
SOCIOLOGY

9699/23

Paper 2 Theory and Methods

October/November 2014

1 hour 30 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer Question 1 and **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **2** printed pages, **2** blank pages and **1** insert.

Section A

Answer question 1.

- 1 Quantitative research produces results that are high in *reliability*. Quantitative methods include content analysis and experiments. Each involves a very different approach to sociological investigation, though both gather data that is largely statistical and measurable. Content analysis is a way of trying to analyse the contents of a range of documents and it involves the systematic recording of the number of times that an item in a given category appears.

Experiments, on the other hand, are a very different technique. These can take place in laboratory conditions, which means that all of the variables are under the control of the researcher. In these experiments the researcher typically takes two social groups that have similar characteristics and exposes each to the same experience. For example, both groups may watch a film that has violent scenes to which their responses are observed. However, in one of the groups the researcher will change some factors in order to test which variable is responsible for causing any change in behaviour. There are other experiments which take place outside the laboratory where the researcher has less control over the situation. These are called 'field' experiments.

- (a) What do sociologists mean by the term *reliability*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** research topics that might be suitable for sociological investigation using content analysis. [4]
- (c) Explain why a sociologist may use experiments as a research method. [8]
- (d) Assess the claim that in sociological research quantitative data is superior to qualitative data. [11]

Section B

Answer either question 2 or question 3.

- 2 'The idea that class is the key factor influencing social identity has been over-stated by sociologists.' Explain and assess this view. [25]
- 3 'The interpretivist approach to how the social world should be studied provides us with the most accurate sociological understanding of society.' Explain and assess this view. [25]

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