



# **MARKSCHEME**

**MAY 2005**

**PSYCHOLOGY**

**Higher Level**

**Paper 3**

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1. (a) **Identify *three* types of triangulation and briefly describe how each of these may be applied in qualitative research.** **[6 marks]**

Candidates may select from any of four types mentioned in the syllabus that come from Denzin’s (1988) original types.

- Data triangulation
- Investigator triangulation
- Theory triangulation
- Methodological triangulation

Past examples have shown that many candidates are familiar with the last of these. Examiners should not award marks for the use of the experimental method unless it is used explicitly in a case study context. Since the question requires application, candidates must make the selected types relevant. For example, investigator triangulation can be used when a team of researchers each interviews participants one at a time. The resulting interview may then be subject to a type of content analysis where each of the researchers contributes to the analytical process. **[1 mark]** should be awarded for the simple identification of the triangulation method. **[2 marks]** should be awarded for each type, with appropriate and clear description of its application.

- (b) **Discuss how the use of *one* type of triangulation may affect credibility in qualitative research.** **[4 marks]**

It is claimed by some researchers that in many examples of qualitative research the aim is to let the participant “...tell his or her own story”; that it is not the task of the researcher to aim for credibility, but the decision for this quality should be with the reader. In qualitative research the concept of credibility does **not** have the same connotation as consistency or reliability where these two terms are used in quantitative research.

Triangulation is used in qualitative research to give more credence to its findings.

The term ‘trustworthiness’ may be a more appropriate word to use for triangulation. Despite these points credibility can be supported as a general outcome of triangulation if separate methods, for example, do result in fairly close agreement. But as Bloor (1997) points out, different methods can give rise to logical and practical difficulties where findings disagree to a degree that makes their direct comparison problematic.

Award **[3 to 4 marks]** for a balanced and informed discussion of the affect on credibility of (one type of) triangulation.

Award **[1 to 2 marks]** for a limited discussion of the affect on credibility of (one type of) triangulation.

2. **Explain the process of applying content analysis to printed material from an email interview.** **[10 marks]**

*Refer to the markbands for paper 3 when marking this question.*

Email interviews enable the researcher to download both questions and answers on to hard copy. The process of analysis starts with a numbering of each line that is produced by the respondent. This process is to identify particular quotations and to facilitate future links in the data. Normally the researchers then read the transcript several times to identify raw data words or phrases that appear to be important to the respondent. Limited credit up to **[4 marks]** should be given for candidates who claim that it is solely the number of times, or frequency, that words or phrases are used that determines what is important. These mechanical methods have generally been dismissed as belonging to a quantitative, positivistic approach that has little to do with the interpretative approach that characterises good qualitative research. The continual use of the theme can of course denote importance but it is not frequency alone that determines key themes. Once the raw data has been identified, usually by more than one researcher, then the first, second and third highest order themes are identified in logical process.

Candidates who show little understanding of this process and the logic that is behind it should receive low marks. In accordance with the mark bands for Paper 3 this style of limited response should receive between **[3 to 4 marks]**. The content analysis itself is interpretative and it should be recognised that there is no one correct interpretation of data. It is relevant that researchers rely heavily on the transparency of their content analysis process by making transcripts. Implications of confidentiality and anonymity should certainly be observed throughout the process. Astute candidates should be aware of these points and consistency in this regard should lead to very high marks.

In the context of this question emails are a point of reference.

3. **Examine *one* sampling technique used in qualitative data collection.** **[10 marks]**

Most of the sampling techniques used in qualitative methods can also be used in qualitative research. However the sample numbers involved in the latter are usually much smaller. Quantitative methods frequently employ inferential tests based upon samples that are randomly selected from a parent population.

Since qualitative research is not based on inferential statistics then random selection techniques are not needed. Candidates who suggest this technique need to justify their choice in a clear, coherent manner. If they fail to do so then a maximum of **[4 marks]** could be obtained.

Other sampling techniques should each be justified on their merits and in this case convenience sampling could also be chosen, although candidates should demonstrate their knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of this technique.

Some candidates may also consider generalisation and the manner in which purposive sampling, for example, may impact on claims for generalisation. Providing that this is done in a relevant manner it should attract credit.

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