2.12 Practical and Theoretical Factors Influencing Choice of Research Method: 10-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use clear sentences for questions worth 4 marks or more. Where asked, apply the named factor to the scenario given. Total time suggested: about 10 minutes.

1 Explain two practical reasons why a researcher studying elderly social networks in rural villages might decide against a face to face, large scale survey.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Item B: A single researcher with specialist skills in life history interviewing has been given access to a small group of retired miners in one town and has limited funding for travel. Using Item B and your own knowledge, explain one theoretical reason why the researcher might choose in depth life history interviews instead of a large numerical questionnaire.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.12 Practical and Theoretical Factors Influencing Choice of Research Method: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a first practical reason, e.g. high travel costs and time for reaching dispersed rural locations	**B1**
explains this reason, e.g. travel increases research costs and reduces time available for data collection	**B1**
identifies a second practical reason, e.g. lower response rates among elderly who may be less likely to complete postal or online surveys	**B1**
explains the second reason, e.g. low response rates reduce representativeness and increase the need for follow up, which costs more time and money	**B1**

Answer: High travel costs and time to reach dispersed rural locations increase research expense and reduce time for data collection, and lower response rates among some elderly people make surveys less representative and require costly follow up, so a large face to face survey may be impractical.

Question 2

identifies a theoretical reason, e.g. the interpretivist preference for qualitative methods to gain verstehen	**B1**
develops the reason using the item, e.g. specialist skills and access to a small group make in depth interviews appropriate to explore meanings and personal experiences	**B1**
links to theoretical outcome, e.g. life history interviews increase validity by allowing empathetic understanding of miners' lives	**B1**
further development, e.g. limited funding and small sample make large questionnaires impractical and unlikely to produce meaningful quantitative generalisations	**B1**

Answer: An interpretivist approach favours qualitative methods like life history interviews to achieve verstehen; the researcher has specialist interviewing skills and access to a small group, so in depth interviews suit gaining empathetic understanding and validity, while limited funding and sample size make large questionnaires impractical.

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