



Sociology

GCSE

Sociology

Unit B673

Exemplar candidate
answers – June 2015

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The sample answers in this resource have been extracted from original candidate scripts to maintain their authenticity.

QUESTION 5D

Identify and explain two disadvantages of using Source 1 to study the re-offending of prisoners in Investigation 1.

[4]

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT QUESTION 5D

This question required candidates to identify accurately (for 2 marks) two disadvantages of the secondary data in the table in Source 1 used to study the reoffending of prisoners. For further marks each disadvantage needed to be explained in relation to the table. This question proved challenging as whilst identify marks were achieved, the explanation marks were often too generic. Simply explaining the meaning of 'adapted' without reference to the source cannot be credited as an explanation. Candidates need to take care with over use of simplistic disadvantages such as 'out of date' if the data is less than five years old.

SAMPLE ANSWER 1 (2 MARKS)

1. The disadvantage of using Source 1 is that it is official statistics^(secondary evidence) and so you ~~can't be sure~~ ^{don't know} who the sample was collate the statistics to ensure that it is a representative view displayed.

2. Another disadvantage of the source is that it only displays reoffending rates within 12 months (line 70) so you are not provided with details about reoffending after 12 months; it may be different.

2 out of 4 marks

COMMENTARY

This response is from a candidate who achieved a very high mark on the paper overall. The second point is excellent with a clear disadvantage identified in the second line and followed by an explanation linked to the issue of reoffending.

However, no marks have been awarded for the first point. Data derived from official statistics is not a disadvantage in itself and official statistics are likely to have a more representative sample than other sources of data. It is also a generic point and not related to the issue.

SAMPLE ANSWER 2 (3 MARKS)

1. Official statistics can be inaccurate in order to make the statistics look better than they are. They can be biased.
 2. Also, you do not know why these people are re-offending, you only have numbers - quantitative data, no qualitative.
- [4]

3 out of 4 marks

COMMENTARY

The first point identifies a disadvantage in the second sentence i.e biased. No explanation mark has been credited as there is no reference to the issue of re-offending.

The second point has been credited with 2 marks. The first sentence identifies a disadvantage which is related to the topic. The second sentence is an explanation, made clear through good use of sociological language.

SAMPLE ANSWER 3 (4 MARKS)

1. First disadvantage is that there's not a percentage for prison sentence that are over 4 years so we don't know if it's a higher or lower percentage that reoffended.
2. ~~Second~~ Second disadvantage is that it's adapted from the Ministry of Justice data 2011. Therefore only specific information was picked and this could be biased and unreliable and it's not a current official statistics since it's from 2011 and not 2015. [4]

4 out of 4 marks

COMMENTARY

The first point identifies a clear disadvantage ie. that data (sentences over 4 years) has been omitted. The next two lines are a developed explanation of how this could affect the results.

The second point has the disadvantage that it could be biased data. The explanation is in the first two lines of the second point ie. that it has been adapted from the Ministry of Justice data 2011. This means there is direct reference to the table in the source.

The last point made could not be credited even if the candidate had not already achieved the full marks. This is because the data is four years old and being less than five years old is not credited as out of date. Often official statistics are not published immediately.

QUESTION 13:

Using both Investigation 1 and Investigation 2 and your sociological knowledge, answer the following question.

Using both of the investigations and your sociological knowledge, evaluate to what extent the sampling used was successful for investigating criminals.

You could focus on the following:

- the sample size
- the sample composition
- the sample type

[12]

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT QUESTION 5D

This is the final question on the B673 paper and the one which requires the most extended writing. Candidates must plan carefully to ensure they have time for this question. Although often referred to as an 'essay', it does not need to follow the usual format of an essay and candidates who write lengthy introductions and conclusions may not be making the best use of their time.

Most importantly candidates must read the question carefully; there is no set format for this question and they need to take care to note with accuracy which investigation they need to use (or both) and whether they need to focus on the primary methods or secondary sources or both, or any other techniques used in the investigations such as sampling. In this question, many candidates assumed that only the primary methods were to be used but the secondary research in the pre-release investigations had discussion of the sampling methods used.

Also important is that candidates note the bullet points in the question. Unlike essays in the other units, these are for guidance and full marks can be achieved even if they do not address them all. The bullet points change from year to year to correspond with the question. What is important is that candidates; use a wide range of material from the investigation/s, develop the points they make, use sociological concepts and demonstrate an evaluative approach. They should also relate closely to each primary method and/or the sources in the pre-release in their answer so they do not provide simply a generic response which could not be credited higher than level 1.

To achieve the top level, candidates must identify both advantages and disadvantages of the sampling used in a range of the primary / secondary methods and data across both investigations. The higher level skill of evaluation within a method (ie. both advantages and disadvantages) is well rewarded. Candidates must also relate back to the topic of investigating criminals. In addition some top level answers could include some suggestion (possibly implicit) as to how one or more of the methods could be improved.

SAMPLE ANSWER 1 (5 MARKS)

The sampling ~~and~~ ^{used} ~~was~~ ~~su~~ was ~~at~~ very successful, ~~however~~ due to him being careful and using Covert ~~observation~~, observation.

In Investigation One, he used ~~some~~ snowball sampling, by giving the guards the questionnaires to give to the prisoners this meant they ~~to~~ would lack validity, the size of the sampling was that he gave 50 questionnaires to the prison governor, but he had to ignore 20, as the prisoners answered ~~to~~ ~~to~~ silly, as in a Category B prison they were saying that they were 'mas murderers' and others were saying they were 'innocent'

In Investigation 2, he spent his time with about 20 men even though there ⁽¹²⁾

100 men, he only spent time with men his age ~~and~~ who were black (like himself) also the same age as him even though the gang had 11-30 year olds.

In conclusion Investigation one went better than Investigation two, as in investigation two there wasn't ~~very~~ ~~more~~ any sampling, he used a lot of secondary research, which ~~was~~ ^{were} very old, However he did mix in with the gang a little bit, but only his age black and ~~gender~~ ~~out of 100~~ he only talked to 2 men out of 100 men, also he didn't understand the gang members secret language, leaving him not understanding most of what they were saying, Even though both investigations are very bad I would be more interested in investigation 7 as it has a variety of data.

5 out of 12 marks

COMMENTARY

This response scrapes into Level 2. In part it is descriptive but given the benefit of the doubt it has been categorised as a basic response, only just above limited. It makes reference to two methods across the two investigations and has made an attempt to be evaluative. These factors take it above Level 1.

The first sentence has not been credited as it does not relate to sampling. In the second paragraph, some use of sociological concepts has been made with accuracy. There is an implicit disadvantage regarding the use of the guards and a clear disadvantage relating to the responses, further developed through the use of examples from the relevant source in Investigation 1. There is also an implicit advantage with regard to the size of the sample.

The third paragraph has a clearly explained disadvantage relating to both sample size and composition and there is direct reference to the source in Investigation 2.

The final paragraph has not been credited as it is either unrelated to sampling or repeats the earlier points made.

SAMPLE ANSWER 2 (8 MARKS)

In investigation one method one, 50 questionnaires were given out which is quite a large sample making the data collected more representative. However, these questionnaires were only given out to one prison therefore isn't representative of all criminals in prison. In addition, the questionnaires were given out in a male prison so the data collected wouldn't be representative of females as well as males. The prison governor passed the questionnaires on to 5 prison officers who chose prisoners to fill them in. This affects the reliability of the data because the prisoners would most likely choose the best behaved prisoners but not trying to make the sample as random as possible to get data which is representative of all criminals.

In investigation one method 2, 2 semi-structured interviews were carried ~~out~~ to find out "what non-offenders think of criminals". 2 people is a small sample therefore isn't going to make [12]

The data representative of all non-offenders
opinions of criminals. Also as both these
people work with offenders their views may
quite subjective / not objective to ~~the~~
represent criminals in a more positive way.
The sample of people chosen should be more
varied to gain representative data showing
opinions of most ~~of~~ non-offenders in society.

Investigation 2 method 3 is a covert
participant observation of one gang. Although
observations are time-consuming ~~so~~ observing
one gang won't give representative data
of gangs from different areas, ages and
gangs of different types.

Investigation 2 source 4 is secondary
sources of 2 sociologists work. ~~Although~~
~~the~~ Although ^{at} sample of 2 sociologists work
isn't a very big sample to gain
representative data the 2 sociologists work
is very different. As a result the data
collected from the 2 sociologists work is
quite vast. Dick Hobbs' study is also ~~the~~ research

into the drug trade which links to investigation 2 because he/she wants to find out if gangs "are involved with drugs". Therefore Dick Hobbs' research is appropriate and relevant to the investigation. James Patrick's study is also relevant because he also studied/observed a gang which is appropriate to investigation 2.

8 out of 12 marks

COMMENTARY

This is moving toward a good response in which the candidate has discussed (in the first part) the sampling used in three of the primary methods in the two investigations. Disadvantages are identified and discussed with some development of the points made. There is appropriate use of sociological concepts and some suggestions for improvement of the sampling.

The last part refers to the secondary research in Investigation 2 which is commendable and increases the range. However, some of the information is not relevant to sampling and the references which are made to the sampling are descriptive.

Apart from in the first sentence, there is no debate as the focus is on disadvantages. Without more developed evaluation and a more balanced debate, the response cannot be placed in the top level. Due to the range, it has been placed at the top of level 2.

SAMPLE ANSWER 2 (8 MARKS)

In investigation 1, the first primary method used a snowball sample. This was a good sampling method for investigating criminals as it needed no sample frame. It also didn't involve the researcher coming into contact with any dangerous criminals so it avoided ethical issues like protection from harm. However it is unlikely that this snowball sample to hand out the questionnaires was representative because the prison officers may have just chosen well behaved criminals to present the prison in a good light. ~~The prison officer may not have been best~~ so it would be hard to make generalisations to all criminals. The composition of the sample only involved prisoners from one prison, it was also only a category B prison so excluded category A prisons, category C and D prisons. It was also only a male prison so excluded female prisoners. This means the sample was not representative of all [12]

prisoners because it is only one prison, only males and only represents criminals who have convicted crimes that would get them into a category B prison. The sample size was 50 which may not have been big enough to make accurate generalisations because it is too small, also he had to ignore 20 questionnaires which would make the sample too small to be representative.

~~Method two~~ Primary method 2 is investigation one only had a sample of 250 and it would not be big enough to be representative. However the sample composition was good as it included both male and female of different ages so was likely to represent different opinions. They were also experts so the data is likely to be valid.

~~The sample of the official statistician~~
~~source 1 investigation 1 is a large~~

sample representing all social groups so
it is likely to be representative.

In source 4, investigation 2 Duck + Lobb
used a purposive sample and a volunteer
sample. This is unlikely to be representative
because he is only choosing drug dealers
who had long sentences which excludes
other drug dealers, also some people may
not volunteer. It is useful for researching
criminals because it doesn't need a
sampling frame. He interviewed 272
people from 22 prisons so the composition is
large enough and includes different prisons
so it is likely to represent many criminals.

In investigation 2 the researcher used an
opportunity sample and this is unlikely to
be representative of all gangs and criminals.
It was also only one gang he studied so
his findings were unlikely to represent all
gangs as every gang is different so he
can't really make accurate
generalisations.

12 out of 12 marks

COMMENTARY

This response uses four of the primary and secondary methods and within these, a range of issues related to sampling have been explored. There is evaluation throughout with discussion of both advantages and disadvantages within and between each method. There is some sophistication and the points made have been developed well. Good and accurate use has been made of relevant sociological concepts and there is good application through reference to specific aspects of the methods relating to investigating criminals.

The response fulfils the criteria for the top band with any suggestion for improvement very much implicit through the criticisms. The quality of the evaluation which is a very difficult skill at GCSE level and the range which includes use of the secondary research means it has been awarded full marks.



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