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MARKSCHEME

May 2012

PSYCHOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 3

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 a sampling method that could be used in this case 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 for choosing a particular sampling method in this case study.

Candidates can refer to convenience sampling or purposive sampling as relevant in the context of this case study. Candidates may explain one or more sampling methods that could be used in this case study. Both approaches are equally acceptable. Candidates may refer to strengths and limitations of the sampling methods in their explanations. This is acceptable but the command term explain does not require this.

Candidates could argue that since the team is already chosen by the organization the researchers decided to use them and did not make a choice of their own. This indicates that the sample is a convenience sample. Candidates could explain that this sampling method has strengths, such as the speed and ease with which participants can be chosen. Candidates who write that the sampling method is purposive could argue that the participants have the necessary characteristics (*i.e.* being relief workers) that the researchers are looking for. This is a major strength of purposive sampling.

Candidates could also explain that these sampling methods have limitations, for example that they may not be representative of the target population (relief workers). This is a relevant point to raise. However, candidates who write that representativeness is not the main issue in a case study should receive further credit for that.

If candidates explain an inappropriate sampling method together with one or more appropriate sampling methods (*i.e.* purposive and/or convenience sampling) they should be awarded up to a maximum of *[6 marks]*.

Candidates could refer to snowballing as a convenient sampling method in this case study (*e.g.* mentioning that further research in the same area could be based on snowballing because the sample size in the study is very small), and if the use of this sampling method is well explained, it should be credited. However, if this is the only sampling method explained, it should be awarded up to a maximum of *[4 marks]*.

If candidates only explain an inappropriate sampling method (*e.g.* random sampling or stratified sampling), they should be awarded *[0 marks]*.

2.   Discuss the extent to which findings from this single case study can be generalized. *[10 marks]*

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term "discuss" requires candidates to offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments and factors. Conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence related to generalization in qualitative research.

A case study is normally defined as an in-depth study of a single entity, such as an individual, a group or a problem. It is sometimes argued in psychology text books that it is not possible to generalize from a case study. However, qualitative researchers argue that it may be possible to generalize from a single case study under certain circumstances. Candidates who are able to discuss the extent to which generalization may be possible in a single case study, for example referring to inferential generalization (or transferability), theoretical generalization or representational generalization, should be awarded marks in the top band.

Despite the fact that the stimulus material presents only a single case study, some of its findings may be generalized beyond the study itself. For example, candidates could argue that if similar case studies have been conducted into the stress experiences of relief workers at disaster sites, and found the same results, then qualitative researchers would argue that there are common elements in the case studies which make some generalization to other relief workers possible (*i.e.* referring to either representational or inferential generalization).

Candidates may refer to the possibility of comparing findings from one case study to other case studies without using specific terminology relating to generalization in qualitative research. Such responses should be awarded up to a maximum of *[7 marks]*.

Candidates who refer to statistical generalization (used in quantitative research) and discuss this in relation to inferential generalization (or transferability) should be awarded credit. However, if candidates refer only to statistical generalization **without** any relevance to generalization in qualitative research, they should be awarded up to a maximum of *[3 marks]*, provided there is reference to the stimulus material.

If there is no reference to the stimulus material and only statistical generalization is discussed, award *[0 marks].*

3. **Explain how a case study could be used to investigate the problems experienced by the relief workers at the disaster site (for example, what qualitative methods could be used to collect data?).** *[10 marks]*

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term "explain" requires candidates to give a detailed account including reasons for choosing a specific approach to investigating the problem in the stimulus material.

Responses may explain different aspects of how a case study could be used to investigate the problem in the stimulus material. These could include but are not limited to:
- data collection methods
- sampling methods
- ways of analysing data.

The case study method can employ a number of different data collection methods in exploring the case under investigation. The fact that it is possible to use several data collection methods gives candidates an opportunity to explain why a particular qualitative method (*e.g.* interview, observation) or a combination of several methods (triangulation) could be a good option in this case study. The candidate could refer to strengths and limitations of each method used in the case study and they are free to choose appropriate methods. However, candidates do not need to evaluate methods to access the high mark bands since the command term is "explain".

If there is no reference as to how a case study could be used to investigate the problems experienced by the relief workers in the study, award up to a maximum of *[6 marks]*.

If candidates explain an inappropriate data collection method together with one or more appropriate data collection methods they should be awarded up to a maximum of *[6 marks]*.

Responses that refer only to data collection methods that are inappropriate in the context of a case study (*e.g.* fMRI, survey, experiments) should be awarded *[0 marks]*.