



MARKSCHEME

November 2008

PSYCHOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 3

*This markscheme is **confidential** and for the exclusive use of examiners in this examination session.*

*It is the property of the International Baccalaureate and must **not** be reproduced or distributed to any other person without the authorization of IB Cardiff.*

1. Discuss ethical issues that need to be considered when participant observation is used in qualitative research. [10 marks]

Responses may include either overt (disclosed) or covert (undisclosed) participant observation, or both. The former usually entails the researcher becoming part of a group activity over a suitable period of time sufficient for relevant observations to be made. Importantly, the others in the group are made aware of the researcher's presence. For some group members the presence of the researcher may inhibit their normal actions or in some cases alter behaviour in other ways that are akin to a Hawthorne effect. Therefore, some candidates may argue that the presence of a newcomer to the group for research purposes only, could be unethical since they would not necessarily have given their approval for this arrangement.

Covert observation, where the researcher's true identity is not revealed, presents more ethical problems, although the use of this method may be justified in terms of the end results presented in valuable findings. Deceit is involved, group members are not consulted, researchers may manipulate the situation in order to provoke certain actions, or recordings may be made without anonymity or confidentiality clauses being agreed. Candidates may well include evidence from relevant studies and this should be given credit.

Award *[7 to 10 marks]* for those responses that present a detailed discussion of ethical issues related to participant observation.

Award *[4 to 6 marks]* for those responses that are mainly descriptive of ethical issues related to participant observation but do not fully discuss these issues.

Award *[1 to 3 marks]* for responses that only describe ethical issues in general, or only describe participant observation without reference to ethical issues.

2. You are asked to carry out qualitative research that involves conducting interviews with a representative sample of four students from a school of 11- to 16-year-old boys and girls. The aim of the research is to investigate the views of students about school discipline.

(a) Identify and describe *one* relevant sampling technique that you could use to select the four students. *[4 marks]*

This is a deliberately small sample since qualitative research aims to obtain in-depth responses to questions. Probably the best sampling technique would be purposive sampling, obtaining four students who would be able to give in-depth responses on school discipline. Neither random sampling nor opportunity sampling are relevant in this case and neither should be awarded marks. Since the school is co-educational it would be reasonable to accept that both boys and girls are selected, and that they represent different age groups. Candidates may suggest a form of stratified sampling.

Award *[3 to 4 marks]* for a clear identification and description of an appropriate sampling technique, taking account of the need to obtain a representative sample.

Award *[1 to 2 marks]* for a limited description of an appropriate sampling technique.

Award *[0 marks]* for random, convenience or opportunity sampling since these sampling methods do not necessarily produce a representative sample of the student population of the school.

- (b) Evaluate the use of a semi-structured interview method in the context of this research.** **[6 marks]**

The semi-structured method permits some control of the direction of the interview by the researcher. Usually this will be in the construction of piloted questions that elicit responses relevant to the aim of the research. The method also allows for the interviewee to exert some degree of control since he or she can answer questions in ways that are not foreseen by the researcher. In the hands of a skilled interviewer this type of response may also reveal valuable information that may otherwise not have been revealed.

Candidates may suggest that the research can be conducted in a small group interview or as individual interviews. If the response suggests that the semi-structured interview be conducted with the group of four students together, sufficient attention should be given to ensure that no one individual dominates responses and that the more reticent group members are encouraged to contribute.

Award **[5 to 6 marks]** for detailed evaluation of the use of a semi-structured interview in this context, including strengths and limitations.

Award **[3 to 4 marks]** for mainly descriptive accounts of the use of semi-structured interviews with no, or limited, evaluation.

Award **[1 to 2 marks]** for general description of semi-structured interviews.

Award up to a maximum of **[3 marks]** for general evaluation of semi-structured interviews without relating it to the specific context.

3. **Three high school students from the same school have complained about being bullied by other students from the school. A case study of the three students is carried out to investigate the causes of bullying within the school.**

To what extent is generalization possible from the findings of the case study of these three students?

[10 marks]

In every case study there are elements that may be generalized to some degree. Gobi suggests that we should not confuse the representativeness of the entire case with the representativeness of its characteristics that we observe. For example, when we watch films in which the murderer enters the house and the door squeaks, it adds a terrified thrill to the audience. Then, when we get home, and hear our own squeaking door, it is not the difference in the noise we notice but its similarities with the door in the film and therefore we experience the same fear response.

The extent to which generalizations can be made from these three case studies is limited by the self-selected sample of students (only they have complained of being bullied). However, common characteristics revealed by these case studies do add something to our knowledge and can be cautiously generalized to other possible victims of bullying in the same school.

It is a superficial response to this question to suggest that since the numbers are small it is not possible to generalize. This would be to misinterpret the use of generalization within a qualitative research context. Such a response will attract few marks.

Award *[7 to 10 marks]* for those responses that demonstrate a comprehensive awareness of the extent to which generalization can be made in this context.

Award *[4 to 6 marks]* for responses that demonstrate limited awareness of the extent to which generalization can be made within the context of the question. Responses that ignore the context of the question, that of three cases of bullying in a school, but present some argument about the extent to which generalization can be made from qualitative research studies, should also be awarded marks in this range.

Award *[1 to 3 marks]* for superficial responses that claim that generalization is not possible with such small numbers.
