



GSOC.ED4 Ethnicity and Educational Achievement

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 75 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

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

- 1** Following the 1999 Macpherson Inquiry into the investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence, which term describes an organisation's routine procedures, attitudes or behaviour disadvantaging a group, even without any single individual intending to discriminate?

- ☐ A) Institutional racism
- ☐ B) Cultural capital
- ☐ C) The correspondence principle
- ☐ D) Value consensus

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Sociologists use the term 'institutional racism' to explain some of the patterns discussed in this pack.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** The sociologist David Gillborn has researched ethnicity and educational inequality in England.

- (a)** Explain what Gillborn's research has focused on in relation to ethnicity and education. (2)
- (b)** Explain one of Gillborn's arguments about how school practices might disadvantage some minority ethnic pupils. (2)

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4 The sociologist Cecile Wright carried out classroom observation research on teacher-pupil interaction and ethnicity.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5 The sociologist Tony Sewell researched the experiences of Black Caribbean boys in British schools.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

- 6 State one criticism that is often made of institutional racism explanations of ethnic differences in achievement.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

- 7 State one criticism that is often made of explanations that focus on peer-group or subculture pressures, such as those studied by Sewell.

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

8 Language can also affect some pupils' access to education.

(a) Explain how not yet having full fluency in English might affect some pupils' achievement. (2)

(b) Explain one way schools can support pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL). (2)

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

9 Sociologists are careful not to treat 'ethnic minority pupils' as a single, uniform group when discussing achievement.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

10 Which sociologist carried out classroom observation research finding that some teachers held lower expectations of Black pupils?

- ☐ A) Cecile Wright
- ☐ B) Sue Sharpe
- ☐ C) Ann Oakley
- ☐ D) Diane Reay

(Total for Question 10 is 1 mark)

11 Cultural and community attitudes towards education have also been discussed as a possible factor in achievement.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

- 12** State one way government or school policy has tried to address ethnic inequality in educational achievement.

(Total for Question 12 is 2 marks)

- 13** Some sociologists, such as Gillborn and Wright, emphasise institutional factors such as teacher expectations and school policy as the main explanation for ethnic differences in achievement. Others emphasise cultural, language or community factors.

Evaluate the view that institutional factors within schools, rather than cultural or family background, are the main explanation for differences in achievement between ethnic groups. In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one explanation.

(Total for Question 13 is 12 marks)

- 14** Sociologists distinguish 'ethnicity' from the older, discredited idea of biological 'race'.

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

15 Sociologists usually measure 'achievement' using exam results, but this method has strengths and limitations.

(a) Explain one limitation of using exam results alone to compare achievement between ethnic groups. (2)

(b) Explain one strength of using exam results for this comparison. (2)

(Total for Question 15 is 4 marks)

16 Explain one similarity between how sociologists explain achievement gaps linked to social class, gender and ethnicity.

(Total for Question 16 is 2 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.ED4 Ethnicity and Educational Achievement

Question 1

- **B1** A (institutional racism)
- **Answer: A**

Question 2

- **B1** discrimination against an ethnic group built into an organisation's normal procedures, attitudes or culture, rather than the actions of one prejudiced individual (oe)
- **B1** development, e.g. the term was defined following the 1999 Macpherson Inquiry into the investigation of the murder of Stephen Lawrence
- **Answer: Discrimination built into an organisation's normal procedures or culture, rather than the actions of one prejudiced individual; the term was defined following the 1999 Macpherson Inquiry.**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** identifies that Gillborn's research examines how the education system may systematically disadvantage some minority ethnic groups
- (a) **B1** development, e.g. including how teachers' expectations, exclusion rates and school policies can differ by ethnicity
- **(a) Answer: Gillborn's research examines how the education system may systematically disadvantage some minority ethnic groups, including through differences in teacher expectations, exclusion rates and school policies.**
- (b) **B1** identifies an argument, e.g. that some school policies and practices, even where not intentionally racist, can produce unequal outcomes for some minority ethnic pupils
- (b) **B1** development, e.g. Gillborn linked this to disproportionately high exclusion rates found among some groups of Black pupils
- **(b) Answer: Gillborn argued school policies, even when not intentionally racist, can produce unequal outcomes, linking this to disproportionately high exclusion rates found among some groups of Black pupils.**

Question 4

- **B1** identifies that Wright's research involved observing interactions between teachers and pupils of different ethnic backgrounds in the classroom
- **B1** finding, e.g. she found some teachers held lower expectations of some Black pupils, and were more likely to assume they would cause disruption
- **B1** development, e.g. this could lead some Black pupils to be disciplined more quickly, or placed in lower sets, than their ability warranted
- **B1** further development, e.g. Wright also found some able Black pupils could be overlooked, because teacher attention focused on managing perceived behaviour rather than recognising achievement
- **Answer: Cecile Wright's classroom observation research found some teachers held lower expectations of some Black pupils, disciplining them more quickly or placing them in lower sets than their ability warranted, sometimes overlooking able pupils in the process.**

Question 5

- **B1** identifies that Sewell's research examined how some Black Caribbean boys' responses to school were shaped partly by peer-group identity
- **B1** finding, e.g. he found some boys faced peer pressure to conform to an anti-school, exaggeratedly masculine identity that could clash with school's behavioural expectations
- **B1** development, e.g. Sewell argued this identity partly developed as a response to negative stereotyping and low expectations from teachers and wider society
- **B1** further development, e.g. he also identified other Black Caribbean boys who resisted this pressure and remained highly engaged and successful at school, showing responses varied within the same ethnic group
- **Answer: Tony Sewell's research found some Black Caribbean boys faced peer pressure towards an anti-school masculine identity, partly a response to negative stereotyping, while other boys from the same background resisted this and remained highly engaged, showing responses varied within the group.**

Question 6

- **B1** identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it can be difficult to prove that unequal outcomes are really caused by institutional racism rather than other factors, such as social class
- **B1** brief development, e.g. or that focusing only on institutional factors can risk overlooking genuine variation in outcomes between different minority ethnic groups
- **Answer: Critics argue it can be difficult to prove that unequal outcomes are really caused by institutional racism rather than other factors such as class, and that this focus can overlook genuine variation between different ethnic groups.**

Question 7

- **B1** identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. not all boys from the same ethnic background take part in the described subculture, so it cannot explain underachievement for the whole group
- **B1** brief development, e.g. or that a focus on peer-group behaviour can divert attention away from institutional factors such as teacher expectations
- **Answer: Not all boys from the same background take part in the described subculture, so this cannot explain underachievement for the whole group, and it may divert attention away from institutional factors.**

Question 8

- (a) **B1** identifies that pupils still developing fluency in English may find it harder, at least initially, to access parts of the curriculum taught and assessed in English
- (a) **B1** development noting this is a language barrier rather than a lack of ability
- (a) **Answer: Pupils still developing fluency in English may find it harder to access curriculum content taught and assessed in English, at least initially; this reflects a language barrier rather than a lack of ability.**
- (b) **B1** identifies a genuine support measure, e.g. additional targeted English-language teaching or support from a trained EAL teaching assistant
- (b) **B1** brief development of how it helps
- (b) **Answer: Additional targeted English-language teaching, or support from a trained EAL teaching assistant, can help pupils access the curriculum more quickly while their fluency develops.**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies that different ethnic groups show very different average patterns of achievement
- **B1** development, e.g. some groups have on average achieved particularly highly, while other groups have shown lower average achievement in various studies
- **B1** further development, e.g. this means explanations must look at each group's specific circumstances rather than assuming one single cause applies to 'ethnic minorities' as a whole
- **B1** further development, e.g. patterns can also vary considerably within any one ethnic group, not just between groups
- **Answer: Different ethnic groups show very different average achievement patterns, with some achieving particularly highly and others lower on average, so explanations must consider each group's specific circumstances rather than treating 'ethnic minorities' as one uniform group, and patterns vary within groups too.**

Question 10

- **B1** A (Cecile Wright)
- **Answer: A**

Question 11

- **B1** identifies that attitudes towards education can vary between and within families and communities of any ethnic background
- **B1** example, e.g. strong extended family or community networks placing a high value on education have been suggested as one supporting factor for some groups' achievement
- **B1** evaluative caution, e.g. sociologists warn against stereotyping, since attitudes vary considerably within every ethnic group, not just between groups
- **B1** development linking back to the point made in Q9, that explanations must be specific rather than generalised across 'ethnic minorities' as a whole
- **Answer: Attitudes towards education vary within and between families and communities of any background; strong community networks valuing education have been suggested as a supporting factor for some groups, but sociologists caution against stereotyping, since attitudes vary considerably within every ethnic group.**

Question 12

- **B1** identifies a genuine type of measure, e.g. monitoring and publishing exclusion and attainment data broken down by ethnicity, to track and address gaps
- **B1** brief accurate development
- **Answer: Schools and government bodies monitor and publish exclusion and attainment data broken down by ethnicity, so that gaps can be tracked and addressed with targeted support.**

Question 13

- **Level 4** (10-12): A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH institutional explanations AND cultural/language explanations, supported by accurate reference to named sociologists. Strengths and weaknesses of each explanation are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached. Sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently throughout.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear evaluation that explains both institutional and cultural/language explanations, with some accurate reference to sociologists. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some relevant explanation of institutional and/or cultural factors, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between explanations.
- **Level 1** (1-3): One or two isolated, undeveloped points about ethnicity and achievement, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Institutional case: Gillborn argued school policies and practices, even where not intentionally racist, can produce unequal outcomes, linking this to disproportionately high exclusion rates among some groups of Black pupils.
 - Institutional case continued: Cecile Wright's classroom observation research found some teachers held lower expectations of some Black pupils, leading to quicker discipline or placement in lower sets than ability warranted.
 - Cultural/community case: attitudes towards education, and community or family support networks, have been suggested as factors affecting achievement for some groups; language barriers can also affect pupils still developing fluency in English (EAL).
 - Peer-group/identity case: Sewell's research found some Black Caribbean boys faced peer pressure towards an anti-school masculine identity, partly as a response to negative stereotyping, though other boys from the same background remained highly engaged.
 - Evaluation of institutional explanations: critics argue it can be difficult to prove unequal outcomes are really caused by institutional racism rather than other factors such as class, and that this focus can overlook variation between minority ethnic groups.
 - Evaluation of cultural/peer-group explanations: critics argue not all pupils from a given background take part in any single subculture, and cultural explanations must not be generalised across an 'ethnic minority' group treated as uniform.
 - A balanced conclusion should note that achievement patterns vary considerably both between and within ethnic groups, and that institutional and cultural/language factors are likely to interact rather than act as rival single causes.

Question 14

- **B1** a shared cultural identity, e.g. based on shared language, religion, customs or ancestry (oe)
- **B1** development, e.g. this is different from 'race', an unscientific idea of fixed biological categories that most sociologists reject
- **Answer: Ethnicity is a shared cultural identity, based on factors such as language, religion, customs or ancestry, distinct from the unscientific idea of fixed biological 'race' that most sociologists reject.**

Question 15

- (a) **B1** identifies a limitation, e.g. exam results do not show why any gap exists, or how much wider factors such as EAL support already affected the results
- (a) **B1** brief development
- (a) **Answer: Exam results alone cannot show why any achievement gap exists, or how far factors such as EAL support have already shaped the results, so they only show the outcome, not the cause.**
- (b) **B1** identifies a strength, e.g. exam results are collected consistently and objectively across all pupils, making comparison between groups straightforward
- (b) **B1** brief development
- (b) **Answer: Exam results are collected consistently and objectively for every pupil, using the same marking criteria, making comparison between ethnic groups straightforward and standardised.**

Question 16

- **B1** identifies a genuine similarity, e.g. in each case sociologists point to both factors inside the home/community AND factors inside the school itself
- **B1** brief development linking this across at least two of class, gender and ethnicity
- **Answer: In each case, sociologists point to both home/community factors (e.g. material deprivation, family attitudes, cultural capital) and school-based factors (e.g. teacher expectations, the hidden curriculum), rather than a single cause.**