GCSE

Sociology

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J696**

OCR Report to Centres June 2017

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General Certificate of Secondary Education

Sociology (J696)

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

B671 Sociology Basics

General Comments:

A number of questions on this paper were answered very well indeed, demonstrating some really good sociological knowledge and understanding. In general most areas of the specification appear to have been covered effectively and thoroughly by centres, although some candidates appeared to be unclear about what was meant by covert research. There was, in general, a good understanding shown of the command words and rubric implications of the different styles of questions. Where candidates were perhaps not as well prepared they confused different skills and often described where they were required to explain, or did not follow the instructions to evaluate or justify, for example.

Most candidates showed at least a basic knowledge of sociological issues, concepts and methodologies. With the linear structure of the GCSE examination, many candidates used their knowledge, understanding and concepts from their B672 topics to good effect and this appears to have led to good synoptic application and engagement. Essay technique remains typically good, with a lot of candidates writing an extended, discursive piece. Most opt for juxtaposition when constructing their debate with a conclusion at the end. Very few bullet pointed responses were seen for question 5 or question 9, suggesting that most candidates had enough time to fully consider and answer all questions on the paper and so were able to maximise their marks. Timing did not seem to be an issue, indeed this seems to have been handled well. Very few 'no responses' were seen and candidates have engaged well with the issues and topics assessed, often using interesting and apt topical examples.

Comments on individual questions:

Section A – Research Methods and Evidence

Question 1

This was a true or false question testing candidate's sociological knowledge. This was generally well answered although there seemed to be more inaccuracies this year than in previous sessions, particularly in relation to question 1a and question 1c. Some candidates had not read the source material carefully enough or didn't know what certain concepts such as 'systematic' or 'qualitative data' meant and therefore were unable to achieve marks. Centres are advised to give their candidates plenty of practice at this style of question prior to the examination. They can be incorporated easily into lessons as starters, reviews and/or plenaries for any topics being studied and will thus familiarise candidates with the format requirements as well as allowing them opportunities to review key concepts and terms on a regular basis.

Question 2

This question is best approached as a question about representativeness and generalisability and candidates should therefore focus their answer on issues of sampling and the key word '**all**' in the question. Candidates generally answered this well although quite a few simply repeated that the sample was not representative with no further clarification of the difference in the two ways. As this is an 'explain' question more than this is required to score the full marks available. A few students did not pick up on the difference between representative/generalisability and accuracy/reliability so these were used as explanations in the wrong questions (question 2, 4b). Some candidates failed to identify a point from the source itself (e.g. just saying the sample size was 'too small' or 'from one location' rather than being specific and using the source material). Typically, those candidates who fell short of full credit here failed to link their response back to why the data was not representative of all people.

Marks will not be awarded here for those candidates who identify and discuss accuracy/bias issues. Centres are therefore advised to give their candidates plenty of pieces of evidence and data to analyse for these types of issues - old legacy papers as well as past Basics papers should prove useful but centres can also set their own question using a topical piece of data from, say, the media to give candidates as much practice as possible. Candidates are best advised in this question to choose two points that are sufficiently different to allow them to clearly demonstrate their sociological knowledge and understanding in their explanations and to ensure that they are not simply repeating themselves – a number of candidates, for example, used '…so it is not representative' as their explanation in both identified points. Points made need to be specific to the source data and candidates should not therefore talk generally here.

Question 3

Candidates seemed to find this question more of a challenge this year. The disadvantages of covert research were described more effectively than the advantages on the whole. Correct advantages mostly spoke of seeing natural behaviour as the sample was unaware of researcher presence, avoids the Hawthorne Effect, increases ecological validity etc. Many candidates used ethical issues such as deception and lack of consent as disadvantages or discussed more practical issues such as being unable to take notes or having to rely on memory. Generic answers where the point made could equally apply to several other research methods, such as 'cheap and easy', 'time consuming' or 'gives qualitative data' were not credited as they are too vague. It is crucial that candidates pay close attention to the method/evidence in the question and tailor their responses specifically to this. Similarly, just stating that something provides quantitative or qualitative data with no further detail or that something is valid or reliable is not sufficient to credit.

Question 4(a)(i)

Answered correctly by almost all candidates although a small minority answered with 'social media' which was not credited.

Question 4(a)(ii)

This was answered correctly by almost all candidates, although a minority put questionnaires rather than a type of interview, or vague points such as 'she asked friends'.

Question 4(b)

Here the focus of the question is on issues of accuracy/validity and it is only answers discussing these issues that will gain marks. Issues with the representativeness of the sample are not creditable. Most candidates were able to find two points from the source that supported the idea that the evidence may not be accurate but sometimes candidates lacked a full explanation or a link back to accuracy. Typical answers discussed the biased diary source, the adapted source, the social desirability factor due to the teacher's/friends presence or the need to rely on memory. There were plenty of points to choose from in this question though some candidates did not adequately develop upon their identifications, either providing vague points such as it 'could be exaggerated' or 'means it's not accurate/ valid' without any development. A few misinterpreted the question and did not focus on issues related to accuracy and validity and instead spoke about issues relating to representativeness. Where candidates could be advised to improve is on the explanations as a number of candidates did not fully explain why the point they had raised led to issues with the data's accuracy.

Question 5

This question generally elicited good responses. The hypothesis was usually understood well. Most students could identify and justify (even if only in a basic way) two primary methods and some secondary evidence. A small handful of students described content analysis as secondary evidence and so this couldn't be credited. Most candidates gave at least lip service to the specific

context of the question (media and how its use had changed) when describing the samples and reasons for their choices, and some tackled the issue of age comparisons well too. Making no reference to the media was a factor restricting a few candidates from accessing the top mark band. Candidates sometimes did not pick up on the difference between representation/generalisability and accuracy/reliability and these concepts were thrown in somewhat at random – often in the final paragraph. Even the most basic of answers usually had some sort of format for this question response which was encouraging to see. Some answers had aspects of evaluation which didn't bring any/many marks as the question is all about justifying a research design rather than focussing on disadvantages of chosen methods or samples. Methods were explained much better than samples which were sometimes confused e.g. systematic samples being alleged to be representative. On the whole the primary methods identification, justification and application was stronger than the secondary methods which were often quite brief and generic. The most common choice of secondary methods was official statistics and then previous sociological studies.

Section B – Key Concepts in Sociology

Question 6

This is a mix and match style question testing candidate's sociological knowledge. It was generally well answered although sometimes there was confusion between primary socialisation and agents of socialisation and/or values was not matched correctly. Regular testing of the concepts with students in the classroom is essential here. Students may also benefit from the production of a key concepts glossary built up as the unit progresses which can then become a really useful revision guide.

Question 7(a)

This question was generally answered well with 'punk' being identified from the source. Some candidates failed to score the mark because they identified a sub-culture not in the source or because they did not select 'punk' i.e. did not know what was meant by the term 'sub-culture'.

Question 7(b)

A range of answers were acceptable here; Goths, Emos, Skinheads and gangs were the most frequent answers. Students that did not score the mark here clearly did not know what a sub-culture was.

Question 7(c)

The descriptions by candidates were generally good in this question. The most common identifications were of housewife, caring about appearance, and being emotional/weak. Some candidates identified a feminine identity but then didn't describe the point. Alternatively, some candidates failed to score the second mark available because their development tended to be a comparison to male stereotypes rather than an explanation of their original idea.

Question 7(d)

A number of candidates did not gain full marks for this question as they often didn't fully explain *how* the identified media strategy e.g. role modelling/stereotypes/adverts, actually socialised individuals into their gender identity. It was therefore more of a partial answer. Some candidates used implicit representation via the media 'showing' how males and females should be. Occasionally candidates did not make any reference to media and instead focused on parents and canalisation which couldn't be credited.

Question 8(a)

There was a wide variety of different quality responses to this question. The better candidates clearly identified two ways in which religion socialises individuals into their identity, though many stopped short of achieving full marks as they often just gave an example without linking to identity thus resulting in a partial or vague response. Common responses included religion affecting clothing, food, behaviour, norms and values, stereotypical views i.e. the Muslim terrorist stereotype, and rules regarding behaviour i.e. sex before marriage.

Question 8(b)

A very well answered question on the whole, with candidates linking achieved status to hard work and effort, and many then describing this in terms of the workplace (promotion etc.) and fame. David Beckham and Alan Sugar featured prominently as examples. A small minority confused ascribed and achieved status and were therefore unable to gain two very accessible marks.

Question 9

A well answered question in terms of attempts at discussing both sides of the argument, candidates are clearly being well taught in terms of how best to approach this question and to formulate an argument successfully. This is great to see. Many candidates drew upon a variety of formal agents to answer the question and were able to discuss the specific strategies they utilise. Those scoring least marks did not make a judgement and some were confused with their 'for' and 'against' points or made common sense or simplistic arguments. For example, some candidates labelled education as a formal agency. Those who scored highly covered multiple agents on both sides of the argument, made an informed judgement and used knowledge of theorists/studies in their examples. Middle mark band responses were typically due to a lack of range in the debate or due to points being insufficiently developed. Common responses for arguments for included the police - power to enforce law through arrest, the court system to decide punishments/sentences with relevant examples, and prison with rehabilitation and acting as a deterrent frequently referred to. Common responses relating to arguments against related to examples of how the informal agents (family, peers and education being the most common) controlled individuals more than formal agents. Education was often linked to the hidden curriculum, media to stereotyping and role models and the family to gender roles/expectations and canalisation and/or manipulation. Other common evaluation responses pointed to crime rates still being high and reoffending rates after prison proof that formal agents of social control aren't effective. Answers typically ended with conclusions which is great to see. Stronger conclusions picked a side/made a judgement and justified their reasoning based on the key points made during the essay, although also recognising that perhaps there is no simple answer and that an agent can only be judged to be 'influential' when the context of the individual is specifically taken into account.

Some excellent sociology was seen in the responses to this question demonstrating a real understanding of the skills of evaluation.

B672 Socialisation, Culture and Identity

General Comments:

The paper differentiated well with candidates being able to engage with most questions. The stronger candidates managed their time well and wrote essays that were fully and consistently substantiated with sociological evidence. The majority of candidates were prepared for most areas of the specification. The one and two mark questions were answered well with a minority mixing up concepts, most specifically on Crime and Deviance.

As in previous years Family, and Crime and Deviance, remain the most popular topics; however there seemed to be a growth in those answering the Education section. Media and Youth were also both still popular with a minority of candidates answering the Work section.

There were some extremely good scripts, with candidates answering at a level above GCSE standard, substantiated with empirical evidence and correct use of theory. However, whilst some candidates used theory correctly, weaker candidates continue to just drop in the words New Right, Functionalism, Marxism with either no explanation, or using it generically or with the wrong explanation. Theory should be used to stretch those at the top end, but in no way is an expectation within this sociology qualification. Candidates often are trying to use statistics as evidence and this is welcomed and credited, but they do need to be sourced and accurate.

Handwriting and spelling present problems in a small number of centres. Where handwriting raises issues of legibility, centres should consider in advance alternative means of candidates answering the papers initially in discussion with their Examinations Officer. Also do remind candidates to clearly label their questions.

1 markers
'From the source questions' were generally answered well. The part b questions where a candidate needs to 'use their wider sociological knowledge' in many cases was less well answered, in specific areas this showed a less comprehensive knowledge of the specification.

Mix and match
On the whole these were well answered.

8 markers
Highest mark answers clearly separated each idea and gave examples to illustrate points. Those who were gaining the highest mark clearly formatted their answers to suit the question, e.g. 'One idea is… this is when … which means/implications of this…' A number of candidates did not develop their answer further or merely repeated the question. In addition, on some of the questions candidates did not read the question carefully and misinterpreted what it was asking for. This year some candidates repeated their explanation as their development - repetition gains no credit.

24 marker
At the top end, candidates have continued to strengthen their ability in regards to writing a discursive essay. The teaching of connectives is again clearly evident in the best essays, which enabled candidates to explicitly demonstrate their understanding of for and against ideas, which assisted candidates in reaching the top level.

One thing that continues to hold weaker candidates back is the need to arrange ideas into paragraphs. The use of paragraphs would make it clear where ideas begin and end and help candidates ensure a wide range of substantiated ideas are used. A further issue for weaker

candidates is not making clear if their idea is justifying or evaluating the claim. Planning their essays first would help them with this.

More candidates provided a conclusion, as requested in the mark scheme for full marks on AO3. Some very strong essays were held back by candidates not fully developing their ideas or by not having a range of ideas. Another notable point is that weaker candidates are not ensuring consistent use of evidence in their essays which prevented them scoring in the higher levels. Occasionally candidates are misreading the question, arguing for instead of against.

Timing continues to improve with most candidates using their time wisely. It is still good practice to attempt the whole paper timed before the exam to prevent a minority of good candidates doing wonderful sections for their first two, some even gaining full marks for both, but then not having time to do well on their third section which will lower their overall mark.

Comments on individual questions:

Section A - Family

Question 1(a)
This question was well answered.

Question 1(b)
This question was largely well answered, with only a few candidates not understanding the term 'types' or giving answers from the source, when specifically instructed not to, or giving two types that were actually one type, but by a different name. Do remind students of the importance of following the instructions. A tip is to perhaps set homework that gives students a mixture of source/ wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

Question 2
A well answered question. When teaching the course, a tip is to give students the list of key concepts for family from the specification. Students need to ensure they have a working definition for each concept and revise these thoroughly.

Question 3
Weaker candidates showed that they did not understand the term 'reconstituted', responding with why divorce had increased. The best answers considered why changes in attitudes (confluent love) and law (making divorce easier) led to an increase in remarriage. A tip is to practice 8 mark questions with your students, highlighting how they need to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format, for example: 'One reason there has been an increase in remarriage is due to changing social attitudes. One example of this is secularisation. This is…'. Ensure candidates plan for 8 mark questions to ensure two distinct and relevant ideas.

Question 4
The majority of candidates engaged with this question. Those who were most successful could articulate why the nuclear family may or may not be good for the family. The best responses compared different theoretical perspectives. There were an impressive amount of studies used such as Dunscombe and Marsden, Edgell, Leach, Murdock, Parsons, Oakley and Dobash and Dobash. Some candidates focused on advantages/disadvantages of other family types but without linking it to the question. Moreover many candidates were unable to gain marks whereby they dropped in sociological evidence without showing any understanding e.g. listing the functions of the family. It was impressive to see some high level evaluation such as the work of Donovan to critically analyse whether domestic violence is only a problem in nuclear families.

Section B - Education

Question 5(a)
This question was well answered.

Question 5(b)
This question divided candidates, many cited league tables and OFSTED but others were unsure about the 1988 Education Reform Act with comments about education being made free. More care was needed by candidates to focus on the details in the question. Do remind students of the importance of following the instructions. A tip is to perhaps set homework that gives students a mixture of source/ wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

Question 6
This question was well answered, with the odd error over cultural deprivation. When teaching the course, a tip is to give students the list of key concepts for Education and ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly.

Question 7
Successful candidates could identify two ways ethnicity had affected educational achievement such as labelling/material deprivation/cultural deprivation. Patterns of achievement were also used well by some candidates. Those that did not score highly ignored the 'ethnicity' part of the question in their answer. A tip is to practice 8 mark questions with your students, highlighting how they need to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format, for example 'One way ethnicity can affect educational achievement is…This is because…' Ensure candidates plan for 8 mark questions to ensure two distinct and relevant ideas.

Question 8
Most candidates engaged with the debate. Often there were good answers: many candidates were able to articulate both sides, using good key concepts. Those who were most successful could explain why preparing candidates for the workplace may or may not be the most important function of education, with a few excellent candidates offering a very theoretical and substantiated debate. A minority of candidates were confused and did not focus on the debate (which of the functions of schools are most important) and started to debate if schools should prepare candidates for employment.

Section C - Mass Media

Question 9
This question was well answered. A tip is to perhaps set homework that gives students a mixture of source/ wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

Question 10
This question was well answered. When teaching the course, a tip is to give students the list of key concepts for Mass Media from the specification and ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly.

Question 11
A number of candidates were unable to gain full marks for this question, either because they did not focus on the 'globalisation' of media or their links from were unclear. The most successful answers focussed on loss of national cultures and digital divides. A tip is to practice 8 mark questions with your students, highlighting how they need to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format 'One way globalisation has affected media is…This is done through…' Ensure candidates plan for 8 mark questions to ensure two distinct and relevant ideas.

Question 12
Candidates engaged well with this debate, some providing excellent answers full of evidence. They knew specific terminology: hypodermic syringe, uses and gratification, role models and provided some excellent examples such as Jamie Bulger's case and more contemporary examples. This was one of the better answered 24 marker questions.

Section D – Workplace

Question 13(a)
This question was well answered by the majority of candidates.

Question 13(b)
This question was well answered by most candidates. A tip is to perhaps set homework that gives students a mixture of source/ wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

Question 14
Most candidates could accurately match all four key concepts although some candidates selected discrimination instead of ageism or racism. When teaching the course, a tip is to give students the list of key concepts for Workplace from the specification and ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly.

Question 15
Most candidates correctly identified two ways gender affects career opportunities such as glass ceilings or the effect of dual burdens, with some basic application. However, fewer candidates were able to successfully develop their answers with key terminology and studies in order to gain full marks for knowledge and development. A tip is to practice 8 mark questions with your students, highlighting how they need to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format, 'One way gender affects career opportunities is vertical segregation. This means…' Ensure candidates plan for 8 mark questions to ensure two distinct and relevant ideas.

Question 16
Very few candidates successfully engaged with this debate, many candidates did not understand the role of trade unions (or even what a trade union is) and weaker answers relied on common sense. The most successful candidates embellished their essays with sociological terminology as well as developing their arguments with relevant examples from the workplace.

Section E – Crime and Deviance

Question 17(a)(i)
This question was well answered by most candidates.

Question 17(a)(ii)
This question was well answered by many candidates. A tip is to perhaps set homework that gives students a mixture of source/ wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

Question 17(b)
A large proportion of candidates answered this question well however some gave examples from the source e.g. courts.

Question 18
Most Candidates could accurately match all four key concepts, however several candidates confused conformity with norms, and delinquency with deviance. When teaching the course, a tip is to give students the list of key concepts for Crime and Deviance from the specification and ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly.

Question 19
Most candidates correctly identified two functions of formal agents of social control and provided accurate knowledge via terminology and application. Fewer candidates successfully developed their responses to achieve full marks. Some candidates identified informal agents and therefore could not be awarded marks. Also a number of candidates identified an agent rather than a function. A tip is to practice 8 mark questions with your students, highlighting how they need to

separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format, 'One function of formal agents of social control is deterrence…This is…' Ensure candidates plan for 8 mark questions to ensure two distinct and relevant ideas.

Question 20
Most candidates engaged with this question. Those who were most successful
could articulate why labelling may or may not be the most important reason males commit crime. Best responses discussed a variety of reasons considering which is most important. A large number of candidates looked at the impact of labelling on crime in general without focusing on males which prevented some good candidates gaining more marks.

Section F – Youth

Question 21(a)
Most candidates interpreted the source correctly. However, some candidates gave responses that were not from the source.

Question 21(b)
This question was well answered by most candidates. A tip is to perhaps set homework that gives students a mixture of source/ wider sociological knowledge questions so they get used to reading the paper carefully.

Question 22
Most Candidates could accurately match all four key concepts. When teaching the course, a tip is to give students the list of key concepts for Youth from the specification and ensure they have a working definition for each and revise these thoroughly.

Question 23
Most candidates correctly identified two ways children transition into adulthood. The use of sociological terminology was good in most responses however again development was lacking in many answers. The use of many different rites of passage displayed good understanding. A tip is to practice 8 mark questions with your students, highlighting how they need to separately identify and explain. Show candidates a clear format 'One way children transition to adulthood is…This is…' Ensure candidates plan for 8 mark questions to ensure two distinct and relevant ideas.

Question 24
Candidates engaged well with this debate, some providing excellent answers full of empirical evidence. Candidates also identified an impressive number of studies. Weaker candidates gave repetitive responses without substantiation.

B673 Applying Sociological Research Techniques

General Comments:

B673, Applying Sociological Research Techniques is taken in the same examination session as B671, meaning it is answered in the second hour of a two hour long session.

There continues to be a basic structure to the paper with Section A based on Investigation 1 and Section B based on Investigation 2 of the pre-release material. Section C consists of one question which requires a more extended response and can be based on either one of the two investigations or both. However, within sections A and B the format of the questions changes each year.

As with the other units in the specification, the B673 examination has questions structured to test the ability range from A* to G grade candidates. It is therefore anticipated that some candidates will find particular questions such as 6, 12 and 13, to be challenging. Conversely, all candidates should find some areas of the examination paper to be accessible, particularly the questions at the start of Sections A and B.

Although candidates are required to demonstrate their sociological knowledge, the paper is weighted towards the testing of skills. Candidates are examined on their knowledge and understanding of sociological research techniques but they also need to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge, understanding and skills of interpretation to the pre-release investigations. For the first time, this material was made available in September 2016, the year prior to the examination. This will happen again for the 2018 paper with the pre-release available to centres in September 2017. Candidates are expected to have studied the pre-release material prior to the examination and to have gained a sound knowledge of it. A copy of the pre-release is made available to them for reference during the exam.

Again this year, it was evident that most candidates were knowledgeable about the pre-release material and many had a good understanding of the methods and sources used. Clearly, teachers had undertaken successful work in the classroom to facilitate this.

Most candidates used sociological language appropriately but the concepts of validity and reliability used interchangeably continues to be a weakness. This was noticeable particularly on question 13. Please do ensure that candidates have an understanding of, and can define precisely, all the concepts in the specification and in particular, those used in the pre-release material.

The more advanced skill of evaluation is demonstrated mainly by the higher level candidates but most candidates were able to find some flaws in the methods and sources in the pre-release investigations when a response required this. Candidates do continue to find a more balanced approach challenging.

Improvement in candidates' performance could be made by increasing AO2 marks. Candidates who are taught to relate back to the investigations where required, are being prepared well for the exam. Question 12 which requires reference back to the topic or pre-release could be much improved.

Comments on individual questions:

Question 1
A large majority of candidates were able to quote directly from the pre-release and gain the mark.

Question 2 (a)
Most candidates gained the mark.

Question 2(b)
The majority of candidates gained the mark. The most common answer was 'Office for National Statistics'. As reference to statistics was included in the mark scheme, this was credited. Few referred to quantitative or statistical data. A response of ONS was not credited.

Question 2(c)
This question was answered particularly well. Almost all responses stated 'lone parent' and therefore achieved the identify mark. Most went on to state correctly the percentage increase of 1.1% or the percentage that it had increased from and to. Where candidates did not gain the second mark, it was most commonly due to giving reasons for the increase rather than referring to the statistics. A small number of candidates stated multi-family and were able to give the correct figure for the second mark. This was credited as the proportionate increase was the highest.

Question 3(a)
In order for candidates to be awarded the mark they needed to ensure there answer was specific to content analysis; answers were not credited if vague and quite general to a variety of research methods. Many candidates referred to the idea that it was cheap or easy, however did not specify that it could be cheap or easy to access data / media and therefore could not be credited with the mark. Some referred to the production of quantitative data which was credited.

Question 3(b)
Many candidates were able to identify and explain two disadvantages of using content analysis although many did not support their answers with evidence from Investigation 1. A common response which only gained one mark was 'media is biased…'. A frequent response which didn't gain both marks was 'soap operas are exaggerated/ distorted/ biased' as they didn't then make the link to them not being realistic to real life families. Another common weakness was candidates giving two proposed disadvantages that were centred on only one concept, for example, 'representativeness.' The most frequent response to gain both marks was 'Only 2 soap operas were studied so not representative'. Fewer candidates than expected discussed categories being operationalised badly. Where this was identified many candidates were able to gain the additional mark.

Question 4
A number of candidates were unable to define the term random. These responses typically referred to a random sample as 'a sample chosen randomly'. A significant number of candidates were able to gain one mark through identifying an accurate example; for example, 'picking names out of a hat'. However, they could not be credited with 2 marks as they did not explain that with a random sample there is no system for selection and respondents have an equal chance of being selected. Do ensure that candidates can define precisely the key terms included within the pre-release.

Question 5(a)
Despite historical documents being used and referred to in the pre-release, a number of candidates did not demonstrate a good understanding. On the whole, candidates were able to identify documents; for example, diaries etc. but did not link it to the past and to the study of the family. A significant number of candidates simply stated 'old documentaries/ TV shows/statistics/studies etc.' which didn't gain them marks. Generally where one mark was achieved, candidates would simple state census or diary from the past. Where candidates gained two marks they were able to give a clear identification such as diary from the past/ census/ and then a clear link to changes in the family such as, being able to see changes in births/ marriages/ divorces. A very small number of candidates gave really clear examples such as 'World War II diary entry'. Some had been taught this specifically and referred to Anne Frank's diary which was credited.

Question 5(b)
This question was answered well. Most candidates were able to identify a similarity between Person A and Person B and therefore gain one mark, the most frequent responses being that they both came from a nuclear family or that they both had loving/ kind families. However, many did not gain two marks because they didn't explain the similarity stated by linking it back to the pre-release. A significant number also identified more than one similarity, both nuclear and nice/kind, rather than providing an explanation, and therefore also only gained one mark. Many candidates also only referred to one of the interviews making comparison not possible.

Question 5(c)
Candidates found identifying differences more difficult. Some identified differences which were not linked in any way to how their family experiences were different. For example; one person was divorced, and the other had money problems. These answers could not be credited. Some candidates used good sociology by identifying the differences in family types experienced by the two people.

Question 6
Generally candidates were able to give at least one advantage and disadvantage of a longitudinal study. A lack of application or development was often where candidates were weaker.

Most candidates were able to describe a longitudinal study as a study that takes place over a long time, and then go on to give the advantage that this means you can see changes in the family over time. Where this was then applied, candidates frequently referenced the aim 'to see family types in the future' or the investigation 'to see changes every 5 years'. The most frequent disadvantage given made reference to the idea that it takes a long time and therefore people may no longer be available/ want to take part in the study. Where this was successfully applied, candidates made reference to Mrs Carter being 90 years old and the fact that she probably wouldn't survive for the entire study. In saying this, many of the responses lacked clear reference to the longitudinal study on the pre-release. For example, many candidates identified that with a longitudinal study, not all respondents may survive the full length of the study. However, at this point, they did not reference Mrs Carter, who at 90 years old may not survive to the next study in 5 years' time. This meant that they were unable to achieve more than three marks on this question.

The majority of candidates started their response by explaining longitudinal study as that which takes place over a long period of time, and then went on to give the advantage that it means you can see changes in the family over time. Most candidates went on to give one advantage and one disadvantage so achieved at least 3 marks. A lack of application was what prevented the majority of candidates from achieving more than 3 marks as a simple rewording of the question was not credited. Those who did gain application marks in the advantages often referred to changes in family types or changes over five years.

In a large number of answers candidates demonstrated a better understanding of the disadvantages of longitudinal research. The most common application was in reference to Mrs Carter's age and her ability to carry on with the research. Many candidates did achieve four marks through one of these applications and a number of non-applied points. Some candidates gave a number of advantages and disadvantages applied well but the lack of development meant they were unable to reach Level 3. Where candidates only achieved three marks, it was due mainly to a lack of application. However, a minority of candidates made an extremely well-developed and applied point, but because it was only one point, with no others made, they could only achieve three marks.

Candidates credited at the top of Level 3 demonstrated good evaluation skills, identifying and explaining both advantages and disadvantages. Where candidates gained only 5 marks, it was due mainly to a lack of development or in some cases, identifying and explaining disadvantages only.

Within Level 1 responses, points made were simple, brief and largely descriptive. An example is, 'It takes a long time'. Some candidates didn't show a clear understanding of the term longitudinal study by making general responses such as, 'You can get a lot of detailed information'.

Question 7 (a)
Most candidates accurately identified functionalists. Most candidates not credited identified social worker, or named a theorist (Oakley, Murdock or Parsons). A small minority did refer to it as Marxists or Feminists.

Question 7(b)
Most candidates identified a hypothesis based on the family and were credited with two marks. Some gained only 1 mark by identifying an aim or question

Question 8
There was a mix of responses to this question. Many candidates showed some understanding of the term researcher bias but gave partial responses by stating the researcher is 'one-sided' and therefore gained one mark. Some candidates went on to describe its effect on the investigation or results produced and therefore were credited with both marks. A number of candidates did not show any understanding of researcher bias and described interviewer bias or social desirability.

Question 9
Responses to this question were on the whole weaker. Many candidates said case studies may be out of date, or not relevant. Another frequent incorrect answer gave the idea that they aren't good because they've been carried out by someone else. Those who were credited mostly gave the response that case studies have small samples and generalisations cannot be made.

Question 9(b)
Most candidates were able to gain at least one mark. Commonly for one mark they either stated ethical research to be, 'Morally correct/ right' or gave a valid example such as, 'When you get consent'. The candidates who gained both marks mostly gave a partial definition followed by an example. Few candidates demonstrated a good understanding by referring to guidelines of research being adhered to. Where candidates failed to gain any marks, the most frequent reason was due to candidates stating both morally right and wrong, or giving examples which would be unethical rather than ethical, such as not gaining consent. Some candidates confused ethical with ethnicity.

Question 10(a)
The most common incorrect answer to this question was, 'Unreliable data is data that is not reliable', simple re-stating the term used in the question. As in previous years, many candidates showed that they did not know the difference between validity and reliability with unreliable data described variously as data that is not accurate, out-dated, biased etc. Few candidates managed to gain both marks by stating that unreliable data is that which cannot be repeated to gain the same results. A minority of candidates did not gain any marks as they mistakenly described reliable data.

Question 10(b)
Most candidates identified a correct conclusion to the graph and were able to gain one mark; the most common cited response was that more males committed suicide than females. Many candidates could not be credited with a second mark as they were unable to support their answer with the correct evidence. A significant number of candidates struggled with the idea of rate and incorrectly stated the rate in thousands, for example, '25,000 men commit suicide per 100,000.' Some candidates misinterpreted the question and tried to explain the data, for example, giving reasons as to why more men might commit suicide than women. Candidates should be encouraged to follow the guidelines in the question, 'Use the data to support your answer'.

Question 11(a)
Few candidates identified clearly the aim but this was often implicit in the answer and therefore credited. The table refers to homelessness and many candidates missed this referring to the table as demonstrating how families are unable to carry out the economic function.

Question 11(b)
The majority of candidates gained 2 marks for this question. The most common answers were related to the statistics being from one area/Merseyside/Liverpool only and this meant it was not representative. Another common response gaining two marks was that the table fails to provide qualitative data on why families are homeless. The tendency was for candidates to gain two marks through an identification mark and an explanation rather than two identification marks. Inaccuracy often came with the second identification and explanation as simple questioning of the validity of the data could not be credited. Examples included that people may not be registered or councils could alter statistics. A number of candidates also argued that the source was out-dated and were not credited.

Question 12
Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the disadvantages of questionnaires and were able to identify accurately three of these. Weaker candidates didn't relate the answers to the topic (family) or Investigation 2. Do advise candidates of the need for the application in order to gain the three additional marks. Some candidates simply recorded examples of questions that they could ask respondents and therefore were unable to be credited.

Question 13
A significant number of candidates wrote well-developed answers but these were one-sided (disadvantages) and therefore they couldn't reach Level 3. Many of these disadvantages were focused on interviews 1 and 2 in Investigation 1 and interviews 5 and 6 in Investigation 2. Few candidates discussed interviews 3 and 4, and where they were discussed the focus was on the disadvantages of using media material. Many points made were very similar, discussing bias, representativeness/ generalisability, social desirability and validity through 'personal contacts' , 'brother of the researcher', 'giving sweets and crisps' and 'phone battery running out'. Some candidates within Level 2 made a number of good points about a range of interviews. However, they didn't go on to develop their answers and therefore couldn't be credited in the top level. Other responses were fairly well-developed. However, they either looked at only a narrow range (often interviews 1 and/ or 2 and then 4 or 5), or there was a wider range, with development, but the debate was one-sided and therefore couldn't be credited in Level 3. Another weak area within Level 2 was repetitive responses, discussing a range of interviews but only looking at one or two concepts, the most frequent being bias.

Most candidates credited in the top level gained 9 or 10 marks as they didn't consider the wider range of sources needed for the top of the band. As in Level 2, there was little focus in the responses on the two secondary source interviews. Some of the best answers did include these interviews and gave both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages included discussion on the content of the interviews and how this could help meet the aims. Candidates credited in Level 3 generally produced well-developed, well-balanced debates across both investigations. However, they still included many more disadvantages than advantages, and the advantages tended to be interpreted more simply. Within this level, a number of candidates made good suggestions as to how the interviews could be improved.

As in previous years, some candidates made purely descriptive points, especially in Level 1 responses. Common across all candidates' responses, but especially within Level 1 and lower Level 2 responses, was the idea that different types of interviews provide different types of data, and that semi-structured interviews provide both types of data with questions that can be explored further (as in Interview 2). In Level 1, some candidates discussed content analysis rather than interviews, or provided confused responses which referenced the secondary table/ graph. Many candidates, especially within Levels 1 and 2 referenced incorrectly the sampling types, referring to interviews 1 and 2 as stratified and interview 5 as snowball sampling. Very few

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candidates were able to correctly identify the sampling type as opportunity. Where snowball sampling was correctly identified in Interview 6, candidates were generally able to give both advantages and disadvantages, such as 'access hard to reach groups' and 'not representative'.

The majority of Level 2 and Level 3 answers were confident in their sociological knowledge, discussing the sources and issues of representation, validity and bias. Some sociological concepts were used very effectively such as social desirability in Interview 6. Within Level 3 and the top of Level 2, many concepts were well-developed to show clear understanding. However, in Level 1 and the bottom of Level 2, responses often left these concepts undeveloped.

As in previous years, candidates' sociological knowledge has been good and a clear understanding of many key terms has been shown throughout the paper.

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