2.6 Secondary and Official Statistics: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

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

1 Data that has already been collected by someone else, for example government records or a previous study, which a sociologist reanalyses for their own research, is called...

- ☐ A) primary data
- ☐ B) secondary data
- ☐ C) a pilot study
- ☐ D) a hypothesis

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Define what sociologists mean by 'official statistics'.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 The positivist tradition takes a particular view of official statistics. Explain the positivist view of official statistics.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Not all crime that occurs is captured by official crime statistics. Explain why official crime statistics may underestimate the true extent of crime.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 State one criticism J. Maxwell Atkinson made of using official suicide statistics as straightforward, objective evidence.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.6 Secondary and Official Statistics: Test Pack

Question 1

B (secondary data) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies official statistics as numerical data regularly collected and published by government departments or other official bodies (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. often produced as a by-product of routine administrative work, such as crime, education or health records **B1**

Answer: Official statistics are numerical data regularly collected and published by government departments or other official bodies, such as figures on crime, education or health, often produced as a by-product of routine administrative work.

Question 3

identifies that positivists see official statistics, such as crime or suicide rates, as objective, reliable indicators of real patterns in society **B1**

development, e.g. because they are collected in a standardised way across a large sample, they can reveal patterns, such as a correlation between social class and an outcome **B1**

further point, e.g. positivists argue statistics can be used to test hypotheses about the causes of social behaviour scientifically **B1**

further point, e.g. Durkheim's use of suicide statistics to identify patterns by religion and marital status is a classic example of this approach **B1**

Answer: Positivists see official statistics as objective, reliable 'social facts', comparable to facts in natural science, which can reveal patterns and be used to test hypotheses scientifically. Durkheim's use of suicide statistics to identify patterns by religion and marital status is a classic example of this positivist approach.

Question 4

identifies the 'dark figure' as the gap between the true amount of crime that actually occurs and the amount recorded in official statistics **B1**

development, e.g. much crime is never reported to the police, for example because victims are embarrassed, fear not being believed, or see it as too trivial **B1**

further point, e.g. some crime that is reported is never recorded by the police, for example due to lack of evidence **B1**

concludes this means official crime statistics likely underestimate the true extent of crime **B1**

Answer: The dark figure of crime is the gap between the crime that actually occurs and the amount recorded in official statistics. Much crime is never reported, for example because victims are embarrassed or fear not being believed, and some reported crime is never recorded due to lack of evidence, so official crime statistics likely underestimate the true extent of crime.

Question 5

identifies that a death is only recorded as a suicide after a coroner interprets the available evidence **B1**

development, e.g. applying their own common-sense assumptions about what a 'typical' suicide looks like, so the resulting statistics reflect coroners' interpretive work as much as the true number of suicides **B1**

Answer: Atkinson argued a death is only recorded as a suicide after a coroner interprets the available evidence, applying their own common-sense assumptions about what a 'typical' suicide looks like, so the resulting statistics reflect coroners' interpretive work as much as the true number of suicides.

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