2.7 Research Ethics: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

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

1 Agreeing to take part in research only after being given enough information about its purpose and what will happen, without being pressured or deceived, is called...

- ☐ A) confidentiality
- ☐ B) informed consent
- ☐ C) protection from harm
- ☐ D) the right to withdraw

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Define what sociologists mean by 'confidentiality' in research.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Sociologists must consider whether their research could cause harm to participants. Explain what protection from harm means in sociological research.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Covert research, such as covert participant observation, raises particular ethical problems. Explain two ethical problems raised by covert research.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 State one role of the British Sociological Association (BSA) in relation to research ethics.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.7 Research Ethics: Test Pack

Question 1

B (informed consent) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies confidentiality as keeping the personal information a participant provides private (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. not disclosing it in a way that would let the participant be personally identified, without their agreement, such as by using a pseudonym in the published research **B1**

Answer: Confidentiality means keeping the personal information a participant provides private, and not disclosing it in a way that would let the participant be personally identified without their agreement, for example by using a pseudonym in the published research.

Question 3

identifies that researchers must not expose participants to physical, or especially in sociology, psychological harm, such as distress, embarrassment or anxiety **B1**

development, e.g. asking about a traumatic experience without adequate support could cause distress **B1**

further point, e.g. researchers should consider offering support or a debrief after sensitive research **B1**

further point, e.g. harm can also include damage to a participant's reputation or relationships if confidentiality is broken **B1**

Answer: Protection from harm means researchers must not expose participants to physical or, especially in sociology, psychological harm, such as distress, embarrassment or anxiety, for example from being asked about a traumatic experience without adequate support. Researchers should consider offering a debrief after sensitive research, and harm can also include damage to reputation or relationships if confidentiality is broken.

Question 4

identifies that covert research involves deceiving participants about the researcher's identity or purpose, breaching informed consent **B1**

development, e.g. participants cannot exercise a genuine right to withdraw if they do not know they are being studied **B1**

further point, e.g. the researcher may have to behave dishonestly, or even take part in activities they would not otherwise condone, to maintain their cover **B1**

further point/example, e.g. a covert participant observation of a gang, modelled on classic studies such as James Patrick's A Glasgow Gang Observed, where the researcher could not reveal he was a researcher **B1**

Answer: Covert research involves deceiving participants about the researcher's identity or purpose, breaching informed consent, and participants cannot exercise a genuine right to withdraw if they do not know they are being studied. The researcher may have to behave dishonestly to maintain their cover, as in covert participant observation studies of gangs modelled on classic work such as James Patrick's A Glasgow Gang Observed, where the researcher could not reveal he was a researcher.

Question 5

identifies that it publishes ethical guidance for sociologists, such as a Statement of Ethical Practice **B1**

development, e.g. covering issues such as informed consent, confidentiality and protection from harm, to encourage ethical standards across the discipline **B1**

Answer: The British Sociological Association publishes ethical guidance for sociologists, such as its Statement of Ethical Practice, covering issues such as informed consent, confidentiality and protection from harm, to encourage ethical standards across the discipline.

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