

Evaluating research

IB DP Psychology HL research extension and Paper 3 full package

1. Evaluating research at a glance

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IB Psychology HL extension: quantitative and qualitative paradigms with their quality criteria, qualitative sampling and analysis with trustworthiness, and the Paper 3 skill of evaluating an unseen study methodologically and ethically.

Must-know: reliability and validity versus credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability; purposive, snowball, convenience with saturation; thematic analysis steps; inter-rater $16/20 = 80$ percent; the bias family answered by reflexivity; Paper 3 Q1-Q3 with every point anchored in the stimulus.

2. The two paradigms

The two paradigms

Quantitative research tests hypotheses with numbers, controls and statistical decisions: it answers how much and whether. Qualitative research explores meanings through thick description - it answers what and how it feels. Not rivals on one scale: $r = +0.42$ between study time and grades says nothing about mechanism; the follow-up interviews answer what the correlation cannot.

Qualitative sampling is deliberate: purposive selects information-rich cases; snowball recruits through networks where no frame exists; convenience takes the accessible. The stopping rule is SATURATION - the sixth interview repeating the first five - not sample size.

3. Analysis and trustworthiness

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Thematic analysis: transcribe, read wholly, code, group into themes, check against the whole set and disconfirming passages, name each theme with extracts. Content analysis counts the qualitative and inherits reliability: two raters agreeing on 16 of 20 statements is 80 percent, reported and improved by sharpening the coding manual.

Trustworthiness: credibility (triangulation, member checking), transferability (thick description), dependability (audit trail), confirmability (reflexivity). The bias family - observer effect, interviewer bias, expectancy - is named by reflexivity, not wished away.

4. Paper 3: the scenario

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Q1 reads the study: method, sampling, data type, what a finding suggests. Q2 discusses method: strengths and limitations named from the stimulus, each with a consequence. Q3 evaluates: credibility, transferability and ethics together, then ONE modification with its trade-off - the marks live in the integration.

Worked scenario: six semi-structured interviews, one year group, three themes on question-avoidance. Credibility strong on extracts, weak on single-coder and no member checking; transferability hedged by thick description; ethics needs skip rights on a sensitive topic; modification: second coder plus member checking, traded against time and rehearsal.

Check yourself

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The two paradigms with their criteria and the $r = +0.42$ example of complementarity.

Purposive, snowball, convenience with saturation as the stopping rule.

Thematic analysis steps; inter-rater $16/20 = 80$ percent with the improvement route.

The four trustworthiness criteria with their serving practices; the bias family; Paper 3 Q1-Q3 with the worked scenario.