

How to 'Design-a-Study' for Paper 4

Paper 2, Section C will require learners:

- (a) Design a study on (a named topic) with using (a named methodology) {10}
- (b) Explain the psychological and methodological evidence on which your study is based. [8]

For example:

People who take biochemical treatments (such as SSRIs) for depression often stop taking them when they feel better, rather than continuing recommended use per the doctor.

- (a) Design a study using an interview to investigate why people stop taking their medication for depression despite advice from their doctor. [10]
- (b) Explain the psychological and methodological evidence on which your study is based. [8]

How to approach this question:

For the Design-a-Study [10], "Candidates should describe the why, who, what, when, where, and how."

- Why- (purpose) why is the study being conducted?
- Who- (sample) include the Ps, TYPE OF SAMPLE, etc- this is all hypothetical, but give reasonable details
- What are Ps doing & How is data being collected- **MUST BE INCLUDED**- what are you manipulating (IV) (if necessary depending on type of study), what data are you collecting (DV), how would it be accomplished (include method- like observation, self-report, psychometrics, etc.)
 - As needed, operationalize the IVs and DVs of your study
 - As needed, include sample questions (such as when using interviews)
 - Include brief procedure details
 - Though not needed, but it makes you feel better, you can simply MENTION ethical issues
- When- type of study with SNAPSHOT OR LONGITUDINAL- can also give hypothetical time of day, etc.
- Where- provide a hypothetical location of study

For the 8-point follow-up [8]

- This carries 8 marks
 - 4 marks for explaining appropriate psychological evidence (research that supports your study)
 - 4 marks for explaining methodology
 - include the advantages and disadvantages of the method you used

SAMPLE RESPONSE on the next page

1. People who take biochemical treatments (such as SSRIs) for depression often stop taking them when they feel better, rather than continuing recommended use per the doctor.

(a) Design a study using an interview to investigate why people stop taking their medication for depression despite advice from their doctor. [10]

Who- 10 volunteers who agreed to take part
What- Ps self-report on why they stop meds
When- regular visit, 20 mins, snap
Where- arranged at Dr office (confidential)
Why- see why Ps stop taking meds
How- semi-structured interview- open/closed-ended, quan/qual, categorize

One way a researcher can investigate why patients with a form of depression stop taking their medication despite doctor's advice could be through a semi-structured interview. In preparing for this investigation, the researcher could recruit a doctor to ask his patients who fit this criteria if they would be willing to discuss this further in an interview. This would be a self-selecting sample from the doctor's group of patients who are asked if they would like to participate after a session is finished. For example, after the doctor and patient have their routine office visit discussing the patient's needs, the doctor would then ask the patient if they would be willing to discuss the topic further with another researcher before their next scheduled follow-up visit. For the patients who volunteer to be part of this, the interview would take place during the next regularly scheduled office visit before seeing the doctor. These would be face-to-face interviews with each of the interviews being recorded (with permission) so that the researcher could go back and review the data at a later period. Each patient would have one interview that would take approximately 20 minutes of their time, making it a snapshot investigation. To make the study ethical, before the interviews, the researcher would provide a letter of informed consent, detailing the purpose of the interview, assuring the Ps that their identity would remain confidential, and ensuring the Ps' privacy by only asking questions related to taking medication.

The semi-structured interviews would focus on the topic of why people stop taking medication against the doctor's advice (defined as not taking the prescription regularly, or at all, and/or not taking the recommended dosage). For the interviews, the researcher would have a set of prepared open-ended questions (such as "What is your main reason for not continuing with the medication") and closed-ended questions (such as "Do you feel better or worse when not taking the prescription?") to ask each patient. The use of the semi-structured style would enable the researcher to delete, modify, or add new questions based upon the feedback to the questions. For the interviews, each patient would be expected to self-report their thoughts and experiences with the medication. These interviews would enable the collection of quantitative data (e.g. number of times they took the prescribed dosage) and qualitative data (e.g. facial expressions) for later review. After the researcher completes the interviews and reviews the recordings (as needed) for accuracy, s/he could then categorize the data into labels such as 'benefits of stopping medication' and 'drawbacks of stopping medication' to examine themes among the patients' responses. If needed, the researcher may also conduct follow-up interviews with patients for clarification of something that they may have said earlier.

(b) Explain the psychological and methodological evidence on which your study is based. [8]

In this section, answers will vary, but should be based upon:

- the use of the biochemical treatment of SSRIs for 4 marks (a solid paragraph)
- strengths/weaknesses of using an interview (such as being able to obtain P's thoughts, but issue of reliability in self-reporting (another solid paragraph))

Commented [SA1]: BRIEFLY OUTLINE the who, what, when, where, why, & how- suggested to label the categories in this order, but fill them in first by why, who, when, where, then what & how (as you would setup the response below)

Leave the outline here as it is- do not cross it out as the grader can refer to it if you forget to write about something

Commented [SA2]: SUGGESTED to arrange the writing to include the 1st paragraph on the why (aim), who (sample), and when/where in introducing the study
For the 2nd paragraph, clearly discuss what (Ps are expected to do during the study) and how (is data being collected and analyzed)- yes, there is overlap with the what/how

Commented [SA3]: Underline the technique given to use

Commented [SA4]: The 'who'- Underline the main parts to the study, such as sample here- use the terminology!

Commented [SA5]: Describe how the sample is recruited if volunteer or where they would be from if opportunity

Commented [SA6]: Underline the 'where'

Commented [SA7]: The 'when'

Commented [SA8]: Identify the type of study

Commented [SA9]: Always best to include a blurb about ethics to clearly show the grader that you thought about it

Commented [SA10]: 'operationalize' the ideas

Commented [SA11]: For interviews/surveys/questionnaires, you MUST INCLUDE SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Commented [SA12]: The 'what' are Ps doing

Commented [SA13]: The 'how' data is being collected and analyzed