

Student 8 – 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 concerned with the study of human relationships, institutions, and the patterns of behavior that shape societies. It looks at how people interact, the roles they play, and the structures that organize social life. Research topics include family systems, social inequality, urbanization, and crime.

Anthropology examines humans from both cultural and biological perspectives, focusing on how people and societies evolve over time. It often uses ethnographic methods to understand different cultures, rituals, kinship, language, and human origins.

Political science analyzes how societies are governed, exploring political activities, institutions, policies, and international relations. Topics in this field include electoral systems, democracy, policy analysis, and global conflicts.

In summary, sociology investigates social patterns and institutions, anthropology explores 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 method for systematically collecting data from a population using questionnaires or interviews.

Key components:

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

Surveys are important because they provide quantitative data on attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and demographics from large groups. This information is essential for understanding social trends, informing public 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 in social science research include:

- **Informed Consent:** Ensuring participants fully understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate voluntarily.
- **Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy and identity of participants.
- **Non-maleficence:** Avoiding harm or distress to anyone involved.
- **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 increasing understanding of social issues. However, unethical research or data misuse can result in public mistrust, reinforce stereotypes, or harm vulnerable groups. Therefore, ethical oversight and transparent communication are essential.

Question 4

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

Answer:

Social stratification refers to the ranking of individuals or groups in society based on factors such as wealth, power, education, or social 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 the complexity of social life.
- Can reinforce stereotypes or justify inequalities.
- Does not always account for individual agency or cultural differences.

Ongoing 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.

Principles include:

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

Interviews are a key qualitative method, allowing researchers to deeply explore participants' perspectives, motivations, and experiences. They 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.