2.12 Practical and Theoretical Factors Influencing Choice of Research Method: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 15 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 15 minutes.

1 Which one of the following is a practical factor that may limit a sociologist's choice of research method for a study of youth gangs in an urban area?

- ☐ A) theoretical preference for qualitative data
- ☐ B) the researcher's access to the group
- ☐ C) the interpretivist idea of verstehen
- ☐ D) the claim that quantitative results are more objective

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Define the positivist preference for 'objectivity' as it applies when choosing a research method to study rates of truancy across schools.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 State one limitation of relying on large scale quantitative surveys when researching the reasons why pupils from a particular ethnic group underachieve at school.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Identify and explain two ways limited funding could affect the choice of method for a national survey of teenage attitudes to education in the UK.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 Explain one theoretical reason a positivist sociologist might prefer using a large questionnaire survey to study patterns of class and educational attainment across several schools in a city.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.12 Practical and Theoretical Factors Influencing Choice of Research Method: Test Pack

Question 1

B (the researcher's access to the group) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies objectivity as aiming to remove researcher bias and produce neutral, replicable results **B1**

development, e.g. positivists therefore favour standardised, quantitative methods that can be measured and tested **B1**

Answer: Objectivity is the aim to remove researcher bias and produce neutral, replicable results; positivists therefore favour standardised quantitative methods that can be measured and tested.

Question 3

identifies a limitation, e.g. they may fail to capture pupils' own meanings and experiences behind statistics **B1**

brief development, e.g. reducing validity and making it harder to explain why underachievement happens **B1**

Answer: Quantitative surveys may fail to capture pupils' own meanings and experiences behind the statistics, reducing validity and making it harder to explain why underachievement happens.

Question 4

identifies a relevant effect, e.g. limited funding may prevent a large, nationally representative sample **B1**

explains the effect, e.g. small samples reduce representativeness and may force the researcher to use cheaper methods such as online convenience sampling **B1**

identifies a further effect, e.g. limited funding may restrict travel and interviewer numbers **B1**

explains the further effect, e.g. fewer interviewers means fewer face to face interviews and more reliance on self-completed questionnaires which may lower response rates **B1**

Answer: Limited funding may prevent a large, nationally representative sample and force use of cheaper methods such as online convenience sampling, which reduces representativeness. It can also restrict travel and interviewer numbers, meaning fewer face to face interviews and greater reliance on self-completed questionnaires with lower response rates.

Question 5

identifies a positivist preference, e.g. for quantitative, standardised data **B1**

develops the reason, e.g. because surveys can produce reliable, comparable data and allow generalisations about patterns across schools **B1**

Answer: A positivist prefers quantitative, standardised data; large questionnaire surveys produce reliable, comparable measures that allow generalisations about patterns of class and attainment across schools.

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