

Student 5 – Social Science Answer Sheet

Question 1

Explain the differences between sociology, anthropology, and political science within the field of social science. Provide examples of research topics for each discipline.

Answer:

Sociology is focused on the study of human social relationships, institutions, and the ways people interact within society. It looks at patterns of behavior and cultural norms, with research topics such as family structures, social stratification, urbanization, and crime.

Anthropology examines humans from both cultural and biological perspectives, considering how people and societies have developed over time. Anthropologists often use ethnographic research to understand kinship, rituals, language evolution, and the origins of humanity.

Political science analyzes how societies are governed, including political systems, institutions, public policies, and international relations. Research in this field covers topics like electoral systems, democracy, policy analysis, and global conflicts.

In summary, sociology explores social patterns and institutions, anthropology studies human diversity and culture, while political science examines systems of power and governance.

Question 2

Describe the structure and function of a typical social survey. Why are surveys important in social science research?

Answer:

A social survey is a systematic research tool used to collect data from a population, typically through questionnaires or interviews.

Key elements include:

- **Sampling:** Selecting a representative group from the larger population.
- **Questionnaire:** Creating a set of structured or semi-structured questions.
- **Data Collection:** Gathering responses via face-to-face, telephone, online, or mail methods.
- **Analysis:** Interpreting the collected data to identify trends, correlations, or patterns.

Surveys are essential in social science because they allow researchers to gather quantitative data on attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and demographics from large groups. This data is vital for understanding social trends, informing policy decisions, and testing sociological theories.

Question 3

Discuss the ethical considerations and societal impacts of conducting social science research with human participants.

Answer:

Ethical considerations in social science research include:

- **Informed Consent:** Ensuring participants are fully aware of the study's purpose and voluntarily agree to participate.
- **Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy and identity of participants.
- **Non-maleficence:** Avoiding harm or distress to participants.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Allowing participants to leave the study at any time.

Social science research can positively impact society by informing policies, improving social welfare, and deepening understanding of social issues. However, unethical research or misuse of data can lead to public mistrust, reinforce stereotypes, or harm vulnerable groups. Therefore, ethical oversight and transparent communication are essential for responsible research.

Question 4

Explain the concept of social stratification and discuss its advantages and limitations in understanding society.

Answer:

Social stratification is the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or groups in society, often based on wealth, power, education, or social status.

Advantages:

- Helps explain patterns of inequality and social mobility.
- Provides a framework for analyzing divisions like class, gender, and race.
- Aids in understanding how resources and opportunities are distributed.

Limitations:

- May oversimplify complex social realities.
- Can reinforce stereotypes or justify existing inequalities.
- Does not always account for individual agency or cultural differences.

Modern research seeks to develop more nuanced theories that address intersectionality and social change.

Question 5

Describe the principles of qualitative research and how interviews are used to explore social phenomena.

Answer:

Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena through in-depth, non-numerical data.

Key principles include:

- Gaining contextual understanding of participants' experiences.
- Using flexible, open-ended data collection methods.
- Emphasizing meaning, interpretation, and process.

Interviews are a core qualitative method, allowing researchers to explore participants' perspectives, motivations, and experiences in detail. They may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, and are used to gather rich, descriptive data on identity, beliefs, social change, and group dynamics.