

Markscheme

November 2016

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 **one** effect of participant expectations **and one** effect of researcher bias that could be relevant to 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 and causes, of one effect of participant expectations and one effect of researcher bias that could be relevant to this study.

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

Participant expectations can be described as participant factors that could influence the outcome of the research.

Effects of participants’ expectations in this study could include, but are not limited to:

- Participants’ ideas of the study could lead them to give answers they think are in line with what they think the researchers want, which would bias the data. This could be particularly true if there is a good rapport between the interviewer and the participants. In this study, the participants could perhaps assume that the researcher is more interested in the positive aspects of teenage motherhood than the negative and therefore adjust their answers in that direction. However, it is very difficult to check if this happens.
- Social desirability effects could be a factor in a socially sensitive study like the one in the stimulus material: participants may behave in ways that they think will give them social approval. In this study it could be that the young mothers answer the researchers’ questions in ways that make them appear in a better light because they don’t want to admit to undesirable traits such as not being able to live up to their role as a mother. They could for example say that they feel happier than they actually do in order to avoid negative reactions. If this is the case the results would be biased.

Effects of researcher bias can be described as researcher factors such as the researchers’ beliefs or values that could potentially bias the research process. For example, the researchers argue that previous research on teenage mothers has mainly focused on the negative consequences of early motherhood (lines 6–9 “According to them, previous research has primarily focused...”).

Effects of researcher bias in this study could include, but are not limited to:

- Collection of data (interviewing): the researchers conducted the interviews themselves and they may have influenced the outcome of the interview by nodding and smiling more when participants respond as expected and smiling less when they give less expected answers.
- Data analysis: the researchers’ beliefs and expectations of a more positive way of experiencing early motherhood could influence the way the data is analyzed. This could be dealt with by having another researcher check the analysis (credibility check).

If a candidate explains more than one effect of participant expectations or more than one effect of researcher bias that could be relevant to the study, credit should be given only to the first explanation.

If a candidate addresses only participant expectations or only researcher bias apply the markbands up to a maximum of [5].

2. Evaluate the purposive sampling technique used 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 purposive sampling technique used in the 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.

The purposive sample is constructed to serve a specific need or purpose. In this study, the researchers chose the participants because they met salient characteristics that are relevant to the research study (selection criteria). For example, in this study, the mother should have given birth to the child before she was twenty and the child should live with her.

Strengths of the purposive sampling method could include, but are not limited to:

- Because the participants accurately represent the topic under investigation they could provide rich data.
- It is relatively easy to select a sample once the selection criteria are clear. In this study, seventeen potential participants were found through a database but only nine of them agreed to be interviewed. It is a small sample but the participants all fit the selection criteria and eventually, more participants could be recruited in the same way or perhaps, through snowballing.

Limitations of the purposive sampling method could include, but are not limited to:

- Sampling may be biased. For example, in this study only nine out of seventeen originally found to match the selection criteria agreed to participate. It could be that they were the ones who were particularly positive about their experience as a young mother.
- The sample is not representative in a statistical sense because it is based on specific criteria so it is difficult to generalize. However, in this qualitative study representational or theoretical generalization could be considered.

Candidates may refer to other sampling methods but this should only be credited if it is done as part of their evaluation of the purposive sampling method used in this study.

Responses that refer to only strengths or only limitations of the purposive sampling method used in this study should be awarded up to a maximum of [5].

3. Explain **two or more** ethical considerations relevant to 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 or causes, of two or more ethical considerations that could be relevant to the research study in the stimulus material.

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

Relevant ethical considerations in this study include, but are not limited to:

- The researchers informed the participants about the study and their rights before the participants gave their consent.
- Anonymity (and confidentiality) is particularly important in a qualitative study like this one exploring personal and sensitive issues around teenage pregnancy and motherhood. The researchers made sure that the names of the participants were anonymous by changing them in the final report (line 15). The stimulus material mentions that there are negative expectations surrounding teenage pregnancy so the young mothers could feel stigmatized so anonymity is very important – especially as the research is conducted in the city where the young mothers live.
- The researchers also presented their project to a local research ethics committee in order to be sure that they would not violate ethical rules.
- Protection of participants – the interviews were conducted in the participants’ homes. This could be in order to make them feel more at ease discussing this sensitive topic.

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

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

If a candidate explains only one ethical consideration, apply the markbands up to a maximum of **[5]**.