

Student 4 – 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 studies how people interact in groups and the structure of societies. It focuses on social relationships, institutions, and cultural norms. Research topics in sociology include family structures, social inequality, urban life, and criminal behavior.

Anthropology examines humanity from both cultural and biological perspectives, looking at human development over time. It often uses fieldwork and ethnographic studies to explore kinship, rituals, language evolution, and the origins of humans.

Political science is concerned with systems of governance, political activities, and the functioning of governments. It explores topics such as electoral systems, democracy, policy-making, and international relations.

In summary, sociology analyzes social patterns and institutions, anthropology investigates human diversity and culture, and political science studies governance and power structures.

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 research tool used to systematically collect information from a population, usually through questionnaires or interviews.

Key components include:

- **Sampling:** Selecting a representative subset from the larger population.
- **Questionnaire:** Designing structured or semi-structured questions.
- **Data Collection:** Gathering responses via face-to-face, phone, online, or mail methods.
- **Analysis:** Interpreting the data to identify trends, correlations, or patterns.

Surveys are essential in social science because they provide quantitative data on attitudes, behaviors, and demographics from large groups, which helps researchers understand social trends, inform policy, and test 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 agree to take part voluntarily.
- **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.

The societal impacts of research can be positive, such as informing policies and improving social welfare. However, unethical conduct or misuse of data can lead to public mistrust, reinforce stereotypes, or harm vulnerable groups. Therefore, ethical oversight and transparent communication are crucial 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 ranking of individuals or groups in society, usually based on wealth, power, education, or status.

Advantages:

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

Limitations:

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

Ongoing research continues to refine these theories to better 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 detailed, non-numerical data.

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 deeply explore participants' perspectives, motivations, and experiences. These can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, and are used to collect rich, descriptive data on topics like identity, beliefs, social change, and group dynamics.