

This study of domestic violence took place in a women’s refuge among women who had sought shelter in the refuge. Dobash and Dobash used unstructured interviews as their research method and they and other interviewers spent a lot of time with the women in the refuge.

Question: Try to describe your experiences of one incident of violence towards you.

He punched me, he kicked me, and he pulled me by the hair. My face hit a step. He was in his bare feet, you know, with being in bed, and he just jumped up and he pulled on his trousers and he was kicking me. If he had shoes on, God knows what kind of face I would have had. As it was, I had a cracked cheekbone, two teeth knocked out, cracked ribs, broken nose, two beautiful black eyes; it wasn’t even a black eye, it was my whole cheek was just purple from one eye to the other. And he had got me by the neck and, you know, he was trying, in fact practically succeeded in strangling me. I was choking; I was actually at the blacking-out stage. I was trying to pull his fingers away, with me trying to pull his fingers away, I scratched myself, you know, trying to get his fingers off. He hit me and I felt my head, you know, hitting the back of the lock of the door. I started to scream and I felt as if I’d been screaming for ages. When I came to he was pulling me up the stair by the hair, I mean, I think it was the pain of him pulling me up the stair by the hair that brought me round again. I can remember going up the stairs on my hands and knees and the blood – I didn’t know where it was coming from – it was just dripping in front of my face and I was actually covered in blood. I just got to the kitchen door and he just walked straight to his bed. I just filled the sink with cold water, put a dish towel in it, and held it up to my face. I remember I went through to the living room and fell asleep and woke up in the morning with this matted dish towel, and, I couldn’t move. There wasn’t a bit of me that wasn’t sore.

Questions

1. Outline and explain why this method is particularly suitable for this topic.

[Blank response area for question 1]

2. Give two reasons why this research is likely to be **valid**.

(i)

[Blank response area for question 2, part (i)]

(ii)

3. Give one reason why this method has some **reliability**.

The following questions try to get at the **weaknesses** of the method.

4. Do you think there could be any **interviewer bias** or that the researcher influenced the women in any way?

5. Do you think this research is reliable? Would another researcher have got the same results? Explain your answer.

6. Because unstructured interviews are so detailed and it takes time to build up trust, it is difficult to do a large number of these interviews. Why is this a problem?

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The other type of interview is a formal or structured interview. A structured interview is where the interviewer has a list of pre-set questions. He/she reads out these questions to everyone and records their answers. The interviewer cannot change the questions. The results are usually turned into statistical data and are **quantitative**. It is more like a questionnaire in that everyone answers the same questions.