2.9 Case Studies and Longitudinal Studies as Research Methods: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For questions worth 4 marks or more write your answers in full sentences. Spend about 15 minutes on this paper.

1 Which of the following best describes a case study in sociological research of an institution such as a single school?

- ☐ A) a large scale survey of many schools at one point in time
- ☐ B) an in-depth study of one group, institution or event producing rich detailed data
- ☐ C) the use of official statistics to compare schools across regions
- ☐ D) an experiment comparing two groups randomly assigned to conditions

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Identify one reason a sociologist might choose a case study over a longitudinal study when researching a single failing school.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Explain two strengths of longitudinal studies for understanding change in education and employment over the life course, using sociological reasoning.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Outline one weakness of case studies when trying to make general claims about social behaviour across a city.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Outline one strength of case studies for producing valid data about a single group's lived experience, such as a community centre users group.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.9 Case Studies and Longitudinal Studies as Research Methods: Test Pack

Question 1

B (an in-depth study of one group, institution or event producing rich detailed data) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies a reason, e.g. case study gives immediate, in-depth understanding without waiting many years **B1**

development, e.g. policy makers may need rapid findings to inform interventions, so a case study is quicker and cheaper **B1**

Answer: A sociologist might choose a case study because it provides immediate, in-depth understanding without the delay of following a cohort for many years, which is useful when policy makers need rapid findings.

Question 3

identifies a strength, e.g. ability to establish sequences of events and potential causal links **B1**

development, e.g. observing the same people over time helps show whether earlier experiences are followed by later outcomes **B1**

identifies a second strength, e.g. can reveal long term patterns and life course trajectories that cross-sectional studies miss **B1**

development, e.g. this helps sociologists understand how early disadvantages link to later unemployment or health issues **B1**

Answer: Longitudinal studies can establish sequences of events and potential causal links because observing the same people over time shows whether earlier experiences are followed by later outcomes, and they can reveal long term patterns and life course trajectories, helping sociologists see how early disadvantages relate to later unemployment or health issues.

Question 4

identifies a weakness, e.g. findings are hard to generalise from a single case to a wider population **B1**

development, e.g. the single case may be unique in ways that prevent wider application of conclusions **B1**

Answer: Findings from a case study are hard to generalise to a wider population because the single case may be unique in ways that prevent applying conclusions across the city.

Question 5

identifies a strength, e.g. high validity because researchers can use participant observation and in-depth interviews **B1**

development, e.g. close contact and multiple qualitative methods increase understanding of meanings and contexts **B1**

Answer: Case studies have high validity because researchers can use participant observation and in-depth interviews, with close contact and multiple qualitative methods increasing understanding of meanings and contexts.

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