2.11 Reliability, Validity and Representativeness in Sociological Research: 10-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write full sentences for questions worth 3 marks or more. Spend about 10 minutes on the whole pack.

1 Explain one practical or ethical problem that can reduce representativeness when using snowball sampling to reach hidden groups, for example young homeless people.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Define what sociologists mean by 'representativeness' when evaluating a sample used in social research.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Explain one reason why structured questionnaires, used in a large school survey of pupil attitudes to homework, tend to score highly on reliability.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.11 Reliability, Validity and Representativeness in Sociological Research: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a problem, e.g. snowball sampling often reaches connected networks so the sample may be biased towards similar people — **B1**

brief development, e.g. this clustering limits how well the sample represents the broader hidden population — **B1**

Answer: Snowball sampling tends to recruit people through existing networks, so the sample may be biased towards similar individuals and not represent the wider hidden population, limiting representativeness.

Question 2

identifies that representativeness is how well a sample reflects the wider population it is drawn from (oe) — **B1**

development, e.g. a representative sample allows researchers to generalise findings to the wider population — **B1**

Answer: Representativeness is how well a sample reflects the wider population it is drawn from; a representative sample allows researchers to generalise the findings to that wider population.

Question 3

identifies a reason, e.g. questions are standardised and asked in the same way to every respondent — **B1**

development, e.g. standardisation reduces variation caused by different interviewers or different phrasing — **B1**

further development, e.g. this makes it likely that repeating the survey under similar conditions will produce similar results — **B1**

clear linking to reliability rather than validity or representativeness — **B1**

Answer: Structured questionnaires are standardised so every pupil receives the same questions in the same order; this reduces variation from different interviewers or question wording and makes it likely that repeating the survey under similar conditions would produce similar results, so reliability is high.

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