
SOCIOLOGY

9699/23

Paper 2 Theory and Methods

May/June 2015

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 The three main types of interview in sociological research are structured, semi-structured and unstructured. An interview consists of a face-to-face question-and-answer session between interviewer and interviewee. Those sociologists who base their work on a quantitative, scientific approach are likely to use structured interviews. Structured interviews consist of questions that are very carefully worded by the researcher. During the interview itself, the researcher will try hard to standardise their performance as interviewers so that they behave in exactly the same way with each respondent.

The presence of the interviewer in the research process brings some advantages when compared to questionnaires, but it may also create the problem of researcher effect. Those researchers who follow the social action tradition in sociology are likely to use unstructured interviews. In this case, the presence of the interviewer in this process creates many advantages, but it can lead to the problem that researchers become heavily reliant on their interviewees' *subjective* understandings.

- (a) What is meant by the term *subjective*? [2]
- (b) Describe **two** reasons why sociologists need to be careful in the way questions are worded in an interview. [4]
- (c) Explain why interviews may create the problem of researcher effect. [8]
- (d) Assess the strengths and limitations of using interviews rather than questionnaires in sociological research. [11]

Section B

Answer **either** question 2 **or** question 3.

- 2 Explain and assess the extent to which individuals are able to shape social reality. [25]
- 3 Explain and assess the view that the most important influence on a sociologist's choice of research method is their theoretical perspective. [25]

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