

Student 9 – 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 looks at how people interact, form groups, and build institutions within society. It explores patterns in social behavior and examines norms and values. Research topics in sociology include family structures, social inequality, urban development, and crime.

Anthropology studies humans from both cultural and biological perspectives, focusing on how people and societies have changed over time. Anthropologists often use fieldwork to understand kinship, rituals, language, and the origins of humanity.

Political science is the study of how societies are governed and how power is distributed. It analyzes political institutions, public policies, and international relations. Research topics include how elections work, the nature of democracy, policy analysis, and global conflicts.

In summary, sociology investigates social patterns and institutions, anthropology explores human diversity and culture, and political science focuses on governance and power.

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 method for collecting information from a population, usually through questionnaires or interviews.

Key components:

- **Sampling:** Selecting a group that represents the larger population.
- **Questionnaire:** Developing a set of structured or semi-structured questions.
- **Data Collection:** Gathering responses via interviews, phone, online, or mail.
- **Analysis:** Interpreting the data to find trends, correlations, or patterns.

Surveys are important because they allow researchers to collect quantitative data about attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and demographics from large groups. This data is crucial for understanding social trends, informing policy, and testing social science theories.

Question 3

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

Answer:

Ethical considerations include:

- **Informed Consent:** Making sure participants know the study's purpose and agree to take part.
- **Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy and identity of participants.
- **Non-maleficence:** Avoiding harm or distress to those involved.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Allowing participants to leave the study at any time.

Social science research can help inform policies, improve social welfare, and increase understanding of social issues. However, unethical research or data misuse can lead to public mistrust, reinforce stereotypes, or harm vulnerable groups. That's why ethical oversight and clear communication are essential.

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, often 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 social divisions.
- 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 choices or cultural differences.

Ongoing research aims 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 focuses on understanding social phenomena through in-depth, non-numerical data.

Principles include:

- Contextual understanding of participants' experiences.
- Flexible, open-ended data collection methods.
- Emphasis on meaning, interpretation, and social processes.

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