



## Psychology Higher level Paper 3

1 hour

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### Instructions to candidates

- Do not turn over 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 is based on a study about the effects of cell phone use at the dinner table and how this can affect parent-child interactions.**

Mobile phones are everywhere and they are consuming more and more of our time. Could this be having an effect on family life? The researchers who conducted this study wanted to investigate how cell phones might influence the interactions of parents and children.

The researchers used a nonparticipant, covert observational method by watching a total of 55 caregivers eating with 1 or more young children in fast food restaurants in Boston. Observers wrote detailed field notes, continuously describing all aspects of mobile device use and child and caregiver behavior during the meal.

The sample was gathered by visiting a range of different restaurants and studying the people who were present at the time. The researchers would buy food and sit near a family, or if no family was present they could sit at a table and wait until a family who met their inclusion criteria (one parent and at least one child) sat down to eat at the table in front of them. They would then take notes on what they observed. They took detailed notes on the parents and child's behaviour, especially how they interacted when the parent was using their phone. They even including in their report things like what types of activities the parents were doing on their phones (e.g. reading emails or visiting websites).

This study was considered exempt from review by the Boston University Medical Center Institutional Review Board. Researchers received training on how to respond if questioned about their observations; however, at no time were the researchers questioned by others in the restaurant.

The field notes were qualitatively analyzed to identify common themes and the results showed that caregivers were often completely absorbed in their mobile phone use. They found that phone use decreased the caregivers' responsiveness and their conversation with their children and "highly absorbed caregivers often responded harshly to child misbehavior." They also found that kids who were ignored would make increasingly demanding gestures for attention (e.g. one group of boys starting singing Jingle Bells Batman Smells in increasingly loud voices to get their Dad's attention).

The study generated a number of questions that could be applied in future studies. For example, are some mobile phone activities more absorbing than others? Can using a mobile phone have positive effects on parent-child interactions? What are the long-term effects of exposure to "present absence" (having a parent physically present but doing other things)? The researchers also plan on using this study as the basis for a laboratory-based observation of mealtimes which they will record and use to create a quantitative way of measuring parent-child interactions in future studies.

Radesky, J.S., Kistin, C.J., Zuckerman, B., Nitzberg, K., Gross, J., Kaplan-Sanoff, M., Augustyn, M., & Silverstein, M.E. (2014). Patterns of mobile device use by caregivers and children during meals in fast food restaurants. *Pediatrics*, 133 4, e843-9 .

Answer all of the following questions.

- Identify** the method used and outline two characteristics of the method. (3)
  - Describe** the sampling method used in the study. (3)
  - Suggest** an alternative or additional research method giving one reason for your choice. (3)
- Describe** the ethical considerations in reporting the results and **explain** ethical considerations that could be taken into account when applying the findings of the study. (6)
- Discuss** how the researchers in the study could avoid bias. (9)