From an investigator's perspective: Challenges and opportunities in building and maintaining rapport in cross-cultural investigative interviewing contexts.

Journal:	*Journal of Criminal Psychology*
Manuscript ID	JCP-11-2024-0123.R1
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Investigative Interviewing, Rapport, Culture, Memory, Victim, Eyewitness

MANUSCRIPT DETAILS

TITLE: From an investigator's perspective: Challenges and opportunities in building and maintaining rapport in cross-cultural investigative interviewing contexts.

ABSTRACT:

Given the geo-political context of war, terrorism, human trafficking and organized crime, the pursuit of justice increasingly relies on effective interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Interviewers who fail to communicate effectively with interviewees from different cultural backgrounds to themselves risk derailing investigations, jeopardise the safety of potential victims, and compromise the delivery of justice. Building rapport constitutes a critical component of effective investigative interviewing and is associated with enhanced investigative outcomes (i.e., detailed and informative accounts). The main objective of the current research was to explore the perceptions of investigators, experienced in the conduct of cross-cultural interviews, with respect to building rapport in interviews with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

We conducted 13 focus groups with a culturally diverse sample of investigative professionals to examine their perceptions of challenges and opportunities pertaining to building rapport in cross-cultural interviews.

Given the exploratory nature of our research objective and the absence of prior research on this issue, we used a qualitative approach to reflect on key themes and sub-themes in our data. We extracted four key themes as underpinning approaches to building rapport in cross-cultural interviews: i) preparation; (ii) situational awareness (during the interview); (iii) relationship building through communication; and (iv) hierarchy in interviews.

CUST_RESEARCH_LIMITATIONS/IMPLICATIONS_(LIMIT_100_WORDS) :No data available.

These results highlight the value of cultural competence and benefits of cultural humility in the domain investigative interviewing.

CUST_SOCIAL_IMPLICATIONS_(LIMIT_100_WORDS) :No data available.

Understanding the challenges and opportunities for improved investigative interviewing in cross-cultural contexts is crucial for both research, training, and practice going forward.

RUNNING HEAD: CROSS-CULTURAL INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWING

From an investigator's perspective: Challenges and opportunities in building and maintaining rapport in cross-cultural investigative interviewing contexts.

Abstract

Purpose: Given the geo-political context of war, terrorism, human trafficking and organized crime, the pursuit of justice increasingly relies on effective interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Interviewers who fail to communicate effectively with interviewees from different cultural backgrounds to themselves risk derailing investigations, jeopardise the safety of potential victims, and compromise the delivery of justice. Building rapport constitutes a critical component of effective investigative interviewing and is associated with enhanced investigative outcomes (i.e., detailed and informative accounts). The main objective of the current research was to explore the perceptions of investigators, experienced in the conduct of cross-cultural interviews, with respect to building rapport in interviews with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Method: We conducted 13 focus groups with a culturally diverse sample of investigative professionals to examine their perceptions of challenges and opportunities pertaining to building rapport in cross-cultural interviews.

Findings: Given the exploratory nature of our research objective and the absence of prior research on this issue, we used a qualitative approach to reflect on key themes and sub-themes in our data. We extracted four key themes as underpinning approaches to building rapport in cross-cultural interviews: i) preparation; (ii) situational awareness (during the interview); (iii) relationship building through communication; and (iv) hierarchy in interviews.

Practical implications: These results highlight the value of cultural competence and benefits of cultural humility in the domain investigative interviewing.

Originality/Value: Understanding the challenges and opportunities for improved investigative interviewing in cross-cultural contexts is crucial for both research, training, and practice going forward.

Introduction

The pursuit of justice increasingly relies on productive interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. The investigation of complex, violent, and illegal activities across international borders, such as war, terrorism, human trafficking, and organized crime requires detailed and reliable evidence and intelligence. Similarly, domestic investigations take place in increasingly multi-cultural contexts and rely on effective interviewing practice. Indeed, contemporary trends in migration (United Nations Population Division, 2018; World Migration Report, 2022) make it increasingly likely that investigators will interview victims, witnesses, suspects, and other informants from different cultural backgrounds to their own. Interviewers who fail to communicate appropriately or effectively with interviewees from different cultural backgrounds to themselves risk derailing the investigative process, jeopardising the safety of potential victims and compromising the delivery of justice. As yet, research on the role of culture in interviewer-interviewee interactions in investigative contexts is in its infancy and has only focused on the issue in rather limited ways (see reviews by Hope et al., 2022; Anakwah et al., 2022; Vredeveldt et al., 2023).

Building rapport with an interviewee constitutes a critical component of effective interviewing and is associated with enhanced investigative outcomes (i.e., detailed and informative accounts; Alison et al., 2014; Alison et al., 2020; Brimbal et al., 2021; Gabbert et al., 2021; Leahy-Harland & Bull, 2017; Walsh & Bull, 2012). As a complex and adaptive feature of human interaction contingent on building a bond or connection, it is plausible that rapport-building is impacted by the cultural background of interactants, and specifically, the variation in cultural orientation, or the extent to which interactants integrate culturally-prescribed norms for social

interactions. To date, however, only a small body of work has considered rapport in cross-cultural interviews (e.g., Matsumoto et al., 2023; Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2016) or examined the practical steps that investigators may need to consider in such contexts. Thus, the aim of the current research was to explore the ways in which a group of investigators, experienced in the conduct of investigative interviews with victims and witnesses from different cultural groups and who themselves come from a range of different cultural backgrounds, identify and respond to the challenges for building rapport in cross-cultural interviewing contexts.

What is rapport?

As an adaptive social skill, rapport helps us create bonds and form relationships with others. In the context of investigative interviewing, rapport has been variously defined as, "The bond or connection between an investigative interviewer and interviewee" (Vallano et al., 2015, p. 369), "A state of communicative alliance" (Abbe & Brandon, 2013, p. 238), and "A positive mood" (Ministry of Justice, 2022, p. 80). There is no consensus definition of rapport; indeed, recent work argues that rapport might be better described as a higher order concept relating to the quality of the interviewee-interviewer interaction with varying definitions emerging as a result of wider-ranging focus on different lower order attributes (e.g., by context; see Neequaye & MacGiolla, 2022). Nonetheless, it is clear that spontaneous rapport between two interacting people emerges at the relationship level and cannot be an activity or feature at the individual level alone.

Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal's (1990) tripartite theoretical model of rapport remains the most influential in the literature, conceptualizing rapport as having three components: (i) mutual attentiveness; (ii) positivity; and, (iii) coordination. Mutual attentiveness might be described as focused cohesive interaction, involvement, and

mutual interest. Positivity is reflected in mutual friendliness, caring, and positive affect, and coordination can be characterized by balance, fluency of interaction, and shared understanding. While this model provides a broad theoretical framework for understanding the development of naturally emerging rapport in a social context, it is limited in the extent to which it can inform individuals how to build rapport in a professional setting where one individual is purposefully and as a feature of their role attempting to develop rapport with another, such as within an investigative interview – this is particularly so when the interaction may also be impacted by different cultural understandings, norms, and expectations. Although recent research suggests there may well be cultural similarities in rapport judgments across cultures (Matsumoto et al., 2023), it is unlikely that rapport behaviors located in one cultural context are universally effective in all others. Indeed, a prominent scale for measuring experience of rapport in forensic and intelligence interviews, the RS3i, includes a measure of 'cultural similarity' (Duke et al., 2018). However, while a recent systematic review of research on rapport in professional information gathering contexts (Gabbert et al., 2021) identified a number of behaviors typically deployed to build rapport, it was also noted that the majority of research is Western-centric and founded on theories and data almost entirely located in WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialized, rich democratic; Henrich et al., 2010) cultures and contexts.

Culture and the Investigative Interviewing Context

Culture refers to a dynamic and complex set of shared systems, meanings, and practices within a social group, emerging from the histories and experience of that group and shaping social interactions and relationships at all levels from the individual to the wider society (see Wang, 2021). As such, cognitive processes (such as memory) and social processes (such as communication and language use) are

saturated in cultural contexts (Wang et al., 2021). Inevitably, so too are interactions between the interviewee and interviewer in investigative settings.

To examine cultural differences in the outcomes of investigative interviews, recent work has begun to examine how reports of witnessed events differ between cultures. For example, using a mock witness paradigm, Anakwah et al. (2020) examined free recall reports for crime-relevant scenes provided by participants recruited in a Sub-Saharan African country (Ghana) and participants recruited in Northern Europe (UK and The Netherlands). Sampling from these diverse cultures was deliberate. The UK and The Netherlands both score high on individualism and low on power distance, two cultural dimensions originally identified in Hofstede's work on the classification of national cultures (Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010)[1], while the opposite pattern is true for Ghana where a more collectivist orientation prevails[2]. Participants were matched in terms of education level and experimental stimuli were generated to reflect both cultural contexts. Across several experiments, Ghanaian participants reported significantly fewer details about the crime scenes in their memory reports than UK or Dutch participants (see Anakwah, 2021). Similarly, Hope et al. (2023) observed a similar pattern of under-reporting in mock witness accounts provided by participants drawn from a collectivist culture (see also Leal et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2017). This reporting pattern aligns with research in the autobiographical memory research literature showing that individuals from individualistic cultures are more likely to provide elaborate, detailed memory reports,

[1] Hofstede's individualism-collectivism index estimates the extent to which countries are individualistic and collectivistic in orientation. See https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/

[2] The individualism-collectivism cultural dimension reflects the degree to which individuals in a society are integrated into social groups and embedded in social relationships (Hofstede, 1983). The power distance dimension reflects the extent to which members of a society expect and accept the unequal distribution of power, with regards to social status, wealth, rights and privileges, and respect.

while those from more collectivist cultures may offer briefer, more general accounts (Ross & Wang, 2010; Wang, 2001; Wang, 2013).

While rapport was not explicitly manipulated in the research described above, there are several potential explanations for the observed differences that, indirectly at least, have implications for rapport and rapport-building in cross-cultural contexts. Researchers have long observed cultural differences in communication preferences (Hall, 1976). According to Hall's (1976) theoretical framework, individualistic cultures tend to favor low context communication styles. Low context communication emphasizes explicit, direct, and content-oriented communication, where words convey precise meanings. In contrast, collectivistic cultures tend to favor high context communication. High context communication relies more on indirect communication, utilizing context to convey implied meanings through nonverbal or paraverbal features such as gestures or vocal tone (Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2001). These preferences are linked to self-construal (Markus and Kitayama (1991, 2010), with cultures valuing an independent self favoring direct communication, while those emphasizing an interdependent self and relational harmony tend to talk around points to reach compromises and maintain good relations (Gelfand et al., 2001; Lalwani et al., 2006). It is inevitable that different communication preferences have implications for interview dynamics. In Western contexts, where direct access to facts is expected as a function of low context communication norms (e.g., Wang 2013), high-context styles which may be shorter, less detailed and involve more indirect communication (e.g., not getting to the point, apparently going off topic; Chae et al., 2006; Chua et al., 2005; Humphries & Jobson, 2012) may frustrate interviewers unfamiliar with this communication preference with the result that interviewees are viewed as uncooperative (Beune et al., 2010). Worse still, such interviewees may be perceived

as obfuscating, resistant, or deceptive (Antaki & Stokoe, 2017). Conversely, from an interviewee's perspective, an interviewer employing a low-context communication style (e.g., asking very direct or detail oriented questions; attempting to get straight to the point) may be perceived as rude, impatient, aggressive, or insulting.

Given that rapport is located at the relationship level within the interaction (Bernieri et al., 1996; Bernieri, 2005), a mismatch between the interviewer and interviewee with respect to frame of reference is unlikely to result in an effective or optimal outcome (Grahe & Bernieri. 1999; Hove & Risen, 2009). As investigators have reported experiencing challenges when conducting interviews in cross-cultural contexts (e.g., see commentaries in Hope et al., 2022), it is entirely feasible that a mismatch in expectations of the interaction, related to a lack of understanding of cultural differences, underpins challenges in rapport building and information gathering. A small body of research examining rapport in cross-cultural settings lends support to this notion. While practitioners responding to an international survey confirmed that rapport is perceived as key to successful interactions with interviewees (Goodman-Delahunty & Sivasbramaniam, 2013), differences have been documented in the use of rapport across jurisdictions, even within Western or Eurocentric countries (Miller et al., 2018). In a study exploring rapport-building techniques with investigative practitioners in five Asian-Pacific countries, Goodman-Delahunty and Howes (2016) found that the techniques used reflected principles of persuasion (Cialdini, 1993; 2001). However, this research also observed that the operationalisation of some principles (e.g., authority, social proof, commitment-consistency) were culturally bound, reflecting cultural differences in what the investigators perceived would be effective in their own particular contexts. More recently, work by Gomez-Bedoya (2024) highlighted differences in how rapport is

linguistically conveyed across languages and cultures. Specifically, in a comparison of interviews with victims in Spain and the UK, this research observed that the expression of rapport is inextricably tied to cultural and linguistic norms and preferences. Reflecting a practitioner perspective on this issue, Goodman-Delahunty and Howes (2019) noted challenges reported by practitioners in establishing and maintaining rapport in high-stakes interviews in the absence of a shared language or culture.

Challenges in building rapport in cross-cultural interviews might emerge in a number of ways depending on the cultural background of the interviewee. For example, in cultures with hierarchical power structures, interviewees may feel uncomfortable or confused with attempts to build rapport via friendly 'small talk' which may serve as a "double-edged sword of sociocultural reality" (Mak & Chui, 2013, p. 130). To add to the complexity, the likelihood of successful rapport building in some cultures is likely to relate to interaction strategies recognising 'honor'; an important concept in some Middle East, Latin American, and African cultures (Nisbett, 2018; Uskul et al., 2019), Similarly, in Asian cultures, the notion of 'face' may be an important feature of an interaction (Aslani et al., 2016; Goffman, 1967). Enabling interviewees to protect or maintain their honor and avoid 'loss of face' may therefore be an important consideration (see Gul et al., 2021; also, Uskul et al., 2019). In this vein, work by Damari et al. (2015) exploring the role of honour and face-saving in military interactions advocated for the use of culturally appropriate strategies to build rapport and avoid conflict.

Another key cultural factor influencing rapport-building is power distance, defined by Hofstede (2001) as the degree to which societies accept hierarchical differences in power and authority. In high power-distance cultures, individuals often

defer to authority figures and may hesitate to speak openly with perceived superiors, such as police or investigators (Ghosh, 2011; Khatri, 2009). This reluctance can restrict the flow of information in witness interviews, especially when the interviewee feels intimidated or unable to express themselves freely. In these contexts, interviewees may provide less spontaneous or detailed responses (Ghosh, 2011). In contrast, low power-distance cultures, typically found in individualistic societies, promote open and direct communication, enabling interviewees to share their thoughts and information more candidly. This openness may lead to more detailed and transparent accounts during interviews (Anakwah et al., 2024; Oyserman, 2006;).

Gender, status, and power distance also heavily influence the reporting of sensitive issues such as rape, sexual abuse, and intimate partner violence (Gill, 202; Gill & Brah, 2014; Kalra & Bhugra, 2013; Kandiyoti, 1988). These factors affect not only victims' and witnesses' willingness to report but also the language used to describe these experiences, often relying on euphemisms or indirect expressions to navigate cultural taboos (e.g., “the shame place” or “he did something dirty to me”; Katz, 2020, p.10). In such situations, rapport-building may even more challenging if there is a cultural mismatch between the extent to which clarity and precise detail is prioritised and perceived as being integral to effective communication (by the interviewer) and a contrasting orientation held by the interviewee whereby relational harmony and avoiding imposing on others is preferred (e.g. Kim & Wilson, 1994).

Aim of the current research

Currently, ‘best practice’ guidelines for the conduct of investigative interviews are often formulated in Western contexts with little consideration for the conduct of interviews with people from different cultures, or the application in practice within

different cultural contexts (for an exception, see Powell et al., 2020; also Kim et al., 2020). Although recent work by Wilson et al. (2022) noted that observers, drawn from three cultures and exposed to clips of investigative interviews, perceived rapport across two clear dimensions – positivity and negativity – with some consistency, no research to date has explored pragmatic responses to challenges arising in cross-cultural interview contexts. Therefore, the goal of the current research was to (i) explore the perceptions and experiences of investigators, experienced in the conduct of cross-cultural interviews and who come from a range of cultural backgrounds themselves, with respect to building rapport in interviews with people from diverse cultural backgrounds; and (ii) identify pragmatic considerations when building rapport in cross-cultural investigative interviews. Given the exploratory nature of this question and the absence of prior research on this issue, we used a focus group methodology and a qualitative analytic approach to identify key themes and sub-themes. The focus group approach, which permits interaction between participants and in doing so enables dynamic responses that might not emerge in individual interviews or surveys (Morgan, 1996), allowed us to document experiences not only of challenge or difficulty but also of understanding, realisation, opportunity and resolution through collaborative discussions between colleagues.

Method

Participants

Participants (N = 66) were investigators involved in interviewing in the international investigative context and a small number of professionals in ancillary roles (e.g., interpreters) who work alongside investigators in interviews. Participants were all staff of an investigative division with responsibility for the investigation of international crimes. Interviews in this investigative context are mainly conducted

with individuals designated as 'witnesses' even though they might sometimes be described as victims in more usual parlance. With the permission of the organization concerned (redacted for anonymity), staff members were recruited to the research via email flyers and information sheets in advance. Participation was entirely voluntary. All participants provided written informed consent before the focus group discussions began. The final sample comprised 29 males and 27 females (a further 10 participants did not indicate their gender) with an average age of 42 years (range 31-61 years). Participants indicated an average of 13.71 (SD = 9.96) years of experience. Length of experience ranged from 1-36 years (median = 10 years). This group indicated an average of 5.06 years (SD = 3.18) experience of interviews in their current role. Across the sample, participants comprised a wide range of nationalities and ethnicities, coming from 35 different countries across Europe, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australia/Oceania.

Procedure

In advance of the focus group sessions (described below), we asked participants to complete an online questionnaire which served two purposes: (i) to collect demographic and role-relevant information (e.g., current role, years of experience in investigative context, and length of experience in current unit; reported above), and; (ii) to provide participants with an opportunity to give some thought to the general topics under consideration in advance of the focus group discussions. The questionnaire asked participants four main open-ended questions regarding their experiences of cultural factors and cross-cultural differences in relation to rapport-building and gaining cooperation in the context of investigative interviewing and included a request for any examples of these differences that came to mind. For example, *"Please provide some examples of cultural differences that you have*

encountered yourself when interviewing, or preparing to interview, someone from a different culture to your own?" "In comparison to interviewing someone from your own culture, what are the broad challenges in communication in an interview with someone from a different culture?"

In discussion with the cross-cultural psychologist on the research team, these preliminary responses (treated as pilot data and not analyzed further) were used to inform the broad themes and prompts for discussion in the focus groups, which were the primary data source for this research.

Focus Groups

Thirteen focus group discussions were completed. Each focus group was scheduled for, and lasted, 90 minutes, resulting in approximately 1,170 minutes of recorded discussions for analysis. The focus groups were conducted in English. Each focus group was attended by two researchers: one researcher facilitated the discussions while another researcher audio-recorded the session and made supplementary observations. All focus groups, comprising on average five participants, were conducted on-site at the investigation unit in a private room where the group could be comfortably seated.

At the outset of the focus group, the facilitator delivered a short presentation to ensure that all participants were familiar with the aims, structure, and ground rules for the session (Krueger, 1998; 2002). Specifically, participants were informed that the aim was to explore their perceptions and experiences of "establishing rapport and building cooperation encountered across different aspects of interviewing in international or cross-cultural contexts". Participants were invited to discuss issues they had experienced in the conduct of cross-cultural interviews. The four main topic prompts were challenges relating to communication, challenges relating to social

structure or hierarchy, challenges relating to self or identity and challenges relating to norms, rules, codes or taboos. For each prompt, participants were invited to discuss whether, in their experience this was a feature in cross-cultural interviews and any strategies they have used or considered to address it. The facilitator introduced these topics at natural break points in the discussion. Towards the end of the session, participants were invited to address any topics or issues that had not been covered up to that point.

The ground rules for the focus groups encouraged participants to freely express their views, perspectives, and experiences, requested that participants avoid talking over each other or monopolizing the conversation, and emphasized that everyone should have sufficient opportunity to speak. Ethical review was conducted by the Science Faculty Ethics Committee at [institution redacted for review].

Data Analysis

All anonymised focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcription service. Each transcription was then checked by a researcher against the original recording to make any necessary corrections or adaptations for accuracy or contextual reference. Names and any identifying features were changed.

We used thematic analysis for generating, reviewing, and defining patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2019). The analysis involved six main steps which were closely followed by the researcher ((NHdN) leading the analysis. First, the discussions were listened to alongside reading of the transcripts. Transcripts were then re-read to ensure familiarity with the content. In the second step, comment boxes with codes were generated and these provided the basis for themes. These codes reflected information of interest to the researchers given the aims

of the research. Deliberately, the codes across focus groups were pooled. Our rationale for this was that all groups were facilitated using the same topic cues and while the focus of discussions can vary naturally depending on the contributors, we had no reason to anticipate that meaningful or interpretable systematic differences would emerge between groups. We took the view that pooling the analysis across groups would provide a more meaningful and aggregated overview informed by all groups. Third, during regular meetings between the researcher and lead author, the codes were reviewed, discussed, and grouped into generic 'themes' reflecting re-occurring patterns across transcripts. In the fourth step, these grouping patterns allowed for categories to be identified and refined. These categories were then used to develop the main themes and sub-themes which were then discussed further, defined, named, and verified, with specific data extracts selected to illustrate the themes. As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019) the identification and interpretation of these themes was a recursive process through discussions between the researcher and the lead author in collaboration. Throughout engaging with the data, conducting these analyses and reporting our interpretation, we collectively reflected on the notion that thematic analysis is, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) an active production of knowledge by the researcher(s) and that any patterns identified are informed by the researcher's own perspective. As such, we acknowledge that our analysis has been influenced by our social context as researchers, experiences of working with investigators, and theoretical understanding and expectations pertaining to the domain of investigative interviewing. We also acknowledge our cultural backgrounds as broadly western European (although we note multiple nationalities and different heritage cultures within the team). Through working together in

developing themes, we aimed for richer interpretations and understanding in addition to sense-making (Byrne, 2022).

Results and Discussion

Our findings identified four main themes concerned with establishing rapport in the context of investigative interviews in cross-cultural settings: (i) preparation (pre-interview); (ii) situational awareness (during the interview); (iii) relationship building through communication; and (iv) hierarchy in interviews. Associated with the main themes, 14 sub-themes were identified (see Figure 1) which are presented below, with illustrative quotes, to reflect the perceptions and experiences of this group of investigators. It could be argued that the themes and sub-themes identified in these analyses are features of good rapport-building and associated interviewing practice *in any context*. However, we would remind the reader that the discussions took place with an explicit focus on cross-cultural interviewing. Participants were asked to discuss issues experienced in the conduct of cross-cultural interviews and identify what strategies have been used (or considered) to address any challenges. As such, we do not expect all examples to explicitly reference cultural factors as this context is at the core of discussions. In any case, the observations and experiences described by the participants go beyond existing insights given the distinct focus on addressing cultural differences in investigative interviews. Specifically, the themes consistently reflect areas where a consideration of cultural factors will benefit the building and maintenance of rapport.

As is common with this type of qualitative approach, the themes are not mutually exclusive and should not be interpreted as such. Data extracts have been edited to facilitate ease of reading; emphasis is the participant's own, unless indicated otherwise.

Insert Figure 1 here

Main Theme 1: Preparation (pre-interview)

Preparation by the investigator in advance of conducting the interviews was identified as an important feature of effective interviewing in cross-cultural contexts. However, the discussions here did not dwell on the basics of preparing to interview from an investigative perspective. Instead, investigators focused specifically on key features of preparations, based on their experiences, that were necessary in the context of cross-cultural interviewing. In other words, these are preparations (or aspects of preparation) they would not necessarily anticipate as required in an interview with someone who shared a similar cultural framework. Discussions frequently focussed on specific or concrete examples of how good preparation might be achieved in advance of an interview with a witness in a different cultural context. Within this main theme, we identified four sub-themes which are detailed below. Overall, these sub-themes clearly evidence the need for additional preparation to: (i) identify potentially relevant cultural factors, and; (ii) mitigate any impacts (and avoid mis-steps) pertaining to those cultural factors, both before and during the interview.

Sub-theme 1(a): Expectations and Explanations

The importance of setting expectations *in advance of* the interview was discussed as an important feature or clarification purposes regarding the pre-meeting and what the interview would entail for the interviewee. This was particularly important *when individuals may not be familiar with interviews and investigative processes for a variety of sociocultural reasons:*

"...there's a lot of expectations here. They don't know [about investigations]. We think they know but no, they don't know." [P14]

"...it's important to explain to the witness why we are asking certain questions because if...that aspect is missing, it's also possible for the witness to misinterpret in the head why certain questions are being asked...because cultural dynamics can be very, very complicated." [P13]

Investigators also reflected on the need to clarify, explain, and discuss the potential outcomes of the interview and wider investigation in a realistic and culturally-sensitive way. This took account of the likely previous experiences of interviewees, either with other agencies or organisations (such as relief organisations, NGOs, or charities). The consideration and management of wider expectations around the conduct of the interview was also discussed. For instance, in small communities recognising the importance of local or culturally-relevant social structures, scripts, and practices when planning interviews might be key to successful interaction and establishing rapport with witnesses at that location:

"I still remember being pulled to one side by one chief and severely admonished for not bringing a goat or a chicken. There was that expectation that we would do that. By not doing so it disrespected him in front of the entire village. For us to even consider doing that was, well it was inducement, it would have created all sorts. But try and explain that to somebody in a rural community where it's the expectation. We straight away have a problem building rapport and earning trust." [P17]

Being aware that the interviewee might also have expectations about the interviewers' state of knowledge was also noted as an important consideration and related to reflecting genuine interest in the interviewee and their experiences. Indeed,

successfully displaying this shared cultural knowledge can contribute to establishing a common ground - the body of beliefs that communicators exhibit to, and acknowledge of, one another as part of successful communication (Clark, 1996). Interviewees may expect and assume shared cultural knowledge, which, when missing, may impede the development of rapport:

"Here the witnesses expect from us a knowledge about the situation… They sort of expect the general knowledge about the situation and then some of them are surprised that we are asking stupid questions." [P21]

Sub-theme 1(b): Social Constraints

This sub-theme reflects the consideration of potential social constraints due to cultural factors from the interviewee's perspective and the need to administer the interview in a manner that reflects understanding of different cultural norms and schedules:

"If we follow our time instead of following the time of the witness in as far as certain cultural practices and beliefs are concerned…if you're dealing with a witness who wants to have a break at five o'clock and go to pray…and you insist to say, well I think I've got no time, this is something that has got to be done, you continue interviewing this person, it is really difficult."[P17]

"You can't conduct an interview in a hurried manner…you really need to take the time to exchange politeness formally and again then age also equals a social ranking so that may be a consideration." [P11]

Sub-theme 1(c): Local customs and taboos

The importance of being informed in advance about local customs and taboos, particularly in the early stages of engagement with a witness, was explored as an important feature of successful rapport-building and onward interactions. Thus, it was

deemed an important area the interviewer needed to prepare for in advance of the interview, including being observant of preferences of high context communication by spending additional time engaging with the interviewee:

"Small talk is important…. you could not go and see someone and immediately go straight the goal of the meeting. It would take sometimes hours and hours to prepare the ground before you could." [P13]

In the context of interviews concerning sensitive topics, investigators identified the need to be especially aware of cultural taboos around the discussion of topics such as rape, sexual assault, or sexuality and the need for significant sensitivity to the cultural context which may have implications both for the investigation and the interviewee.

"It's absolutely inappropriate to talk to a stranger, even a doctor. It's completely inappropriate to say those words or talk about those kind of acts to someone you've never met. Never mind someone foreign, never mind someone of a different gender, never mind someone international who's there as an authority figure…it can be kind of a perfect storm of awkwardness." [P13]

Sub-theme 1(d): Language Skills

The need for some understanding the local language was a final aspect of preparation perceived to be beneficial for rapport building with interviewees and other community members. Again, this consideration appears to reflect the need for a genuine interest in interacting with the interviewee and understanding their context and experience:

"Local dialects are completely different from ours. So, at that initial stage… there should be something that's factored in the preparation like simple phrases,

greetings, how do you do, how are you, you know. You say that to them it kind of breaks the ice." [P6]

Main Theme 2: Situation Awareness (during the interview)

Across topics, the theme of maintaining situation awareness during the course of the interview was associated with maintaining rapport, a productive interaction, and associated information outcomes. To some extent the theme of 'situation awareness' may well reflect the investigators' experience of cognitive load during interviews, particularly during cross-cultural contexts where unfamiliar factors may affect rapport and outcomes (e.g., see Hanway et al., 2021). This is interesting as, to date, much of the literature on rapport focuses on establishing it in the first place and, problematically, the activity of building rapport is sometimes (mis)understood by trainers and practitioners as a front-end task: in other words, something to focus on at the start of the interview. Of course, rapport with an interviewee needs to be maintained across the course of an interview and to achieve that, the interviewer needs to have situation awareness or a sense of 'how the interview is going'. Situation awareness is "the perception of the elements in the environment within a volume of time and space, the comprehension of their meaning, and the projection of their status in the near future" (Endsley, 1995, p.36) and is in common use in other areas of applied and organizational psychology (e.g., non-technical skill in surgery; Yule et al., 2018). In a cross-cultural setting, situation awareness will also incorporate monitoring cultural differences and indeed, investigators focused on communication features that may well be missed or mischaracterized if the interviewer fails to detect relevant aspects of cultural difference. We grouped four sub-themes within the overall theme of interviewer situation awareness: (a) Interviewee acquiescence; (b)

Interaction context and environment; (c) Self-awareness and sensitivity; and (d) Monitoring the report. Together, these evidence the importance of investigators staying alert to the cultural context of the interview, having situational awareness across the course of the interview, and recognizing the various roles, hierarchies, barriers, and dependencies potentially present or emerging within that interaction as a function of culture.

Sub-theme 2(a): Interviewee acquiescence

Interviewee acquiescence or compliance in an interviewing context is problematic for several reasons, ranging from the introduction of unreliable or incorrect information into the investigations and associated wasted time pursuing bad leads to the effects of the collapse of such information later in court settings (Gudjonsson, 2021; Otgaar et al., 2023). Interviewees may be unduly compliant for a variety of reasons. Notably, cultural differences in perceived power distance in the context of the interaction may also result in acquiescence, or apparent acquiescence, both within and outside the interview (Cheung & Rensvold, 2000; see, for example, De Bruine et al., 2018, who noted this acquiescence response style in a Sub-Saharan African sample).

"Before I went to Africa for the first time I couldn't imagine that somebody will not tell me no. They always say yes, they always agree, but you have to read between the lines which type of yes is actually no." [P10]

Sub-theme 2(b): Interaction Context and Environment

This sub-theme focused on the contextual understanding needed in the course of the interview interaction; specifically, being responsive to cultural expectations that might impede the progress of the interview or the quality of the information obtained.

"You have to be a bit creative in that cultural context. I was once in this interview with a [redacted] person and she refused to talk to a man….And then I

managed to during the interview, but during the sensitive part, I would step aside, I'm not there and the interview could be continued." [P12]

Interviewers also identified some ways to offset challenges presented in the interaction context by both giving the interviewee some autonomy about the interaction arrangements and exploring issues that might be causing reluctance or lack of forthcomingness during the interviewing, including whether that apparent reluctance is due to cultural scripts around communication when there are differences in interactants' perceived positions of power.

"You just find that the witness is not very cooperative even when neutral questions are being asked. So, yes, I think it's a very, very valid point for the interviewer sometimes to probe and ask why the witnesses are reacting in certain ways even when the questions being asked don't seem to be offensive." [P26]

"I will give a simple example, if the witness or the victim who was violated, let's say with a gun put in the vagina. Just to say the word vagina in [that] culture is a very big word, it is very difficult to pronounce. And even when they ask you to explain exactly how was the act itself, the victim will explain to you that I was violated that way. If you want to go deeper it's blocked. So the strategy is to…put in place words that are not affecting and will be accepted." [P5].

Returning to more practical concerns, investigators reflected on the importance of interviewees being comfortable in the interview environment for facilitating relationship building. This requirement seems self-evident but it is something that can be easily overlooked, particularly in cross-cultural environments, where participants from one culture are not familiar with certain environments (e.g., Western-style hotels), practices, or behaviors that might be entirely familiar to another.

"Imagine someone who has never been in a hotel and a hotel with four or five stars, the atmosphere, the temperature, sometimes it's cold. .people saying I'm feeling cold. Yes, it also causes discomfort for them." [P18]

Sub-theme 2(c): Self-awareness and sensitivity

Awareness of one's own behavior and pre-existing biases, and sensitivity in the moment to needs of an interviewee underpins rapport maintenance (Alison et al., 2021). In the context of cross-cultural interviewing such awareness also signals cultural competence, which can be broadly defined as "the ability to work and communicate effectively and appropriately with people from culturally different backgrounds. While appropriateness implies not violating the valued rules, effectiveness means achieving the valued goals and outcomes in intercultural interactions" (Alizadeh & Chavan, 2016, p.120). Indeed, cultural norms and expectations may exacerbate the impact of lack of awareness, such as in the example below:

"The investigator asked the interviewee if he was hungry...in that setting first of all you don't ask someone that if you're hungry. You just give food. The moment you ask then the interpretation is that you're really not interested in giving the food. And to compound that, I mean we have been sitting together with everyone and there is no chance that this guy could have eaten anything anywhere. So the guy said no he was not hungry. Of course, that is not what he meant." [P11]

Sub-theme 2(d) Monitoring the information reported

Remaining alert to the cultural factors or tendencies affecting the nature or content of a report also requires on-going attention in the course of an interview (for further discussion of memory and culture; see Hope et al., 2022; Wang, 2021). Participants reflected on examples of the challenges when obtaining certain kinds of

information from witnesses who were, perhaps, unused to calibrating such information with respect to Western norms or precision or held different, non-linear representations of time (Brislin & Kim, 2003), or even perceived past events as being relatively closer to the present (Ji, Guo, Zhang, & Messervey, 2009). Distance, dates, times, durations, ages, and date of birth were noted as particularly challenging topics – although the investigators also reported different strategies that had proved successful in the field for accessing such information.

"... time has a different definition. So, someone might tell you tomorrow but tomorrow is any time in the future."[P17]

Participants talked about what they had learned from their previous experiences with interviewing different cultural groups and discussed strategies to understand and overcome challenges in accessing information.

"I learned that five minutes is fairly close by. 15 minutes, forget it. It could be anywhere. It could even be tomorrow. It's just relearning the rules" [P18]

"People associate events with not date but events that happen at that moment. A storm or rain, heavy rains or sunrise or before sunset." [P4]

Differing communication norms can produce a mismatch in the 'flow' of information and expectations about level of detail required (Kim & Wilson, 1994). Importantly, the discrepancies between what information is expected by investigators and what and how interviewees are comfortable disclosing supports past findings on increased concerns of individuals with collectivist values about avoiding hurting or imposing on others in communication versus clarity concerns of individuals with individualist values (Kim, 1994). This mismatch can be particularly problematic in the context of investigations conducted in formalized Western legal contexts which demand the specification of precise facts, such as dates, times, distances, and actions

in communication messages to directly convey meaning (i.e., low context communication). This issue is further exacerbated in the context of rape and sexual assault where either the lack of precise terminology (or knowledge of such terminology) or culturally-endorsed inappropriateness of discussing sexual matters in any detail means that investigators often struggle to obtain the specific details required to pursue prosecutions. Indeed, as noted by Combs (2010) euphemistic terms such as 'having time with women' and 'forced marriage' have been used to refer to rape and sexual abuses in the context of international investigations (see Vredeveldt et al., 2023, for further discussion).

Participants also discussed a social phenomenon sometimes associated with collectivist cultures in that there is a tendency of individual group members to describe events experienced by members of their social group (e.g., family, neighbours, village) as something they have experienced themselves (e.g., Combs, 2010; Schot, 2021) due to the extent to which representations of the self and close others overlap, even at the neural level (Zhu, Zhang, Fan, & Han, 2007). Clearly, this type of reporting is highly problematic in the context of a legal systems relying on independent, individual, first-hand accounts based on direct experience.

"People were talking about the experience of others, but not because they want to mislead or misrepresent or embellish. It was just the nature in which they experienced, collectively, some of the traumatic events that affected a whole community. And it was a lot of we, we, and never I. And because, as with the I in certain contexts, it is rude to speak about yourself as I." [P18]

Overall, the observations described by the interviewers relating to challenges accessing information in sufficient detail, or particular kinds of information, map well onto the small body of empirical research describing cultural differences in the

content of witness memory reports (e.g., Anakwah et al., 2020) as well as the wider body of literature describing cultural differences in the content and nature of autobiographical memories (e.g., Gutchess & Sekuler, 2019; Wang, 2021). As such, these observations confirm the basic applicability and relevance of the laboratory-based work in relevant fields (e.g., memory) to the applied task of interviewing in cross-cultural contexts.

Main Theme 3: Relationship-building through communication

Unsurprisingly, communication was an important theme within discussions around building and maintaining rapport with the interviewee while accessing investigative detail. Participants reflected on cultural preferences or norms in different communication contexts and how these might be transmitted throughout the interview. We grouped four main sub-themes relating to relationship-building through communication: (a) verbal communication; (b) nonverbal communication; (c) respect and trust; and (d) working with interpreters.

Sub-theme 3(a): Verbal Communication

With respect to verbal communication, participants highlighted features of high context communication, which is characterised by a reliance on situational context (e.g., pauses in speech, social position of interactants relative to each other, social identities, etc.), and indirect messages where meaning is rooted in the sociocultural context (Hall, 1976); this communication style is linked with collectivist values and interdependent self-construal (Gudykunst et al., 1996) Participants noted the importance of taking this communication context into account when formulating questions and following up on more specific details in accounts:

"You need to understand the context, because one verb may mean 500 things. If you don't understand the context, forget it." [P19]

"I had a witness once who left two days out of his account, and I went well, now it looks like you are lying. He went, but when you sit a test you just have to get 50% to pass. That is true. He didn't want to mislead me, he actually went oh, it was too long, the story was too long. I just wanted to save your time. So I very rarely come across liars, as opposed to just storytellers." [P29]

Discussions also reflected the experience of different types of language barriers; for instance, when attempting to obtain detailed specific information from an interviewee. This may be due to a constrained vocabulary or use of a language which simply does not have equivalent terms or necessitates use of an alternative language code to discuss sexual matters (Thetela, 2002). Alternatively, for sensitive subjects, the use of metaphor or euphemism may be preferred, reflecting cultural differences in the extent to which clarity is prioritised and perceived as being integral to effective communication, in contrast to maintaining relational harmony and avoiding imposing on others (Kim, 1994; Kim & Wilson, 1994):

"Someone is not going to say to you, oh well I was raped because they put their penis in my vagina without my consent. They'd say somebody disrespected me. They treated me very badly. They lay down… Like if you push for specifics, they lay down with me, they slept with me; they made me their wife." [P13]

Participants discussed approaches to address some of these challenges, including the use of sketching or other reference materials (see Dando et al., 2009; Fisher & Geiselman, 1992), particularly when either individual factors such as illiteracy or limited terminology in a language made accessing detail difficult:

"So you need to be creative, like using drawings. Sometimes asking the person if she would prefer to show it you see this situation very often with illiterate people because that's something that they're not used to talking about. And they don't have a very developed vocabulary as well. And there are certain things in the language that don't have an equivalent to our language." [P14]

Sub-theme 3(b): Nonverbal Communication

Investigators felt that the lack of detailed cultural knowledge made it difficult to pick up on important nonverbal cues in interviews; and noted that familiarity with the culture increased the likelihood of understanding and engaging with the witnesses.

"The stuff we must miss, you know, really, the cues that we're not picking up on because of our expectations, because it is really obscure and specific to certain cultures, cities." [P28]

"The assessment of non-verbal communication: the less you are familiar with the culture, the less likely it is that you get it right." [P7]

Participants also noted cultural differences in the form and relevance of non-verbal communication, and the extent to which meaning is embedded in the sociocultural context, providing interesting examples concerning gestures and nonverbal utterances:

"We realise that in some cultures quite a big amount of information is given by gestures. So I had a witness who was saying he went there and did that and then he went somewhere else and did something else. And the content was given by this body language which is really difficult to capture, really difficult to note." [P5]

"There are times we may misread the person who is in front of you, you may be talking to somebody and the person is going yes, yes, actually nodding, and you thing that they are saying something positive or they are with you. They're really not with

you but they are just trying to be polite. Or it's just that person's way of doing things [in that culture]. It's nodding, nodding, nodding but they are not with you - different kinds of gestures, different countries and different cultures," [P19]

Finally, participants reflected on the need to monitor one's own non-verbal communication, particularly where such behavior might be viewed as inappropriate or overwhelming as a function of cultural differences (e.g., too forthright, overbearing, immodest).

"I also noticed that again it's something that you need to be aware of yourself, your non-verbal communication and how that's being interpreted. Because this is something I've encountered where again I'm going by my cues and I'm making a huge amount of eye contact and I'm leaning forward and I'm engaged, and that's a way of trying to build a rapport in the context that I'm used to, but to someone else that's completely overwhelming." [P12]

Sub-theme 3(c): Respect and trust

Interviewers identified the importance of having and showing respect for the interviewee. Of course, respect of human dignity is a core feature of ethical interviewing practice (e.g. Méndez Principles; Association for the Prevention of Torture, 2021). Here interviewers reflected specifically on respect for cultural norms or preferences that may be different to their own:

"Important aspect of building respect in as far as cultural issues are concerned is the ability to use the frame of reference of the witness, and that frame of reference might have certain cultural connotations, put aside your own frame of reference about what you're trying to talk about and use the frame of reference of the witness." [P5]

Participants also observed that the way they go about their task of questioning may be perceived as lacking in respect from the point of view of the interviewee, particularly if the interviewee feels they are not being believed.

"It's almost like you're challenging or you're doubting or disbelieving them. Which runs the risk of breaking down the relationship." [P14]

Interviewers noted the importance of showing respect through the approach taken in the interview, for example, acknowledging that the interviewee is the one who has the information. This 'transfer of control' is a core feature of good interviewing practice and a central tenet of the Cognitive Interview (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992). Importantly, in the context of cross-cultural interviewing, this approach may also work to attenuate the power distance differential between the interviewer and interviewee.

Discussion also focused on engaging or developing trust with the person being interviewed. Research is increasingly focusing on the role of trust in forensic interviewing context as a distinct concept to rapport (see Hillner, 2022). Trust has been defined as 'a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another' (Rousseau et al., 1998, p.395). This definition is clearly applicable to investigative interviewing contexts, particularly where there is likely to be some onward implications or consequences for the interviewees. In the current study, interviewers saw both trust and rapport as critical to successful interviews.

"Here the challenge is to build the rapport and the trust and to be able to take those topics forward you need time. You need to be given the time to be able to develop the trust. They trust you, they trust you if you tell them that I'm here to help you, they trust you." [P10]

The investigators also identified investigative contexts in which taking time to develop trust was particularly important.

"Like sexual violence against men, victims really I think feel very strong stigma and it's really embarrassing to say I was sexually assaulted by men. So quite difficult. You really need to build trust." [P8]

Sub-theme 3(d): Working with interpreters

Despite the growing need for interpreters in investigative interviews (Shaffer & Evans, 2018), research on their role remains limited (see Evans et al., 2019). However, as Walsh et al. (2020) note, rapport studies largely focus on interviewer–interviewee dynamics, overlooking triadic interactions involving interpreters, with some exceptions (e.g., Filipović, 2019; Goodman-Delahunty & Howes, 2019). Indeed, there are many interviewing contexts where several other people (e.g., lawyers, appropriate adults) may be involved in the interaction and reliant on interpreters.

Participants in this study frequently conducted interpreter-assisted interviews and highlighted the benefits of pre-interview preparation. This included receiving insights from interpreters concerning relevant cultural or local knowledge and briefing them on the interview's informational objectives.

"Quite often, not always, an interpreter particularly if they're from the region they may be able to advise you beforehand or certainly the language you need about. So if these sort of topics come up how are they, what are the sorts of words that you see, going in with some sort of knowledge in advance…When they understand, they know that everything that's said is useful for the record." [P11]

Overall, participants were positive about working with interpreters, particularly interpreters they knew and had worked with previously or who had good working

knowledge of the local culture, although frustrations remained due to the need to interview through a third party.

"As soon as you go through an interpreter, there's a person in between you and your witness….ideally if they're a really good interpreter they almost blend into the wall. So, you are speaking even though you're not speaking the same language but all your interaction is between you and the witness." [P11]

Participants noted that sometimes the interpreter's ability or interpretative approach taken can be problematic in interviews. A range of different challenges were discussed ranging from the interpreter diverging from what the interviewee has said or over-contextualising the information in some way to the interpreter having untranslated interactions with the interviewee.

"in many cases because the interpreter and witness are from the same background…(in) the interview, the witness will address issues directly to the interpreter. You don't want that, you don't want actually to keep the narrative to the interpreter, he is your interpreter, he is your mouth, he is translating, and he has a specific job to do." [P23]

Participants also recounted situations in which rapport had broken down between the interviewee and the interpreter, including for cultural reasons.

"So, whilst you don't know it, there is actually a communication breakdown between the interpreter and the interviewee, whereas you think absolutely everything is going to be okay, and I have had an interpreter say I just can't ask these questions. It's not appropriate for me to ask an elderly person these types of questions." [P8]

As a whole, these sub-themes reveal useful considerations and potential approaches for rapport building, particularly in challenging contexts where cultural differences may lead to a mismatch in cultural scripts, norms, expectations, and

interactions between interviewer and interviewee. The results also fit well with findings in other research fields concerned with interaction, communication and relational linguistics in other applied contexts. For example, Spencer-Oatey and colleagues (e.g., Spencer-Oatey, 2005; Spencer-Oatey & Xing, 2003) identified behavioral expectations, face sensitivity, politeness, and interpersonal goals as important features of rapport management across cultures in business interaction contexts.

Main Theme 4: Hierarchy in interviews

The recognition of hierarchy was acknowledged as an important theme relevant for successful rapport building in cross-cultural settings. In wider cultural psychology literature, hierarchy relates to power distance, a cultural dimension that concerns how perceived inequality in society might affect social interactions (Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede et al., 2010). As outlined earlier, power distance has implications for the extent to which lower status individuals choose to express their views to superiors or authority figures; thus, free and spontaneous communication may be limited as a function of the power distance inherent in hierarchical roles. We grouped three sub-themes: (a) hierarchy and gender; (b) hierarchy and authority; and (c) team composition.

Sub-theme 4(a): Hierarchy and gender

The cultural meaning attached to gender can play a significant role in interactions in the investigative interview context. Cultural hierarchies with respect to gender can affect both the interviewee and the interviewer. For instance, access to the witness might be restricted or through a gatekeeper:

"Difficult being able to speak to females without for example going through the village chief or a husband and them wanting to be present and know exactly what you're going to talk about." [P4]

On the other side of the interaction, female investigators reported encountering interviewees who refused to engage with them on account of their gender.

"if you face a culture where gender is also important…they completely ignore me. I'm just a secretary probably there or, you know, who knows what they think about me, but I'm definitely not an investigator or an interviewer." [P3]

"the interviewer was a woman, but she also had to take a male investigator with her because otherwise she was not getting all the information from the [witness]. So for me it has to do with gender and in some cultures what they associate to the gender, which is very visible, even if they don't know what your rank is" [P3]

Male colleagues also commented on this strong gender hierarchy in certain cultures and sub-cultures (e.g., military):

"There would be myself and a female investigator and no matter who asks the question the answer comes to me. And that was, and that happens more than once. We didn't really address that at the time because we thought well he's still answering and we need the answer. We're not there to necessarily change his opinion of things. We just want the answer. It worked. But it was very noticeable." [P6]

Sub-theme 4(b): Hierarchy and authority

The second sub-theme featured hierarchy associated with authority of the investigating organization, in this case reflecting a culturally different origin, and the potential impact of that on the dynamics of the interview.

"If you don't do something right in the eyes of the interviewee your authority is going down. Like you should be very careful, they treat you like, they look at you as if

you are able to give some help, some support to them and they have hopes and you are a bit like representative... You are a person who is in an organization or something like that, and if you make small mistakes like muddling things, like small things like all humans do, your authority is diminished." [P10]

Investigators also identified the need to consider the perceptions of the interviewer and inferences that might be made about the organizations, from a cultural perspective, particularly in patriarchal or traditional societies, where age and gender may warrant different respect status:

"It's a female in her 30s for instance to talk to a judge who is 50 or 60 years old, they feel it's an insult and they think immediately the [organization] doesn't respect me, that's why they send me their inexperienced staff. [P3]

In particular, interviewers noted that differences in perceived authority as a function of culture can have negative implications for the interview, either due to the discomfort experienced by the interviewee in the situation or their perception of their role or purpose in the interview.

"If you're talking to someone about a situation where they were sort of powerless or they were emasculated, or they're worried that they're going to be crushed, then if the dynamic of the interviewers or the cultural changes is something that sort of reinforces that, that is the worst-case scenario." [P7]

Sub-theme 4(c): Team Composition

This sub-theme reflected the need to consider the team composition and specifically focused on potential perceptions the interviewee might have of hierarchy within the interview team at relatively surface levels (age, gender, nationality):

"But there are definitely power dynamics around race and countries that people come from. You know if I was Congolese I wouldn't want to have a Belgian rocking up to…interview me". [P29]

The experiences reported by interviewers within each of these sub-themes lend support to theoretical frameworks that describe cultural differences (e.g., power distance, communication context, perceptions of time). Indeed, many of the examples provided elucidate how these cultural dimensions (and others) present in the investigative interviewing context as a particular challenge for the progress of the interview. For example, hierarchy or power distance norms that mean an interviewee feels uncomfortable or reticent to talk openly to an interviewer may ultimately result in the disclosure of little or no information. Furthermore, a cultural tendency towards acquiescence to authority figures as a function of high power distance means interviewers must be especially careful to avoid leading or potentially suggestive questioning.

General discussion

The goal of the current research was to explore the perceptions and experiences of investigators with respect to building rapport in interviews with people from diverse cultural backgrounds who, typically, had been witness to, or victims of, interpersonal violence, including rape, physical assault and other acts of war and genocide. Documenting experiences of challenge or difficulty, but also of understanding, realisation, opportunity, and resolution, is informative for both research and practice going forward. The current data provides a unique and richly descriptive insight reflecting experiences and sense-making into the complexities of conducting such investigative interviews with people from a different culture to one's own. Notably, and consistent with previous research, the data clearly highlight the importance and,

indeed, necessity of a humane, person-centred, and contextually-sensitive approach to build rapport and facilitate positive investigative outcomes from the perspective of this experienced group of interviewers.

It is important to note that the themes described here can be viewed holistically to show how considerations for building rapport take place across several domains, with participants taking into account how cultural factors may influence each domain. This can be exemplified in how our participants discussed managing face-threatening situations across the four themes. 'Face' is an important component for both individualist and collectivist cultures, and is related to both power distance and honor concepts. However, the effective strategies to avoid loss of face differ across individualist and collectivist cultures (Merkin, 2015). During face-threatening situations, participants from individualist cultures preferred to be directly consulted about the situation at-hand, whilst participants from more collectivist cultures preferred indirect communication to maintain harmony and thus avoid loss of face. In this way, investigative interviewers need balance taking into account the needs of the interviewee during situations which are especially face-threatening (e.g., rape, assault, etc.), which may be rooted in different cultural scripts, and the requirements of obtaining the necessary information for a statement. This requires successful preparation in and acknowledgement of cultural scripts prior to the interaction (Theme 1), awareness of interviewees' needs, particularly navigating face-threatening discussions (Theme 2), adjusting communication within the constraints to build an effective relationship (Theme 3), whilst managing not only existing hierarchies, but also acknowledgement that the nature of the interviews can be perceived as threatening to the established cultural hierarchies (Theme 4). These findings align

with recent comparative analysis of interviews with victims documenting cultural and linguistic differences in approaches to rapport building (Gomez-Bedoya, 2024).

Strengths and Limitations of Study

A particular strength of the present study is that active investigators working in an international and culturally-diverse organisation took part and provided their lived experiences of building and maintaining rapport in culturally different contexts.

Of course, an obvious limitation of the current research is that in the consideration of rapport - a feature of two-sided interactions - in these data, we only represent the perspective of one party to that interaction, that of the interviewer. It is worth reasserting that the investigator group was culturally diverse, drawn from 35 countries and reflecting a range of wide-range of nationalities and ethnicities. However, it would be invaluable to have access to the perceptions and experiences of the interviewees. While obtaining research data from interviewees may be possible in some interview contexts (e.g., medical interactions; see, for example, Schinkel et al., 2019), it is likely to be difficult to access in some investigative contexts for a variety of reasons ranging from legal and ethical issues through to associated costs. In any case, consideration of the interviewee perspective was outside the scope of the current project although we hope researchers will be able to pursue this route in future.

A related issue is that in this dataset we can only examine the perspectives of the interviewers aggregated across a number of interviews conducted over time. In other words, we were not able to make any independent assessment (using, for example, third-party ratings or established coding methodology, such as ORBIT; Alison et al., 2020) of the extent to which interviewers were indeed able to build rapport effectively with a particular interviewee. Similarly, we cannot assess whether building rapport in cross-cultural interview context was associated with more

productive interviews – although existing evidence, using analysis of real-world interviews, suggest this is likely to be the case (e.g., Alison et al., 2014; Baker-Eck & Bull, 2022; Baker-Eck et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020).

Finally, it may also be considered a limitation that all participants were drawn from a singly organisation and, as such, cannot reflect wider practice or experiences. Nonetheless the experiences of this sample in the investigation of significant and complex violent crimes means their experience is relevant for wider crime investigation, including terrorism, organised crime, human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Implications for Practice

Going forward, these results highlight the value of both cultural competence and cultural humility (see Greene-Moton & Minkler, 2020) in investigative interviewing. Cultural competence reflects an ongoing commitment to learning and improving cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and cultural skills/behavior (e.g., Alizadah & Chavan, 2016) while cultural humility has been defined as, "a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and critique, to redressing power imbalances . . . and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations" (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p. 123). Recently, Greene-Moton and Minkler (2020) proposed an integrative partnership between both for more effective self-reflection and reflective practice across a range of barriers and inequities.

Given the current analyses, and observations in other domains (e.g., healthcare), it seems that these important elements of competence and humility are also perceived by investigators in the current study as key to building rapport and the onward conduct of effective interviews in cross-cultural contexts. As such, these

results are also consistent with the conclusions reached by Vredeveldt et al., (2023) and Powell and Brubacher (2020) that there is no single recipe or protocol for effective cross-cultural investigative interviews. Instead, most progress is likely through the development of cultural competence and the use of adaptive rapport-based techniques which facilitate responding to the needs of the individual interviewee in context.

Conclusion

Given the nascent stage of research examining investigative interviewing in cross-cultural contexts, we believe that there is significant value in drawing on the perspectives of experienced practitioners to both inform and illustrate the nature of the issues encountered and identify routes for future research and practices taking these issues into consideration. Ultimately, although rapport is a feature of two-way interactions, in the case of investigative interviewing at least, the onus is on the interviewer to seek to build and maintain rapport across the interaction. Of course, sometimes the interviewee, whether a victim, a witness, or even a suspect will seek to build rapport with the interviewer, but in other instances this may not be the case. For this reason, it's worth reiterating that investigative interviews are not spontaneously occurring naturalistic interactions, they are formal interactions where the interviewer has an investigative objective. The results reported here provide invaluable and unique insights into experiences of success and failure at building rapport in cross-cultural interviews by a diverse sample of investigators.

References

Abbe, A., & Brandon, S. E. (2013). The role of rapport in investigative interviewing: A review. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling, 10,* 237–249. https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.1386

Alison, L. J., Alison, E. K., Noone, G., Elntib, S., & Christiansen, P. (2013). Why tough tactics fail and rapport get results: Observing rapport-based interpersonal techniques (ORBIT) to generate useful information from terrorists. *Psychology, Public Police, and Law, 19*, 411–431. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034564

Alison, L. J., Alison, E. K., Noone, G., Elntib, S., Waring, S., & Christiansen, P. (2014). The efficacy of rapport-based techniques for minimizing counterinterrogation tactics amongst a field sample of terrorists. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 20*, 421430. https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000021

Alison, L. J., Alison, E., Shortland, N. D., & Surmon-Böhr, F. (2021). ORBIT: The science of rapport-based interviewing for law enforcement, security and military. New York: Oxford University Press.

Alizadeh, S., & Chavan, M. (2016). Cultural competence dimensions and outcomes: a systematic review of the literature. *Health & social care in the community*, *24*(6), e117–e130. https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12293

Anakwah, N., Horselenberg, R., Hope, L., Amankwah-Poku, M., & Van Koppen, P. J. (2020). Cross-cultural differences in eyewitness memory reports. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 30*, 505–515. Doi: 10.1002/acp.3637

Anakwah, N. (2021). Considering the native land of witnesses: Cultural influences on memory reports. *Doctoral Thesis. University of Portsmouth & Maastricht University.*

Anakwah, N. (2022). Cross-cultural investigative interviews. In S. Landstrom,

Granhag, P. A. & van Koppen, P. J. (Eds). *The Future of Forensic Psychology: Core Topics and Emerging Trends*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003308546-7

Aslani, S., Ramirez-Marin, J., Brett, J., Yao, J-J., Semnani-Azad, Z., Zhang, Z-X., Tinsley, C., Weingart, L., & Adair, W. (2016). Dignity, face, and honor cultures: a study of negotiation strategy and outcomes in three cultures. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 37*,1178–1201.

Antaki, C., & Stokoe, E. (2017). When police treat straightforward answers as uncooperative. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *117*, 1-15. Doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2017.05.012

Association for the Prevention of Torture. (2021). *Principles on Effective Interviewing for Investigations and Information Gathering.* https://interviewingprinciples.com/

Baker-Eck, B., & Bull, R. (2022). Effects of empathy and question types on suspects' provision of information in investigative interviews. *International Journal of Police Science and Management, 24,* 406-416.

Baker-Eck, B., Bull, R., & Walsh, D. (2021). Investigative empathy: Five types of cognitive empathy in a field study of investigative interviews with suspects of sexual offences. *Investigative Interviewing: Research and Practice, 11,* 28-39.

Bernieri, F. J., Gillis, J. S., Davis, J. M., & Grahe, J. E. (1996). Dyad rapport and the accuracy of its judgment across situations: A lens model analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71,* 110–129. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.71.1.110

Bernieri, F. J. (2005). The expression of rapport. In: Manusov V (ed). *The Sourcebook of Nonverbal Measures: Going Beyond Words.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, Mahwah,

Beune, K., Giebels, E., Taylor, P. J. (2010). Interaction patterns in police interviews: the role of cultural dependency. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 37*, 904–925. Doi:10.1177/0093854810369623

Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*, 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*, 589-597. DOI: 10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806

Brimbal, L., Meissner, C. A., Kleinman, S. M., Phillips, E. L., Atkinson, D. J., Dianiska, R. E., Rothweiler, J. N., Oleszkiewicz, S., & Jones, M. S. (2021). Evaluating the benefits of a rapport-based approach to investigative interviews: A training study with law enforcement investigators. *Law and Human Behavior, 45*, 55–67. https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000437

Brislin, R. W., & Kim, E. S. (2003). Cultural diversity in people's understanding and uses of time. *Applied Psychology, 52(3),* 363-382. https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00140

Cialdini, R.B., 1993. Influence: science and practice. New York: Harper Collins.

Chae, Y., Kulkofsky, S., & Wang, Q. (2006). What happened in our pizza game? Memory for a staged event in Korean and European American preschoolers. In F. Columbus (Ed.), *Frontiers in Cognitive Psychology Research*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Chua, H. F., Boland, J. E., & Nisbett, R. E. (2005). Cultural variation in eye movements during scene perception. *Proceedings of the National Academy of*

Sciences of the United States of America, 102, 12629–12633. Doi:10.1177/01461672042aa72166

Chua, H. F., Leu, J., & Nisbett, R. E. (2005). Culture and diverging views of social events. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 31*, 925–934. Doi:10.1177/0146167204272166.

Clark, H. H. (1996). Using language. Cambridge university press.

Combs, N. A. (2010). *Fact-finding without facts: The uncertain evidentiary foundations of international criminal convictions.* Cambridge University Press.

Cheung, G. W., & Rensvold, R. B. (2000). Assessing extreme and acquiescence response sets in cross cultural research using structural equations modeling. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 31,* 187–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022100031002003

Damari, R. R., Rubin, G. & Logan-Terry, A. (2015). Navigating face-threatening terrain: Questioning strategies in cross-cultural military training scenarios. *Procedia Manufacturing, 3*, 4090-4097. Doi: 10.1016/j.promfg.2015.07.981

De Bruïne, G., Vredeveldt, A., & Van Koppen, P. J. (2018). Cross-cultural differences in object recognition: Comparing asylum seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa and a matched Western European control group. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 32,* 463–473. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3419

Dando, C., Wilcock, R. and Milne, R. (2009), The cognitive interview: the efficacy of a modified mental reinstatement of context procedure for frontline police investigators. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 23*, 138-147. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.1451

Duke, M. C., Wood, J. M., Bollin, B., Scullin, M., & LaBianca, J. (2018).

Development of the Rapport Scales for Investigative Interviews and Interrogations (RS3i), Interviewee Version. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 24,* 64-79.

Endsley, M. (1995). Toward a theory of situation awareness in dynamic systems. *Human Factors, 37*, 32-64.

Evans, J. R., Shaffer, S. A., & Walsh, D. (2019). Interpreters in investigative interviewing contexts. In R. Bull & I. Blandón-Gitlin (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Legal and Investigative Psychology* (pp. 133-148). Routledge.

Filipović, L. (2019). Evidence-gathering in police interviews: Communication problems and possible solutions. *Pragmatics and Society, 10*, 9 – 31 https://doi.org/10.1075/ps.00013.fil

Fisher, R., & Geiselman, R. (1992). *Memory-enhancing techniques for investigative Interviewing: The cognitive interview*. Springfield: Charles Thomas.

Gabbert, F., Hope, L., Luther, K., Wright, G., Ng, M., & Oxburgh, G. (2021). Exploring the use of rapport in professional information-gathering contexts by systematically mapping the evidence base. *Applied Cognitive Psychology.* https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3762

Gelfand, M.J., Nishii, L.H., Holcombe, K.M., Dyer, N., Ohbuchi, K.I., & Fukuno, M. (2001). Cultural influences on cognitive representations of conflict: Interpretations of conflict episodes in the United States and Japan. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 1059-1074. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.6.1059

Ghosh, A. (2011). Power distance in organizational contexts—A review of collectivist cultures. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 47*, 89–101.

Gill, A. K. (2022). Honour-based femicide. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Femicide/Feminicide* Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Gill, A. K., & Brah, A. (2014). Interrogating cultural narratives about 'honour' based violence. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *21*(1), 72-86. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506813510424

Goffman, E. (1967), Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior, Doubleday Anchor, New York, NY.

Goodman-Delahunty, J., & Howes, L. M. (2016). Social persuasion to develop rapport in high-stakes interviews: Qualitative analyses of Asian-Pacific practices. *Policing and Society, 26,* 270–290.

Goodman-Delahunty, J., & Howes, L. M. (2019). High-stakes interviews and rapport development: Practitioners' perceptions of interpreter impact. *Policing and Society, 29,* 100-117. https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2017.1293051

Goodman-Delahunty, J., & Martschuk, N. (2018). Securing reliable information in investigative interviews: coercive and noncoercive strategies preceding turning points. *Police Practice and Research, 21*, 152–171. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2018.1531752

Grahe, J. E. & Bernieri, F. J. (1999). The importance of nonverbal cues in judging rapport. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior, 23,* 253–269. DOI: 10.1023/A:1021698725361.27.

Greene-Moton, E., & Minkler, M. (2020). Cultural Competence or Cultural Humility? Moving Beyond the Debate. *Health Promotion Practice, 21*, 142-145. doi:10.1177/1524839919884912

Gudjonsson, G. H. (2021). The science-based pathways to understanding false confessions and wrongful convictions. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12,* 633936.doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.633936

Gudykunst, W. B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Toomey, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (1996). The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research, 22*, 510-543. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1996.tb00377.x

Gul, P., Cross, S. E., & Uskul, A. K. (2021). Implications of culture of honor theory and research for practitioners and prevention researchers. *American Psychologist, 76*, 502–515. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000653

Gutchess, A., & Sekuler, R. (2019). Perceptual and mnemonic differences across cultures. *Psychology of Learning and Motivation - Advances in Research and Theory*, *71*, 131–174. https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.plm.2019.06.001

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.

Hillner, L. (2022). Rapport and trust: What's the difference? *CREST Security Review,* 14.

Hanway, P., Akehurst, L., Vernham, Z. and Hope, L. (2021), The effects of cognitive load during an investigative interviewing task on mock interviewers' recall of information. *Legal and Criminological Psychology, 26,* 25-41.

Hofstede, G. (1983). National cultures revisited. *Behavior Science Research, 18(4),* 285-305. https://doi.org/10.1177/106939718301800403

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Culture and organization: Software for the mind* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Hope, L., Anakwah, N., Antfolk, J., Brubacher, S. P., Flowe, H., Gabbert, F., Giebels,

E., Kanja, W., Korkman, J., Kyo, A., Naka, M., Otgaar, H., Powell, M. B., Selim, H., Skrifvars, J., Sorkpah, I. K., Sowatey, E. A., Steele, L. C., Wells, S., … Anonymous (2022). Urgent issues and prospects at the intersection of culture, memory, and witness interviews: Exploring the challenges for research and practice. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 27, 1– 31. Doi: 10.1111/lcrp.12202

Hope, L., Kontogianni, F., Rechdan, J., Tavitian, L., Anwar Soubra, N., Abu Marak Brome, D., Gibson, V., Anakwah, N. (2023). Exploring cultural differences in eyewitness accounts using a self-administered reporting technique. *Psychology, Crime and Law.*

Henrich, J., Heine, S. J., & Norenzayan, A. (2010). The weirdest people in the world? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 33*, 61–83. https://doi.org/ 10.1017/S0140525X0999152X

Hofstede, G. (1983). Dimensions of National Cultures in Fifty Countries and Three Regions. In J. B. Deregowski, S. Dziurawiec, & R. C. Annis (Eds.), *Expiscations in Cross-Cultural Psychology* (pp. 335-355). Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Hove, M. J., & Risen, J. L. (2009). It's all in the timing: Interpersonal synchrony increases affiliation. *Social Cognition, 27*, 949–961. DOI: 10.1521/soco.2009.27.6.949.

Humphries, C., & Jobson, L. (2012). Short report: Influence of culture and trauma history on autobiographical memory specificity. *Memory, 20*, 915–922. https://doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2012.710432

Ji, L., Guo, T., Zhang, Z., & Messervey, D. (2009). Looking into the past: Cultural differences in perception and representation of past information. *Journal of*

Personality and Social Psychology, 96, 761-769. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014498

Kalra, G., & Bhugra, D. (2013). Sexual violence against women: Understanding cross-cultural intersections. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 55*, 244-249.

Kandiyoti, D. (1988). Bargaining with patriarchy. *Gender & Society*, *2*(3), 274-290. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124388002003004

Katz, C., Tener, D., Marmor, A., Lusky-Weisrose, E., & Mordi, H. (2020). "Yes, my Uncle, I'll do whatever you say": Experiences of Israeli Muslim Arab children during forensic interviews following child sexual abuse. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520943732

Khatri, N. (2009). Consequences of power distance orientation in organizations. *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective, 13*, 1-9. http://doi.org/d9cv2j

Kim, M. S. (1994). Cross-cultural comparisons of the perceived importance of conversational constraints. *Human Communication Research, 21,* 128-151.

Kim, S., Alison, L., & Christiansen, P. (2020). Observing rapport-based interpersonal techniques to gather information from victims. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 26*(2), 166–175. https://doi.org/10.1037/law0000222

Kim, M. S., & Wilson, S. R (1994). A cross-cultural comparison of implicit theories of requesting. *Communication Monographs, 61,* 210-235

Krueger, R. A. (1998). *Moderating Focus Groups*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Krueger R. A. (2002). *Designing and conducting focus group interviews*. Retrieved from http://www.eiu.edu/ihec/Krueger-FocusGroupInterviews.pdf

Lalwani, A. K., Shavitt, S.,& Johnson, T. (2006). What is the relation between cultural orientation and socially desirable responding? *Journal of Personality*

and Social Psychology, 90, 165–178. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.1.165

Leal, S., Vrij, A., Vernham, Z., Dalton, G., Jupe, L., Harvey, A., & Nahari, G. (2018). Cross-cultural verbal deception. *Legal and Criminological Psychology, 23*, 192–213. https://doi.org/10.1111/lcrp.12131

Leahy-Harland, S., & Bull, R. (2017). Police strategies and suspect responses in real-life serious crime interviews. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 32,* 138-151.

Mak, B. C. N., & Chui, H. L. (2013). A cultural approach to small talk: A double-edged sword of sociocultural reality during socialization into the workplace. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses, 8(2)*, 118-133. https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2012.753078

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98,* 224–253. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2010). Culture and selves: A cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5,* 420–430. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610375557

Matsumoto, D., Wilson, M., Helmy, M., García, J. M. G., & Vasquez, A. N. A. (2024). Cultural Similarities and Differences in Judgments of Rapport. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 55,* 127-144. DOI 10.1177/00220221231217710

Miller, J. C., Redlich, A. D., & Kelly, C. E. (2018). Accusatorial and information-gathering interview and interrogation methods: a multi-country comparison. Psychology, Crime & Law, 24, 935–956. https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2018.1467909

Ministry of Justice (2022). *Achieving best evidence in criminal proceedings: Guidance on interviewing victims and witnesses, and guidance on using special measures.* London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.

Neequaye, D. A., & Mac Giolla, E. (*2022*). The use of the term rapport in the investigative interviewing literature: A critical examination of definitions. 6 *Meta-Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.15626/MP.2021.2808

Nisbett, R. E. (2018). *Culture of honor: The psychology of violence in the South*. Routledge.

Otgaar, H., Mangiulli, I., Battista, F. & Howe, M. L. (2023). External and internal influences yield similar memory effects: the role of deception and suggestion. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 1081528. Doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1081528

Oyserman, D. (2006). High power, low power, and equality: Culture beyond individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 16*, 352–356. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1604_6

Powell, M.B., & Brubacher, S.P. (2020). The origin, experimental basis, and application of the standard interview method: An information-gathering framework. *Australian Psychologist, 55,* 645–659. https://doi.org/10.1111/ap.12468

Ross, M., & Wang, Q. (2010). Why we remember and what we remember: Culture and autobiographical memory. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *5*, 401–409. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610375555

Rousseau, D. M., Sitkin, S. I. M. B., & Burt, R. S. (1998). Not so Different after All: A Cross-Discipline View of Trust. *The Academy of Management Review*, *23*,

652. https://doi.org/10.2307/259051

Schinkel, S., Schouten, B. C., Kerpiclik, F., Van Den Putte, B., Van Weert, J. C. M. (2019). Perceptions of barriers to patient participation: are they due to language, culture, or discrimination? *Health Commununication, 34*, 1469-1481. doi: 10.1080/10410236.2018.1500431.

Schot, S. L. (2021). *Testimonial evidence of traumatised witnesses in trials of international crimes: Striking a balance in the interest of fair proceedings and accurate fact-finding*. University of Groningen.

Schug, J., Yuki, M., & Maddux, W. (2010). Relational mobility explains between- and within-culture differences in self-disclosure to close friends. *Psychological Science, 21,* 1471–1478. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610382786

Shaffer, S. A., & Evans, J. R. (2018). Interpreters in law enforcement contexts: Practices and experiences according to investigators. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 32, 150–162. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.3388

Sivasubramaniam, D., & Goodman-Delahunty, J. (2019). International consensus on effective and ineffective interviewing strategies: a survey of experienced practitioners. *Police Practice and Research, 22*, 921–937. https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2019.1628756

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2005). (Im)Politeness, face and perceptions of rapport: unpackaging their bases and interrelationships. *Journal of Politeness Research, 1*, 95-119. https://doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2005.1.1.95

Spencer-Oatey, H. & Xing, J. (2003). Managing rapport in intercultural business interactions: A comparison of two Chinese-British welcome meetings. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 24*, 33-46, DOI: 10.1080/07256860305788

Taylor, P. J., Larner, S., Conchie, S. M., & Menacere, T. (2017). Culture moderates

changes in linguistic self-presentation and detail provision when deceiving others. *Royal Society Open Science, 4,* 170128. doi:10.1098/rsos.170128

Tervalon M., Murray-García J. (1998). Cultural humility versus cultural competence: A critical distinction in defining physician training outcomes in multicultural education. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 9, 117-125.

Thetela, P. H. (2002). Sex discourses and gender constructions in Southern Sotho: A case study of police interviews of rape/sexual assault victims. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, 20,* 177–189. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073610209486309

Tickle-Degnen, L., & Rosenthal, R. (1990). The nature of rapport and its nonverbal correlates. *Psychological Inquiry, 1*, 285–293.DOI: 10.1207/s15327965pli0104_1

Ting-Toomey, S., & Oetzel, J.G. (2001). *Managing intercultural conflict effectively*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Vredeveldt, A., Given-Wilson, Z., & Memon, A. (2023). Culture, trauma, and memory in investigative interviews, *Psychology, Crime & Law,* 10.1080/1068316X.2023.2209262

Vrij, A. (2008). *Detecting lies and deceit: Pitfalls and opportunities* (2nd ed.). Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Walsh, D., & Bull, R. (2012). Examining rapport in investigative interviews with suspects: Does its building and maintenance work? *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, 27*, 73-84

Walsh, D., Oxburgh, G.E. & Amurun, T. Interpreter-Assisted Interviews: Examining Investigators' and Interpreters' Views on Their Practice. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology,* 35, 318–327 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11896-020-

09366-2

Wang, Q. (2001). Culture effects on adults' earliest childhood recollection and self-description: Implications for the relation between memory and self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*, 220–233. https://doi.org/10.1037//OO22-3514.81.2.220

Wang, Q. (2013). *The autobiographical self in time and culture*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199737833.001.0001

Wang, Q. (2021). The cultural foundation of human memory. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *72*, 151–179. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-070920-023638

Wilson, M., Matsumoto, D., Avendano Vasquez, A. N., Garcia Garcla, J. M., & Helmy, M. (2022). Social judgments of rapport in investigative interviews across cultures. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *56*(5), 496–526. https://doi.org/10.1177/10693971221119944

Yang, Y., Wang, L., & Wang, Q. (2021). Take your word or tone for it? European American and Chinese children's attention to emotional cues in speech. *Child Development, 92,* 844-852. doi: 10.1111/cdev.13576

Yule, S., Gupta, A., Gazarian, D., Geraghty, A., Smink, D. S., Beard, J., Sundt, T., Youngson, G., Mcilhenny, C., & Paterson-brown, S. (2018). Construct and criterion validity testing of the Non-Technical Skills for Surgeons (NOTSS) behavior assessment tool using videos of simulated operations: Validity testing of Non-Technical Skills for Surgeons behavior assessment tool. *British Journal of Surgery*, *105*, 719-727. https://doi.org/10.1002/bjs.10779

Zhu, Y., Zhang, L., Fan, J., & Han, S. (2007). Neural basis of cultural influence on self-representation. *NeuroImage, 34*, 1310-1316. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2006.08.047

Figure 1. Finalised thematic map.