

Markscheme

May 2015

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 **two or more** considerations involved **before** conducting the interviews in this study.

[10]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “explain” requires candidates to give a detailed account, including reasons, of why the researchers did make or could have made certain considerations *before* the interviews, referring to details of the study in the stimulus material.

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

Relevant considerations involved *before* conducting the interviews may include, but are not limited to:

- Ethical considerations such as getting informed consent from participants – for example, before the interview, researchers must explain the aim of the research, inform participants about their right to withdraw, get permission to record the interview, and ensure participants’ anonymity (researchers must respect the rights of the participants). Since the topic of the interview is very personal it is also important that participants feel comfortable. The fact that the researcher let the participants themselves choose a place for the interview could contribute to this.
- Sampling of appropriate participants. In this study a purposive sample of first-time expectant fathers was chosen. Since the interviews were conducted in Swedish, all first-time expectant fathers who could not speak Swedish were excluded from the study, and this was probably to make it easier for the Swedish researcher but using only Swedish speaking participants could limit generalization.
- Data recording: The researcher must decide beforehand if the interview is to be recorded. In this study audio-recording was used (the advantages of this are that it is easier to conduct the interview as the researcher can concentrate on the interaction with participants). This is particularly important as there was only one researcher in this study.
- Transcription: The researchers must decide how to transcribe (*eg* whether verbatim or postmodern) depending on the aim of the study (a postmodern transcript is more difficult to analyse so this could be a reason to choose verbatim as was done in this study).
- The type of interview used – here a narrative interview was chosen to ensure that participants could tell their own story without interruption and present it as they have experienced it themselves.

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

Candidates may explain considerations that were taken before the interviews in the actual study or considerations that could have been taken before the interviews. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

Candidates who address considerations during and after the interview can be credited if these considerations are explicitly linked to considerations involved *before* conducting the interview in this study.

Candidates who only address one consideration, or only ethical considerations, should be awarded up to a maximum of **[5]**.

2. To what extent can findings from this qualitative study be generalized? [10]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “to what extent” requires candidates to consider the merits or otherwise of the argument that the findings from this qualitative study can be generalized.

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

Generalization is not the purpose of qualitative research as such as it rather seeks to describe and seek insight into specific situations like in this study but three forms of generalization in qualitative research that may apply under certain circumstances are:

- **Representational generalization:** Findings from this study on expectant fathers could perhaps be applied to populations outside the study. For example, knowledge gathered in this study could be used to understand experiences of expectant fathers who match the selection criteria of this study. Since the sample is small the results cannot be statistically representative but if there is a clear description of the sample selection criteria (lines 5–9) and similar studies confirm the findings of this study (triangulation), it could be argued that generalization is to some extent possible. The problem is that not many studies have been performed so far. Another problem is that the study is conducted in Sweden where it is expected that parents share parenthood on equal terms – and this is not the case in many other countries.
- **Inferential generalization (or transferability):** In principle, findings from this study could be transferred to similar settings (context or space), that is, to other prenatal clinics that include expectant fathers in the preparation for parenthood. This requires rich/thick descriptions. However, since this study seems to be one of the first studies to explore this experience from the perspective of expectant fathers, generalization could be difficult except in this particular context unless other research studies support the findings from this study (triangulation).
- **Theoretical generalization:** If theoretical concepts and theory are developed based on rich/thick descriptions of the personal and social processes of becoming a father in this study, this could be used to conduct further research and by that perhaps contribute to further development of theory. In this study, the inductive content analysis revealed a number of themes (for example, all men felt that the pregnancy was “a time of transition” characterized by certain emotional and social changes). Such findings could contribute to development of theory that could be further investigated in other studies on the same topic.

Candidates may discuss one form of generalization to demonstrate depth of knowledge, or may discuss several forms of generalization in order to demonstrate breadth of knowledge. Both approaches are equally acceptable as long as they are specifically linked to the study.

Candidates may, in their discussion of generalization of findings from this qualitative study, briefly refer to statistical generalization (quantitative research) as part of their argument. This should be given credit as long as the main focus is on generalization from qualitative research.

Candidates may refer to the possibility of comparing findings from one qualitative study to other qualitative studies without using specific terminology relating to generalization, such as “representational”, “inferential” and “theoretical”.

Candidates who only discuss statistical generalization without any reference to qualitative research should be awarded [0].

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

[10]

Refer to the paper 3 markbands when awarding marks.

The command term “evaluate” requires candidates to make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations of the use of the narrative interview in this qualitative study. Although a discussion of both strengths and limitations is required, it does not have to be evenly balanced to gain high marks.

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

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

- The use of an opening question such as the one referred to in the stimulus material “Can you tell me about your own experiences of the pregnancy?” could stimulate an in-depth narrative about each participant’s individual experience. This approach, specific to the narrative interview, provides insight into how the expectant fathers construct meaning in their lives compared to being guided by specific questions. This means that rich data is collected.
- Participants can talk freely and in their own way without being interrupted as the interviewer is only supposed to ask questions that actually stimulate the interviewee’s own narrative. This could limit the effect of participant expectations as well as researcher expectations.
- The narrative interview is useful in qualitative research exploring personally sensitive issues like this study because it gives participants the opportunity to talk in their own language and develop their own story without interruption. The narrative approach thus enables the expectant fathers to actually reveal how and why they think and feel as they do, for example with reference to the stimulus material, such as “feelings of insufficiency and inadequacy” and “feelings of responsibility” (line 25).

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

- It is very time consuming to transcribe and analyse the huge amounts of data from narrative interviews. However, since there were only seven interviews the amount of material to transcribe and analyse may be manageable.
- The narrative interview may go in all directions because it is mainly the participants who decide what to tell, so it may be that some potentially useful data is not obtained with this method. However, in this study the researcher was able to see a pattern in the different experiences (lines 23–24).
- There may be ethical issues involved in having people talk about very personal experiences.

As part of the evaluation, candidates may refer to alternative interview methods. This is perfectly acceptable if the main focus is on the use of the narrative interview. For example, candidates could argue that the researcher would probably not get a deep understanding of each expectant father’s experience if she had used an alternative way of interviewing such as focus group or semi-structured interview and could give reasons for why these methods may not be as useful to achieve the aim of the study.

Responses that refer to only strengths or only limitations of the narrative interview should be awarded up to a maximum of [5].