2.10 Primary and Secondary Data, Quantitative and Qualitative Data: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For questions worth 2 marks or more write your answers using full sentences where requested. Spend about 30 minutes on this paper.

1 Item A: A researcher visits a youth club and records short notes describing how members talk about their neighbourhood during one evening session. Using Item A and your own knowledge, identify two reasons why this information would be classed as qualitative primary data.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Describe one reason why quantitative data may be easier for sociologists to compare across time, in the context of GCSE sociology.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

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3 Discuss how far sociologists would agree that qualitative data gives a better picture of society than quantitative data.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

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4 Define the term 'primary data' as it is used in GCSE sociology research methods.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Which one of the following is primarily quantitative data in GCSE sociology?

- ☐ A) A set of interview transcripts about students experiences
- ☐ B) A table showing percentages of pupils who passed an exam
- ☐ C) A researcher field diary describing classroom interactions
- ☐ D) Photographs of neighbourhood conditions

(Total for Question 5 is 1 mark)

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6 Explain one strength of quantitative data for sociological research, in the context of GCSE sociology topics.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.10 Primary and Secondary Data, Quantitative and Qualitative Data: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies that the notes are collected first-hand by the researcher, so they are primary	**B1**
development showing understanding of primary data, e.g. the researcher was present and directly recorded the interaction	**B1**
identifies that the notes are descriptive and concerned with meanings and speech, so they are qualitative	**B1**
development showing understanding of qualitative data, e.g. the notes capture feelings, language and context rather than numbers	**B1**

Answer: The notes are primary because they were collected first-hand by the researcher while present at the youth club; they are qualitative because they record descriptive material about how members talk, capturing meanings and context rather than numerical measures.

Question 2

identifies a correct reason, e.g. numbers allow consistent measurement	**B1**
development, e.g. the same statistic, such as unemployment rate, can be calculated in the same way each year	**B1**
further development, e.g. numerical trends can be graphed to show increases or decreases over time	**B1**

Answer: Quantitative data are easier to compare across time because numbers allow consistent measurement: the same statistic, such as an unemployment rate, can be calculated the same way each year and graphed to show increases or decreases over time.

Question 3

Level 1 Basic statements about qualitative or quantitative data with little development. Limited use of sociological ideas or examples. Conclusion, if present, is unsupported or simplistic.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear description of strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative data with some development. Some use of sociological examples or reasons why one type may be better. Limited evaluation and an attempt at a judgement.	**4-6**
Level 3 Well developed discussion of both qualitative and quantitative data, showing understanding of how each contributes to a picture of society. Good use of examples and reasons, with balanced evaluation and a supported judgement.	**7-9**
Level 4 Excellent, balanced discussion that evaluates the claim in depth. Shows how qualitative data provides rich meanings and context while quantitative data provides comparability and generalisability. Uses relevant examples, considers limitations of both approaches, and reaches a clear, supported conclusion about the extent of agreement among sociologists.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Qualitative data strengths: rich, detailed insight into meanings, motives and social context; useful for understanding processes and experiences; examples include interview transcripts, field notes and diaries.
- Qualitative data limitations: often small samples, harder to generalise, potential researcher bias, time-consuming to collect and analyse.
- Quantitative data strengths: numerical measures allow comparison, trends and statistical testing; easier to present in tables and graphs; useful for measuring the scale of social patterns, for example exam pass rates or unemployment rates.
- Quantitative data limitations: can miss context and subjective meanings, may impose researcher categories that distort participants views, and may hide important variations within groups.
- Sociological perspectives: some interpretivist-leaning sociologists value qualitative depth for understanding social action, while other sociologists value quantitative breadth for general patterns; most would argue the choice depends on the research question.
- Practical and ethical factors: time, cost and access affect which data are feasible; consent and confidentiality may be managed differently for qualitative and quantitative work.
- Conclusion guidance: a balanced answer may argue qualitative data gives a better picture in terms of depth and meaning, while quantitative data gives a better picture in terms of scale and comparability; many sociologists favour a mixed approach to gain the strengths of both.

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Question 4

identifies primary data as data collected first-hand by the researcher, oe **B1**

development, e.g. examples such as questionnaires, interviews or observations collected by the researcher **B1**

Answer: Primary data is data collected first-hand by the researcher, for example through questionnaires, interviews or observations carried out by the researcher themselves.

Question 5

B (a table showing percentages of pupils who passed an exam) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 6

identifies a strength, e.g. it allows measurement and comparison using numbers **B1**

development, e.g. numerical results can be presented in tables and graphs to compare groups or track change over time **B1**

Answer: One strength of quantitative data is that it allows measurement and comparison using numbers, for example presenting results in tables and graphs to compare groups or track change over time.

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