2.5 Observation: Participant, Non-Participant, Covert and Overt: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological vocabulary and name sociologists where you can.

1 An observation in which the researcher joins in with the group being studied, taking part in their everyday activities, is called...

- ☐ A) non-participant observation
- ☐ B) participant observation
- ☐ C) structured interview
- ☐ D) content analysis

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Define what sociologists mean by the 'Hawthorne effect'.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Researchers taking part in a group's activities for a long time face a particular risk. Explain what this risk is and why it is a problem for participant observation.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Covert participant observation raises particular ethical problems. Explain two ethical problems raised by covert participant observation.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 State one limitation of non-participant observation compared with participant observation.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.5 Observation: Participant, Non-Participant, Covert and Overt: Test Pack

Question 1

B (participant observation) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies the Hawthorne effect as the tendency for people being observed or studied to change their normal behaviour simply because they know they are being watched (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. this can reduce the validity of the data collected, as it does not reflect the group's true, natural behaviour **B1**

Answer: The Hawthorne effect is the tendency for people being observed or studied to change their normal behaviour simply because they know they are being watched, which can reduce the validity of the data collected.

Question 3

identifies 'going native' as a researcher becoming so involved in or attached to the group being studied that they start to identify with the group rather than staying objective **B1**

development, e.g. they may start to see the world entirely from the group's point of view **B1**

further point, e.g. this risks losing the sociological objectivity/detachment needed to analyse the group critically **B1**

further point, e.g. the researcher may become reluctant to report findings that reflect badly on the group **B1**

Answer: 'Going native' is when a researcher becomes so involved in or attached to the group being studied that they start to identify with the group and see the world entirely from the group's point of view. This risks losing the objectivity needed to analyse the group critically, and the researcher may become reluctant to report findings that reflect badly on the group.

Question 4

identifies that covert observation involves deceiving the group being studied about the researcher's real identity or purpose, breaching informed consent **B1**

development, e.g. participants cannot give genuine informed consent to being studied if they do not know it is happening **B1**

further point, e.g. the researcher may need to take part in illegal or immoral acts to maintain their cover **B1**

further point, e.g. participants cannot exercise a right to withdraw if they do not know they are subjects of research **B1**

Answer: Covert observation involves deceiving the group about the researcher's real identity or purpose, breaching informed consent, since participants cannot agree to something they do not know is happening. The researcher may need to take part in illegal or immoral acts to maintain their cover, and participants cannot exercise a right to withdraw if they do not know they are subjects of research.

Question 5

identifies that by staying apart from the group, the researcher may gain less insight into the meanings and motives behind the group's behaviour **B1**

development, e.g. producing less valid, less detailed data than participant observation **B1**

Answer: By staying apart from the group, a non-participant observer may gain less insight into the meanings and motives behind the group's behaviour, producing less valid, less detailed data than participant observation.

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