

# Standardisation of Interview Questions for New Hires in Medical Social Services Department



Singapore Healthcare  
Management 2022

Alicia Tan, Yvonne Tang, Yong Lee Ling,  
Grace Lim, Azizah Binte Aziz,  
Medical Social Services,  
Sengkang General Hospital

## Background

Traditionally, interview candidates were being assessed based on their past work experience and response to situational questions. Since every interviewer would have a different set of questions in mind, there would inevitably be inconsistencies and varying difficulty levels in the assessment of candidates applying for the same job position.

Without a standardised process in place, new or first-time interviewers might also be less prepared to holistically assess candidates on their suitability for the job.

As such, the team decided to develop a more standardised approach of conducting interviews.

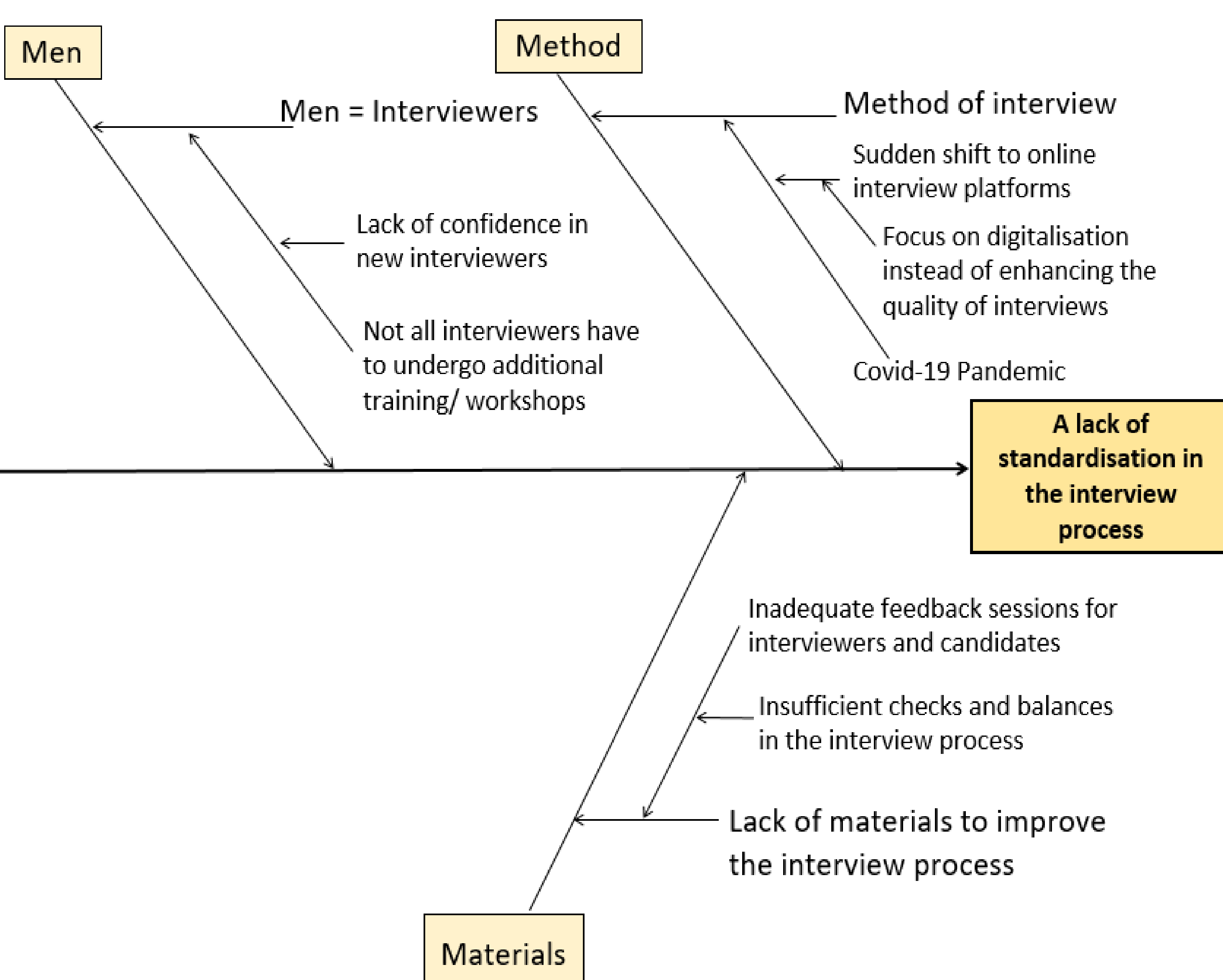
## Current State

While the current interview questions test a candidate's skills and abilities, they are random and differ for each candidate. Thus, candidates applying for the same job position might not be examined in a uniform way, especially when the interviewers were different. This hypothesis was further supported by the findings from a survey, where interviewers rated 2.25 on a 5-point scale, on whether the current method of conducting interviews ensured standardisation across interviewers and candidates.

Likewise, interviewers also rated 2.25 out on a 5-point scale, on their confidence level in assessing a candidate's suitability, without the availability of a standardised list of questions. As such, it is pertinent for a standardised list of questions to be made available and used as a key interview tool moving forward.

## Root Cause Analysis

### Cause and Effect Diagram



To address the lack of focus on the interview process and questions, as well as the lack of checks and balances for the interview process from the root causes identified.

## Goal

Our ultimate goal is to put in place a uniform assessment approach in the evaluation of candidates and to improve the confidence level of both new and experienced interviewers in the process of assessing the suitability of candidates applying for the same job position.

## Interventions

To achieve our goal, a "Standardised List of Interview Questions" was compiled and developed for each of the three staff categories in the department: Medical Social Worker, Social Work Assistant and Administrative Staff.

A trial was conducted across a few interview sessions and a post-intervention survey was conducted. The PDSA framework was adopted:

**Plan:** Develop a Standardised List of Interview Questions.

**Do:** Interviewers to carry out actual or simulated interviews using the Standardised List of Interview Questions.

**Study:** Review effectiveness from post-survey results.

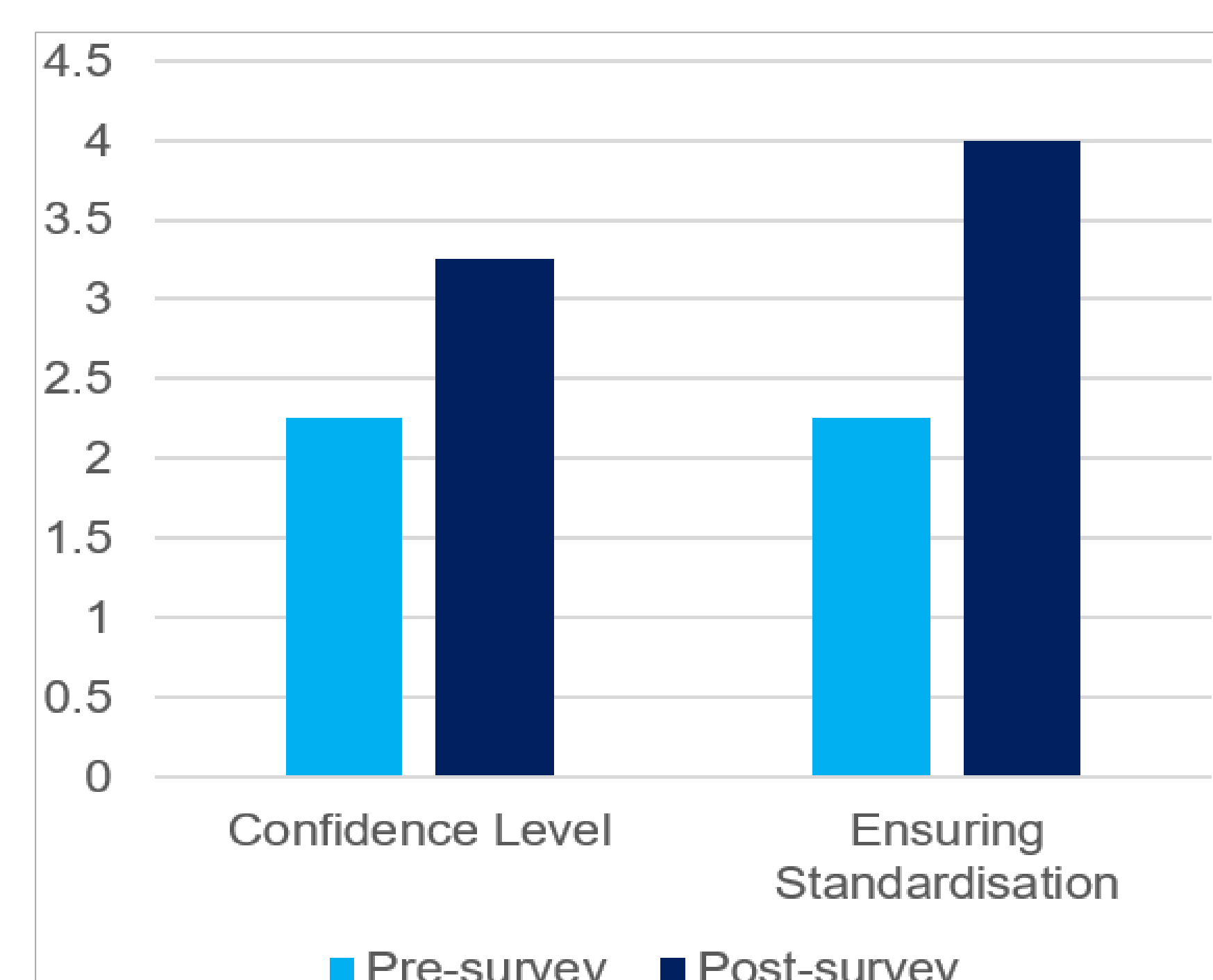
**Act:** Refine questions based on feedback received/ Implementation.

## Results

Pre- and post-intervention survey results were compared.

100% of the survey respondents agreed that the use of a "Standardised List of Interview Questions" had benefitted them in the aspects of improving their confidence and providing standardisation in the interview process.

Based on a 5-point scale, there was an increase in the interviewer's confidence score from 2.25 to 3.25 points. The respondents also rated greater standardisation of the interview process, with an increase from 2.25 to 4.0 points.



## Conclusion

All interviewers unanimously agreed that a "Standardised List of Interview Questions" had facilitated their interview sessions and they recommend the use of it for future interview sessions.

With time, more interviewers would have the chance to be exposed to the benefits of this intervention. Feedback could be gathered, and the list of questions could also be reviewed and refined periodically to ensure its relevance to date.