5.6 Crime Statistics and the Media: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological vocabulary and name sociologists where you can.

1 Using your knowledge of moral panics and deviancy amplification, explain what is happening in this scenario.

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

2 Evaluate the view that the media is the main cause of crime and deviance in society. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one point of view.

(Total for Question 2 is 12 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

3 Explain how social media might allow a deviancy amplification spiral to develop more quickly than through traditional print or broadcast media alone.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 State one way police forces or other official bodies sometimes try to correct exaggerated media impressions of a crime trend.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 5.6 Crime Statistics and the Media: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies the newspaper's sensationalised, repeated coverage as consistent with a moral panic	**B1**
identifies the teenagers being presented as a folk devil, a visible scapegoat for wider anxieties	**B1**
explains the mismatch between the dramatic coverage and the small real increase in police data as characteristic of media exaggeration relative to the actual scale of the issue	**B1**
explains the councillors' call for a curfew as an example of a stronger societal or control reaction following amplified media coverage	**B1**
identifies this stronger reaction as illustrating the amplification spiral	**B1**
accurate use of terminology throughout (moral panic, folk devil, deviancy amplification)	**B1**

Answer: The newspaper's dramatic, repeated coverage of a small real rise in anti-social behaviour is consistent with a moral panic, presenting local teenagers as a folk devil; the gap between the sensationalised coverage and the modest police data, followed by councillors calling for a curfew, illustrates a deviancy amplification spiral, where media exaggeration provokes a stronger control response.

Question 2

Level 4 A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH the case that the media can cause crime AND the case that its main role is reacting to and amplifying crime, supported by accurate reference to Cohen's study. Strengths and weaknesses of each view are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached. Sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently throughout. **10-12**

Level 3 A clear evaluation that explains both the media-as-cause case and the media-as-amplifier case, with some accurate detail. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported. **7-9**

Level 2 Some relevant explanation of the media's role in crime, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between the two views. **4-6**

Level 1 One or two isolated, undeveloped points about the media and crime, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail. **1-3**

Level 0 No relevant content. **0**

Indicative content:

- Case for the media as a cause of crime: claims that exposure to violent or criminal content can encourage imitation or 'copycat' behaviour, particularly among a small number of vulnerable individuals.
- Case for the media as a cause of crime continued: some argue repeated media coverage can desensitise audiences to violence or glamorise certain deviant lifestyles.
- Case for the media mainly amplifying, rather than causing, crime: Cohen's concept of the moral panic and folk devil shows the media often exaggerating and sensationalising existing deviance rather than originating it.
- Case continued: the deviancy amplification spiral shows how media coverage can provoke a stronger societal reaction, which produces more recorded incidents, which the media then reports as confirmation, without the media having caused the underlying behaviour.
- Evaluation of the media-as-cause case: critics argue direct-cause claims are difficult to prove, since the great majority of people who consume violent or criminal media content never offend.
- Evaluation of the amplification case: some sociologists question how far Cohen's 1972 findings, from a very different media era, apply unchanged to fast-moving modern and social media.
- A balanced conclusion should weigh the media's better-evidenced role in amplifying, labelling and reacting to crime and deviance against the more contested and harder-to-prove claim that media content directly causes offending.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Question 3

identifies that social media allows stories, images and comments to be shared and reshared very quickly to large audiences	**B1**
development, e.g. this can accelerate the amplification spiral Cohen described	**B1**
further point, e.g. generating an intense reaction to a story within hours rather than the weeks a 1960s newspaper story might have taken	**B1**
correct link back to Cohen's original spiral concept explained in Q4	**B1**

Answer: Social media allows stories, images and comments to be shared very quickly to large audiences, which can accelerate the amplification spiral Cohen described, generating an intense reaction within hours rather than the weeks a 1960s newspaper story might have taken.

Question 4

identifies a genuine method, e.g. publishing official statistics or public statements to reassure the public	**B1**
brief development, e.g. aiming to provide a more accurate picture alongside media coverage	**B1**

Answer: Police forces or official bodies sometimes publish official statistics or public statements to reassure the public and provide a more accurate picture alongside media coverage.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk