



MARKSCHEME

November 2012

PSYCHOLOGY

Higher Level

Paper 3

6 pages

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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 considerations that the researcher could have taken both before *and* after the interviews in this study. [10 marks]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “explain” requires that candidates give a detailed account, including reasons, for the considerations that the researcher could have taken both before and after the interviews in this qualitative study.

Responses that use the term “experiment” as a generic term for “study” should not be penalized.

Considerations in conducting a narrative interview should include methodological considerations and may also include ethical considerations.

Relevant considerations before the narrative interviews in the study could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Choice of interviewer: for example, interviewer should be of the same age and sex as the participants.
- Recording the interview: decisions about whether to use a tape recorder or taking notes when interviewing.
- Transcription of the data: decisions about how to analyse the data (for example, inductive content analysis). Relevant explanation could be that inductive content analysis is very useful when analysing large amounts of data in order to discover strategies used by the young students to construct their profiles.
- Ethical considerations, for example confidentiality since participants were showing their private profile on a social networking site.

Relevant considerations after the interviews in the study could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Debriefing participants after the narrative interviews so that they are assured that their data will not be misused and that their identities will be kept confidential.
- The researcher could ask participants to read the transcripts and/or research report and ask them to confirm the researcher’s analysis and interpretation of, for example, the identified themes in the construction of identity (credibility check).

Candidates may refer to the considerations taken by the researcher in the study in the stimulus material and/or considerations that could have been taken. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

Responses may explain a smaller number of considerations in order to demonstrate depth of knowledge, or may explain a larger number of considerations in order to demonstrate breadth of knowledge. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

Responses that provide considerations that could be taken only before or only after interviews should be awarded up to a maximum of [5 marks].

Responses that do not address methodological considerations and provide only ethical considerations should be awarded up to a maximum of [5 marks].

2. Explain how reflexivity could be used in the context of this study. [10 marks]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “explain” requires that candidates give a detailed account, including reasons, of how reflexivity could be applied in this study and give reasons and causes for why this could be relevant by referring to details of the study.

Responses that use the term “experiment” as a generic term for “study” should not be penalized.

Reflexivity in qualitative research is based on the assumption that it is important for a researcher to reflect on his or her own contribution to construct meaning in the research process. This could include bringing one’s own biases to a research project. For example, a researcher may be biased towards the findings of a study because he or she perceives and interprets data through his or her own individual lens (*i.e.* personal reflexivity). Using reflexivity in qualitative research could also include reflections of whether a specific method is useful in achieving the aim of the study (*i.e.* epistemological reflexivity). Reflexivity is thus a way to establish credibility/trustworthiness.

Since there is not specific reference to the term “reflexivity” in the stimulus material candidates need to rely on their knowledge of reflexivity and apply that to the stimulus material.

In the framework of the study in the stimulus material, candidates may, for example, argue the following:

- The researcher could think that it is better to meet face-to-face than interacting virtually or that interacting virtually is a fantastic way to present yourself the way you want other people to see you. The use of a reflective journal could help to limit this bias.
- The researcher could include a description of his or her own experiences with social networking sites (or lack of it) and reflect on how his or her attitudes to social networking could affect the interview process as well as interpretation of the data and potential findings of the study.
- The researcher could use reflexivity in relation to whether the narrative interview is the most useful to use to study “constructions of identity” in this study.

Candidates may make reference to personal and epistemological reflexivity when explaining how reflexivity could be used but they do not need to use these terms to access the higher markbands.

Responses that provide an explanation of reflexivity but fail to explain how reflexivity could be used in the context of the study in the stimulus material should be awarded up to a maximum of **[5 marks]**.

3. Evaluate the use of narrative interviews in this study.

[10 marks]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “evaluate” requires candidates to make an appraisal by weighing up strengths and limitations of the use of narrative interviews in this study.

Responses that use the term “experiment” as a generic term for “study” should not be penalized.

Narratives are individual interpretations of the world and it is known that such narratives influence people’s behaviour. A researcher may choose a narrative interview when the research is centred around something very personal because it allows participants to “tell their story” as they see it. This could be particularly relevant when dealing with how participants present themselves in their profiles on a social networking site as they do in this study.

Relevant strengths in the context of this study could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The participants can use their everyday language and communicate freely when they present their profile on the social networking site and give their reasons for choosing this particular profile.
- The narrative interview gives the participants the opportunity to present their own “reality” because they are not interrupted as much as they would be in a semi-structured interview.

Relevant limitations in the context of this study could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Narrative interviews that may produce large amounts of data are potentially difficult to analyse. This could be the case in this study where the researcher needed to combine information from the narratives with information from the profiles, for example, photographs.
- It can be difficult for a researcher to avoid interfering in the narrative interview by asking questions, which may bias the participants’ responses.

Although both strengths and limitations should be addressed, it does not have to be evenly balanced to gain high marks.

Candidates may choose to address semi-structured or focus groups as part of the evaluation of the narrative interview applied in this study. This should be given credit.

If a candidate addresses only strengths or only limitations, apply the markbands up to a maximum of **[5 marks]**.