



88125707



**PSYCHOLOGY  
HIGHER LEVEL  
PAPER 3**

Tuesday 6 November 2012 (morning)

1 hour

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not turn over this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the passage carefully and then answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is *[30 marks]*.

*The stimulus material below is based on a research article.*

Social networking (for example, *Facebook*, *MySpace*) has affected the way people interact and present themselves to others. Psychologists argue that examining the nature of online communication is critical to understanding the process of identity development.

5 The aim of this research was to investigate ways in which young people develop identities on a social networking website. A multi-ethnic sample of ten undergraduate participants (five males and five females, with a mean age of 20 years) was recruited from an online website at an American university. The participants were active members of a social networking website and willing to present their personal profile (the page which introduces the person).

10 The researcher used narrative interviewing to collect data. The participants presented their profiles to the researcher. The profiles included photos and explanations of why these photos had been chosen. The interviews were videotaped.

The video recordings were transcribed. Inductive content analysis was applied to the transcripts. The researcher found three major themes in identity formation:

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- the use of images to represent relationships (for example, using an image of a heart to represent the participant's boyfriend/girlfriend)
  - the use of photographs to tell the participants' personal stories
  - the use of images to indicate the participants' personal preferences (for example, music preferences, favourite sports, support of environmental issues or human rights).

20 The researcher concluded that young people use a number of methods to express identity within the social network. The results indicated that their profile was generally less verbal and more visual.

*Answer **all** of the following three questions, referring to the stimulus material in your answers.*

1. Explain considerations that the researcher could have taken both before **and** after the interviews in this study. *[10 marks]*
  2. Explain how reflexivity could be used in the context of this study. *[10 marks]*
  3. Evaluate the use of narrative interviews in this study. *[10 marks]*
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