



# **MARKSCHEME**

**November 2011**

**PSYCHOLOGY**

**Higher Level**

**Paper 3**

6 pages

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**Paper 3 markbands**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>Level descriptor</b>
<b>0</b>	The answer does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
<b>1 to 3</b>	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.
<b>4 to 7</b>	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.
<b>8 to 10</b>	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. Evaluate the use of non-participant overt observation in this study.****[10 marks]**

*Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.*

This question invites for evaluation of the use of non-participant overt observation in the study mentioned in the stimulus material. The command term “evaluate” requires candidates to make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations. Although a discussion of both strengths and limitations is required, it does not have to be evenly balanced to gain high marks.

Non-participant observation means that the researchers are not an active part of the group under observation. The participants have agreed to being observed in an overt observation so they are aware of the research going on and of the researchers’ presence. Researchers can decide to do overt observation because they want to co-operate with the participants, for example being able to ask questions to the parents after the observation and vice versa. There could also be follow-up discussions among the parents and the researchers, which would be logical in an observational study like this one.

With reference to this study the candidates could say that non-participant overt observation was chosen because it gave the researchers the possibility to have open discussions with parents during and after the observation. This could perhaps lead to formulation of other research topics in the area.

Other strengths which could be mentioned by candidates include but are not limited to:

- openness ensured that ethical issues were taken into account since the parents knew they were being observed
- openness ensured that parents could take an active role during the observation and therefore felt valued as participants instead of being research objects.

Limitations of the non-participant observation in the context of this study could be:

- the parents may not have acted in a natural manner because they are under observation
- the researchers could have been too detached as objective observers so they did not really understand the problems the parents talked about.

**2. Explain ethical considerations relevant to 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 and causes. For every ethical issue mentioned the candidate should therefore justify why it is relevant in order to be awarded full marks.

In the context of the study mentioned in the stimulus material there are several ethical issues which could be mentioned. The research covers an extremely sensitive area where it is very probable that parents could feel offended, threatened, insufficient or otherwise uncomfortable. An observation such as this one requires that researchers take great care not to demean the parents in any way.

Ethical issues relevant to this study could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Informed consent should be used and the participants should be fully informed about the purpose of the study at all stages because it is very sensitive research that could harm parents in the long term if it is not dealt with in the right way.
- Participants should not be harmed in any way. In the context of this study it could be psychological harm that could question their role and identity as parent without giving them support.
- Debriefing at the end of the training in the study which could include reference to unresolved issues. Parents could be offered further guidance and psychological support if they want it. A point here could also be that the parents will eventually have access to the research report and can contact the researchers at any time for clarification.
- Withdrawal: the parents should be informed about their right to withdraw at any time. This implicates that even after the observations have ended they could withdraw their data.
- Anonymity and confidentiality should be assured so that parents can feel confident that the data is not misused in any way through the research report. In this study the parents knew each other. During debriefing the researcher could bring up that it is important that information from the training does not reach people from outside of the group. Another thing could be that researchers say that they will destroy the videos after analysis of the data.

Candidates may discuss a relatively small number of ethical considerations in greater depth or a greater number of ethical considerations in less depth, thereby demonstrating a breadth of understanding. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

Where candidates mention a number of ethical issues but provide no explanation of them, apply the markbands up to a maximum of **[5 marks]**.

Where candidates have explained only one ethical consideration, apply the markbands up to a maximum of **[5 marks]**.

**3. Explain how reflexivity could have been used in this qualitative 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 and causes.

Reflexivity can be used in qualitative research such as this observational study in order to control for researcher bias. This could be achieved by having the researcher reflecting on his or her own contribution to the construction of meaning in the research process in order to identify possible bias. It is a process that takes place throughout the whole research and it could help the researcher to identify possible sources of bias, for example how the researcher’s own beliefs, experiences and interests can influence the collection and interpretation of the data. This is called personal reflexivity.

In the context of this research the candidates could answer that the researchers are already working in a centre for children with behavioural problems so they may not be totally objective. For example, they could have preconceived ideas about “bad parents” which may limit their objectivity. It could also be that the researcher is dependent on a positive outcome of the study to have research funding so that s/he could be biased in the analysis and interpretation. If there is personal involvement or interest in a research study it could thus be a good idea that the researcher makes it clear to the people who are to read about the research that such factors should be taken into account.

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