2.8 Experiments in Sociological Research: Laboratory and Field Experiments: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For short answer questions write in full sentences for AO2 and AO3 items. The final evaluation question must be written in full sentences. Spend about 20 minutes on the paper.

1 Which one of the following is an independent variable in a sociological experiment testing whether classroom seating location affects student participation?

- ☐ A) the number of times students volunteer answers
- ☐ B) the seating location assigned to students
- ☐ C) the age of the students
- ☐ D) the school inspector's report

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Describe the comparative method as used by sociologists when a true experiment is not possible, for example when studying differences between two whole countries.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

3 State one limitation of the comparative method in establishing cause and effect when comparing two societies.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Give one example of how a sociologist could increase the reliability of observations in a field experiment testing public reactions to a new social policy poster.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 Define what sociologists mean by 'replication' in relation to using experiments in research.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

6 Describe one weakness of laboratory experiments in sociology related to validity.

(Total for Question 6 is 3 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.8 Experiments in Sociological Research: Laboratory and Field Experiments: Test Pack

Question 1

B (the seating location assigned to students) because the independent variable is what the researcher manipulates **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies the comparative method as comparing existing societies or groups to look for patterns or possible causes **B1**

development, e.g. sociologists compare variables between cases where they cannot manipulate variables experimentally **B1**

example or further development, e.g. comparing crime rates and social policies between Country A and Country B to suggest explanations **B1**

Answer: The comparative method compares existing societies or groups to look for patterns or possible causes when experiments are impossible. Sociologists compare variables between cases, for example comparing crime rates and social policies between two countries to suggest explanations.

Question 3

identifies a limitation, e.g. difficulty controlling for all other differences between societies **B1**

brief development, e.g. many variables differ between countries so it is hard to be certain which one causes the observed outcome **B1**

Answer: A limitation is the difficulty of controlling for all other differences between societies, because many variables differ between countries making it hard to be certain which one causes the outcome.

Question 4

identifies an appropriate example, e.g. use the same clear coding scheme for all observers **B1**

development, e.g. this reduces variation between observers **B1**

further development or alternative, e.g. train observers and use inter-observer checks to ensure consistent recording **B1**

Answer: A sociologist could increase reliability by using the same clear coding scheme for all observers, reducing variation, and by training observers and carrying out inter-observer checks to ensure consistent recording.

Question 5

identifies replication as repeating a study or experiment to check results **B1**

development, e.g. replication helps test whether findings are reliable and not due to chance or error **B1**

Answer: Replication is repeating a study or experiment to check results, which helps test whether findings are reliable and not due to chance or error.

Question 6

identifies a weakness, e.g. low ecological validity because the lab is artificial **B1**

development, e.g. behaviour in a lab may not reflect real social behaviour in natural settings **B1**

further development or example, e.g. students may act differently under observation than they would in a real classroom **B1**

Answer: A weakness is low ecological validity because the laboratory is artificial; behaviour in a lab may not reflect real social behaviour in natural settings, for example students may act differently when they know they are part of an experiment.

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