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MARKSCHEME

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PSYCHOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 3

5 pages

1. **(a)** **Outline an example of a psychology related problem for which a large scale survey could be used as the research method.** *[2 marks]*

The example selected should be amenable to a large scale survey. The problem needs to be answered by several hundreds or thousands of people and therefore should be within their experience. A problem that is too complex for respondents to understand will not be amenable to a large scale survey.

Award *[0 marks]* for an inappropriate choice.

Award *[1 mark]* for a choice that is partially adaptable to a large scale survey, *eg*

Award *[2 marks]* for a choice that is wholly appropriate for a large scale survey.

(b) **Describe *one* sampling technique that could be applied to the example that you have chosen in section (a).** *[4 marks]*

Random sampling is not an appropriate means for large scale surveys unless there is an explicit explanation that justifies this as a precursor to random cluster sampling or other large groups. More appropriate will be stratified sampling, multistage sampling, or proportionate or disproportionate sampling where important groups are given unequal weighting. Snowball sampling, and convenience (opportunity) sampling are not appropriate in this case.

(c) **Evaluate the use of a Likert scale that could be applied to the example that you have chosen in section (a).** *[4 marks]*

The use of Likert scales is easy to develop for particular purposes, and its tendency to involve participants mean that they will often complete the scales where they may not complete the apparently more boring types of questions. They can be used with large numbers and can determine which items are important to the sample population. Answers are normally coded and treated statistically. However the combination of statements for this purpose also means that cumulative scores are difficult to interpret. Issues of validity and reliability can arise.

Award *[1 to 2 marks]* for evaluation that covers some of the issues, but which omits key points.

Award a maximum of *[2 marks]* if the explanation is not explicitly related to the example in part (a).

Award *[3 to 4 marks]* for evaluation that addresses several major relevant points.

2.   (a)   Explain, using an example, what is meant by participant observation.   *[4 marks]*

Usually the term 'participant observation' refers to an observer who is a complete participant who conceals the role of observer from the group members. But the term is sometimes used to identify the person who admits to the group that he or she is an observer and will try to establish a close relationship with the group. Either interpretation is acceptable. There are well known examples such as Whyte or Festinger or Clark. Alternatively, appropriate examples may be hypothetical.

Award *[0 marks]* for an inappropriate example or incorrect explanation.

Award *[1 to 2 marks]* for an example that is partially adaptable to participant observation or in which the explanation is only partial.

Award *[3 to 4 marks]* for an example that is wholly appropriate for participant observation and in which the explanation is adequate or comprehensive.

(b)   Evaluate the use of participant observation as a research method.   *[6 marks]*

There are ethical issues raised in participant observation, especially when the observer is concealed. There is also a tendency over long term covert membership of a group to 'go native' and lose the objectivity of observation. Recording of events is also problematic especially where the observer is known and Hawthorne effects may begin to operate. The application of findings from such potentially biased data can cause dysfunctional policies to be implemented, *e.g.* as a result of biased data being interpreted into policies that affect actions in the police force, in prisoners or their guards.

Award *[1 to 3 marks]* for evaluation that covers some issues, but which omits key points *eg*.

Award *[4 to 6 marks]* for evaluation that addresses several major relevant points.

3.   (a)   Evaluate the use of e-mail interviews.   *[4 marks]*

Shy or reserved participants may contribute more in an e-mail interview than a face-to-face interview.
E-mail allows interviews to be conducted economically in terms of time and cost – there is no need to transcribe the interview, for example. Standardisation and minimisation of researcher expectancies are more readily achieved than in face-to-face interviews. However, while the absence of non-verbal cues from the interviewer can be considered an advantage, the same absence of non–verbal cues from the interviewee reduces the quality of the data obtained. While non–verbal information can be inserted by interviewees in the form of acronyms *e.g.* LOL and faces *e.g.* ;-) or :-(, these are neither spontaneous nor as varied as those discernable from face-to-face or telephone interviews. Hesitations, pauses, changes in pitch, volume and speed of responses are all present in verbal but not in e-mail interviews. Neither anonymity nor verification of identity can be assured.

Both positive and negative aspects of e-mail interviews should be considered for *[3 to 4 marks]*.

If only positive or negative aspects are considered, award a maximum of *[2 marks]*.

Award *[1 to 2 marks]* where there are key omissions in the discussion or *[1 mark]* where the discussion relates generally to interviews rather than e-mail interviews specifically.

(b)   Consider *one* method of content analysis suitable for applying to e-mail.
                                                                        [6 marks]

Content analysis, when it is regarded as inductive, is the attempt to interpret what is important to the interviewee. The lesser known and lesser used deductive or phenomenological content analytic techniques acknowledge the difficulties of not involving the researcher's own interpretation, and accept that this will happen. There is no one interpretation of an interview that is correct. Each interpretation is based upon the researcher's own individual perceptions. Content analysis may be low on reliability but reasonably high on validity. However such analyses can throw considerable light on the experience of participants that can affect decisions on social policy making.

Award *[0 marks]* for no idea about content analysis.

Award *[1 to 3 marks]* for some consideration but this is inadequate or contains significant errors.

Award *[4 to 6 marks]* for relevant information that is clear and adequate in terms of both description and evaluation and is related to e-mail interviewing.