

328/01

SOCIOLOGY – SOC 2a

UNIT 2a - SOCIAL RESEARCH

A.M. TUESDAY, 15 May 2007

(1 hour 15 minutes)

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to this examination paper, you will need a 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

You are advised to spend 15 minutes reading the passage and questions. Divide your time according to the mark allocation given.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The question carries 60 marks.

The number of marks is given in square brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

You are reminded that marking will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answers.

Read the following passage and then answer **all** the questions that follow.

Understanding grandparent/grandchild relationships

The research adopted a **qualitative** approach to explore the meaning and importance of grandparent-grandchild relationships.

Respondents were chosen to provide a social spread and were drawn from affluent (wealthy) and less affluent backgrounds, from rural (countryside) and urban (towns) areas. The **sampling** was also intended to include participants from minority ethnic backgrounds.

It proved harder to access participants than was expected. Grandchildren were accessed through schools and community groups. Grandparents were accessed through organisations in the local community and a variety of clubs. Getting people to take part was most successful when a local person encouraged people to participate, usually because they were interested in the research. It was harder to involve grandfathers than grandmothers.

148 respondents took part in the study, 75 young people and 73 older people with at least one teenage grandchild. Half the young people were aged 10 – 14 and half aged 15 – 19. Grandparents ranged in age from the early 50s to the late 80s. Interviews and group discussions were held with respondents from both generations.

In total 68 interviews and discussions were held:

- 24 individual interviews and 10 group discussions with young people
- 18 individual and 8 group discussions with older people
- Joint interviews were also conducted with 8 grandparent-grandchild pairs.

Some young people were more open about their feelings when interviewed individually.

Source: adapted from download at www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term **qualitative** research. [5]
- (b) Identify and explain the strengths of the research design described in the above passage. [10]
- (c) Using both the passage, and your own knowledge, describe and explain the importance of **sampling** techniques for sociological research. [15]
- (d) Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of **qualitative** methods of research. [30]