你的王牌來的，所以你要拿回女兒和綜援是沒有關係的。正正就是你拿回一間公屋，你拿回綜援，你拿回女兒的撫養權的機會是更加大的。

S： 如果你這樣留住的話，他是不會給你的。

Q： 是的。

S： 你要說到你有計劃去過穩定的生活。說真的，女兒不會長期在寄養家庭的，你想想她現在九歲了，幾年後你不知道的，開始反叛期了。所以其實你把女兒拿回來照顧，有一些社區保母，課餘托管服務，這些都是一個幫女兒上學、放學的一個支援來的。其實你不用擔心「我要全天候照顧著她」，現在不用的，很多都是：「可以的了，那個保母幫她去處理。」那些事情是會幫她處理的。

Q： 當你有需要的時候，其實你要和社工說，那麼他自然就會幫你去處理的了。

…

A： 前陣子他知道我沒有地方住的時候，也有叫我考慮一下申請綜援，但是我說不用。

S： 但是你不要覺得是貪，不相關的。其實綜援都不是很多錢而已，純粹是解決一些燃眉之急而已。就好像你拿綜援，你再申請公屋是有機會容易一點的。而且你拿綜援然後去公屋，可能免租的。因為綜援是包括租金的，其實你是可以節省一筆。你當綜援那一筆錢全是交租的。

Q： 你現在做的事情不是為了你，你是為了你的女兒。

A： 知道的。

…

Q： 你見女兒的狀態是可以的(okay)嗎？

A： 可以的(okay)，因為我教會很多人關心她的，她都有上小組那些，她都沒有問題的。

Q： 即是還可以的？

A： 是的，她又沒有不開心甚麼的，沒有這些的。

4. *Constant Comparative Method*

The constant comparative method is a powerful approach that enables researchers to systematically analyse and explore interview data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Throughout the interview process, researchers closely examine, code, and analyse the interview content from various perspectives. This practice enables researchers to explore and analyse data systematically and rigorously, case by case, during the data collection.

Unlike traditional deductive approaches, the comparative analysis method empowers researchers to actively interact with the data by actively engaging with the data and embracing an inductive perspective, fostering the construction of novel understandings and theories (Reichertz, 2007). The comparative analysis occurs iteratively throughout the research process, involving simultaneous data collection and analysis (Cutcliffe, 2000).

Researchers immerse themselves in the data, constantly comparing similarities, differences, and the consistency of meaning between incidents or indicators. This iterative process leads to the identification and development of coded categories and their properties (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Researchers can uncover connections, relationships, and unique insights that transcend individual interviews. Combined with theoretical sensitivity, researchers have the ability to promptly delve into newly emerging themes and areas for further investigation during the interview process. In such a process, researchers can inductively examine the data, identify patterns, and develop codes to categorise and organise the information, enabling theoretical integration. This integration offers support and direction to the establishment of conceptual frameworks, bridging the gap between abstract theories and specific empirical studies (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). By grounding concepts and themes in the data rather than preconceived principles or theories, the comparative analysis method ensures that findings and results are firmly based on empirical evidence (McGhee et al., 2007). This approach enhances the robustness and richness of the research findings, contributing to the advancement of knowledge within the field.

Example:

Case 1

Q： 我剛剛聽你的語氣就是，「僕冰啲班友」或者是「他們聽死」，你們會不會是有區分「我們就是吸大麻的一群」，看不起別人。

A： 我們沒有分，是我自己純粹看不起吸毒的人這樣。

Case 2

Q： 因為譬如我們之前訪問那樣，訪問一些食大麻的人。他是很看不起那些食其他毒品的人。

A： 是嗎？我看不起食大麻那些。

Case 3

Q： 吃冰是會被可卡因看低一線？

A： 不是，白粉會被吃冰和吃可卡因的人，這兩類人看低，因為白粉真是污穢不堪。

Another example of a constant comparative method applied in drug literature is the analysis of female drug offenders on their experience of a drug program conducted by Roberts and Wolfer (2011). In their study, comparisons within each individual interview have been done “by labelling and examining responses to individual questions and comparing them to similar responses made at different points in each interview” (Roberts & Wolfer, 2011, p. 89). For instance, some of their participants commented on the County Drug Court judge upon a few interview questions, which allowed the researcher to compare and see the commonalities and differences between the responses (Roberts & Wolfer, 2011). Also, comparisons were made between the interviews to categorise participants with similar experiences (Roberts & Wolfer, 2011). As such, thematic categories of the topic of the study were developed (e.g., positive and negative opinions of the program) (Roberts & Wolfer, 2011).

To summarise, the constant comparative method is an integral part of the entire research process. It occurs alongside data collection by generating thematic patterns from the data and comparing them until a consensus on theme formation has been reached (Roberts & Wolfer, 2011). By consistently applying this method, researchers uncover meaningful insights and generate rich and nuanced findings from their qualitative data.

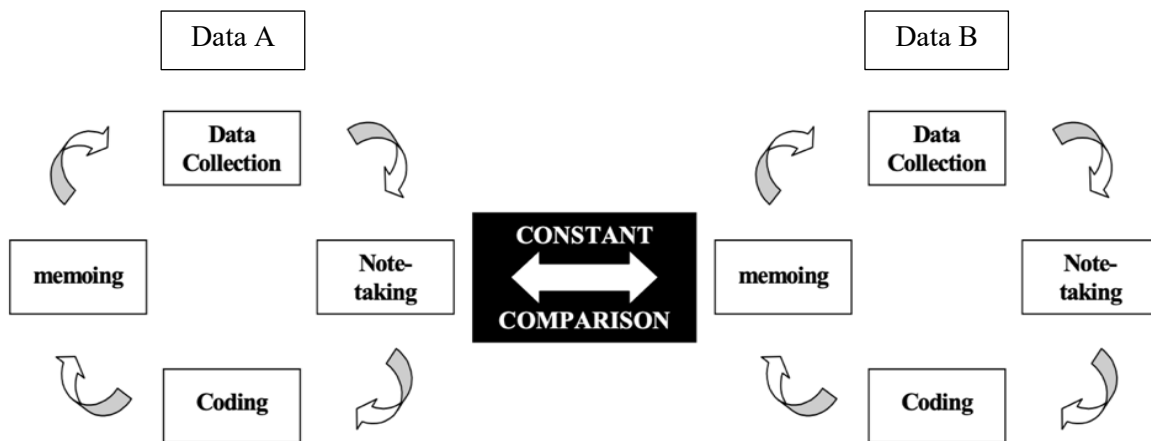


Figure 5. Constant Comparison (Jones & Alony, 2011, p. 105)

5. Conducting Interviews

Introduction

Before the interview, the researcher can do an opening by briefing and illustrating the research study (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The opening could include the organisation/affiliation of the researcher/interviewer, as well as the research rationale and procedures. Also, informed consent has to be achieved by giving out consent forms, and the reasons for recording the interviews have to be explained (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). An example of an opening could be like: “I am [Name], a researcher from [organisation/affiliation]. Thank you for your participation in this interview. This study aims to investigate [the purpose of study]. Your sharing of your life experiences on drug-taking/drug rehabilitation would be fruitful for this study. It is hoped that the results of this research will help generate significant practice implications. Please feel free to share your experience; your views will be kept confidential. Once the research has been completed, all of your data will be destroyed.”

The extant literature on qualitative interviewing offers ample evidence that participants' comprehension may differ from the interviewers at the outset, may undergo modifications over time, or may even become confounded (Warren, 2002). If necessary, revisiting and reinforcing this understanding during the interview can be beneficial.

Example 1:

Q： 謝謝 A，謝謝你今天接受我們訪問。我是香港城市大學應用社會科學系的，你叫我 Q 就可以了。其實我們本次的研究就主要想去了解多一些我們香港的青少年人濫藥的情況和他們在一些濫用藥物上面的一些交易方面的東西，你的經歷也可以，或者其他人的經歷也可以的。我們整個的訪問其實沒有絕對的對與錯，所以你不需要去找一個標準答案出來的。亦在這個過程入面都先告訴你聽，其實是絕對保密的，你會見到其實我們是會錄音的。我們錄音純粹用來騰錄而已。今天我們聊完天之後，我們就會將它變做文本，變做文字，之後三個月之內我們就會銷毀這個錄音，所以不需要擔心，你所有的名字那些東西會在文本上消失了。

Example 2:

Q： 你好，我是 Q，城大的，謝謝你們願意讓我們去做這個訪問。

A： 不用，是 C 先 follow 我們，就見到他叫人支持，還問我們做不做訪問，我一開始還以為是他自己的功課，要做這個研究。

Q： 不是，他是我們的同事來的。我在城大裡面幫忙做一個研究就是看看現在香港大麻的文化越來越厲害，越來越多人吸食大麻，所以我們就想去了解一下究竟甚麼令到這個新的趨勢出現，大家去選擇用大麻的時候，那個原因會是甚麼？在甚麼處境去使用，去了解這個整體的情況。放心，我們不是要你去戒，亦都不是一定要你去停止，不是的，我們純粹是想去了解你們為甚麼會使用，背後的原因是甚麼？你們用的時候的感覺是怎樣的，這一些方向。

A： 我想知道，你們這個研究不是功課，那麼是用來幹甚麼的？研究是用來當作甚麼的參考？

Q： 因為我們是香港禁毒處資助的，但是放心，我們不會洩漏你們的資料。

A： 明白。

Recording

Recording the entire interview, whether through audio or video recording, is highly advantageous in qualitative research (King & Horrocks, 2010). Audio recording is the most commonly used method, although video recording may be employed in select studies to fulfil specific research objectives.

However, it is important to consider how the presence of recording devices may impact the overall interview process. As Warren (2002) highlighted, recording devices hold different meanings for individuals being interviewed. It is argued that the presence of recording devices inevitably causes discomfort to participants (Spear & Hutchby, 2003). King and Horrocks (2010) highlighted an important concern regarding the potential hostility and authenticity of participants when recording devices are introduced in the field. For example, in the context of drug research, participants with drug-related experience may feel insecure about sharing their sensitive stories (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2023a), and thus, recording may be a threat

to them. Although predicting the reaction of each person is impossible, researchers should take measures to address potential threats to data validity. King and Horrocks (2010) suggested researchers provide ample time for participants to acclimate to the recording device. Taking the time for an informal briefing or casual conversation before formally starting the interview can create a more relaxed atmosphere and build rapport between the interviewer and the participant. This can help the participant feel more comfortable and less self-conscious about the recording process. By establishing a sense of trust and easing any anxieties, the quality of the recorded interview can be enhanced. It is crucial for participants to trust the interviewer and believe that their confidentiality and anonymity will be protected throughout the process (Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1997). Without establishing this trust, participants may feel inclined to provide false information or desired responses or withhold certain details in order to protect themselves.

The quality of the recording has to be ensured since interviews are often one-time opportunities. Hence, researchers must become thoroughly familiar with the equipment and ensure proper recording. It is advisable to test the equipment in the interview room whenever possible to address any potential acoustic issues or consider using two independent recorders as a precaution against unexpected errors (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Also, it is advisable to avoid frequently checking the functionality of the recorder during the interview, as this can disrupt the flow of the conversation and distract both the interviewer and the interviewee. Instead, the audio recording device should be checked before the interview (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

The use of recording devices also presents technological challenges. In certain instances, despite indications of recording, no sound was captured without any apparent cause. Fortunately, the team had employed a second recorder available on-site, ensuring that valuable data was not lost.

While video recording was not employed in this particular research project, it can be a valuable technique to fulfil certain research objectives and designs. Video recording is particularly advantageous when the naturalistic and non-verbal interactions are intended to be captured, whether between participants or between the interviewer and interviewees. However, it is important to note that video recording requires specific environmental settings, such as a private and uninterrupted venue, along with the use of two cameras to capture multiple angles effectively. It is also beneficial to have an assistant to monitor and control the cameras during

the interview. Nonetheless, there are additional challenges and time costs when it comes to transcribing and analysing the recorded data, particularly in capturing the dynamics and nuances of interaction. Despite these challenges, video recording can provide rich and insightful data that can enhance the research outcomes.

Similar precautions should be taken with video recordings to minimise the potential influence of the presence of recording devices. Just like with audio recordings, participants should be informed and provide explicit consent for the use of video recordings. Providing a clear explanation of how the recording will be used, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and addressing any concerns or questions that the participants may have to build trust and reduce self-consciousness are important.

Project Experience:

During the implementation of this project, it became evident that certain drug abusers, particularly those involved/who had been involved in drug dealing, harboured suspicion or hostility toward recording devices. The participant turned to conservative language, intentionally used “politically correct” wordings, and feigned abstinence from drugs because of apprehension about the recordings being submitted to the Narcotic Bureau. In such instances, the X paused the recorder and engaged in an "off-record" conversation with the participant. This allowed for a more candid and open discussion, fostering trust and reducing the participant's fear. Additionally, the interviewer took the opportunity to thoroughly explain the procedures for data storage and analysis, addressing any concerns and further alleviating distrust. While reaffirming the researchers' neutral and non-judgmental position, consent was obtained to re-record the interview, ensuring that accurate and reliable data could be gathered.

Example:

Q： 那麼可不可以說一說你主要在甚麼情況下、甚麼場合？

A： 不說了這個就。還告訴你知道？你禁毒處的喔！

Q： 我不是，我城大的。

A： 你匯報給禁毒處的啊，我當然不跟你說！

...

Q： 反而即是想這件事是更加要不停在推廣...

A： 是，推廣(promote)，是的。但是要保護那個群體的前提下去推廣的。因為你的資訊始終是正在給予我們最大的敵人的吧，是不是？不說那麼多了吧。

...

Q： 不是，你想我關(off)了它 [錄音機] 都可以的，是的。

A： 好的。

Note-taking or Memoing

In the case that some participants strongly refuse to be recorded, researchers may resort to note-taking or memoing as an alternative method to keep a written record of the key points expressed by the participants. These written documents serve as valuable sources to rely on when audio or video recording is not available. However, it is important to ascertain beforehand whether they are comfortable with the researcher using these written materials or if they consider them "off the record".

Regarding functionality, note-taking or memoing serves as an audit trail for the research, documenting the decision-making process and conceptual developments. Note-taking or memoing is not simply about jotting down key points; it is a technique that allows researchers to deeply engage with the data and explore its underlying meanings throughout the entire research process (Birks et al., 2008). Birks et al. (2008) believed that memos serve as a means of mapping research activities, recording decision-making processes, and maintaining momentum throughout the study. Qualitative research is a complex and long-term journey that involves organising data, identifying theoretical connections, and generating explanations or theories for specific issues. Throughout the chronicle of the research journey, memos provide a flexible record for personal retention or dissemination to others, helping researchers be aware of their personal influence during the process of analysis, thereby enhancing the credibility of the study (McGhee et al., 2007).

In addition, memos extract meaning from the data by enabling the researcher to analyse and summarise what is happening in the data (Birks et al., 2008). Memos facilitate the generation of theoretical assertions grounded in raw data and aid in the comparison and exploration of relationships. It also captures valuable insights from the data that can contribute to the development of theories. Hence, it takes roles from conceptualisation to completion of the study, providing a clear record of how decisions were made, and how conclusions were reached (Birks et al., 2008). By continuously writing memos throughout the research, researchers become intimately familiar with their research area, leading to higher theoretical sensitivity and the ability to identify meaningful connections (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

In fact, memoing will probably be transformed and integrated into resulting findings in a later stage (Birks & Mills, 2015; Piantanida et al., 2004). Therefore, keeping and sorting memos is of great importance during the later stages of theory formation, as they help clarify the complexities of relationships and contribute to the overall understanding of the research

topic (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Holton, 2005). As a result, memo pieces should be retained until the completion of the study to ensure that valuable insights are not lost and leave room for further clarification and exploration of details afterwards.

Interview Techniques and Quality

During the interview, it is important to maintain rapport with the participant and create a comfortable, non-judgmental atmosphere. While researchers take an active and leading role in the interview and subsequent analysis, researchers and participants are in a partnership to produce knowledge. This means that they engage together in exploring the participants' experiences and reflections openly and respectfully, rather than simply extracting predetermined information from participants (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

To facilitate a productive interview, several strategies can be employed. Firstly, starting with broad, open-ended questions allows the participant to tell their story in their own words. This approach encourages a more detailed and nuanced response from the participant, avoiding any imposition of the interviewer's own interpretations. One example of such open-ended question can be like: "Now [Name of the participant], I would like you to tell me your life story in your own words and in a way most comfortable for you..." (Puvimanasinghe et al., 2014, p. 75). Specific to drug situations, the open-ended questions which help initiate the participants' sharing of life stories can be "When was your first time taking drugs, and what was your experience?". Less sensitive, menacing questions can be asked (e.g., background information, general life situations) before inquiring into in-depth drug experience and inner sense (Chauncey, 2014; Wright et al., 1998). It is difficult to strike a balance between adapting the interview guide and following the participant's lead. However, alongside the person-centred approach, the research team believed that allowing the participants to guide the conversation and share what is most important to them could lead to unexpected insights. Probing questions can facilitate a more comprehensive exploration of their stories or explanations. These probing questions should be aimed at eliciting elaboration, clarification, and completion of participants' narratives, rather than imposing the interviewer's own agenda or interpretations (King & Horrocks, 2010). Examples of probing questions include "Tell me more", "Give me an example of that", "Can you describe that...", and "Tell me what you mean" (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019, p. 6); they can be used when the interviewer wishes to inquire more details about the drug experience and stories shared by the participants. By balancing the participant's autonomy in steering the conversation with the use of probing questions, this flexibility in the interview

process helps create a more meaningful and authentic exchange between the researcher and participants.

Example:

Case 1

Q： 你可不可以形容一下你做「廚房」的時候，你做些甚麼工作？

A： 加工，其實簡單一點來說。一些「生嘢」回來，之後你就打梳打粉。之後其實沒有，只是加工而已。

Case 2

Q： 吸食冰毒會令人的自信增加？

A： 他會令你的自信變高。自信變高的意思是當下你會覺得做什麼都很有信心。因為你的集中力變高了，你會覺得自己很有能力。但你沒有發現其實做出來的事情會變得更差。

Q： 可否提供一些例子？

A： 有些人吸食完冰毒之後，不論什麼事情也會搶著去做，但可能用的方法和步驟比平日更多，或者過程會比平日更複雜，在別人眼中看上去便是「無果樣整果樣」。現在的我當然不會有這個情況，以前難免會有，縱然大部份都不會。我看到有些人很有趣，比如說拿起遙控按掣就是了，他們卻不是，要先按選單才去調音量，但你對他說旁邊不是有個音量鍵嗎？然後他便會很不開心。

Active listening is another key skill during the interview. By upholding active listening, interviewers are capable of raising impactful follow-up questions to encourage the participants to expand on their responses. Giving full attention, using verbal and nonverbal cues to show interest, and summarising key points ensure understanding and demonstrate engagement with the participant's narrative (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Rephrasing terms and sentences can be valuable for clarification and verification of meanings and details, ensuring accurate understanding between the interviewer and the participant. For ambiguous descriptions, interviewers need to be sensitive and familiar with the field so as to ask the proper and precise questions to elicit detailed narratives. Asking participants to describe specific events or episodes related to drug use, recovery, and any related challenges helps to gather rich and contextually relevant information (Tennant et al., 2023). Applied in drug research, the researcher/interviewer can demonstrate active listening by paraphrasing the interviewee's sharing in terms of contents and feelings and restating what the interviewee has tried to share in his own words (Trenholm & Jenson, 2004).

Example:

Case 1

Q： 剛才我有聽你提過，你其他的朋友或者圈子裡有福音戒毒那些，全部其實你沒有見過有一個是有效的？

A： 可能有效我不知道，我身邊那些沒有效。

B： 我就有效啊。

Case 2

Q： 用你自己做了這麼多年，你去看這個模式，你會覺得有些甚麼擔心？

A： 說真的你這樣賣廣告想被人抓。這些群組說真的所有人都能夠進去的。你又不知道對方甚麼人。說真的你賣這些東西的時候，你當然越低調越小心越好的。賣廣告賣到街知巷聞，你又不知道有些甚麼人進來的，你那些群組又甚麼人都能夠進的。

Q： 是，可不可以這樣說，就算甚麼情況你都不會用這個模式去做？

A： 是。

Thirdly, maintaining a non-judgmental stance is essential in narrative interviews. Even when participants express opinions or actions that may be unfavourable or disagreeable to the interviewer, criticism should be avoided. The epistemology of a semi-structured interview lies in the constructive and subjective truth of participants. It is important to note that this does not imply agreeing with everything that is said. Interviewers should refrain from interjecting their own opinions. Affirming or rejecting such opinions may hinder participants from revising their categorical statements later in the interview. Researchers merely need to demonstrate authenticity, empathy, compassion and respect through active listening, maintaining appropriate eye contact, and responding attentively to participants' cues, rather than reinforcing or disproving any views or beliefs in the interview (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Example:

A： 我們說我的經歷，或者原因之前，都會好奇。Q 你自己其實是支持，或者你自己有沒有接觸過大麻這樣事情？或者其他軟性的，香港來說被定性為一些軟性的毒品。

Q： 我自己就沒有的，沒有接觸的，因為其實我就不是說反對，還是支持，純粹是覺得沒有需要而已。

Furthermore, contradictions and inconsistencies in participants' expressions are not uncommon. However, these pieces of information should not be treated as wrong or problematic. Participants may express different opinions on the same issue or person at different points in the interview. Interviewers should refrain from admonishing participants for their contradictions or inconsistencies. Instead, interviewers should take responsibility for any

misunderstandings and encourage participants to elaborate or provide further clarification while avoiding leading questions (Wright et al., 1998).

Example:

A： 但其實你吸食完是會加快了你想事情的速度。自我而言就會，亦都會令我不停想很多事情，會想很多有關自己的事情。那麼真是會有很多問題。在腦內不停想事情，不停想事情。我覺得是激發了我的腦去做更加多其他的事情。

...

A： 除非你知道之後自己的行程有事情做，那麼你不可以那麼放鬆(chill)的，你要認真的，那麼這些就會控制自己。即是有安排，下班才吸食吧。

Q： 但你不是說吸食了之後專注一些，想事情快一些的吗？那不是應該更加幫到你做事情嗎？

A： 是的，如果你控制到那個份量便是了。我經常都說，一些朋友都會問我可不可以 stone 住上班。其實你 stone 住上班可以，原則上當然不可以的，跟你老闆說你 stone 住上班當然不行的。但你吸食完之後是可以表現出，都能夠做到事情的，那麼沒有任何問題的。所以其實某一方面是都會令到你高效率的。

...

Q： 是的，所以你剛才就說反而你說見到行程上有事情要認真做，那麼你就會選擇不吸食的，但是按功能來說應該是吸食了去做會更加好的。

A： 但因為有時你吸食完之後，你會經常笑的。還有就是因為太高效率了，和你說話期間，你突然間想到這件事情你都還未說，你有時會不記得的。所以有時人們說吸食大麻的副作用是會令到你沒有那麼好記憶力。記事情沒有那麼好的。然後又說對視覺上，你的視覺都會衰退的，慢慢會有影響，這個我都相信是真的。

Silence during interviews is a natural and valuable part of the conversation. Interviewers should not be afraid of silence during interviews. Silence can occur when participants need time to reflect on a question or process their thoughts. By being comfortable with silence and resisting the urge to fill it immediately, interviewers create an environment that encourages participants to engage in meaningful reflections and share more profound insights. Feeling compelled to fill silence by quickly jumping to additional questions or seeking clarification can disrupt the participant's thought process and prohibit participants from fully exploring their experiences or perspectives. Silence enables participants to delve into their memories and consider different aspects of their experience and facilitates their subsequent sharing of the experience (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Example:

Q： 你記不記得起初去越峰的時候、去找同事幫忙的時候，你覺得整個過程是有甚麼幫到你的？

A： Er...

Q： 也很多年前了吧？

A： 是。可能差不多十四年了。

Bad example:

Q： 那麼你一直打針到甚麼時候？為甚麼會開始戒藥呢？

A： Er...

Q： 或者你告訴我知，你那麼多年裡入醫院的經歷？

For participants who are severely intoxicated (e.g., heavy drug abusers), it should be noted that interviews should not be performed (Power, 1989). As such, it is advisable to re-arrange the interviews.

Example:

Case 1

Q： 有沒有一些情況是很想立即吸食？

A： 有，現在。想了很久。

Case 2

(受訪者 A 去廁所)

社工： 很亂。阿 A 很亂。

受訪者 C： 他「索了 K」。

...

研究員： 還有他抹得不乾淨。

社工： 他的樣子看得出的。

...

研究員： 其實我看她去廁所也很頻密。

受訪者 C： 是啊，去廁所「索 K」而已。

Moreover, interview techniques and questions can be modified and altered based on the characteristics of the samples (Coyne, 1997; Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). The chosen interview techniques and questions depend on the developing categories and emerging theory (Coyne 1997). Such flexibility and adaptability ensure the interview process aligns with the research objectives.

Incorporating the constant comparative method, interviewers can refer to the collected data, including themes and codes, to examine connections, relationships, and unique insights.

This method involves comparing new data with previously collected data to identify similarities, differences, and patterns, thereby refining and expanding the analysis. By using this method, interviewers can establish a systematic and rigorous analysis process that helps in the development of a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

The aim of a qualitative interview is to explore and understand participants' accounts of aspects of their experiences rather than gathering answers to specific questions as if they were variables in a survey. As such, insights gained from the initial interviews should inform subsequent ones. The constant comparative method allows interviewers to note effective probe questions and consider aspects of participants' lives that may have initially been overlooked but are relevant to the phenomenon under study. Being aware of the development of interviewing practices over the course of the project helps to avoid distorting the analysis of the data and secure the quality of interviews.

6. *Closing the Interview*

Consistent with good practices to ease the participant into the interview, it is equally important to devise a strategy for a natural and unhurried ending. Although the longer the interview took, the more data obtained, researchers should monitor progress throughout the interview. Ideally, all the aspects outlined in the interview guide should have been covered within the allotted time. In most instances, the interviewer needs to take responsibility for ending the conversation (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015).

A closing question enables participants “to reflect, share additional information, and decompress” (Sowicz et al., 2019, p. 2), as well as enabling participants to have a greater degree of control in terms of the provision of additional information and enquiry about the research (King & Horrocks, 2010). It is advisable to formulate closing questions that shift the focus away from emotional personal disclosures (King & Horrocks, 2010). Examples of closing questions can be “Have we missed anything?” and “Is this an adequate summary?” after summarising the interview (Sowicz et al., 2019, p. 3; see also Krueger & Casey, 2015). Besides, a suitable approach frequently employed involves inquiries pertaining to envisaged future modifications or advancements. Consequently, the research team often asked questions related to recommendations for drug prevention campaigns if they have the power to plan or amend government policy and law enforcement practices at the final phase of the interview. However,

it is important to note that not all interviews will conclude in the same manner due to variations in participants and their interviews.

After closing questions, researchers should allocate time for debriefing participants with the beginning of expressing gratitude for their time and willingness to share their stories (e.g., Baumbusch, 2010). During the debriefing, the researcher summarises the main points covered and invites the participants to give any comments or feedback (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). Also, participants should be allowed to seek clarification on any information provided earlier in the session. Participants may have questions regarding anonymity, confidentiality, or the use and access to the interview material. Researchers should invest sufficient time in responding to participants' enquiries, demonstrating a willingness to engage rather than appearing eager to conclude the session. Researchers should also ensure that the participant is aware of any next steps in the study, such as follow-up interviews or additional data collection. Researchers should take care to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of the participant's information, including anonymising data in publications and presentations (e.g., Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2015; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014; King & Horrocks, 2010).

Example:

Case 1

Q： 好的(okay)，基本上我就問得七七八八了，你們還有沒有甚麼想讓我知道的？

A： 我有一個很特殊的案例(case)，那個都是年輕人，差不多千禧年紀的一個男孩子，他很有研究的，甚至都有涉及到買賣，我可以 pass 他的聯絡給你。之後就變了用大麻，甚至是大麻二酚(CBD)、大麻萜酚(CBG)去醫自己的腰骨痛，他自己本身也有注意力不足及過動症(ADHD)、過度活躍之類的不同疾病。

Case 2

Q： 你覺得在政策上面，香港又能夠為青少年人在濫藥方面，你覺得又不能夠做些甚麼？還是，思維上面應該可以擴闊一步？

A： 我覺得可以做多一些知識推廣的。

Q： 可不可以說多一點知識推廣，告訴你「企硬」？「吸毒，企硬」？

A： 不是，但是不要用這種的，就是不要用這種，你不斷強行推銷(hard sell)「大麻是毒品！」「企硬！」沒有意思的。你起碼，例如你在煙的包裝上面都會寫陽萎、會減少壽命、心臟病發。這些都有些資訊給到我，是不？但是你對於大麻的推廣就是只是「企硬！」不要吸食，高下立見。

Q： 但是上網都很多在說，你剛才所說它誇大了，或者是誇大了一些大麻的壞處的。其實你都沒有怎樣看到的？其實我們在不同的宣傳上面都有在說吃藥。然後你覺得可以再說得明白一點，是不？你覺得大學生其實很多時候都不知道吸毒，或者是這些的壞處？所以需要多一點資訊，再明顯一點的資訊讓他們認識？

A： 寧願這樣，而不是只是說：「不要吸食！」。

Q： 明白，好。真的很謝謝你的訪問，還有我們大概想知的事情都差不多了。你會不會有些甚麼想問我的？

A： 你給我二十秒想一想。

Q： 好。

Incentives for Participation

Compensation and incentives for participation are the most straightforward way to increase response rates. Offering small-value compensation (e.g., \$50-\$100 supermarket coupon) can be seen as a gesture of goodwill, building trust between researchers and participants rather than a purely transactional exchange (Bickman & Rog, 2009). In addition to increasing response rates, compensation also serves to equalise the relationship between researchers and participants, acknowledging and respecting their valuable contribution to the study (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000).

However, it is important to approach compensation ethically and strike a balance. Compensation should not be solely viewed as an inducement that may compromise the voluntary nature of participation or potentially influence the data generated (King & Horrocks,

2010). It is crucial to handle compensation in a way that maintains the integrity of the research process.

To ensure transparency and accountability, proper records of compensation should be maintained and securely stored throughout the study. This includes documenting the amounts, types, and distribution of compensation provided to participants. These records serve as a reference and safeguard against any potential disputes or misunderstandings.

Furthermore, researchers should adhere to ethical guidelines and institutional policies regarding compensation and incentives. These guidelines provide frameworks to ensure that compensation is fair and reasonable and does not unduly coerce participants or compromise the scientific rigour of the study.

7. Data Saturation

Saturation is the stage at which data collection no longer yields new codes or concepts, indicating the completion of data collection (Cutcliffe, 2000; Saunders et al., 2018). “*Saturation means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category*” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 61). Also, saturation is obtained when the researchers “*have enough data to build a comprehensive and convincing theory.*” (Morse, 1995, p. 148). Saturation serves to verify the established categories and ensure the comprehensiveness and completeness of the research (Morse et al., 2002; Timulak, 2014).

Saturation involves a thorough explanation and validation of the categories, the variations between codes and categories, and the relationships among categories (Green & Thorogood, 2004). However, the exact moment of achieving saturation is subjective and dependent on the researcher's level of theoretical sensitivity and judgment (Morse, 2010). Consequently, debates and the need for evidence and standards regarding the attainment of saturation exist.

Bowen (2008) emphasised that there are no explicit guidelines for determining saturation in qualitative methodologies. Instead, strong evidence for data saturation is provided through the application of constant comparative methods, coding, memoing, sampling, and the researchers' knowledge. Methodological rigour and a trustworthy research process serve as evidence of achieving saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). The saturation of data depends on the analysis process and the presence of sufficient data and developed categories for theory

generation (Saunders et al., 2018). Researchers should present clear evidence of saturation through their research process and the rigorous application of their methodology to convince their audience.

When data saturation is preliminarily perceived, researchers may conduct additional interviews among all types of participants to ensure the sufficiency of collected information for subsequent data analysis. Data saturation is considered to be achieved when the data from these additional interviews demonstrate complete coherence and consistency with the previous interviews. However, if the data from the additional interviews do not align with the existing findings, indicating that saturation has not been reached, further interviews must be conducted until saturation is achieved (Saunders et al., 2018).

8. *Considerations for Applying and Adapting the Interview Guide*

Flexibility in Using the Interview Guide

Given this interview guide encompasses the entire journey of drug abuse, not all five stages may be necessary for every research project. Users should have clear research boundaries to determine how to apply this interview guide, such as the demographic and geographical characteristics of the target population, the specific types of substances being investigated, and the time period of substance use being considered. The selective application of the interview guide is welcomed depending on the research interest and objectives. However, users of the interview guide must decide whether to comprehensively cover all relevant topics or focus on a specific stage or type of drugs for meticulous investigation. This decision depends on the researcher's preference or the need to steer the direction of the interview. It is important to recognise that strictly adhering to the interview guide runs the risk of unintentionally limiting participants' opportunities to raise unexpected perspectives that may genuinely contribute to the research. Therefore, maintaining adaptive flexibility should be kept in mind.

Although the interview guide is designed for semi-structured interviews, structured use of the interview guide can be acceptable when it aligns with the user's research objectives and goals.

Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations hold immense significance in the realm of interviewing individuals involved in substance use, as they serve as the bedrock for safeguarding the well-being and dignity of participants. In order to navigate this sensitive terrain, researchers must

prioritise the following ethical guidelines to ensure a principled approach to their inquiry. Firstly, obtaining informed consent from participants is paramount. This entails providing a clear and comprehensive explanation of the purpose of study, potential risks and benefits associated with participation, and an assurance that participants possess the right to withdraw their consent or decline to answer specific questions at any stage of the interview process. This commitment to informed consent upholds the principles of respect for autonomy and promotes a sense of agency among participants (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Safeguarding the confidentiality of participants is another ethical imperative. Researchers are obligated to employ rigorous measures to anonymise participant data and securely store any identifying information. By doing so, researchers demonstrate their commitment to protecting participants' privacy and ensuring their trust in the research process (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Furthermore, maintaining a non-judgmental and empathetic stance is of utmost importance when engaging with substance abusers. Researchers should approach participants with genuine empathy, respect, and cultural sensitivity, recognising the inherent worth and dignity of each individual. It is essential to refrain from using stigmatising language or displaying attitudes that perpetuate societal biases surrounding substance use. By adopting a non-judgmental approach, researchers create a safe and supportive environment that encourages open and honest dialogues (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Additionally, researchers should consider integrating harm reduction principles into the interview process, where appropriate. This involves providing participants with relevant information about harm reduction services, resources, and strategies that can help minimise the potential risks associated with substance use. By embracing a harm reduction approach, researchers demonstrate a commitment to the well-being of participants and contribute to the efforts which aim at reducing the adverse consequences of substance use (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

In the context of drug abuse research, participants may divulge information about their involvement in offences or misconduct, such as drug dealing or drug-related crimes. Due to the sensitive nature of these disclosures, maintaining confidentiality is crucial (Fitzgerald & Hamilton, 1996). However, confidentiality can be breached under specific circumstances, particularly when there is empirical evidence indicating ongoing child abuse or imminent harm

to a third party (British Society of Criminology, 2015; Israel, 2004). According to the British Society of Criminology (2015), there is a legal obligation to report three serious crimes: terrorism, money laundering, and long-term child abuse. If any of these crimes are disclosed during the research process, it is our responsibility to report them to the appropriate authorities, ensuring the safety and well-being of potential victims (British Society of Criminology, 2015).

It is crucial to carefully consider and adhere to ethical guidelines and legal frameworks throughout the research process. A balance between maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of research participants while fulfilling legal obligations to protect individuals from harm is difficult to strike. Nevertheless, researchers have to uphold the principles of beneficence, respect for autonomy, and justice. These principles ensure that the voices and experiences of substance abusers are heard and respected while simultaneously promoting responsible and ethical research practices in this complex and sensitive field.

Rights of Withdrawal

Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any point, even after the interview has taken place. It is important to provide participants with the researcher's contact details so that they can address any concerns or questions they may have in the future (King & Horrocks, 2010). Participants may also request the removal of their comments from the transcripts, either immediately or at a later date (Barbour, 2018). Respecting their right to withdraw and ensuring their privacy and confidentiality, any data or materials related to their participation should be promptly deleted.

King and Horrocks (2010) further pointed out the importance of differentiating distress induced by the interview process and their desire to withdraw. While the main objective is to gather information, interviews can evoke emotional responses, which can contribute to rich and in-depth data. Under emotional distress, interviewers may offer a short break or ask the participant if they wish to continue, taking into account the well-being and comfort of the participant.

In line with a person-centred approach, it is important to prioritise the well-being of participants and avoid causing distress or conflict through the inclusion of their data. Although withdrawal is not an ideal outcome, providing participants with the option to withdraw can offer them reassurance and control over their participation (De Jonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Chapter 4. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a crucial process in making sense of the collected data (Merriam, 2009). It involves organising, managing, and analysing data to identify patterns, themes, and insights. To ensure effective analysis, developing analytic guidelines or questions at the outset of the study, writing observer comments to stimulate critical thinking, and writing memos to reflect on the learning and insights gained are all beneficial steps for researchers to take.

As mentioned in the constant comparative method, analysis is not a separate stage that occurs after data collection. Instead, it is an ongoing and recursive process that takes place throughout the entire research journey. By engaging in continuous analysis, researchers can capture the richness and complexity of qualitative data and generate valuable findings (Fram, 2013). This approach ensures researchers to stay focused, organised, and actively engaged with the data, enabling them to uncover meaningful insights and draw valid conclusions (Heath & Cowley, 2004).

There are various acceptable methods for qualitative data analysis, each with its own strengths and limitations. For the basic features, qualitative content analysis requests a systematic description of the meanings of qualitative data by classifying them as instances of the categories of a coding frame (Schreier, 2012). The analytical procedures employed in the examination of semi-structured interviews particularly emphasise discerning the shared meanings and variations that permeate the interview data (Merriam, 2009).

While data collection can extend indefinitely, practical considerations such as time, resources, and the emergence of regularities and new information guide the decision to transit to intensive data analysis. It is important to avoid overextension, where new information diverges significantly from the existing categories and does not contribute meaningfully to the research. The ultimate goal is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the data and generate valuable insights that contribute to the research objectives (Fossey et al., 2002; Heath & Cowley, 2004; Rusinova et al., 2009).

1. Transcribing Interviews

Transcribing interviews is a vital step in qualitative analysis, converting audio recordings into written documentation. It involves creating either a verbatim transcript or a concise summary report of the interview content (King & Horrocks, 2010). Transcription is a demanding and time-consuming task, often delegated to skilled individuals to alleviate time pressure and workload (King & Horrocks, 2010). However, researchers should not entirely rely on others for transcription, as the process fosters familiarity with the data and aids the development of theoretical sensitivity (King & Horrocks, 2010; Tilley, 2003).

Regardless of whether researchers opt for verbatim records or summary reports, conducting the transcription process while the details are fresh in memory is crucial (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). This ensures that researchers capture not only the spoken words but also important nonverbal cues, tone of voice, and contextual elements that contribute to a more precise analysis (Grundy et al., 2003; King & Horrocks, 2010). These elements often convey meanings and emotions that may not be fully captured the words alone. In the spirit of co-constructing knowledge and the dialogic nature of the interviews, the transcript should encompass the discourse of both the participant and the interviewer (Grundy et al., 2003).

Furthermore, transcribing interviews promptly enables researchers to address any missing or unclear elements. If critical information is absent or further clarification is needed, researchers can reach out to participants while the interview is still fresh in their memory (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). This helps ensure the accuracy and completeness of the transcribed data.

It is important to note that transcribing involves interpretation, and any method of transcribing will have some level of interpretation involved (Grundy et al., 2003; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Besides, there may be instances where not everything said during an interview needs to be transcribed. For example, irrelevant conversations or intrusions can be omitted, and participants' requests to omit certain statements should be noted (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Researchers should closely check and verify the records to prevent distortion.

After completing each transcript, both original and transcribed files need to be stored confidentially (Merriam, 2009; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Preserving the audio recordings of the interviews allows researchers to take references, make clarifications, or enrich a specific segment of the transcript for further analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010). The audio recordings should be anonymised and encoded to protect the participants' identities.

It is important to note that the transcripts presented in academic works may differ from raw transcriptions. Details from the original transcripts may be removed to facilitate readability and comprehension for audiences (King & Horrocks, 2010). Researchers make these modifications to ensure that the focus remains on the analytical procedures and to avoid overwhelming beginner audiences (Bezemer & Mavers, 2011; King & Horrocks, 2010; Tessier, 2012).

Ethical considerations cannot be neglected in transcribing interviews. Throughout the transcribing process, any identifying information from the interview transcripts should be meticulously removed (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). The inclusion of participants' names in the transcript must be strictly avoided, and the document itself should remain devoid of any labelling associated with the participant's identity. Instead, researchers commonly use pseudonyms or numerical identifiers to refer to participants (Allen & Wiles, 2016). Additionally, all names of individuals or places mentioned should be appropriately substituted with pseudonyms or bracketed descriptions to uphold the confidentiality of all parties involved (Allen & Wiles, 2016; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). This precautionary measure holds particular significance in sensitive contexts, such as drug abuse, except for public figures who have already attained a prominent presence within the public domain.

Restricting data access protects confidentiality. Researchers must take appropriate measures to store both the audio recordings and the transcripts securely, such as using passwords to lock the files and storing files to encoded drives (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Online data storage may not be an adequate option because it lays the responsibility to the third parties (Yang et al., 2020).

While it is acceptable to professionally discuss data with colleagues, researchers should refrain from sharing information that could identify participants (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Consistently, using pseudonyms protects participant identities (King & Horrocks, 2010; Tessier, 2012).

By acknowledging these considerations and taking appropriate measures, researchers can effectively manage the transcription process, maintain confidentiality, and ensure the ethical treatment of participants' data (Grundy et al. 2003; King & Horrocks, 2010).

2. *Hunting Meanings in Verbatims*

By integrating the semi-structured interview design with the narrative method, participants were allowed to discuss a wide range of topics, life experiences, and self-reflections pertaining to their journey with drugs. Grounded in the constructivist paradigm of qualitative research, this approach recognises participants as active agents in constructing meaning in their lives, while acknowledging that social contexts provide the framework for constructing personal meaning (King & Horrocks, 2010; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Consequently, the data obtained from such interviews may possess a loosely structured nature, making it crucial to diligently search for underlying meanings within the participants' verbatim accounts during the analysis phase (Merriam, 2009).

In light of the theoretical sensitivity cultivated in earlier stages of the research, researchers are strongly advised to engage closely and personally with the research tasks (Orland-Barak, 2002). This heightened sensitivity enables the collection and synthesis of scattered fragments of information, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives (Hoare et al., 2012). By adopting an immersive and attentive approach, researchers can uncover the nuanced meanings embedded within the data, thus enriching the overall analysis.

Besides, users are suggested to thoroughly review the interview guide again prior to commencing the analysis. The interview guide serves as a vital tool in facilitating participants' discussions on their experiences, concerns, and thoughts, thereby providing a valuable roadmap for organising the subsequent analysis (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Researchers can use the content within the interview guide to initially refine the interview dimensions and establish hierarchical levels, subsequently developing coding frames (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015; Weston, 2001). This strategic approach expedites the analysis process by providing a structured framework for systematically categorising and interpreting the data.

In order to precisely capture the meanings, research should delegate to an iterative process of reading, reinterpretation, and refinement. In the process of reading, theoretical sensitivity further accumulated. Meanings are not always explicitly stated and can be conveyed indirectly through subtle references, emotionally charged language, or digressive comments made during the interview process (Halldén et al., 2007; Patterson & Macqueen, 2021). Interpretation is necessary, necessitating researchers to exercise judgment in discerning the meanings behind participants' statements and drawing upon their expertise to understand the social contexts among participants (Halldén et al., 2007; Patterson & Macqueen, 2021).

To further enhance the precision of meanings, researchers can create a rough set of excerpts by using the notes or memos they have taken during the interview, serving as an index of subsequent coding and analysis (Kinchin et al., 2010; Pope et al., 2000). Similar excerpts can be grouped into separate files for each repeating idea, while non-repeated excerpts can be set aside for further analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010; Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). A brief integrative summary reflecting the ideas or themes of the repeating idea files can be drawn and revised throughout the process of adding excerpts.

In this preliminary stage of data analysis, it is important to avoid over-interpretations or forcing excerpts into pre-existing constructs from the literature (King & Horrocks, 2010; Morgan, 2021). In this stage, researchers should focus on the unique perspectives and meanings provided by participants without imposing personal interpretations that may contaminate the original meanings (Morgan, 2021).

By systematically comparing excerpts to one another, researchers can identify similarities and further refine the excerpts (Pope et al., 2000). Examining commonalities or repeating ideas within the excerpts enhances the accuracy of interpretation and analysis. It is also valuable to explore characteristics or experiences common to subgroups of participants who share the same repeating idea, providing a deeper understanding of the range of meanings and how individual meaning-making relates to social identities, relational contexts, or cultural locations (Halldén et al., 2007; Neale, 2016).

During the process of hunting the meanings, it is inevitable to encounter excerpts that do not belong in their initial file. In such cases, non-meaningful excerpts can be removed, while those containing important meanings may require a more complex integrative summary to capture the heterogeneity (King & Horrocks, 2010; Pope et al., 2000). If many excerpts do not fit in a file, researchers may consider dividing them into smaller files or expanding the integrative summary. Remaining open to unexpected patterns and similarities among different categories is crucial to stay in the original meanings of excerpts. Refining categorisations, repeating ideas, integrative summaries, and descriptive labels alternates back and forth in the later analysis process, so the open and non-judgmental attitude helps to maintain a focus on the participants' words and meanings to gain insight into their perspectives (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

Example:

A: 很少傳統毒品的。可樂場的話，有，但不是我搞的。我不會搞的，我只會跟別人玩。我不會吃的，純粹去玩。

Q: 你怎麼沒有夾份的？

A: 沒有夾份...我不是夾很多份。

Q: 因為聽你說你有幾個場。

A: 三、四個酒場，兩個派對房的大麻場。我說出來也沒有所謂吧。

Q: 因為我都不知道在哪裡。

...

Q: 但你開幾個場就可以了吧，好似你現在這樣，你現在都是開幾個場。

A: 我現在是夾份的。

Q: 但和人夾份又不行嗎？即是做正當的場。

A: 正當又賺不到錢，第一租金貴。蘭桂芳那些頂到十多萬租，因為他們的老闆有錢。

...

Q: 那你的客人，怎樣找車手？

A: 我的客人，看哪些，有些上酒場。

Q: 上酒場就無關係。

A: 上酒場那些，自己賣。

From the above dialogues, the participant initially denied his involvement in drug-using entertainment venues. However, he later restated that he was a small shareholder, running a few venues with friends and said, "It doesn't really matter even if I say it". From these statements, the researcher should have the ability to recognise the participant's hesitations about revealing details and, hence, remain attentive to whether the two mentioned bars are merely ordinary bars.

In the second dialogue, the researcher revisited this topic from a different perspective. The participant responded that legitimate bars don't earn much money. From these verbatims, some information can be gleaned. For example, the pieces of information, "running the businesses together with others", repeatedly appeared in different places of conversation, suggesting that the information, "the participant is a small shareholder", is credible. Nevertheless, over-interpretation should be cautious. For instance, this gleaned information does not serve as a piece of evidence to indicate that various triad factions collaborated to share the profit in the Hong Kong drug market.

On the other hand, the two mentioned bars may not be completely free from drugs due to the participant's perception of the low profits of legitimate bars. In the later interviewing process, when discussing drug trafficking, the participant mentioned that customers came to his wine bars to pick up "goods". These statements proved that the participant's venues were actually involved with drug dealing. This information supplemented his initial words, reflecting more details for researchers to draw conclusions on the participant's involvement in drug-using venues.

This case highlights the importance of hunting meanings in qualitative verbatims to uncover subtle indications and inconsistencies in participants' responses. Experiences and theoretical sensitivities certainly help the research to approach sensitive topics from different angles and remain attentive to participants' potential concerns and reservations of certain details.

3. *Coding*

After ensuring a thorough understanding of the meanings conveyed in the verbatim data, researchers need to code and categorise the data for analysis. The coding process can be seen as closely tied to the constant comparison method, as it involves analysing, categorising, identifying core information, and making comparisons (Kendall, 1999; Piantanida et al., 2004).

Among various coding methods, there are two coding procedures that may help users to better ground the analysis from the qualitative data: 1) open, axial, and selective coding and 2) substantive and theoretical coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1978). These procedures reflect different philosophical approaches. Open, axial, and selective coding emphasises the importance of memoing and diagramming throughout the research process. It allows the emergence of new ideas and themes, facilitating a comprehensive analysis. On the other hand, substantive and theoretical coding encourages creativity and rejects rigid procedures and rules during the coding process. It aims to generate new theoretical insights through creative analysis (Heath & Cowley, 2004).

While there are similarities between these two coding procedures, their underlying philosophical differences suggest that it is often more effective for researchers to employ them separately rather than combining them (Amsteus, 2014; Heath & Cowley, 2004; Kendall, 1999). By choosing one of the procedures, researchers can ensure the relevance and elegance of their results (Heath & Cowley, 2004).

Open, Axial, and Selective coding (Straussian Approach)

Open, axial, and selective coding takes three steps to finalise the procedure. The initial step is open coding, where researchers are allowed to code data without being restricted by the number of codes but merely based on the share common characteristics or similarities (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The aim is to generate as many rich codes as possible to capture the nuances and variations present in the data. Corbin and Strauss (1990) believe the researcher can identify the dimension of the properties of data and hence generate the categories.

Then, axial coding reduces and clusters the identified categories to produce a linear model based on the generated codes (Heath & Cowley, 2004). The constructed framework in axial coding makes the researchers focus only on a single category until the category is selected as a core and integrated into the framework. Theoretical sensitivity will be attained through the employment of constant comparative methods throughout the research process (Walker &

Myrick, 2006). Corbin and Strauss (1990) advocate using references such as verification, validation, and deductive thinking during this phase to comprehensively explore the relationships between categories and their subcategories. Memoing and diagramming are often utilised to uncover the causes, context, interactions, and conditions of the phenomenon (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Walker & Myrick, 2006). While initial coding breaks down raw data into codes or categories based on their properties or characteristics, axial coding conceptually reconnects them through thematic analysis (Birks & Mills, 2015). Themes and models often emerge during this phase.

In the final phase, selective coding, the data converge around a central theme and model identified in the axial coding phase, resulting in a detailed and richly described theory of research topic and questions (Amsteus, 2014; Heath & Cowley, 2004; Walker & Myrick, 2006). Researchers are required to select the confirmative data for core elements of the framework. Thus, selective coding can be seen as the verification of the axial coding process.

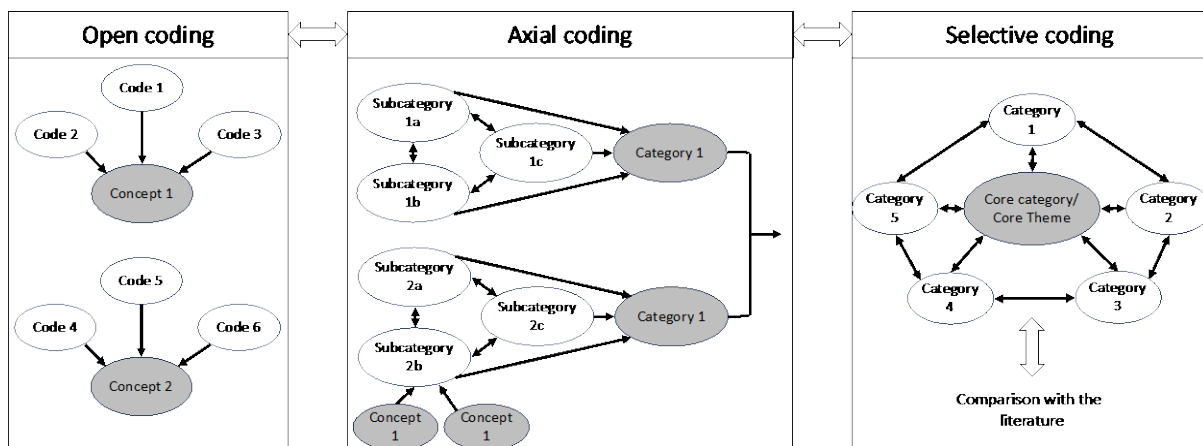


Figure 6. Open, Axial, and Selective Coding (Martinez-Jurado et al., 2014, p.64)

* Arrows represent the relatedness

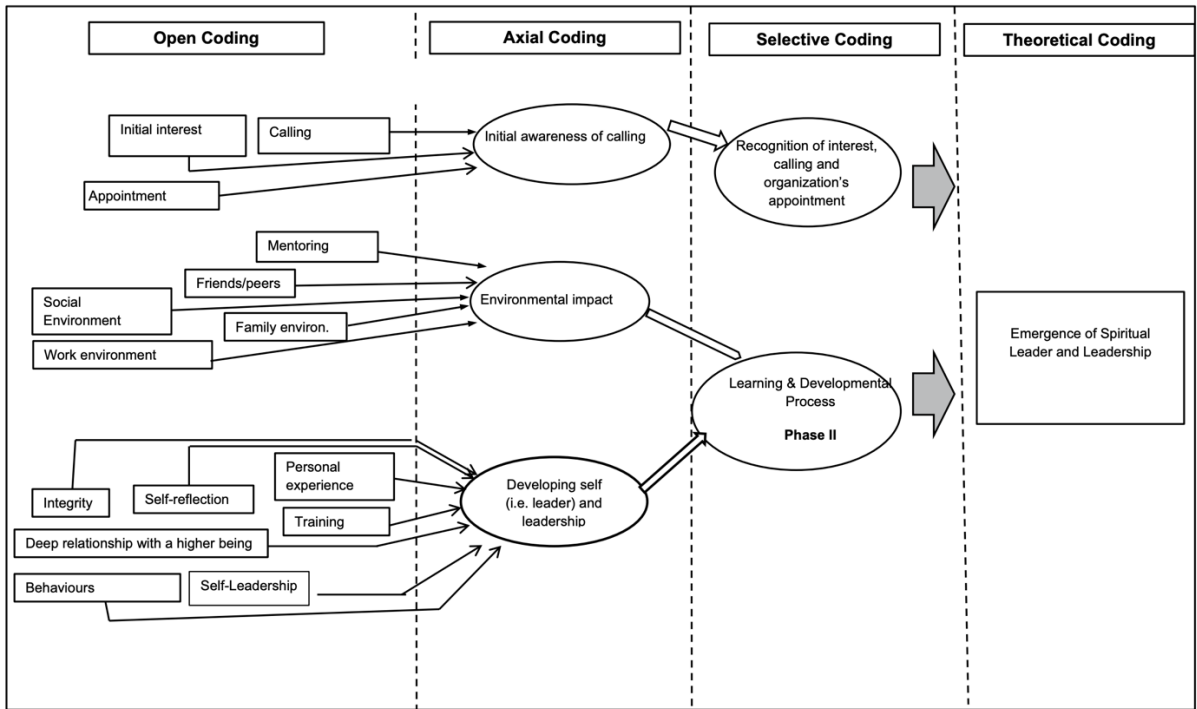


Figure 7. An Example of the Straussian Approach (Low & Ayoko, 2020)

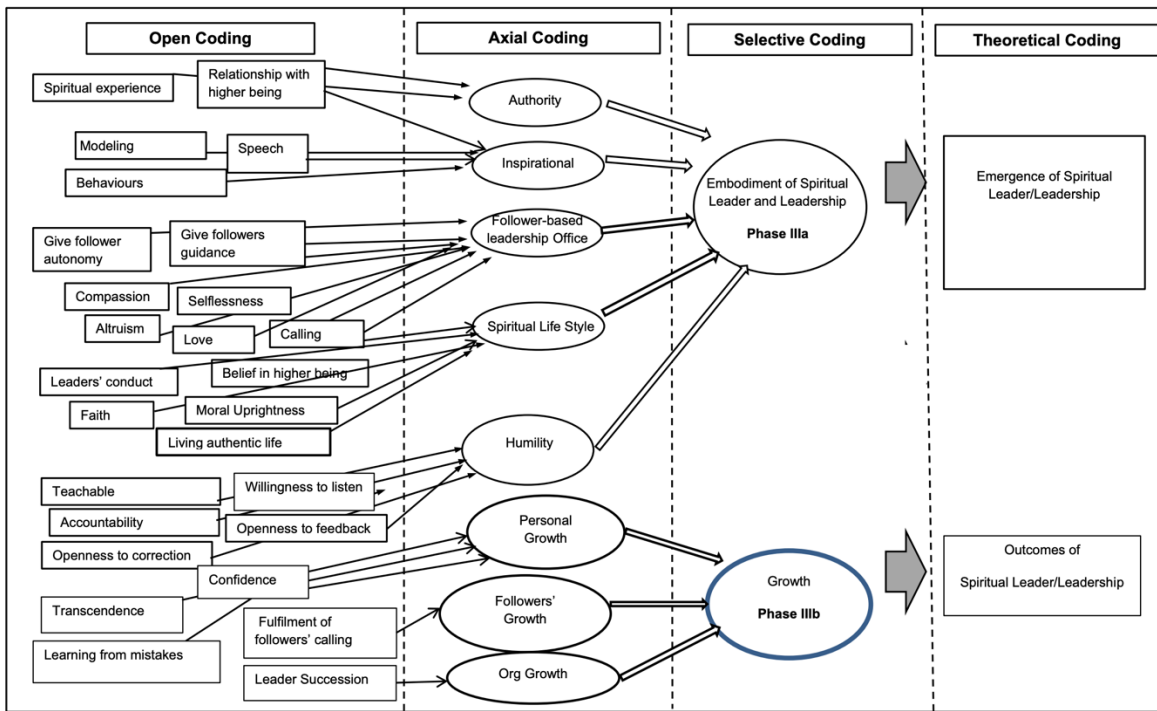


Figure 7. (continued)

Substantive and Theoretical Coding (Glaserian Approach)

Similarly, substantive and theoretical coding (Glaserian approach) starts at the same pieces with the Straussian approach to code as many as possible (Glaser, 1978). In contrast, Glaser (1992) argued the development of categories from the former coding procedure is too radical and, therefore, the outcomes are not grounded in the qualitative data. The early formation of the framework forced researchers to either consciously or unconsciously fulfil the linear model of explanation (Heath & Cowley, 2004).

In response to the rejection of creating a specified framework and forcing the data into a conceptual description during axial coding (a slightly deductive inclination), the Glaserian approach advised researchers to stay with the original data and constantly compare their codes/categories with the original data repeatedly until all core categories emerged and saturated. The repetitive manner minimises missing any important categories and data relevance (Holton, 2007).

There should be no structure considered in the initial coding phase. The categories and characteristics of data should be generated through a constant comparison method. When the researchers develop the theoretical sensitivity of relationships within data, the categories of data will be discovered (Heath & Cowley, 2004). This process has no predetermined framework and is purely inductive, so it is called substantive coding. Therefore, the research should be done with patience, persistence and iteration; otherwise, the data cannot speak (Amsteus, 2014). Hence, coding and analysis can avoid data relevance in the early stage. Researchers, herewith, will not be too selective and start with preconceived categories (Glaser & Holton, 2004). When there are no more core categories emerging from the data, the substantive coding is completed.

Combined with the constant comparison, directions, links and theoretical connections of core categories are uncovered and used to formulate a theory. The codes and categories will be delimited. Then, the theoretical coding circuits the core categories and discovers the underlying framework. As a result, the theoretical coding ensures the parsimony, scope, and modifiability of the generated theory (Heath & Cowley, 2004).

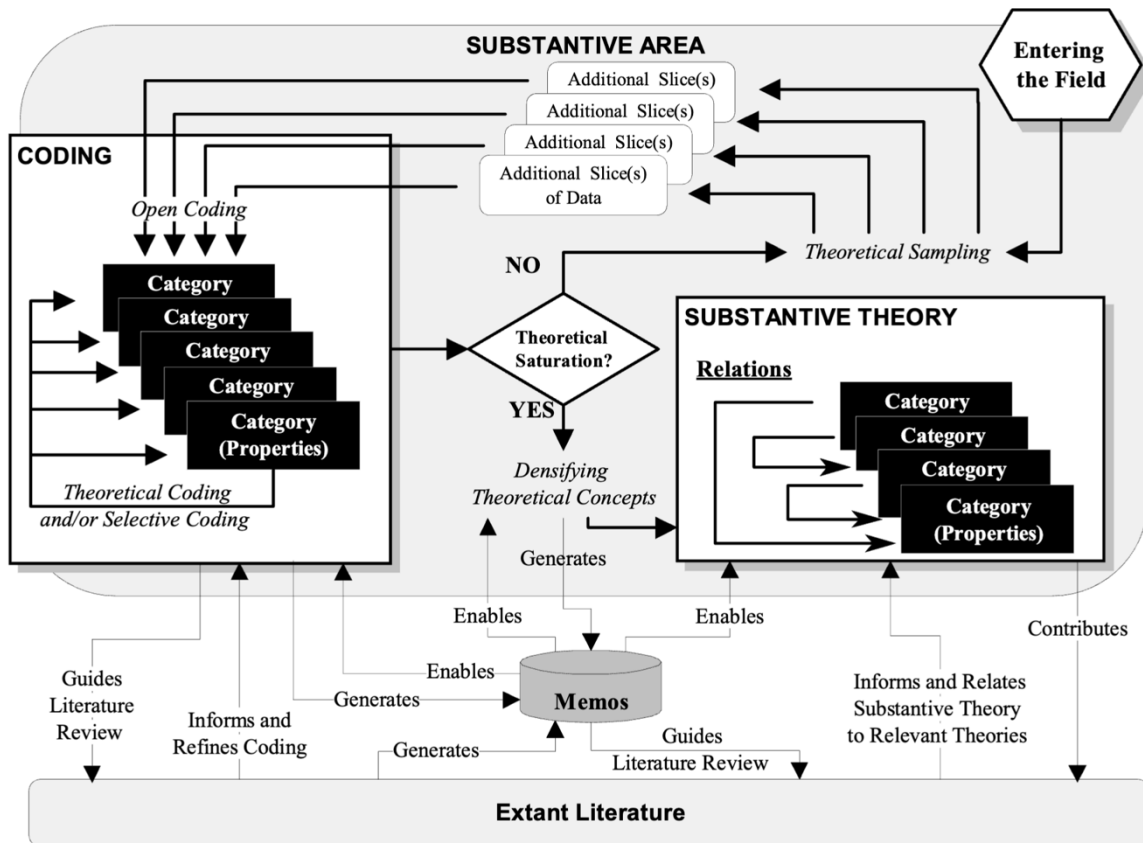


Figure 8. Selective and Theoretical Coding (Fernandez, 2003, p. 85)

Among these two coding procedures, the core variables/categories that have been revealed from substantive and selective coding are unlikely to change in the subsequent data collection and data analysis (Holton, 2007). Data will merely be reviewed again to fit and refit into the core categories (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Glaser & Holton, 2004). As the emerged categories, subcategories, and codes have been structured, researchers can make choices that align with the research question and objectives. Different ways of structuring the categories can yield different analytical practices.

The core differences between the above two coding procedures lay in the role of induction during the axial coding. Cooney (2010) proposed three considerations for the researchers while deciding the adoption of coding procedures, including data analysis, outcomes of the procedures, and philosophical paradigm. A summary of the two coding procedures is presented in the following table. Users can easily determine their choice of approach regarding the nature below.

	<i>Straussian approach</i>	<i>Glaserian approach</i>
<i>Initiation</i>	Provides a general idea of where to begin	Starts with a state of general wonderment (an empty mind)
<i>Data analysis</i>	Offers clear guidelines with structured questions	Adopts a less structured approach with more freedom
<i>Theoretical sensitivity</i>	Derived from methods and tools	Emerges through immersion in the data
<i>Outcomes of the procedures</i>	Not all studies aim to develop theory ⇒ <i>Produce useful and conceptual descriptions of situations</i>	Aims to uncover the natural emergence of structure ⇒ <i>Conceptual theory directly emerges from the data</i>
<i>Philosophical paradigm</i>	Induction, deduction, and verification are "absolutely essential" ⇒ Aligned with constructivism	Primarily follows an inductive approach ⇒ Aligned with positivism/post-positivism
<i>The role of researcher</i>	Actively interprets as an observer	Takes a passive role and exhibits disciplined restraints to stay grounded in the data

Table 1. A Summary of Straussian and Glaserian Approaches
(Cooney, 2010; Glaser, 1992; Health and Cowley, 2004; Jones & Alony, 2011).

The problematic application of these coding procedures by researchers, rather than the procedures themselves, is a major concern. Therefore, users need to carefully examine which procedure best aligns with their research questions, contextual issues, and philosophical stance (Cooney, 2010).

Case:

Q： 那你自己十七歲就已經有大麻交易？

A： 是，那時候值錢。

Q： 我又聽另一個，就是說，「和勝和」的大麻生意是最大的，因為他們每次從加拿大運送回來不知幾多個貨櫃，然後再給下面的人去散。

A： 都有的，我現在取貨那邊都是「勝和」、「水房」。

Straussian Approach to Coding

Open Coding: Open coding involves breaking down the data into discrete parts, closely examining, and comparing them for similarities and differences.

1. **Code:** Early Cannabis Involvement (“是，那時候值錢。”)
2. **Code:** Triad interaction (“我現在取貨那邊都是「勝和」、「水房」。”)

Axial Coding: Axial coding involves reassembling the data by establishing connections between categories and subcategories identified during open coding.

1. **Category:** Triad Influence
 - **Subcategory:** Interaction with Triad Members
 - **Description:** Association with triad societies/members facilitates the initiation of drug use.
2. **Category:** Onset of Cannabis Use
 - **Subcategory:** Early Cannabis Involvement
 - **Description:** Experiences and context surrounding the initial involvement in cannabis.

Selective Coding: Selective coding involves integrating and refining the theory by selecting the core category and relating it to other categories.

1. **Core Category:** Initiation and Involvement in Drug Use
 - **Related Categories:**
 - Triad Influence
 - Peer Influences
 - Curiosity

Integration:

The initiation and involvement in drug use are heavily influenced by interactions with triad members, peer influences, and curiosity about drug effects. For instance, the interviewee’s initial involvement in cannabis trading at seventeen was driven by the perceived value of cannabis and facilitated by associations with the triad.

Glaserian Approach to Coding

The Glaserian approach is more flexible and less structured than the Straussian approach, focusing on constant comparison and the emergence of core categories.

Initial Coding: Initial coding involves a line-by-line analysis to identify concepts and categories.

1. **Interaction with Triad Members:** "我現在取貨那邊都是「勝和」、「水房」。"
 - **Concept:** Triad Interaction
 - **Category:** Influence of Triad
2. **Initiation of Cannabis Use:** "是，那時候值錢。"
 - **Concept:** Early Cannabis Involvement
 - **Category:** Onset of Cannabis Use

Constant Comparison: Constant comparison involves comparing incidents applicable to each category and integrating categories.

1. **Category:** Influence of Triad
 - Comparing different instances of interaction with triad members:
 - E.g. "不用和黑社會交雜太多，我拿貨去買給別人而已。"
 - E.g. "你說你是黑社會又能怎樣？只是掛個名字，不想被人搞場。"
2. **Category:** Onset of Cannabis Use
 - Comparing instances of initial cannabis involvement:
 - "Q：那你自己十七歲就已經有大麻交易？ A：是，那時候值錢。"
 - "自己是由十六歲開始去接觸到這個，一年後就開始做賣家。"

Emergence of Core Category: Identifying a core category that integrates other categories.

1. **Core Category:** Pathways to Drug Use
 - **Integrated Categories:**
 - Influence of Triad
 - Peer Influences
 - Curiosity

Emergence:

The core category "Pathways to Drug Use" captures the various influences and experiences that lead individuals to start using drugs, including the roles of triad interactions, peer influences, and personal curiosity.

4. Analytic Methods

Again, the analysis does not begin after the data collection but throughout the research process. Users should take the analysis in their mind during each step they take in the research. For a better presentation, this section arranged analysis behind coding. The analysis aims to provide answers to the research questions inductively. The meaningful codes or segments are extracted in the former procedures based on the theoretical relevance of their potential to be the answer or part of the answer. Given numerous ways for the analysis, users can explore more in the research field and select the most suitable analytical methods corresponding to their

research design. The following part merely outlines three popular analysis methods for reference.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a systematic method used in qualitative research to examine and categorise data based on predetermined coding frames. Its aim is to provide a systematic description of the embedded meanings within the data (Schreier, 2014). The process involves assigning different parts of the material to specific categories within a coding frame and systematically identifying shared meanings. It concludes with a discussion on how to synthesise the shared meanings.

1. Coding Frame

In this method, the coding frame is a central component, comprising main categories and subcategories that capture different aspects of the material under analysis (Schreier, 2014). The excerpts, integrative summaries and categories can be used to initially organise the synthesis. For instance, a main category like "Opinion" can be generated to reflect participants' perspectives on the research topic, and its related segments or codes can be further divided into subcategories, such as moral reasoning, emotional causes, cost-benefit calculation, and so on.

Category	Definition	Coding Rules
Intervention	An intervention is a combination of program elements or strategies designed to produce behavior changes or improve health status among individuals or a group	Modalities or program activities of the adherence club to improve retention in care or improve patients' adherence to antiretroviral therapy
Context	Context refers to salient conditions that are likely to enable or constrain the activation of program mechanisms.	Components of both the physical and the social environment that favor or disfavor the expected outcomes
Actors	These are the individuals, groups, and institutions who play a role in the implementation and outcomes of an intervention	This was coded as the actions or actual practices of an individual, group, or institution.
Mechanisms	This refers to any underlying determinants or social behaviors generated in certain contexts	Any explanation or justification why a service or a resource was used by an actor to achieve an expected outcome, or considered as a constraint
Outcomes		
Immediate outcome	Describes the immediate effect of the adherence club program activities	Immediate outcome typically refers to changes in knowledge, skills, or awareness, as these types of changes typically precede changes in behaviors or practices.
Intermediate outcome	Intermediate outcomes refer to behavioral changes that follow the immediate knowledge and awareness changes.	Codes here define a move from direct outcomes to intermediate outcomes, identified through the indirect impact of the activity and accountability of the program.
Long-term outcome	Refer to change in the medium- and long-term, such as a patient's health status, and impact on community and health system	The codes here represent the further indirect impact of the activity demonstrating the lesser accountability of the program.

Main Categories (bracketed on the left side of the table)
Sub-categories (bracketed at the bottom of the table)

Figure 9. An Example of the Coding Frame (Mukumbang et al., 2018, p. 1845).

Coding frames can vary in complexity, but it is advisable to keep them manageable, typically with no more than three hierarchical levels (Schreier, 2014). Each main category

should cover a distinct aspect of the material, while subcategories within a main category should be mutually exclusive to ensure clarity and prevent coding overlap. It is important to note that the requirement of mutual exclusiveness applies to each main category individually rather than the entire coding frame.

Furthermore, coding frames should be exhaustive, meaning that they should cover all relevant aspects of the material (Merriam, 2009). While residual categories can be introduced to achieve this, they should be used sparingly to maintain the validity of the coding frame (Merriam, 2009; Wu et al., 2021). The initial category can be abstract in meaning to avoid the loss of concrete information. Later, a number of concretes and slightly different passages will thereby be generated through comparison and correlation between different parts of the material (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

Example:

The onset of the five-stage framework in this project

Category and subcategory	Descriptions	Coding rules
Onset		
1. Peer influences	Interactions between the participants and peers to initiate the drug use	Events, activities, thoughts, and contexts of those interactions with peers initiating the drug use.
2. Clubbing culture	Influence of clubbing culture on drug use	Drug use experiences while engaging in clubbing, including disco, private venues, and bar
3. Curiosity	Initiation of drug use out of curiosity	Feelings and thoughts about the drug effects before the use of drugs
4. Triad influences	Influence of triad members on drug use	Association with triad societies/members facilitating the initiation of drug use
5. Drug-using family members	Influence of family members who use drugs	Family environment and interactions with drug-using family members that lead to the initiation of drug use.
6. Coping mechanism to life transition/ stress	Use of drugs as a coping mechanism for life transitions or stress	Life adversities, stressful moments and other emotional situation triggers the use of drugs
7. Concession to drug use	Justifications or rationalizations for using drugs against the initial resistance	Arguments and reasons given for starting to use drugs despite initial reluctance or resistance.

2. Three Key Features

To achieve this purpose, three key features: data reduction, systematicity, and flexibility, are incorporated (Schreier, 2012). Data reduction involves categorising the segments or codes into selected aspects of meaning that are relevant to the research question. While there can be numerous aspects, the researcher's capacity to handle categories limits their number (Schreier, 2012). The process is similar to the steps outlined in Figure 7 and Figure 8 to narrow down the codes and categories for subsequent analysis.

Systematicity requires a comprehensive examination of all relevant parts of the material. It ensures that the analysis is not influenced by preconceived assumptions or expectations. The method follows a sequence of steps, which may be iterative, allowing for modifications to the coding frame (Schreier, 2012). For example, the coding rules in Figure 9 demonstrated a systematicity that coders have to follow the stated rules rather than personal judgment during the coding process. Double coding (two independent coders) can additionally be employed to enhance the quality and clarity of category definitions (Schreier, 2012).

Flexibility combines both concept-driven and data-driven categories within the coding frame (Schreier, 2012). Table 1 has outlined the concept-driven (Straussian approach) and data-driven (Glaserian approach) ways to conduct the data coding. Flexibility ensures that the categories accurately represent the data. The coding frame should always be tailored to match the material under analysis, enabling a valid description of the data.

3. Analysis Phases

The above three features provide a solid foundation for researchers to develop data-driven coding frames, category definitions, and meaningful segments for the pilot and main analysis phases.

During the pilot analysis phase, the coding frame undergoes a review and modification process to address any shortcomings. Various data types and sources are selected to evaluate the consistency and validity of the coding frame. For accurate results of the frame checking, researchers may need to perform the trial run twice or employ two independent coders to assess inter-rater reliability (MacPhail et al., 2016). If inconsistencies are observed, it indicates a lack of clear boundaries between the definitions of subcategories, necessitating a revision of the coding frame and decision rules (MacPhail et al., 2016). Once the coding frame accurately

represents the material and concepts relevant to the research question, it can be confidently applied in the main analysis phase (Schreier, 2012).

The main analysis phase involves coding all the material using the finalised coding frame in three steps (Neale, 2016; Schreier, 2012). It is important to note that the coding frame cannot be modified at this stage, highlighting the importance of ensuring its reliability and validity beforehand (Neale, 2016; Schreier, 2012). First, the material is divided into coding units, and these units are then assigned to the categories in the coding frame (Neale, 2016; Schreier, 2012). If major revisions were made during the pilot phase, double coding might need to be repeated to consolidate the rigour (Schreier, 2012). Secondly, all the coded results are required to be recorded in a coding sheet (Neale, 2016; Schreier, 2012). Units that were coded only once or double coded with consistent results have clear meanings. Coding inconsistencies can be addressed through discussion, and researchers aim to arrive at a final meaning by tracking their reasoning (Campbell et al., 2013).

The final step in the main analysis phase involves comparing codes to identify any discrepancies, assessing coding quality, and determining the meaning of coded units so as to properly answer the research question (Campbell et al., 2013; Schreier, 2012). To facilitate this comparison, a comparative coding sheet is created with three columns: one for each coder or coding point in time and one for the final code assigned to each unit (Schreier, 2012).

Data unit	First coder/ First time code	Second coder/ Second time code	Final decision
1.1	2.2	2.2	2.2
1.2	2.10	2.5	2.5
1.3	2.2	2.2	2.2
1.4	2.6	2.6	2.6
1.5	2.7	2.7	2.7
1.6	2.5	2.5	2.5
1.7	2.9	2.9	2.9
1.8	2.2	2.10	2.2
1.9	2.8	2.8	2.8

Table 2. Example of the Coding Sheet

Coding quality can be reported by calculating measures of coding consistency, such as percentage of agreement or kappa, for each dimension and across all dimensions (Campbell et al., 2013). These measures allow researchers to compare the trial coding phase with the main coding phase, with higher consistency indicating improved coding quality.

Determining the final meaning of each unit of coding comes from comparing the assigned codes. If codes coincide across coders, the code is entered into the third column, the final code, of the comparative coding sheet (Schreier, 2012). In cases of inconsistencies, achieving consensus among coders is crucial (Campbell et al., 2013). If working alone and coding a unit differently at different points in time, researchers reassess the reasons for each code and make a final decision. In cases of persistent inconsistencies, seeking advice from a third-party expert can aid in cross-checking the units when uncertainty arises (Campbell et al., 2013; Schreier, 2012).

Once the comparative coding sheet is completed for all units of coding and dimensions, the comparison process is finished. The final results can be presented by outlining the categories with detailed segments by providing text or tabular representations, absolute frequencies, or inferential statistics (Schreier, 2012). Examples are provided in Tables 3 to 7 for reference.

<p>For many participants, their sense of the age of the therapist was closely linked to their perception of graduate students. All clients were informed on intake that their therapist was a graduate student. This information helped them identify an approximate age range.</p> <p>“...Oh well I’m assuming he’s in graduate school here in some capacity but so I’m thinking he probably gonna be in his I’ll say mid to late twenties maybe.” [Participant 1]</p> <p>“... But I would have thought, being that it’s with the university it would be somebody young.” [Participant 2]</p> <p>Despite believing that their therapist would be both young and a student, many participants also expected that their therapist be experienced and professional.</p> <p>“I would hope that they have a certain amount of experience even if they were still relatively new at their job.” [Participant 3]</p> <p>“Um, hopefully informed, hopefully know what they’re talking about. I’m sure they will, I mean that’s why we’re here.” [Participant 4]</p> <p>“... you know I was expecting a level of professionalism...” [Participant 5]</p>	<p>Verbatims are cited as evidence to demonstrate the development of each category from the raw data. The descriptions, claims, and interpretations are supported through both summaries of verbatims and detailed information about the category.</p>
	<p>The links, comparisons, and relationships between categories are highlighted to reveal the distinctive information found in the verbatims.</p>

Table 3. Example of Using Continuous Text (Tambling & Johnson, 2010, p. 326)

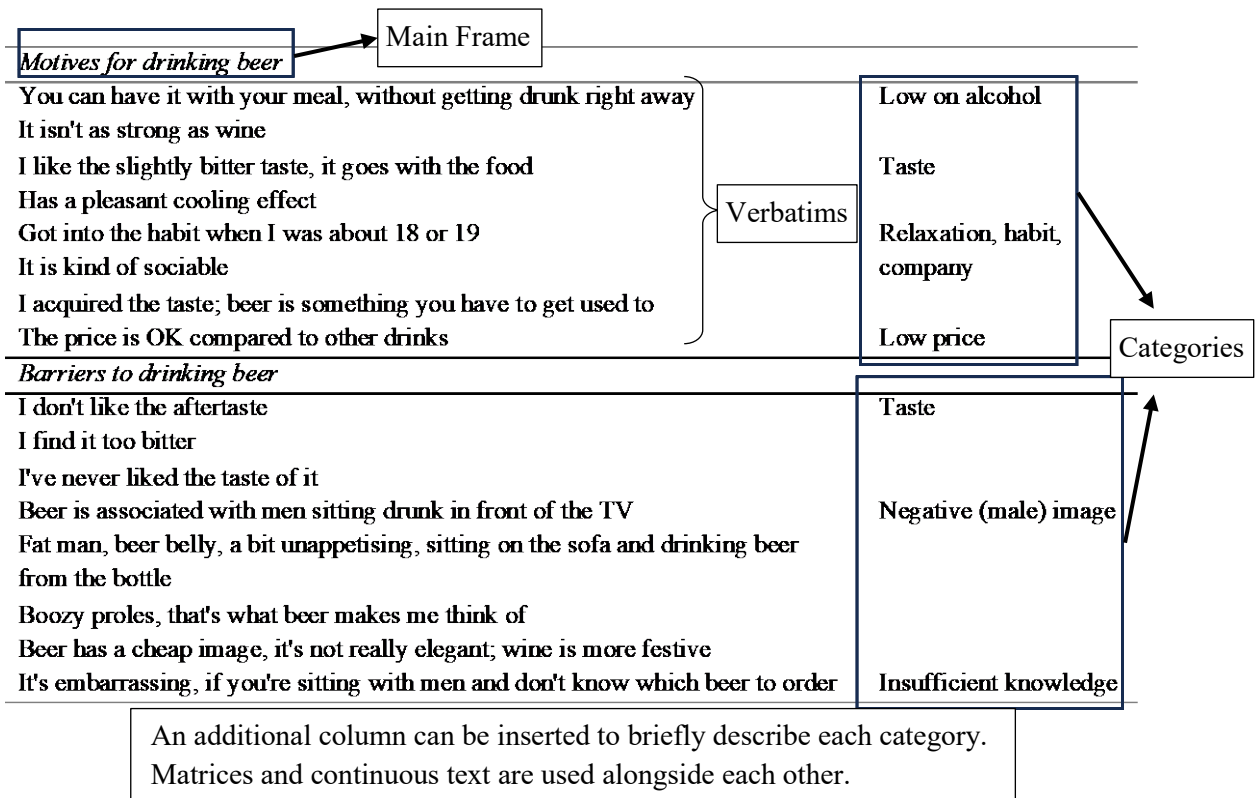


Table 4. Example of Using a Matrix With Two Columns (Mayr-Birklbauer, 2009, pp.817ff)

Opinion: Morally justified	Personally, I can agree with this kind of decision, but I would say, sort of, that this is an extremely difficult decision to make and that it is a tragic decision and that there always remains some uncertainty in the end.	Participant A
Reasons in favour: Duration of the coma	Well, this strongly depends on the time factor. The longer someone has been in a coma, the fewer the chances.	
The relatives agree	And I would say that it depends on the relatives...	Participant B
Diagnosis	That would be the personal opinion of the doctor who is treating her. ... And I would say that it depends on the relatives and the doctor who is treating her.	
Miscellaneous	If this was me, I would agree. And it would not take 15 years. For myself, I would say after two or three years maybe, when the chances are really-	Participant C
Reasons against: She might regain consciousness	... and you never find out whether you have done the right thing. Because, if you turn the machines off now, I suppose that the chances are 99.99% that you didn't rob this woman of a single day of being conscious and alive. But you never know, you can never be 100% certain.	

The matrix clearly demonstrated different points of view among participants.

Table 5. Example of Using Text Matrices to Compare Cases (Schreier, 2012, p.225)

Categories
("theme" in their terminology)

Theme
(linked to their conceptual framework)

Theme	No. of participants	Description of theme	Spiritual expression
1. Aesthetic qualities	15	Focus of attention was absorbed in the aesthetic qualities of the wilderness setting	Sacredness of life
2. Being away	15	Escape from the pressures, people, distractions, and concerns of the human-made world.	Sacredness of life
3. Meaningful Experience	13	The experience was significant to the individual's life.	Meaning and purpose in life
4. Number of Peak Experiences	12	The peak experience recounted was only one of a number of positive and profound moments experienced in a wilderness setting.	Sacredness of life and the transcendent unseen dimension
5. Oneness-Connectedness	10	Feeling a connection or belonging to wilderness, a feeling that was described using mystical language.	The transcendent unseen dimension
6. Overcoming Limitations	9	A sense of overcoming limitations; a rush of energy, overcoming pain, renewing depleted energy resources (Williams & Harvey, 2001).	The transcendent unseen dimension
7. Heightened Awareness	9	A deeper understanding of world/self/life occurred during or shortly after the experience (Williams, 1998).	The transcendent unseen dimension

The coding frequency: the number of participants who mentioned this aspect.

Instead of giving detailed verbatims, this matrix presented the integrated information to illustrate which categories were mentioned the most.

Table 6. Example of Integrating Frequency Information into Text Matrices (McDonald et al., 2009, p. 376)

Each column represents a category.

The percentage of participants from the respective stakeholder groups coded in each category. (the sum of each row is 100%)

Opinion / Stakeholder group	Morally justified	Long overdue	Morally wrong	Refusal	Unclear
Healthy persons	66.7%	22.2%	0%	0%	11.1%
Patients	50%	33.3%	8.3%	0%	8.3%
Physicians	0%	42.9%	28.6%	14.3%	14.3%
Nursing Personnel	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	0%	0%
Politicians	20%	0%	40%	0%	40%
Health Insurance Representatives	33.3%	16.7%	0%	16.7%	33.3%
Total	37.8%	26.7%	15.6%	4.4%	15.6%

The final row showed the percentage of all participants across the stakeholder groups in each category.

By inspecting the table, the preferences of each group of participants and the distribution of various opinions become immediately obvious.

Table 7. Example of Using Percentages to Report the Results (Schreier, 2012, p.236)

All in all, content analysis is an inductive approach that aims to uncover insights rooted in situations, settings, styles, images, meanings, and nuances (Altheide, 1987). This entails coding raw data and constructing categories concurrently. While there are computer-aided

qualitative data analysis software available, not all of them equally support every step of qualitative content analysis. Therefore, researchers should carefully consider the capabilities of the software in relation to their specific needs/areas for analysis if they adopt the analytical software.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis aims to identify and analyse patterns and themes that emerge from the data, enabling a deeper comprehension of the underlying phenomena. In order to grasp the subjective understanding of participants, interpretive frameworks related to the topic being studied and the experiences of participants that shape those frameworks are equally important (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). The theoretical framework employed positions individuals as active agents who construct meaning within social contexts, providing guidance for analytical inquiries.

When conducting thematic analysis, researchers have to carefully review the transcripts and identify common themes, patterns, and insights. This process involves iterative steps of coding, categorising, and refining themes. Researchers may need to engage in congenial discussions in the first few interviews to initially gain a concise and consistent understanding of the data (Rosenblatt & Wieling, 2019). Utilising excerpts, integrative summaries, and categories while hunting for the meanings of verbatims can expedite the coding process and facilitate the identification of patterns and themes.

Two basic coding approaches, coding reliability and flexible approaches, allowed researchers to construct themes in distinct ways and obtain diverse explanations (Terry et al., 2017).

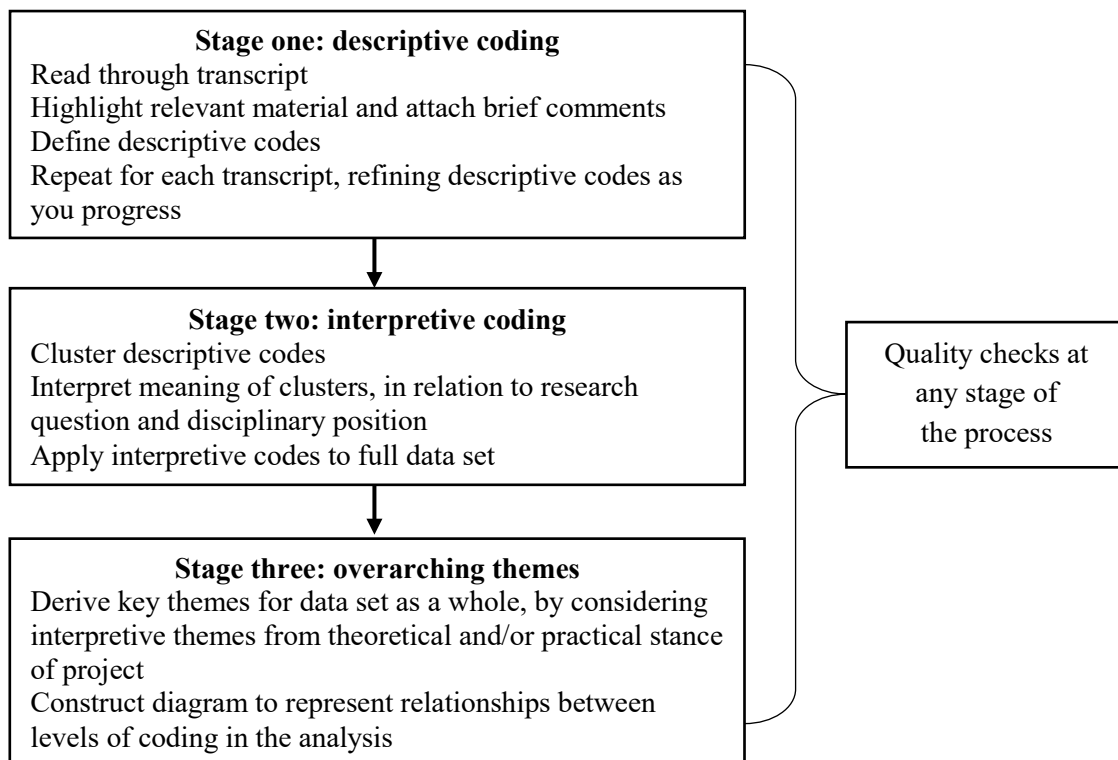


Figure 10. Stages in the Process of Thematic Analysis (King & Horrocks, 2010).

1) Coding Reliability Approaches

Coding reliability approaches are deductive in nature, which begin with established theories, to guide the identification of themes and hypotheses/predictions (Terry et al., 2017). The process of analysis involves gathering evidence and testing these hypotheses. It is particularly important for researchers to familiarise themselves with the data and develop themes. Often, themes are, at least partly, determined based on existing theories and interview questions in advance of full analysis (Guest et al., 2012). Regarding the deductive nature, the process of coding is to identify evidence to support these themes, even if the distinction between codes and themes may not always be clear.

The coding process is designated to test and report reliability, which is considered the gatekeeper of the results' quality. A "code book" or "coding frame" needs to be constructed to outline the coding criteria and conditions, including a definitive list of codes with labels, definitions, instructions for identifying codes or themes, exclusions, and examples (Terry et al., 2017). Codes can be determined in advance based on pre-existing theory or inductively through familiarisation with the data. Although inductive examples of coding reliability exist, they are scarce (Boyatzis, 1998). Additionally, at least two independent coders use the code book to

code all or a sample of the data. The level of agreement between coders is measured to determine inter-rater reliability (Campbell et al., 2013; Schreier, 2012; Terry et al., 2017).

2) Flexible/Reflexive Approaches

Opposite to the coding reliability, the flexible/reflexive approach embraces the subjectivity of the researcher in the analysis process instead of solely focusing on achieving precise coding consistency between coders (Braun & Clarke, 2022; MacPhail et al., 2016; Terry et al., 2017). This approaches typically employ an inductive coding method and prioritises a flexible and organic coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Terry et al., 2017). Coding is seen as a dynamic and iterative process that requires deep immersion in the data. Themes are developed from the coding and close examination of the data, rather than being predetermined (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Initially, those codes and themes may stay at a superficial level. However, ongoing engagement and analysis with the data further improves the quality of these codes and allows for the development of more profound insights (King & Horrocks, 2010).

The outcomes of the analysis cannot be easily replicated by another coder because they arise from an analytical and interpretative process rather than adhering strictly to the procedures outlined in a code book (MacPhail et al., 2016; Terry et al., 2017). These outcomes are a result of the researcher's interpretation, which can be strong or weak, but they are not considered objectively "right" or "wrong" (Campbell et al., 2013; Terry et al., 2017). For example, Rosenblatt and Wieling (2019) pointed out that the differences in coding themes among coders served as a means for more open and flexible data analysis. The analysis is regarded as a creative process that combines the researcher's theoretical frameworks, disciplinary knowledge, skills, and experiences with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Fostering reflection, rigour, a systematic and thorough approach, and deeper engagement can be the strategies to ensure the quality of analysis, rather than focusing solely on coding accuracy (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Terry et al., 2017).

Understanding the distinction between coding reliability and the flexible approach is crucial as they are rooted in different conceptualisations of knowledge, research, and the role of the researcher. Following the analogy of Terry et al. (2004), researchers in the coding reliability approach are akin to archaeologists carefully sifting through the soil in search of hidden treasures, while researchers in the flexible approach liken sculptors, shaping a block of marble in a creative endeavour.

Researchers have to make deliberate choices in their data analysis, such as their theoretical stance and selection of inductive or deductive approach. Inductive coding and theme development begin with the data itself, identifying meaning and interpreting it from a "bottom-up" perspective. However, it is important to recognise that the researcher's social position and theoretical lens still impact the analysis, even in an inductive approach. Conversely, a deductive approach starts with existing theoretical concepts or theories, guiding the analysis from a "top-down" standpoint. This method allows for predetermined meanings and the development of themes based on those concepts. Neither approach is inherently superior to the other, but researchers have to ensure that the chosen approach aligns with the specific analytic purpose and research context.

Example:

1. Coding Reliability Approaches

Coding reliability approaches are deductive, starting with established theories or pre-defined themes. Here's how we can apply this approach to the provided verbatim:

Step-by-Step Process:

1. **Develop a Code Book:** Create a list of codes based on existing theories and the research questions.
 - Example Codes: "Work History", "Family Background", "Drug Dealing", "Legal Issues", "Economic Challenges", "Social Influences", etc.
2. **Familiarise with the Data:** Read through the transcript to get an overall sense of the content.
3. **Initial Coding:** Apply the pre-defined codes to the relevant sections of the transcript.
4. **Review and Refine Codes:** Discuss with another coder to ensure consistency and reliability.
5. **Identify Themes:** Group similar codes into broader themes and test these themes against the data.
 - **Work History:** "今年二十一歲。做偏門工作的。"
 - **Family Background:** "單親，爸爸在我八歲的時候離婚。我十七歲生了女兒，跟前妻離婚，到現在還在一起。"
 - **Drug Dealing:** "我十七歲的時候，被拘捕了大麻。當時收貨，被拘捕時搜到身上有一抽，即是一公斤。"
 - **Economic Challenges:** "六月的時候輸了百幾萬仔展，破產直接不玩。"
 - **Legal Issues:** "去年 2021 年 10 月 21 日才判，等了三年。"

By coding the transcript in this way, we can systematically identify themes and patterns based on the pre-defined codes and theories.

2. Flexible/Reflexive Approaches

Flexible/reflexive approaches are inductive, allowing themes to emerge from the data itself. Here's how to apply this approach:

Step-by-Step Process:

6. **Immerse in the Data:** Read through the transcript multiple times to understand the context deeply.
7. **Initial Coding:** Begin coding without pre-defined categories, letting themes emerge organically.
8. **Iterative Review:** Continuously review and refine codes as you engage with the data.
9. **Develop Themes:** Group similar codes into broader themes and refine them through further analysis and discussion.
10. **Reflect on Subjectivity:** Acknowledge the researcher's influence on the coding and interpretation process.
 - **Economic Hardship:** "六月的時候輸了百幾萬仔展，破產直接不玩。"
 - **Drug Trade Dynamics:** "我多數看 Youtube，那些全部都是外國網站。那些 Youtuber 全部都是外國人。他們有分享吸食大麻經驗，食大麻之後的感覺，然後大麻對身體或者醫學，有甚麼益處甚麼壞處，"
 - **Legal Consequences:** "去年 2021 年 10 月 21 日才判，等了三年。"
 - **Social Influences:** "在香港是沒有可能不認識黑社會相關的人。"

By using this approach, we allow themes to emerge directly from the data, providing a more nuanced and contextually rich analysis.

Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis aims to study how stories are told and understand the complexities of personal and social relations as reflected in participants' constructed stories (Josselson & Hammack, 2021). Rather than treating stories as coherent and unified entities, narrative analysis explores the diversity and multiple levels involved (Andrews et al., 2004; Josselson & Hammack, 2021). It focuses on how participants construct their stories, including the sequencing of events, characters, and settings, while also considering the broader social construction that contributes to the overall meaning (Esin et al., 2014; Josselson & Hammack, 2021). When individuals adopt a particular position, they perceive the world through the lens of that position, influenced by relevant images, metaphors, storylines, and concepts shaped by specific discursive practices and personal histories. While the concept of "positioning" suggests individuals choose their subjects, the constructionist perspective recognises that individuals are also chosen by the discursive resources and social contexts in which they are situated (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

In narrative constructionism, the emphasis is on the social production of states rather than internal states separated from the narratives themselves. Stories are viewed as social phenomena, and cognitive records find their expression in stories (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). The narrative constructionist model operates at different interconnected levels, including the co-construction of stories within a single text, potentially across different types of stories, and even between conscious and unconscious narratives (Hollway & Jefferson, 2017). "Why" and "how" the stories are constructed are certainly important in narrative analysis. "What" is told is equally essential to be noted.

Many researchers choose to combine different narrative-analytic approaches, such as adopting a constructionist perspective while also examining thematic narratives (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). They may also integrate various qualitative approaches, such as combining content analysis with narrative analysis. The goal is to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the constituent elements of stories. By employing these combined approaches, researchers can delve deeper into the complexities and nuances of narratives (Elliott, 2005; Squire, 2008).

1) Discursive positioning

Considering the purpose of understanding how storytellers construct their narratives from different positions, identifying the positions from which individuals construct their stories

brings unique insights into how various elements are assembled in response to cultural resources and interpersonal interactions (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). According to Davies and Harre (1990), the present moment of storytelling involves both cultural and personal resources, as storytellers take up a particular position that influences their perception of the world and the elements they incorporate into their stories, such as images, metaphors, storylines, and concepts.

Simultaneously, researchers also take positions in the conversation and story construction process (Hollway & Jefferson, 2017; Grundy et al., 2003). There are two main positions they can adopt. The first position involves listening and understanding the narratives as they are told, with a focus on highlighting the meanings present in the storytellers' stories (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Esin, 2011). The second position involves decoding the meaning of narratives, recognising the relativity of all narratives, and exploring the interrelations of different voices and perspectives within a narrative (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; 2015; Esin, 2011). The second position may raise a different interpretation from the original story to uncover conflicting cultural discourses behind the narratives.

During the interview process, a complex interaction occurs between the participant's responses and the researcher (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Mishler, 1986). Power relations within stories are also considered, acknowledging that the construction of meaning is a collaborative process involving the negotiation of shared meanings (Phoenix, 2013). Narrative conversations go beyond rational and value-free exchanges and encompass alliances, conflicts, and negotiations that shape the emerging meanings. Both storytellers and listeners contribute to the power dynamics in these exchanges (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Esin, 2011).

The complexity deepens when considering narratives as co-constructed within interview settings. The meanings of collected data, including spoken words, paralinguistic cues, other sounds, and non-verbal communication, are further shaped by the dynamic interactions between the research participant and the interviewer (Esin, 2011). Hence, researchers need to uphold a critical and systematic reflexivity, so as to reflect on their research decisions, such as theoretical assumptions, interview techniques, data analysis, and presentation of findings (Josselson & Hammack, 2021). Reflexivity acknowledges the researcher's role in shaping and influencing the narratives under study. A clear distinction between the voices of researchers

and participants is essential to maintain the credibility of the research analysis (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). Typically, two constructs are applied to examine the cultures and participants' experiences and identities in the narratives.

2) Storytelling As Cultural Constructs

Narratives serve as a reflective lens, magnifying the cultural specificity of diverse communities (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Josselson & Hammack, 2021). This specificity can be discerned and analysed within the narratives themselves (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). The structure of stories, the favoured topics, and the patterns of participation and narration, all vary across different cultural groups. The choices of wording pertain to agency and participants' roles within both the narrative and the broader world are also subjected to thorough investigation (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Josselson & Hammack, 2021).

The cultural specificity is not only mirrored in the general cultural models of the community but also embedded in the unique forms of knowledge that are woven into the content of the stories told (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). Researchers in this field are interested in describing and understanding the specific cultural elements present in stories and drawing comparisons between story structures and aspects of storytelling events across different communities.

The construct of narratives reveals systematic differences in the way different cultural groups structure stories, their preferred topics, and the patterns of narratives and participation (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Moreover, it provides insights into broader differences in ideologies and the organisation of social life within these communities. Thus, narratives discover and analyse cultural specificity, offering a unique window into the distinctive aspects of various cultural groups (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012).

3) Storytelling As Experiences and Identities Constructs

Storytelling also functions as a dynamic framework for experiences and identities (Esin, 2011). These experiences and identities are not necessarily delineated in terms of a homogeneous culture (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). Rather, they are often defined in terms of a shared ground, constituted by a more varied set of elements such as shared practices, experiences, and characteristics. Narratives, in this context, have been employed to elicit the

affirmation of new identities and the construction of fresh apprehensions of experience (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

Identity is viewed as a continuous process rather than a fixed result, emphasising the performative nature of identity expressions and constructions as active engagements rather than static states (De Fina, 2016). Identities are multifaceted, characterised by multiple voices and occasional conflicts, allowing individuals to claim belongingness to diverse groups and communities. These identities are evolving and emergent, rejecting the notion of fixed labels used to define oneself and others (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

Stories provide a platform for narrators to project themselves into realms of experience without the necessity for open evaluation and discussion (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). However, they also invite evaluation and participation by the researcher. Consequently, they represent both a comfortable medium of expression for interviewees and a significant source of data for researchers. The content of these stories is subsequently analysed in terms of overarching themes employed by narrators to lend coherence to experience (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Josselson & Hammack, 2021). These coherence principles reflect on cultural systems and common understandings of reality that can be perceived as shared by members of a culture. In essence, storytelling is a rich tapestry, intricately weaving together cultural constructs, experiences, and identities (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Esin, 2011).

Example:

Identity Construction Among Cannabis Users

In the discussion of cannabis use, a clear distinction emerges between cannabis and other traditional substances. Cannabis users often perceive themselves as different from conventional drug abusers, using this segregation as a process of identity construction. Experiences and identities are often constituted by a more varied set of elements, leading to the construction of heterogeneous identities even within a seemingly homogeneous group (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). This complexity highlights the dynamic and multifaceted nature of identity formation, where individuals negotiate their sense of self through diverse and evolving experiences.

1. Differentiation from Conventional Drug abusers

Cannabis users frequently emphasise their separation from users of harder drugs to solidify their identities as "not addicted" users. This distinction serves not only to affirm their self-perception but also to convey a sense of control and moderation. For instance, in Case 1, the interviewee strongly agrees with the notion that users of hard drugs lack self-control:

Q : 因為你們表示一定不會使用硬性毒品(hard drugs) , 那麼你們會不會覺得食硬性毒品(hard drugs)的人會比較不能自控 ?

This response illustrates a clear demarcation, with the users positioning themselves as more disciplined and self-regulated compared to hard drug abusers.

In Case 2, another interviewee acknowledges a boundary but refrains from expressing disdain, emphasising a personal boundary rather than a judgemental stance:

Q： 因為我訪問的人中有人會看不起使用硬性毒品(hard drugs)的人。

B： 不會看不起的，真的是自己有一些界線存在。「道不同不相為謀」。自己也不會認識得到這些人。

Here, the interviewee highlights the existence of personal limits and the principle of "different paths do not conspire," indicating a preference to not associate with hard drug abusers without expressing superiority.

2. Identical Identity to Traditional Drug abusers

Contrastingly, some cannabis users do not distinguish themselves from traditional drug abusers, viewing all substance abusers as part of the same community. For instance, in Case 3, the interviewee admits to having friends who use hard drugs and recognises the harm these drugs can cause, yet does not see cannabis users as superior:

Q： 你會不會有少許分開軟性毒品(soft drugs)和硬性毒品(hard drugs)的人，覺得大家是不同的圈子，有一點看不起他們。

A： 不會，我也有認識一些有使用硬性毒品(hard drugs)的朋友。沒事的，目前為止我認識的幾位都已經沒有使用了。但是我在他們身上可以見到一些禍害植根在他們的身體上。有一個是整棚牙都不知道怎樣了。他們在我旁邊就好像一個標本那樣告訴我不要接觸硬性毒品(hard drugs)。但沒有誰比誰高尚。大家都是毒品，沒有必要，也不要分得那麼小。我沒有資格看不起這些吸食硬性毒品(hard drugs)的人，我自己也是一個用家。還有我自己覺得是沒有必要的。

This perspective underscores a sense of solidarity and shared experience among drug abusers, rejecting hierarchical distinctions and acknowledging the equal risk and harm associated with all substances.

3. Evolution of Identity Construction

Further exploration into the stories of cannabis users reveals the nuanced nature of their identity construction. In Case 4, the interviewee discusses the initial phase of adopting a sense of superiority over traditional drug abusers, which eventually evolves with greater understanding:

Q： 接著就是有一部份好像你訪問的說，就是看不起傳統毒品的那班人，會有少許看不起。

A： 剛剛開始接觸會是這樣的。未有完全認識所有事情的時候，你要有一些所謂潔癖位去證明自己正在做的事情是比人高尚(superior)。偏頗與否就不知道了，每一個人都會經歷這個階段。

This narrative reflects the dynamic process of identity formation, where initial biases and attempts to validate one's choices through perceived superiority eventually give way to a more informed and less judgemental stance.

4. Influence of Stereotypes and Perceptions

The separation between cannabis users and traditional drug abusers is often rooted in stereotypes associated with traditional drugs. Reports of extreme behaviours, such as hallucinations and violence, influence cannabis users' perceptions and reinforce their choice to avoid harder

and violence, influence cannabis users' perceptions and reinforce their choice to avoid harder substances:

Case 5

因為你這個也和新聞有關，那些甚麼吸完冰接著發瘋，就是幻覺殺了人，那些你會害怕的。

Case 6

因為我在朋友身上見過一些很不好的事情。有一個好像是吸食過可卡因，之後就從高空掉了下來傷了腦部。

These stories emphasise the perceived dangers of traditional drugs, driving cannabis users to view cannabis as a safer, more manageable option. Only a minority of cannabis users in the study expressed interest in trying traditional drugs, reinforcing the idea that cannabis is a preferable and less risky choice.

In conclusion, the identity construction of cannabis users is a multifaceted process influenced by personal experiences, societal stereotypes, and evolving perceptions. Through storytelling, cannabis users navigate and affirm their identities, whether by distinguishing themselves from traditional drug abusers or recognising a shared journey within the broader context of substance use.

4) Narrative Analytic Models

Narrative analysis does not follow strict guidelines in terms of where to find stories, how to identify them, or what aspects to investigate. Researchers are encouraged to develop their own approaches while remaining open to learning from other methods, rather than seeking the “best” single way to conduct the analysis (Mishler, 1995). However, a constructionist approach in narrative analysis centres on the story itself as the unit of analysis and examines how different levels of context, including the research process and broader socio-cultural and historical contexts, shape the generation and interpretation of stories. Researchers need to make decisions regarding their analytical approach and the selection of narratives for analysis, often focusing on specific narrative segments as micro units of analysis to explore multiple elements of narratives on various levels.

Narrative thematic analysis focuses on the content of narratives, emphasising "what" is said rather than "how" it is said. Narratives involve details and themes within individual life stories, which can provide insights into personal values, emotions, and the social and cultural context. Narratives are extracted to identify common experiences or elements, patterns, and meanings, disregarding the specific narrative structures or contextual details. The process begins with open coding, labelling, and grouping of data based on the theoretical framework of the research. Researchers develop categories and themes based on their conceptual framework as well as discover new themes during the analysis. This model is valuable for theorising across multiple narratives and identifying commonalities and differences in thematic

elements among participants. Providing nuanced descriptions of thematic categories, and incorporating contextual details from the interviews, helps to avoid oversimplifying the shared meanings within similar thematic categories.

The narrative structural analysis aims to understand the way stories are told by examining their components and analysing their structure. This approach involves detailed analysis of small sections of qualitative data to uncover the function of each clause within the narrative. The model categorises clauses based on the questions they answer and aims to capture both the sequence of events and the evaluative function of the narrative content.

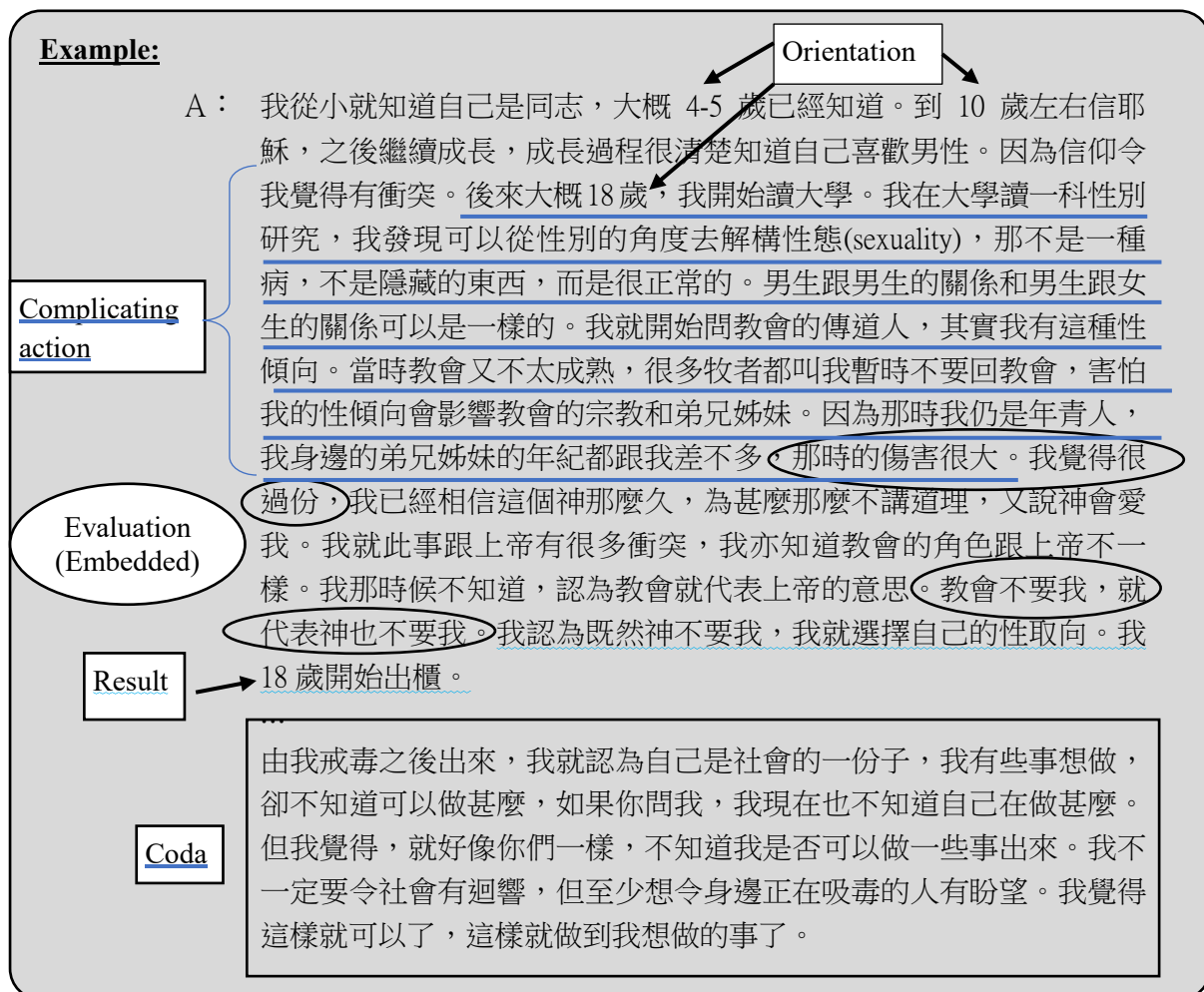
Labov and Waletzky's model (1997) identifies six elements in fully formed oral narratives: abstract, orientation, complicating action, result, evaluation, and coda. These elements help to analyse the sequence of events and the meaning conveyed in the narrative. While not all stories include each element, the narrative adequacy lies in the orientation, the complicating action, and the evaluation (Ouyang & McKeown, 2014).

Elements	Functions
Abstract	An introduction or summary of the story - often contains a description of the “most reportable event”
Orientation	A setting in the events of the story – the background information (e.g., details of time, persons, place)
Complicating action	A chain of causal or instrumental events presented in a linear way with a chronological order following the ‘then, and then’ structure. ⇒ The event sequence, often with a crisis or turning point
Result	The outcomes of the events in the narrative
Evaluation	The opinions on the events of the story, the point of the narrative and the reason for telling the story from the perspective of the narrator 1. External: The narrator steps outside the complicating action and tells the listener the point 2. Embedded: The narrator tells the listener how they felt at the time without interrupting the flow of the story 3. Evaluative: The narrator reveals emotions as a part of the story
Coda	A signal of returning to the present and the end the story

Table 8. The Six Elements of Narrative

(De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Labov & Waletzky, 1997; Ouyang & McKeown, 2014)

However, it's important to note that structural narrative analysis may decontextualise narratives and overlook historical and interactional aspects of life. It focuses primarily on the language structure and may not capture the holistic sense of an interview or the broader socio-cultural factors. Despite these limitations, the structural analysis demonstrates the transformative power of narrative structure and its potential for understanding conversational narratives in various contexts. Presenting the analysis typically involves describing the application of the model to a selected story using a table and providing detailed explanations under each element.



The research team has a conceptual framework within the research design. The analysis is conducted based on the coding reliability approaches in thematic analysis. However, users of this guide have the flexibility to choose from the three aforementioned analytic methods, content analysis, thematic analysis, and narrative analysis, for analysing the collected data, based on their research design. Additionally, the option of utilising mixed methods, which combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, can also be considered. However, a

comprehensive discussion of mixed methods is beyond the scope of this guideline. Users are encouraged to consult additional references to explore this approach further and gather more insights beyond the information provided in this guide.

5. Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

In the field of research, the production of valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner is a fundamental concern. Whether the findings of a qualitative study are sufficiently authentic and trustworthy depends on the level of procedural rigour employed to plausibly and accurately represent the participants' original data and perspectives, encompassing aspects such as the conceptualisation of the study, meticulous data collection, analysis, interpretation, and the presentation of findings. In qualitative research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are adopted to represent the quantitative measures: internal validity, external validity, reliability and confirmability. While qualitative and quantitative research approaches have different standards of rigour, understanding the traditional terminology of validity and reliability can provide valuable insights into ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Qualitative studies provide detailed portrayals of subjective interpretation and personal understandings in specific research areas, allowing researchers to find coherence and meanings. Due to the diversity of qualitative research approaches, there are no universal criteria for validity and reliability. Different types of qualitative studies may require distinct evaluation criteria. For example, narrative studies often emphasise the persuasive power of storytelling, while ethnographic research places importance on detailed descriptions of cultural groups.

While there are ongoing debates regarding the adoption of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as substitutes for internal validity and external validity in qualitative research, it is essential not to let these theoretical discussions hinder the immediate needs of qualitative researchers to address concerns about the credibility of their research. These concepts have been introduced to capture the unique aspects of validity in qualitative research and offer alternative perspectives (with the corresponding quantitative research terms shown in parentheses).

Credibility (Internal Validity)

In quantitative research, internal validity refers to the extent to which a study accurately measures the intended constructs and accurately establishes cause-and-effect relationships within the research design. Unlike objective and fixed reality in quantitative research,

qualitative research acknowledges that reality is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Therefore, credibility is based on the congruence between findings and the data presented. Four types of methods are suggested to assess credibility involving the evaluation of the trustworthiness in relation to the research data, including prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and member check (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Prolonged engagement entails maintaining a lasting presence during the observation of interviews or engaging extensively in the field with participants (Chamberlain & Hodgetts, 2018; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). This approach allows researchers to invest sufficient time in familiarising themselves with the setting and context, conducting thorough assessments to identify and mitigate the potential for misinformation, building trust with participants, and acquiring in-depth knowledge of the data (Chamberlain & Hodgetts, 2018; Lankenau et al., 2005). By immersing themselves in the research environment, researchers can access rich data that accurately represent the participants' experiences and perspectives (Merriam, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Additionally, providing a clear description of the research context and its unique features helps audiences understand the specific conditions under which the research was conducted (Merriam, 2009). This information enables audiences to assess the relevance and applicability of the findings to their own contexts.

Persistent observation involves identifying the specific characteristics and elements that are most relevant to the problem or issue under study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009). Researchers focus their attention on these aspects, delving into them in detail to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. This focused approach enables researchers to capture the intricacies and nuances of the subject matter, contributing to the depth and richness of the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009).

Triangulation utilises various data sources, investigators, and methods of data collection to cross check the data and findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Data triangulation involves gathering information from multiple sources at different times, in different places, and from different individuals or groups (Merriam, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). This comprehensive approach allows researchers to validate and corroborate their findings, ensuring consistency and reliability across different contexts and perspectives. Additionally, investigator triangulation involves the collaboration of multiple

researchers in coding, analysis, and interpretation decisions, which helps minimise individual biases and enhances the robustness of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Method triangulation entails employing multiple data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic from different angles (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Example 1:

Case 1

Q：你自己在香港，你去接觸的時候其實你怎樣認識到賣的那一個呢？

A：都是一些朋友給的一些電話我的。那時那位朋友就接觸到「城大草王」，他說「好吧，拿個電話。」你接觸到多一些人，你便會問他：「哪裡買會便宜一點？」又多一點途徑，再自己格一下價，我一直有跟的那個就買那一個的那些來的，我覺得頗好，貴一點也不要緊的。

Case 2

Q：這樣問是因為我聽聞 6 號宿舍 (Hall 6) 有很多吸食大麻的人。還有你認不認識一個在城大叫阿牛的人？

A：不認識，你是指 J？

Q：我也不知道他叫什麼名字，只是因為我另外的同事訪問時有人提到一個稱為「城大藥王」的人。

A：我不知道，但是我知道住 6 號宿舍 (Hall 6) 的朋友那裏的貨源也是很穩定的，在那裡供貨應該很賺錢的。

Example 2:

Case 1

Q：有沒有試過是不用錢的？

A：那當然會。

Q：那什麼情況下是不需要錢的？那麼好？

A：因為有時候通常一對一的話，有時候有機會有人是不需要錢的。譬如我告訴他沒錢，他有 chem 的話，他覺得沒問題的話，他出 chem，因為那時我自己是有地方的。那通常很多人沒有地方的話，我就出地方，然後他出 chem 這樣的。

Q：有地方的意思是自己的家？

A：因為我自己住的。

Case 2

Q2：我想確認一件事，之前有其他受訪者提及舉辦派對的人會免費提供毒品。

A：是否只是他而已？

B：有幾種做法吧。

...

Q2：所以舉辦活動的人請參加者免費吸食毒品並不常見？

A：做得有聲有色的派對都不是免費的，舉辦得成功或者可以經常舉辦的派對，他們都不是免費的。通常免費的派對，他們未必真的稱為派對，頂多是 **home party**，可能只有六七個人左右，四五個人、六七個人左右。我們稱為派對的最少有十幾人，甚至二十多人，那麼免費的只有他一人還是全部人都免費？如果全部人都免費，你是想像那裏要花費多少錢？感覺上有點不合理。

...

B：也不一定，但我覺得新人什麼都不懂，然後有人叫你一起參加，可能開初時候會。

A：但他說十年來。

B：十年真的沒什麼可能，可能一開始時我們稱為「導」你。

...

A：說這些的人有時你要小心點，有時他們會把自己的幻想滲入個故事中。

Q2：即是有吹噓成分？

A：或者可能他們忘記自己其實已經付了錢。有時候是這樣，他們忘了自己已經付過錢，他們真的會忘記了，真的以為自己不用付錢，但其實已經付過了。又或者他們只是直接離開了沒有付錢，主人家也很無奈，他們不會追出去，懶得追回那一百幾十元，於是他便以為是免費的。有時候是這樣，有些人不好意思開口，如果他十多年來都是這樣做，這人在圈內除非是非常低調，否則做這種事只有兩種趨向：一是他已經開始老了，人家心裏想你都這麼老了，也不好意思收你的錢，就當是敬老，有時候我們都會敬老。

Member check involves providing feedback to the participants of the study, including data, analytical categories, interpretations, and conclusions (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). By sharing these findings with the original participants, researchers offer them an opportunity to review and validate the accuracy and authenticity of their own contributions. This process strengthens the credibility of the data and interpretations, as participants bring their unique perspectives and insights to the analysis, adding depth and richness to the findings (Merriam, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The member check process acknowledges the importance of collaboration and respects the participants' role as co-creators of knowledge in the research process.

Transferability (External Validity)

External validity refers to the generalisability and applicability of research findings beyond the specific research context (Merriam, 2009). Although qualitative research never

focuses on generalisation and statistical representativeness of the results and findings (King & Horrocks, 2010; Schreier, 2018), transferability refers to the degree of variation and diversity to which the results of qualitative research can be extended beyond the specific research context to other contexts, settings, or populations with different participants (King & Horrocks, 2010; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009). The researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through thick description.

Thick description requires researchers to describe not just the behaviour and experiences, but their context as well so that the behaviour and experiences become meaningful to an outsider (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The inclusion of vivid examples and quotations further enhances the transferability of qualitative research findings (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, providing contextual information allows audiences to compare their own contexts with the research context, facilitating the assessment of transferability (Merriam, 2009; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). By offering rich descriptions, researchers enable audiences to assess the relevance and applicability of the findings in different situations.

Dependability and Confirmability (Reliability)

Reliability in quantitative research refers to whether findings can be replicated with an assumption of a single reality (Merriam, 2009). Due to the dynamic nature of human behaviour and the multiple interpretations of events, traditional notions of reliability are not applicable in qualitative research (Im & Chee, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Instead, dependability and confirmability, or categorised as the consistency in some expressions, are applied to ensure that the study's results make sense given the information gathered (Merriam, 2009).

Dependability in qualitative research pertains to the consistency and stability of the findings over time (Im & Chee, 2006; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009). It involves evaluating how well the findings, interpretations, and recommendations align with the data provided by the study participants (Merriam, 2009). By actively involving participants in the evaluation process, researchers ensure that the findings accurately reflect the information gathered during the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Confirmability, on the other hand, focuses on the extent to which the research findings can be confirmed by other researchers (Im & Chee, 2006). It seeks to establish that the data and interpretations are not influenced by the researcher's personal biases or subjective

perspectives (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). The goal is to demonstrate that the findings are derived directly from the data in a transparent and objective manner (Im & Chee, 2006).

An *audit trail* needs to be kept to transparently document the research steps taken from the beginning of the project to the development and reporting of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009). By keeping detailed records, researchers provide a clear and traceable path that allows others to review and evaluate the research process, including demonstrating how the results were derived and building confidence in the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This practice promotes transparency, accountability, and rigour, thereby bolstering the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

Reflexivity

Regarding the interpretative nature of qualitative research, reflexivity is a crucial aspect of qualitative research that involves critical self-reflection by the researcher (Darawsheh, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009). It encompasses an examination of one's own biases, preferences, preconceptions, and the impact of the research relationship on participants' responses.

To facilitate reflexivity, researchers have to draw a detailed diary throughout the research process as a tool for exploring their conceptual lens, explicit and implicit assumptions, preconceptions, and values (Darawsheh, 2014; Merriam, 2009). By reflecting on these aspects, researchers can better understand how their personal perspectives influence their research decisions at every stage of the qualitative study. With careful implementation, researchers are capable of critically reflecting on themselves as the instrument of the research. Biases, dispositions, and assumptions related to the research being undertaken can hence be identified (Darawsheh, 2014; Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Merriam, 2009). By clarifying the potential influences that came from researchers' own experiences, worldviews, and theoretical orientations, audiences can realise how their interpretations of the data were shaped. This transparency is aimed at helping audiences grasp the influence of the researcher's values and expectations on the conduct and conclusions of the study.

Additionally, peer examination or peer review is a valuable strategy to enhance the rigour of qualitative research (Darawsheh, 2014; Henry, 2015). This process involves seeking feedback from colleagues who are knowledgeable about the research field or methodology (Henry, 2015). Peers review the research findings and provide recommendations for better

structure or presentation, enhancing readability and comprehension. Alternatively, a colleague unfamiliar with the research topic can also conduct a thorough examination by reviewing raw data and assessing the plausibility of the findings based on the data (Merriam, 2009).

Project Experience:

Inevitably, participants held expectations that researchers would contribute positively to the drug community by reducing drug stigmatisation, advocating for the legalisation of drug use, and providing guidance on drug policies which are “favourable to them”. In this project, the research team encountered a participant who urged for the legalisation of cannabis use in medical situations. The participant shared a personal story about a close friend who suffered from severe depression and relied heavily on cannabis to alleviate the emotional distress. Tragically, the friend ultimately took their own life. Emotionally, the participant exclaimed, "There are people dying," as a heartfelt plea to the research team to support the legalisation of cannabis use for medicinal purposes.

Example:

Q： 所以我也保證你，我們一定是中立的立場去做這個研究。

A： 中立也不足夠的。

Q： 但你要我偏頗任何一邊，其實就違反了我的研究倫理的了。

A： 它本身都不是從一個倫理的角度去執行，或者是去釐定它的政策…

Q： 所以禁毒處是禁毒處。我是學術研究團隊的(academic team, research team)。

A： 何謂倫理？你令到人們想抗癌，第四期末期的朋友，我遇過起碼兩個，這些人的生死…是有生和死的課題在當中，它不只是娛樂的，即是你都要看一下。是，你的倫理是很重要的，但你都要看一下你貢獻的資訊，在另一端它是怎樣去處理這些資訊，是不是都是這有倫理，如果不是的話你就變了助紂為虐了，是不是？

These expectations stemmed from the hope that the research findings would contribute to positive social change and improve the lives of the population. Participants perceived researchers as potential allies who could address the pressing issues faced by their community, seeking support, advocacy, and evidence-based policy advancements from them (Allan, 2019). However, researchers need to be cautious not to become overly immersed in these comments (Allan, 2019). When researchers are overwhelmed with an abundance of information, their neutrality may be compromised, potentially hindering the development of objective theories and unbiased analysis.

By carefully designing research studies, attending to ethical concerns, and employing specific strategies to enhance validity and reliability, qualitative researchers can contribute valuable knowledge that informs theory and practice in their respective fields.

Chapter 5. Epilogue

Conducting semi-structured interviews with the narrative method offers a unique opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding drug use and recovery. It allows researchers to delve into the personal stories and experiences of substance abusers, providing valuable insights into their perspectives, motivations, and challenges. By following the guidelines outlined in this manual, researchers can ensure ethical, rigorous, and empathetic research that contributes to the knowledge base and informs policy and practice.

Narrative interviews can be a powerful tool for understanding the lived experiences of substance abusers. By actively listening to their stories and allowing them to share their perspectives, researchers can gain unique insights into the underlying factors contributing to drug use and addiction. These insights can inform the development of interventions, policies, and support systems which aim at reducing drug use, promoting recovery, and improving the well-being of substance abusers.

The importance of researcher attributes throughout the qualitative research procedures has been outlined in the contents above. It highlights the need for researchers to possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and sensitivity to conduct narrative interviews with substance abusers. Researchers should invest in their professional development in qualitative research methods, including understanding the principles of narrative inquiry and honing their interview techniques. By doing so, they can administer the interview guide and conduct the entire research process more effectively.

However, it is important to acknowledge that this guide cannot comprehensively cover all aspects of qualitative research. It provides a foundation and important considerations for conducting narrative interviews with substance abusers, but researchers should also consult additional research materials and resources to develop their research relevance and expertise. Engaging with a diverse range of literature, attending relevant workshops or seminars, and seeking mentorship from experienced researchers can further enhance researchers' qualitative research skills and broaden their understanding of the subject matter.

As Merriam (2009) aptly stated, “*the trustworthiness of a qualitative study also depends on the credibility of the researcher*” (p. 234). Users (also as researchers) must recognise the critical role they play in the research process and their impact on the quality of the findings.

While guidelines and regulations can provide a framework for addressing ethical concerns, the ultimate responsibility lies with the individual investigator. It is essential for researchers to be aware of the ethical issues inherent in the research process and to reflect on their own values and biases to ensure a respectful and unbiased approach.

Appendix: Interview Guide (Chinese Only)

- * 半結構性訪談：研究員可跟據受訪者的回答作出追問並更改發問問題的次序。
- * 如受訪者沒有相關經驗(如販毒或戒毒)，則改為詢問有沒有認識的人有相關經驗或以他的角度有沒有相關觀察。

訪談前，請盡量完成下列事項：

1. 向受訪者介紹及解釋是次研究的安排及目的
2. 請受訪者簽署接受訪談同意書
3. 受訪者的背景資料

1. Drug use (social and psychological reasons)

1. 你何時開始第一次吸食毒品？
2. 當時吸食的原因是甚麼？
 - a. 好奇想試、想high、「想唔諗野」等原因，這些因素影響你開始吸毒的程度有多大？
3. 當時吸食的情境是怎樣的？
4. 你吸食毒品多少年？你最常／曾經吸食何種毒品？
 - a. 如曾有進入院所（例如：懲教署推行的強迫戒毒計劃、由非政府機構營辦的自願住院戒毒治療康復計劃），在進入院所前，吸食的份量及頻密程度是怎樣？你吸毒的模式是怎樣？（例如：「一班朋友一起吸食」還是「一個人在家、在工作地點等等吸食」？）
5. 你有沒有犯罪紀錄？家人有沒有吸毒背景或犯罪紀錄？
 - a. 如有，這些對你吸毒有沒有影響？
6. 第一次吸食之後是甚麼原因令你持續吸食？
7. 你吸食的頻率是怎樣？
8. 在甚麼情況下，最容易令你有吸食的想法／慾望？
9. 當你有強烈吸食慾望的時候，你會怎樣處理？
 - a. 如情況不許可，一般你能怎樣阻止／控制自己吸食毒品？
10. 你能否辨識「心癮」及「身癮」？

- a. 他們對你持續吸食毒品分別造成甚麼的影響？
- 11. 你能否控制自己不吸毒？
 - a. 有沒有曾有一段時間停止吸食或最長沒有吸食的紀錄是多久？
 - b. 當時是甚麼原因令你停止，又是甚麼原因令你復吸？
- 12. 對你來說，不能控制自己時的感覺是怎麼？
 - a. 不能控制的原因是甚麼？
 - b. 最能夠幫你控制自己的方法是甚麼？
- 13. 你用藥後會進行甚麼活動？或甚麼活動會促使你吸食？
- 14. 會否因應不同的需要，而選擇不同種類的毒品？
- 15. 如果要你講述一次吸毒中最痛苦的經歷，哪會是甚麼？
- 16. 吸食毒品對你有甚麼影響，你失去了甚麼？
- 17. 父母、夫／妻、孩子對你吸毒是否知情？他們有何反應？
- 18. 原生家庭的關係、父母管教方式，對你吸毒有沒有影響？
- 19. 個人的滿足感、成功感、成就感，對你吸毒有沒有影響？
- 20. 曾否覺得自己的人生很混亂／失敗？
- 21. 工作／生活壓力，對你吸毒有沒有影響？
- 22. Disco/ rave party 等娛樂場所的消失，對你吸毒有沒有影響？影響了甚麼？
- 23. 受朋友、男朋友／女朋友／契哥／契妹影響你吸毒的程度有多大？
- 24. 因為性需要、性能力的因素，影響你吸毒的程度有多大？
- 25. 因為習慣左吸毒帶來的感覺，只是習慣驅使，身體不能控制等因素，影響你吸毒的程度有多大？

2. Accessibility to drugs

- 1. 你從哪些途徑獲得毒品？
 - a. 為甚麼會從這途徑獲得毒品？
- 2. 有沒有在網上買／賣毒品？在哪些網站／手機應用程式上買／賣？
- 3. 怎樣取得這些賣家資訊？
- 4. 為何你會信任這個賣家？
- 5. 交易的過程是怎樣的？
- 6. 哪類服務最方便？包括：樓上、樓下擺貨，送貨上門、記帳、借錢買。

7. 這些服務的便利性有沒有對你造成影響？

3. Drug treatment

1. 有沒有想過戒毒？

a. 如果想，你曾否嘗試戒毒？用甚麼方法？

2. 過去，你曾否參加戒毒機構的服務？（例如：懲教署的戒毒所、美沙酮診所治療、自願性戒毒服務、福音戒毒、戒毒村、正生書院、濫用精神藥物者輔導中心、醫管局物質誤用診所等等。）

a. 如果沒有，原因是甚麼？（例如：自己從來沒有戒毒的念頭、覺得服務沒有用、幫唔到等）

b. 如果有，你參加過甚麼服務？效果如何？但最終未能協助你戒除毒癮的原因是甚麼？

3. 你在這些服務中的經驗是怎樣？有沒有效？

4. 戒毒服務的內容是怎樣的？有甚麼活動？

5. 你對哪些活動印象最深刻？

6. 最長一次戒毒，能夠維持多久？

7. 對你來說，最能幫助你戒毒的原因和方法是甚麼？

8. 要協助吸毒人士戒除毒癮，你認為自願戒毒與「法庭判入戒毒院所」哪種形式較為有效？原因是甚麼？

9. 比對「在社區戒毒」與「住院戒毒」，你覺得哪種形式較為有效？原因又是甚麼？

4. Drug treatment – relapse - treatment cycle

1. 有沒有試過一段時間沒有吸食，最終卻沒有成功戒毒？是甚麼原因令你再次吸食？

2. 嘗試過哪些方法戒毒，但最終不成功？

3. 當你離開戒毒治療中心或懲教署戒毒所後，維持多久，再次吸毒？

a. 再次吸毒的原因是甚麼？

4. 如曾吸食海洛英，多久出現上癮徵狀？

5. 如曾吸食精神科毒品，對身體的負面影響可能較長時間才出現。當負面影響

出現時，你會否已經不能抗拒對毒品的依賴？

5. Desistance

1. 是甚麼原因使你能成功戒除吸毒習慣？
2. 對你來說，最能阻止自己吸毒的原因是甚麼？
3. 是甚麼戒毒服務或方法讓你成功戒毒？如有嘗試過其他服務，為何它們都不能協助你成功戒毒？
4. 有沒有甚麼方法抵抗想復吸的衝動？
5. 戒毒後對吸毒的看法/感受有甚麼不一樣？
6. 在社區內抗拒復吸，最困難的問題是甚麼？哪方面的協助最能幫助你抗拒復吸？

I. Overview of Hong Kong Drug Situation

1. 以你所知，香港現時的吸毒情況如何？吸毒潮流有沒有改變？
2. 你有沒有觀察到吸毒年輕化的趨勢？你認為為什麼會有這趨勢出現？
3. 哪類毒品最受歡迎？價格大概是多少？
4. 現時政府在宣傳教育上，運用了不同的廣告、警告、口號等（如：「不可一、不可再」、「Say No to drugs（向毒品說不）」）。你有否接收過這些訊息？
 - a. 如果有，你看到時的感受及反應是甚麼？
 - b. 對未曾吸毒的人是否有效？
 - c. 對已多年吸毒的人，是否有效？
 - d. 如果沒有，你建議有甚麼其他的教育宣傳方法？
6. 執法部門不時突擊巡查Parties、樓上吧等等可能出現群眾聚集吸毒的場所，你曾否遇過這些情況？
 - a. 如有，你有感到害怕嗎？這有否令你決心開始戒毒？
 - b. 如沒有，你認為怎樣打擊較為有效？
5. 你有沒有曾經被警察截察？你的感受如何？
7. 在疫情下，你認為對吸毒圈有甚麼影響？用量、格價、使用頻率、吸食模式有沒有改變？
8. 在疫情下，你的吸毒習慣或模式有沒有受到影響？

II. Drug Trafficking (Online drug trafficking)

1. 你有沒有參與販賣毒品？
 - a. 如有，他們使用甚麼途徑販賣？
 - b. 你何時開始參與販賣毒品？
 - c. 你如何參與販毒？
 - d. 你是哪個階層的毒販（例如腳、車手、電台、莊仔或大莊）？
2. 你有沒有參與或看到有人網上販賣毒品？
 - a. 你認為為甚麼會利用網上平台？當中涉及甚麼風險？
 - b. 網上平台販賣毒品與傳統販賣毒品的方式有甚麼不同？
 - c. 如你有使用網上平台販賣毒品，販毒過程是否還有細分階層？
3. 你參與販賣毒品的原因是甚麼？（例如：補貼吸食的费用，賺取的盈利可觀等）
4. 你一般從哪裡獲得貨源？你或你認識的人如何取得與供貨者（supplier）的關係和信任？
5. 你如何獲取客源？
6. 你與客人的關係如何？
7. 你有沒有加入販毒集團／群組？或有沒有認識同區的賣家？
 - a. 如有，和他們的關係如何？
 - b. 與販毒集團／群組或同區的賣家合作，合作的情況如何？
8. 你是否有黑社會背景？在黑社會中屬於哪個階層？
9. 黑社會因素，這对你參與販毒的程度有多大影響？怎樣影響？
10. 以你所知，黑社會在毒品買賣中扮演著甚麼角色？
11. 參與販毒对你或你認識的人吸毒的行為有多大影響？怎樣影響？

III. Cannabis use

1. 你有沒有吸食大麻？
 - a. 如有，為甚麼你會吸食大麻？
 - b. 你從哪裡獲得大麻？
2. 大麻在你身邊的朋友圈子是否流行？哪類人比較傾向吸食大麻？

3. 使用大麻的圈子中是否有海外回流的人？
4. 你最常使用的是CBD，THC還是Hybride？
5. 你會傾向使用Indica還是Sativa？
 - a. 為甚麼有這傾向？對你而言，它們分別有甚麼不同？
6. 你會如何吸食大麻？（例如捲煙、Bong、Pipe、Vape、Edible、tincture？）
7. 你會否把大麻與其他毒品、酒類或煙一齊使用？
8. 你會否「看不起」吸食傳統毒品的人？
9. 你認為大麻對身體有害嗎？為甚麼會有這樣的想法？
10. 吸食大麻對你的身心、社交及生活有甚麼影響？
11. 你曾否有試過戒大麻？
 - a. 如有，是甚麼原因令你想戒？
 - b. 如沒有，是甚麼原因令你不戒？
12. 外國對大麻合法化有沒有影響你使用大麻或對大麻的觀感？
13. 你認為香港應否把大麻合法化？為甚麼？
14. 你從何得知大麻的資訊，包括使用的效果、對身體的影響、販賣渠道等？

IV. Hidden Drug Abuse

1. 你覺得香港現時的吸毒者是否更傾向隱蔽吸毒？
 - a. 如果是，你認為隱蔽吸毒的趨勢成因為何？
 - b. 如果不是，那吸毒者最常吸毒的地方是哪裡？
2. 在家或私人地方吸毒是否會增加吸食的份量？
3. 你認為在公眾地方吸毒的人士與隱蔽吸毒者對毒品的看法/感受有沒有差異？
4. 要及早為發現隱蔽吸毒者並為他們提供戒毒支援服務，你覺得有甚麼方法？

V. Chemfun - Sexual Minority (LGBT+)

1. 你有沒有參與過 Chemsex/Chemfun？參與這類活動對你使用毒品有甚麼影響？
2. 你參與的頻率是怎樣？使星期有平均有多少次？
3. Chemfun 的價錢是多少？你去過最貴及最平是多少？
4. 一般會在甚麼地方舉辦 Chemfun？
5. 有甚麼要求才能成為 Host？

6. 為甚麼毒品在 Chemfun 中是必要的？
7. 你認為 Chem 還是 Fun/Sex 比較重要？
8. 除了性行為之外，你會在 Chemfun 中做甚麼？
9. 能否在 Chemfun 中找到穩定伴侶？伴侶對使用毒品或參與 Chemfun 有多大影響？
10. 有沒有在 Chemfun 之外的時間獨自使用毒品？如會，是甚麼情況下會獨自使用？

Optional questions

1. 不同毒品之間有沒有階級之分，或是有一個進程？
2. 你會怎樣形容毒品和你的關係？
3. 你會否認為吸毒者是被毒品控制？
4. 你覺得宗教信仰（任何宗教信仰）對戒毒有沒有幫助？
5. 你有沒有宗教信仰？
 - a. 如有，你的宗教價值觀有沒有造成你戒毒的動機？
6. 你有沒有想過透過宗教信仰（任何宗教信仰）戒毒？
 - a. 如果有，原因是甚麼？ 如果沒有，原因又是甚麼？

Suggested Readings for Further Qualitative Research Skills

Owing to the limited scope and focus on administering the interview guide, users are strongly recommended to be equipped with further qualitative research knowledge. To facilitate and enhance the capability of conducting qualitative interviews, the research team listed the following suggested readings for users.

1. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in the Asian Context
2. The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods
3. Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation
4. Interviews in Qualitative Research
5. Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology: Combining Core Approaches

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