



MARKSCHEME

May 2011

PSYCHOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 3

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Paper 3 markbands

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The answer does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1 to 3	There is an attempt to answer the question, but knowledge and understanding is limited, often inaccurate, or of marginal relevance to the question. The response makes no direct reference to the stimulus material or relies too heavily on quotations from the text.
4 to 7	The question is partially answered. Knowledge and understanding is accurate but limited. Either the command term is not effectively addressed or the response is not sufficiently explicit in answering the question. The response makes limited use of the stimulus material.
8 to 10	The question is answered in a focused and effective manner and meets the demands of the command term. The answer is supported by appropriate and accurate knowledge and understanding of qualitative research methodology. The response demonstrates a critical understanding of qualitative research methodology applied to the stimulus material.

1. Explain possible effects of participant expectations on the findings of this study. [10 marks]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “explain” requires candidates to give a detailed account including reasons or causes.

Candidates should explain what is generally understood by participant expectations and then they should say how such participants’ expectations could influence the findings of the research. In order to receive high marks, candidates should make reference to the stimulus material and indicate how participant expectations could apply in this particular study.

The responses may vary and examiners should be open to interpretations as long as they make sense in the context of the study presented in the stimulus material. There are a number of possible responses which would be acceptable. Responses could, for example, show that participant expectations could depend on previous experiences or attitudes towards the minority group in question. Responses could perhaps also indicate that if the participants expect a positive outcome from the programme they would probably be more positive in the interviews. They could also indicate that participants may have expectations that their work should be seen by others as universally beneficial. Additionally it may be that responses show that since the participants have invested so much time in the programme they want to see it as positive even though it may not be so. Any of these or other relevant participant expectations could bias the data.

2. Discuss the use of semi-structured interviews in this study.

[10 marks]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “discuss” requires candidates to offer a considered and balanced view that includes a range of arguments or factors. Conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.

Semi-structured interviews are normally characterized by the use of open-ended questions. The researcher has an interview guide with a list of questions but there is room for the respondents to bring up issues of importance to them. This means that a semi-structured interview is flexible and makes it possible for the respondents to express personal experiences that have not been anticipated by the researchers. This may result in richer data as the participants continue through their interview and develop ideas of their own. The strength of this method is that it has flexibility. A limitation of this method could be that analysis of data is time consuming.

Candidates could mention more general factors related to the use of semi-structured interviews and they should gain credit for that, but in order to gain full marks they also need to relate such factors to the stimulus material. Candidates could, for example, mention that in relation to the befriending project the ten participants are asked to express their view on how they benefit themselves by participating in the study.

The stimulus material makes reference to some of the positive experiences expressed by the participants and candidates could make references to these. It could also be that candidates will mention that in a research study like this one the participants express views that were not anticipated by the researchers, for example that they did not benefit from participating in the project.

- 3. Explain how researchers could use inductive content analysis on the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews in this study. [10 marks]**

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “explain” requires candidates to give a detailed account including reasons or causes.

The candidates could say that inductive content analysis generally consists of two stages: analysis and interpretation of the data. Analysis involves a systematic search for themes in the transcript that emerge after several readings. Subsequent readings will try to find further themes and connect them in meaningful ways in order to see how they relate to each other and thereby establish hierarchies of themes. The researcher continues the readings until there is no more information in the data.

Eventually the researcher makes a summary table of subordinate themes and higher-order themes. The interpretation of the data is based on the identified themes. The student could also mention that it is important that the researchers are able to understand how the participants themselves think. The researchers’ interpretations are then used to form the basis for the findings of the research report.

Knowledge and understanding of inductive content analysis should be applied to the stimulus material in order to gain high marks.
