

The paper that will be discussed is the “Service users’ perceptions of student nurses” which was published in the *Nursing Times* in 2014 (Barksby, 2014). The paper aimed to explore the experience of service users’ who came into contact with student nurses within their care facilities.

The paradigm in which this study was situated within is interpretivism. This can be used in all qualitative research as the researcher interacts with the research that is taking place. They are not an objective outside observer as they would be with quantitative research (Milburn, et al., 1998).

The study design that was used in this research paper was that of interpretive phenomenological analysis, this allowed for the exploration of the personal and social world of the research participants. It allowed for the researcher to gain insight into the experience of the service users’ when interacting with students (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The sample was selected from service users’ that have had contact with the NHS learning disability service. It was unclear from the paper which form of sampling had been used. It may have been purposive sampling or volunteer sampling, they may have asked for volunteers from the group or selected volunteers from within the group (Parahoo, 2014). Data was collected for the study using a semi-structured interview, in which the researcher gives the interviewers a list of questions to guide the interview, along with options to expand upon the answers given by the interviewee (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). The data was analysed using applied thematic analysis, which was used to identify key themes within the data provided by the service users’ (Guest, et al., 2012). There were three key themes identified; positive response, indifference, and poor-quality students.

The data collection method used was that of semi-structured interviews, as stated above the interviewer was guided by the researcher as to what questions were to be asked and how to guide the interview, this is called an interview guide (Parahoo, 2014, pp. 318-320). In quantitative research the interview questions are known as an interview schedule, this is a more rigid structure than is used for qualitative research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2010). Some of the strengths for how the data was collected are as follows: the interview schedule, face to face interviews, same questions asked of all participants, allowed for expansion and probing of answers by the interviewer, order of questions was flexible to allow for natural flow of conversation.

The first strength seen is the interview guide. For this semi-structured interview, it was developed by the staff nurses who act as student mentors and a lecturer in nursing. This should have meant that the questions posed would have been at an appropriate level for the service users’, with enough scope that the interviewer could reword them to effectively ask the questions (Drever, 1995). A strength linked to the interview guide is that all of the questions asked of the participants should be the same, an example of a question used was “How do you feel when student nurses leave? Do students say goodbye?” (Barksby, 2014). Only a few examples of questions were provided in the research paper, it is said that in the paper that interviewers could ask probing questions but did not state whether they came up with them or whether they were provided (Barksby, 2014). This could affect the data collected from the interviewee as they may have been prompted for more information in some cases and in other cases the interviewer may not have asked for the same level of detail (Drever, 1995). Using probing questions and prompts can allow there to be more understanding for the interviewee of what they are being asked, this should allow for more detailed answers to be given. Probes are a characteristic of an inductive research approach, aiming to gather more detail rather than less, this allows the researcher to gain greater understanding of people as humans (Blumer, 1969). Another part of the interview guide that can affect response is the type of question that has been used. The type used appears to be closed, but only a few example questions were given in the paper, so it cannot be generalised that all of the questions were closed.

Using an interview guide can enable researchers to compare the answers to specific questions, thus allowing them to look for themes in the research and carry out a thematic analysis. Unlike a structured interview a semi-structured interview allows for the expansion and probing of answers, whereas structured interviews allow for clarification rather than increasing the depth of the answer (Parahoo, 2014, pp. 311-318). The ability to reword a question means that the language can be simplified depending on the service users' level of understanding. From the example questions shown the language appears to be simple and there being closed questions should allow for simple answers, that can be expanded upon if the service user wished or was prompted to.

When using a semi-structured interview allowing the interviewee to guide the conversation allows the researcher to gain more in-depth data about the topic that has been discussed, this can enable a broader scope for the thematic analysis. When organising the interview guide the questions should be ordered in a way that any that could be deemed invasive are not used first. It is unclear how the questions have been ordered, but it is important to consider that some questions may be upsetting for service users' and this could affect further answers (Barksby, 2014).

Using a face to face interview for each participant was beneficial as it removed potential barriers such as being unable to use a computer for video chatting or not having been able to use a telephone for communication. The service users' may have had a wide range of communication abilities, meaning face to face interviews would have allowed the interviewer to make a clinical judgement as to the best way to communicate and allowed them to adapt their questioning style to suit the individuals' needs.

Along with the other aspects of a semi-structured interview a key one that can affect the data collected is the interviewer gathering the data. Wheeler posed that the attributes needed to be an effective counsellor are the same as those needed to be an effective interviewer for qualitative research (Wheeler, 2000). One of the attributes of an effective interviewer is that they should be empathetic to the interviewee and show understanding of how the person was feeling without they themselves becoming emotionally involved with the interview. The way the interviewer presents themselves can also affect the interview, so they should dress appropriately but not so to intimidate the interviewee (Drever, 1995, pp. 50-52). Effective interviewers must also be able to assert control when needed (Drever, 1995). Information checking is also important, the interviewer must ensure that they have recorded and understood the correct data from the interviewee, this allows the interviewee to change or alter the information if they feel it was not correct. Active listening is also considered to useful when interviewing, it prompts the interviewee to continue to expand on the point that they are making and can give a deeper answer (Ritchie, et al., 2013). We do not know who the interviewer was for the Service users' perceptions of student nurses study, it would be assumed that they would be trained how to interview for research and have some experience working or interacting with people with learning disabilities.

The interviewer can be both a strength and a weakness for semi-structured interviews. No details about the interviews were provided in the study other than the time, number of interviewees and several example questions. Someone who has never spent time with people with learning disabilities may unintentionally put up barriers between themselves and the interviewee. The ability to adapt the questions could have been imperative to being able to gain fully informed answers from the service users'.

Another weakness with semi structured interviews could be the interview guide, this is a very useful tool if it has been made whilst closely considering the research questions, but if it has not then it can lead the interview away from the research questions and the information gathered may not be relevant to the research aim or question.

Overall when using interviews, the results can be affected by the honesty of the participants, they may want to tell the interviewer what they think they want to hear, this means the information is not always reliable.

The study is relevant to clinical practice as it can inform the staff and students, who have contact with service users' in these long-term services, of the effects that it has on the individuals when students enter their lives and their homes for a brief time. It could also be considered that high staff turnover has the same effect on the service users' as people are coming and going. This study could possibly be used to inform the way the practice educators structure the placements that happen in these facilities. It may be better to have longer placements for there is a lower frequency of people leaving or have fewer students going to the long-term care settings for placements.