



MARKSCHEME

November 2010

PSYCHOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 3

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Paper 3 Markbands

In applying the markbands the concept of “best fit” should be used: a response that meets most of the statements in a particular markband, but not necessarily all, can still be awarded marks in the markband. The markband that best fits the response should be determined first. Then, by reference to the markband above and the markband below, the mark should be determined.

- 9 to 10** The response shows accurate knowledge of qualitative methods. There is evidence of clear explanation and identification of conditions appropriate for the application of each method, and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each method. There are no significant errors or omissions. The demands of the question are addressed effectively in a focused and logical manner.
- 7 to 8** The response shows an accurate knowledge of qualitative methods. There is a good attempt at explanation, at identifying conditions appropriate for the application of each method, and at evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each method. Omissions or errors are relatively minor. The demands of the question are addressed effectively within a structured framework.
- 5 to 6** The question is addressed and contains some accurate knowledge of qualitative research methods. There is a reasonable attempt at explanation, at identifying conditions appropriate for the application of each method, and at evaluating strengths and weaknesses of each method, but there are some omissions or errors. There is a limited but reasonable attempt to organize the answer.
- 3 to 4** Although there is an attempt to answer the question, knowledge of qualitative research methods is limited, often inaccurate and of marginal relevance to the question. There is a minimal attempt at explanation, or at identifying conditions appropriate for the application of each method, or at evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each method. There is minimal evidence of organizational structure.
- 1 to 2** There is very little or no understanding of the question, nor is there evidence of knowledge of qualitative research methods. The answer is no more than a collection of generalizations, or is a paragraph of few relevant facts. There is almost no organizational structure.
- 0** If the answer does not achieve the standard described in markband 1 to 2, a mark of 0 should be recorded.

1. **A questionnaire is to be used by a school administration to survey attitudes of parents towards the proposed introduction of lessons on birth control and sexually transmitted diseases.**

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using e-mail as a means of obtaining research data for this specific survey.

[10 marks]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

Shy or reserved participants may contribute more in an e-mail questionnaire than a face-to-face interview, especially given the sensitive nature of this specific survey. E-mail allows questionnaires to be conducted economically in terms of time and cost – responses can be readily copied and pasted into data analysis software or into reports. Standardization and minimization of researcher expectancies are more readily achieved by using e-mail questionnaires rather than in face-to-face interviews.

However, while the absence of non-verbal cues from the researcher can be considered an advantage, the same absence of non-verbal cues from the participant reduces the quality of the data obtained.

More non-verbal information is likely to be inserted by participants in the form of acronyms (*e.g.* LOL) and emoticons (*e.g.* ;-) or :() than in responses to paper-based questionnaires. However, these are neither spontaneous nor as varied as those discernable from face-to-face or telephone surveys. Hesitations, pauses, changes in pitch, volume and speed of responses are all present in face-to-face communication but not in e-mail communication. Neither anonymity nor verification of identity can be assured.

Award **[7 to 10 marks]** for responses that effectively discuss both advantages and disadvantages of e-mail questionnaires in relation to the specific context provided.

Award **[4 to 6 marks]** for responses that present a limited discussion of both advantages and disadvantages of e-mail questionnaires or responses lacking explicit reference to the specific context provided.

Award **[1 to 3 marks]** for responses in which the discussion relates generally to questionnaires rather than e-mail questionnaires specifically, or for answers that do not relate to the specific context provided.

If only advantages or disadvantages are discussed, award up to a maximum of **[5 marks]**.

2. **Contrast the use of a conversational interview with the use of a semi-structured interview for investigating the musical preferences of young people in their early adulthood.** *[10 marks]*

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

Responses should make reference to the context provided of musical preferences of young adults.

In conversational interviews there is a greater reciprocity in the exchange of ideas and the direction that the interview takes. Conversation implies turn-taking. There is a mutual handing over of initiative as each conversationalist relinquishes speech and allows the other to speak in turn. A conversational interview occurs in a more natural manner and therefore has greater ecological validity. Because the interviewer and interviewee perceive themselves to be at the same level of control, the rapport will be greater between them and therefore richer data about musical preference is more likely to be obtained. Conversational interviews do tend to present more material that may not be relevant to the researcher's aims, and they are generally more time-consuming to analyse.

Although semi-structured interviews follow the same order of presentation and the same wording for the main questions in the interview schedule, they permit some control of the direction of the interview by the researcher through the use of sub-questions in response to the interviewee's answers. A degree of creativity is required by the interviewer since sub-questions have to be thought out instantly in responding to the interviewee's replies to the main questions. In the hands of a skilled interviewer this type of response may also reveal valuable information that may otherwise not have been revealed.

It is possible, for example, that many young people will state that rock music is their musical preference since their peers prefer this music. If the interviewers have noted that one of their sub-questions is to be on listening to classical music, the young interviewee may indicate that they also listen to classical music. This statement may never have arisen in a conversational interview.

Award **[7 to 10 marks]** for responses that clearly explain several differences between the two types of interviews in the context provided in the question.

Award **[4 to 6 marks]** for responses that provide limited accounts of differences between the two types of interview, or responses lacking reference to the context of musical preferences of young adults provided in the question.

Award **[1 to 3 marks]** for responses that merely describe each type of interview without reference to the concept of musical preferences.

3. (a) **Discuss how researcher expectancies that can occur in *qualitative* research may invalidate the findings.** [4 marks]

Candidates should discuss how the operation of researcher expectancies may make the resulting findings invalid. For example, in relation to qualitative content analysis, researchers may take a less than objective view of a transcript; predetermined rather than emergent themes may be selected and emphasized, leading to bias. This bias can be multiplied when themes are combined into larger categories and when conclusions are drawn. Participant observers' stereotypes of a group under study may bias their analysis. Unstructured interviews are susceptible to bias as the beliefs and attitudes of the interviewer may influence the interview.

Award [4 marks] for a well developed discussion that includes reference to researcher expectancies and the possibility of invalidation of research findings.

Award [2 to 3 marks] for a limited discussion where reference to the impact of researcher expectancies on validity of research findings is not made clear.

Award [1 mark] for a descriptive account of research expectancies in qualitative research.

- (b) **Explain precautions that could be taken to overcome the problem of researcher expectancies.** [6 marks]

Researcher triangulation, where different researchers contribute to the process of research, should ensure that potential bias of any one individual researcher will be minimized. Good practice in qualitative research ensures that individual researchers use the method of reflexivity to examine their beliefs, attitudes and values at the beginning and end of the research process. The aim of this procedure is to make researchers themselves aware of potential biases and this may be enhanced by having other researchers question the neutrality of the research.

Award [5 to 6 marks] for clear explanation of more than one relevant precaution.

Award [3 to 4 marks] for clear explanation of only one precaution or for limited explanation of more than one relevant precaution.

Award [1 to 2 marks] for limited description of one or more relevant precautions.
