

## **Sensorveiledning HMET5120 (spring, 2019)**

### ***About the exam***

This exam is divided into two parts. The first part (assignment a and b) consists of general questions about qualitative methods. The second part (assignment c, d, e and f) consists of more specific questions related to the attached article by Idunn et al. (2011), titled: “Treatment decisions on antidepressants in nursing homes: A qualitative study”.

The students have been instructed to answer all of the six exam questions.

### ***About the grading***

Each question counts about 1/6 of the final grade. However, the final grading is based on the total impression of the answers. For example, if a student has provided a very good answer to one or more questions, it might positively influence the total impression.

The answers are evaluated on the basis of detail (i.e. to what degree the student demonstrates knowledge about the topic), and whether the student is able to include/discuss relevant examples, and/or relevant connections between qualitative concepts (“independent thinking”). In order to receive the grade A, the student must demonstrate strong knowledge about the topics, as well as a high degree of independent thinking. The grade C reflects “a good performance in most areas” and a “reasonable degree of judgment and independent thinking”.

### **Part 1 (general questions)**

#### ***(a) What are some factors to consider when using (individual) interviews as a research method?***

This question is quite open, and gives the students a chance to demonstrate their knowledge about qualitative interviews as a research method. It is relevant to describe different types of interviews and how they differ from each other (e.g. semi-structured interviews and narrative interviews). Students might also describe how the researcher can use different types of questions (e.g. grand tour questions, etc), and how the researcher can put the respondents at ease. The use of different sampling strategies could also be mentioned. Students might also mention some of the ethical aspects the researcher should take into consideration (e.g. how to preserve the interviewee’s anonymity).

Interviews as a research method are described in chapter 5 in Green and Thorogood (2018), and in some of the articles on the syllabus, specifically: Leech (2002) and Tansey (2007).

***(b) Discuss some advantages and disadvantages of using group interviews as a research method. (You are not required to differentiate between different types of group interviews, but you can do so if you want).***

Group interviews are described in chapter 6 in Green and Thorogood (2018). Students can find examples of advantages and disadvantages/limitations of group interviews in this chapter, as well as in the lecture notes. It's good if the students provide some examples when discussing advantages/disadvantages. For example, Green & Thorogood (2018, p. 156) describe a relevant study of users' views of health care services in South Africa. Students might also provide their own examples.

## **Part 2 (questions related to the article)**

***(c) Please describe the aim/objective of the study and discuss why you think a qualitative approach is relevant for answering the aim.***

This assignment gives the students a chance to describe some characteristics of qualitative research (for example from: chapter 2 in Green & Thorogood (2018), the article by Malterud (2001) titled "Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines", or the first lecture) and to relate these to the research aim/objective of the article. The students are not required to give a definition of qualitative methods/qualitative research, but should demonstrate that they are familiar with some of the characteristics. Students might also discuss the research aim/objective in relation to different theoretical perspectives (positivism/realism, phenomenology, social constructivism).

***(d) Explain how transferability is understood in qualitative research. How do the findings in the study matter outside of the immediate context in which the research took place?***

"Transferability" (the students have been told that they can use the terms "generalizability", "transferability" and "external validity" interchangeably) is a key concept in qualitative research. The concept is mentioned in the article by Kuper et al. (2008), the article by Malterud (2001) titled "Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines", and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture. In order to answer this question, students have to explore and describe the context of the study (e.g. where the study took place, etc.). Students might also mention that some of the results/themes from the study could be relevant outside of Norwegian or Scandinavian nursing homes (e.g. time pressures facing healthcare personnel).

***(e) You were previously asked to discuss some advantages and disadvantages of using group interviews. Try to relate some of these advantages/disadvantages to the study.***

Students should be able to discuss different advantages and disadvantages of group interviews in relation to the study. For example, separating the participants into “homogenous” groups might have been an advantage, because it may have prevented hierarchical barriers/ allowed all participants to speak up. However, students might also discuss whether this decision might have had some disadvantages as well.

***(f) What is meant by reflexivity? Is reflexivity addressed in the study?***

Reflexivity is a central concept in qualitative research. It is described several places in the syllabus, such as in the article by Kuper et al. (2008) and the article by Malterud (2001) titled “Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines”. Students might mention that reflexivity is addressed to some degree. For example, the authors do address their own backgrounds, but they do not seem to critically reflect over the influence of their background on the study.