2.11 Reliability, Validity and Representativeness in Sociological Research: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write full sentences for questions worth 3 marks or more. Spend about 15 minutes on the whole pack.

1 Which one of the following best describes the concept of reliability in sociological research methods, as used in GCSE sociology?

- ☐ A) Whether the research method gives a deep and true picture of social life
- ☐ B) Whether repeating the research using the same method would produce similar results
- ☐ C) Whether the sample reflects the whole population so findings can be generalised
- ☐ D) Whether the research follows ethical rules about consent

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State one way reliability can be improved when using structured interviews in research with school staff.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 State one reason why qualitative participant observation may be low in representativeness.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

4 Define what sociologists mean by 'validity' in the context of research methods used to study people and social behaviour.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

---

5 Explain one reason why structured questionnaires, used to study attitudes to homework across many schools, may perform poorly on validity.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk

Mark scheme · 2.11 Reliability, Validity and Representativeness in Sociological Research: Test Pack

Question 1

B (whether repeating the research using the same method would produce similar results) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies a way, e.g. train interviewers and use a standardised interview schedule **B1**

brief development, e.g. training and standard questions reduce interviewer variation and improve repeatability **B1**

Answer: Train interviewers and use a standardised interview schedule so all staff are asked the same questions in the same way, reducing interviewer variation and improving reliability.

Question 3

identifies a reason, e.g. participant observation usually studies a small group or setting in depth **B1**

brief development, e.g. the small, non-random sample makes it hard to generalise to a wider population **B1**

Answer: Participant observation typically focuses on a small group or setting in depth, so the small, non-random sample makes it difficult to generalise findings to a wider population, lowering representativeness.

Question 4

identifies that validity is about whether a method measures what it claims to measure or gives a true picture (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. valid methods capture meanings, motives and in-depth understanding rather than only surface features **B1**

Answer: Validity is about whether a research method measures what it claims to measure and gives a true, in-depth picture; valid methods capture meanings, motives and depth rather than only surface features.

Question 5

identifies a reason, e.g. closed response options may not capture a respondent's true feelings or the complexity of attitudes **B1**

development, e.g. respondents may choose the nearest available option or give socially desirable answers rather than express their real view **B1**

further development, e.g. this reduces depth and the truthfulness of data, so questionnaires can lack validity **B1**

clear link to validity rather than reliability or representativeness **B1**

Answer: Structured questionnaires with fixed response options can fail to capture respondents' true feelings or the complexity of their attitudes; pupils may pick the nearest option or give socially desirable answers, reducing depth and truthfulness and so lowering validity.

© Revision Library | revisionlibrary.co.uk