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Psychology

Higher level

Paper 3

19 May 2023

Zone A afternoon | Zone B morning | Zone C morning

1 hour

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open 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 **[24 marks]**.

The stimulus material below describes a qualitative study on smoking based on cognitive dissonance theory. This theory suggests that people select and interpret information in ways that allow their beliefs to fit their decisions and behaviours.

Smoking is a habit that may lead to cancer. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore which strategies smokers use to avoid the psychological discomfort of knowing that smoking can be dangerous to their health.

5 The female researcher was an ex-smoker who conducted the research herself. A purposive sample of six smokers (two females and four males, with a mean age of 29 years) was recruited through the researcher’s own social network. The selection criteria required participants to have smoked for at least five years and to have tried to quit at least twice without success.

10 The participants were informed that the study was about smoking and problems in quitting. They were also told they could withdraw at any time. They each signed an informed consent form that included permission to record the interviews.

15 The interview guide included questions that were closed and open-ended. Each interview was conducted for 45 minutes, on a one-to-one basis. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed by the researcher herself. The participants were asked to check the transcripts and the researcher’s conclusions before publication of the final report. Another researcher checked the findings.

The researcher identified several themes for not giving up smoking, for example:

- Optimism: “I haven’t had any health problems so far and I doubt I will have any in the future.”
- Discrediting research: “Research on the effects of smoking is probably exaggerating the dangers.”
- 20 • Protection of self: “I will simply be too stressed if I don’t smoke.”

The researcher concluded that the participants in her study were unable to quit smoking despite their desire to do so and avoided psychological discomfort using cognitive strategies.

Answer **all** of the following three questions, referring to the stimulus material in your answers. Marks will be awarded for demonstration of knowledge and understanding of research methodology.

1. (a) Identify the research method used and outline **two** characteristics of the method. [3]
(b) Describe the sampling method used in the study. [3]
(c) Suggest **one** alternative **or one** additional research method that could be used to investigate the aim of the original study, giving **one** reason for your choice. [3]
 2. Describe the ethical considerations that were applied in the study and explain if further ethical considerations could be applied. [6]
 3. Discuss how a researcher could ensure that the results of the study are credible. [9]
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