

# **Sociology**

Advanced Subsidiary GCE

Unit **G671**: Exploring Socialisation, Culture and Identity

## **Mark Scheme for January 2011**

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1. Define the concept of consumer culture. Illustrate your answer with examples.  
(8 marks)

### A01: Knowledge and Understanding

**Definitions** Core meaning of the concept may focus on the buying or consuming of goods and services in society which has led to the development of a consumer based society / culture. Further explanation may link consumer culture to cultural and economic factors, or immediate gratification. Culturally, society portrays a sense of its identity through the consumer goods available, and economically, the UK has moved from a 'production' to a 'consumer' based society. Links may be made to postmodernism – choice and diversity of consumption in the market place; identities are constructed around consumption patterns. Links may be made to popular culture and/or global culture. Responses may link consumer culture to the mass media. Responses may refer to some of the features of consumer culture and examples may be taken from these features. Responses may offer specific definitions for 'consumer' and 'culture'.

**Examples** may refer to specific examples or examples of features/aspects and may include: shopping, fashion, exotic identity through global consumer culture, music, debt / credit / loans, packaging, advertising, shopping as leisure, expansion of internet shopping, mega-shopping centres. Reference may be made to studies; eg Polemus, "Supermarket of style" and Saunders "consumption cleavages". Reference may be made to 'conspicuous consumption' - the buying of particular brands, logos and designer goods as status symbols, strongly encouraged by the advertising industry and endorsed by celebrities. An example may be taken from the pre-release (dating advertising).

**Award a maximum of 4 marks for a definition (maximum of 3 for a partial definition)**  
**Award a maximum of 4 marks for examples (maximum of 2 for only one example)**

#### 7-8 marks

The key issue to expect in top band answers is a clear definition of the concept with two or more examples in support.

Candidates show a very good knowledge and understanding of the concept of consumer culture. The definition will be explicit and detailed and examples used to illustrate their definition will show wide ranging **and** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be clear and frequent use of relevant sociological evidence, related to the concept of consumer culture.

The quality of the written communication will be very good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with very few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

#### 5-6 marks

Candidates show a good knowledge and understanding of the concept of consumer culture. Responses contain wide ranging **or** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be some use of sociological evidence. The definition may be partial. There will be examples but these are likely to be undeveloped or only partially explained.

The quality of the written communication will be good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

#### 3-4 marks

Candidates show a basic knowledge and understanding of the concept of consumer culture. Examples, if given, will be basic and/or vague in places, lacking in sociological evidence. The definition may be implicit through examples given, or confused. An accurate explicit and detailed definition without any examples can be awarded 4 marks. Alternatively, two detailed examples without a definition can be awarded 4 marks.

The quality of the written communication will be basic, presenting some sociological material with limited coherence and some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**1-2 marks**

Candidates show a limited knowledge and understanding of the concept/example of consumer culture. There will be one vague point which does not adequately offer a definition or accurate examples.

The quality of the written communication will be limited, presenting some sociological material with limited coherence and many errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**0 marks**

No relevant sociological knowledge or understanding.

**2 Outline and explain two ways in which the media socialises individuals (16 marks)****A01: Knowledge and Understanding**

Responses may refer to:

- **Concepts:** references may be made to: the process of socialisation (role models, copy-cat / imitation, media effects eg hypodermic syringe, active audience, creation of a cultural climate, media representation / stereotypes, moral panics and labelling, positive and negative sanctions). References may be made to the links between the media and consumer culture. Candidates may choose to focus on how the media socialises individuals into a specific identity; eg gender identity; age identity.
- **Studies:** References may be made to Gender and the media (McRobbie, Kilbourne, Cowan, Ferguson), Ethnicity (Gillespie, Van Dijk, Gilroy), Class (Medhurst), Age (Muncie), Currie, Gauntlett, Gill and Herdieckerhoff.
- **Theories:** For example Marxist theory that the media socialises individuals into being part of a wider consumer culture, addressing 'false needs'; postmodernism.
- **Contemporary examples**, such as examples of copy-cat behaviour, eg Bulger case; examples of media representation of social groups (eg slimblondness - McRobbie) specific examples relating to gender/class/age/ethnic identities.

**10-12 marks**

Candidates show a very good knowledge and understanding of two ways in which the media socialises individuals. At the top of this mark band, there will be a clear reference to the way/s in which this process occurs. Responses contain wide ranging **and** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be clear, precise and frequent use of sociological evidence.

The quality of the written communication will be very good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with very few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**7-9 marks**

Candidates show a good knowledge and understanding of two ways in which the media socialises individuals. Responses may describe the agency of socialisation (the media) without focusing on the way/s in which it occurs. Responses contain wide ranging **or** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be some use of sociological evidence, but it may be underdeveloped. Responses in this band may be uneven / unbalanced; only one way will contain clear, precise and frequent use of sociological evidence; the other may be partial. At the bottom of the band, candidates may show good understanding but lack the precise evidence to back up claims.

The quality of the written communication will be good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**4-6 marks**

Candidates show a basic knowledge and understanding of the way/s in which the media socialises individuals. Knowledge and understanding will be both lacking in range and depth. Responses in this band are likely to contain sociological evidence which is lacking in quantity and / or partially understood / unsubstantiated / implicit. It may be difficult to clearly identify two separate ways. In this band, responses may be heavily reliant on contemporary examples only, without reference to concepts/theories/studies. Responses in this band may deal with only one way (with depth and precision) or with two very briefly (lacking in sociological evidence).

The quality of the written communication will be basic, presenting some sociological evidence with limited coherence and some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**1-3 marks**

Candidates show a limited knowledge and understanding of the way/s in which the media socialises people. There may be only brief reference to one way and the answer will be lacking in sociological evidence, relying more on asociological ideas.

The quality of the written communication will be limited, presenting some sociological material with limited coherence and many errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**0 marks**

No relevant sociological knowledge or understanding.

**AO2 (a): Interpretation and Application**

*There are two aspects to AO2a skills. A range of appropriate and relevant knowledge needs to be selected (interpretation) The selected knowledge should be directly related to the specific question (application); in this case media and socialisation.*

**4 marks**

Candidates show a very good ability to interpret and apply evidence to two ways in which the media socialises individuals. There will be a range of appropriate and relevant sociological evidence selected and application to the question will be made explicit.

**3 marks**

Candidates show a good ability to interpret and apply evidence to two ways in which the media socialises individuals. There will be some appropriate but underdeveloped evidence selected and / or it may be implicitly relevant.

**2 marks**

Candidates show a basic ability to interpret and apply evidence to the way/s in which the media socialises individuals. The selection and interpretation evidence may be basic; eg it may be unsubstantiated, or conceptually sparse. Responses may be only partially relevant; it may not adequately answer the specific question.

**1 mark**

Candidates show a limited ability to interpret/apply evidence to the way/s in which the media socialises individuals. Responses are likely to contain limited relevant sociological evidence and address one aspect in a vague way.

**0 marks**

No relevant interpretation or application.

**3 Explain and briefly evaluate the view that age is the most important source of an individual's identity. (24 marks)**

**AO1: Knowledge and understanding**

Expect to see reference to: different stages of the life course in relation to age identity: childhood / youth, middle age, old age with associated cultural characteristics, although responses may choose to focus on one of these; eg youth. Responses may include concepts such as: youth culture, transition, peer group, subculture, norms and values associated with different age groups; social construction of age

Expect to see studies / theorists such as: Pilcher, Victor, Willis, Clarke & Warren, Hockney & James, Laslett (fourth age), McKingsley (oldest old), Laslett, Abrams, Davis, Bradley, Neugarten, Clarke & Warren (active ageing). References may be made to studies of particular age identities, such as Hodkinson, Thornton (Youth Culture and identity). Reference may also be made to Jagger from the pre-release material.

**10-12 marks**

The key issue to expect in top band answers is the link between age and identity. Candidates show a very good knowledge and understanding of the view that age is the most important source of identity. Responses contain wide ranging **and** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be clear and frequent use of sociological evidence.

The quality of the written communication will be very good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with very few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**7-9 marks**

Candidates show a good knowledge and understanding of the view that age is the most important source of identity. Responses contain wide ranging **or** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be some use of sociological evidence although it may be underdeveloped and / or narrow in focus

The quality of the written communication will be good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**4-6 marks**

Candidates show a basic knowledge and understanding of the view that age is the most important source of identity. Responses will be lacking in both range and depth. The sociological evidence used may be brief and lacking in substance. Responses in this band are likely to contain sociological evidence which is lacking in quantity and/or partially understood / unsubstantiated / implicit or solely reliant on the pre-release material. In this band, responses may be heavily reliant on contemporary examples only, without reference to concepts/theories/studies.

The quality of the written communication will be basic, presenting some sociological material with limited coherence and some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**1-3 marks**

Candidates show a limited knowledge and understanding of the view that age is the most important source of identity. Evidence will be limited with a tendency towards anecdote.

The quality of the written communication will be limited, presenting some sociological material with limited coherence and many errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**0 marks**

No relevant sociological knowledge or understanding.

**AO2 (a): Interpretation and Application**

*There are two aspects to AO2a skills. A range of appropriate and relevant knowledge needs to be selected (interpretation) The selected knowledge should be directly related to the specific question (application); in this question, age and identity.*

**7-8 marks**

Candidates show a very good ability to interpret and apply evidence to the view that age is the most important source of an individual's identity. There will be a range of appropriate and relevant sociological evidence selected and application to the question will be made explicit.

**5-6 marks**

Candidates show a good ability to interpret and apply evidence to the view that age is the most important source of an individual's identity. There will be some appropriate but underdeveloped evidence selected and / or it may be implicitly relevant.

**3-4 marks**

Candidates show a basic ability to interpret and apply evidence to the view stated. The selection and interpretation evidence may be basic; eg it may be unsubstantiated, or conceptually sparse. Responses may be only partially relevant; it may not adequately answer the specific question; for example, it may focus on how individuals are socialised into their age identity and not whether it is important.

**1-2 marks**

Candidates show a limited ability to interpret/apply evidence to the view stated. Responses are likely to be vague and/or contain limited relevant sociological evidence.

**0 marks**

No relevant interpretation or application.

**AO2 (b): Evaluation and Analysis**

Responses may focus other aspects of an individual's identity which may be more important than age (class, gender, ethnicity), the problematic nature of the concept of 'age' eg age is a socially constructed category or criticisms of specific studies / theories; non-uniformity of age categories; the postmodern view that age boundaries are becoming blurred (eg Hunt).

**4 marks**

Candidates show a very good ability to analyse and evaluate the importance of age as a source of identity. There will be a range of evaluation which will be explicit and relevant using sociological evidence; clearly focusing on the *importance* of age.

**3 marks**

Candidates show a good ability to analyse and evaluate the importance of age as a source of identity. There will be some relevant evaluation but it may be underdeveloped and / or narrow in focus.

**2 marks**

Candidates show a basic ability to analyse and evaluate the importance of age as a source of identity. The evaluation may be partially relevant / implicit and lacking in sociological evidence.

**1 mark**

Candidates show a limited ability to analyse and evaluate the importance of age as a source of identity. Analysis and evaluation will be minimal or largely irrelevant or very narrow or assertive in tone.

**0 marks**

No relevant evaluation or analysis.

- 4 Using the pre-release material and your wider sociological knowledge, explain and evaluate the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for new partners. [52 marks]

**AO1: Knowledge and understanding**

**Methods:**

- Responses will make clear what quantitative methods are and responses should discuss why quantitative methods would be suitable for this research context.
- Expect responses to focus on the method of content analysis, as this is the method used in the pre-release, but allow respondents to discuss other forms of quantitative data such as questionnaires, structured interviews.

**Wider research process issues:**

- Sampling, access, relationship between the researcher and researched; ethics; pilot survey; theoretical considerations in relation to data collection – particularly positivism; Operationalisation; hypotheses, variables, primary data collection.

**Concepts:**

- Key concepts: Validity, Reliability, Representativeness, Generalisability.
- Other concepts: Patterns, trends, objectivity, value freedom, variables.

**16-20 marks**

Candidates show a very good knowledge and understanding of the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for new partners. Responses contain wide ranging **and** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be explicit and frequent use of sociological evidence. At the top of this level, the candidate will use a wide range of concepts relevant to the use of quantitative methods in a detailed and explicit manner. At the bottom of the level, the use of concepts will still be wide ranging and detailed but underdeveloped in parts.

The quality of the written communication will be very good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with very few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**11-15 marks**

Candidates show a good knowledge and understanding of the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for new partners. Responses contain wide ranging **or** detailed knowledge and understanding. There will be some use of sociological evidence and relevant methodological concepts. At the top of the level, candidates will use relevant concepts in an explicit way. At the bottom of the level, concepts may be under developed and some may be implicit and / or not always accurate.

The quality of the written communication will be good, presenting appropriate material in a logical, accurate and coherent manner, with few errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**6-10 marks**

Candidates show a basic knowledge and understanding of the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for new partners. The sociological evidence used will be lacking in quantity and depth. Concepts and evidence are likely to be implicit / partially accurate / confused. At the top of the level, answers may include relevant concepts but they may be undeveloped or implicit and the focus may be largely on the advantages and disadvantages of the method chosen (content analysis). At the bottom of the level, responses will be likely to focus on advantages and disadvantages of the method chosen without using the concepts.

The quality of the written communication will be basic, presenting some sociological material with limited coherence and some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**1-5 marks**

Candidates show a limited knowledge and understanding of the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for new partners. At the top of the level, knowledge will be narrow, possibly only focusing on 2 or 3 ideas, but will have some coherence. Responses may be very generalised. At the bottom of the level, there may be only 1 or 2 ideas, and these may be confused in places.

The quality of the written communication will be limited, presenting some sociological material with limited coherence and many errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling

**0 marks**

No relevant sociological knowledge or understanding.

**AO2 (a): Interpretation and Application**

Responses will demonstrate the ability to interpret the pre-release material and wider sociological knowledge to meet the demands of the question. Knowledge and understanding needs to be applied to the given context; that is (1) **age** and (2) **advertising for a partner** (*dating adverts*).

**10-12 marks**

Candidates show a very good ability to interpret and apply sociological evidence to the use of quantitative methods as a way of researching the importance of age when advertising for a partner. Contextualisation will be sustained – focusing on both aspects of the context. At this level, responses will explicitly engage with the given context.

**7-9 marks**

Candidates show a good ability to interpret and apply sociological evidence to the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for a partner. There will be some contextualisation, although there may be a lack of balance eg focusing on age more than dating adverts.

**4-6 marks**

Candidates show a basic ability to interpret and/or apply sociological evidence to the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for a partner. Responses are likely to be generalised, only partially addressing the context or context referred to is no more than lip service. Responses in this band may be overly focused on the pre-release material in a very descriptive way.

**1-3 marks**

Candidates show a limited ability to interpret and/or apply sociological evidence to the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for a partner. Material will be marginally relevant.

**0 marks**

No relevant interpretation or analysis.

**AO2 (b): Evaluation and Analysis**

*There will be a consideration of the disadvantages of using quantitative methods in this study; Responses may consider practical, ethical and theoretical / conceptual issues and may focus particularly on content analysis. For example, objectivity, the imposition problem, interpretation issues, representativeness, ethics. Candidates are likely to link their response to the lack of validity and to reasons why Interpretivists would not find the research method particularly useful. Problems of interpreting and analysing quantitative data, of researcher imposition (in relation to operationalisation) respondent validation, and researcher bias may also be considered.*

**16-20 marks**

Candidates show a very good ability to evaluate and analyse the use of quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for a partner. There will be a range of evaluation.

At the top of the level, reference will be made to theoretical considerations. Relevant methodological key concepts will be fully developed. The evaluation will be sustained, with an evaluative tone throughout the response. At the bottom of the level, the evaluation and analysis will be sustained, but slightly less developed in one area.

**11-15 marks**

Candidates show a good ability to evaluate and analyse why the researcher used quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for new relationships.

At the top of the level, relevant concepts / evidence will be accurately discussed, although evaluation will be less developed than the top band. At the bottom of the band, evaluation may be more narrow / imbalanced / undeveloped.

**6-10 marks**

Candidates show a basic ability to evaluate and analyse why the researcher used quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for a partner. Evaluation may be focused on just the advantages (justification) and / or practical issues. At this level, evaluation will be lacking in depth / quantity. Concepts and evidence are likely to be implicit / partially accurate / confused.

At the top of the level, answers may include relevant concepts but they may be undeveloped or implicit and the focus may be largely on the advantages and disadvantages of the method chosen (content analysis). At the bottom of the level, responses will be likely to focus on advantages and disadvantages of the method chosen without using the concepts.

**1-5 marks**

Candidates show a limited ability to evaluate and analyse why the researcher used quantitative methods to research the importance of age when advertising for a partner.

At the top of the level, a partial reference may be made to relevant methodological concerns and the response is likely to be confused in terms of key concepts. Responses are likely to focus on only practical strengths / weaknesses.

At the bottom of the level, responses will make partial references to one or two advantages / disadvantages of the research methods, or evaluation will be very narrow.

**0 marks**

No relevant evaluation or analysis.

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