

General Certificate of Education
January 2006
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



SOCIOLOGY
Unit 3

SC3W

Monday 16 January 2006 9.00 am to 10.00 am

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is SC3W.
- This paper consists of **one** question. Answer **all** parts of the question.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for questions (or part questions) are shown in brackets.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. Part questions (e) and (f) should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in these answers.

SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS

Answer **all** parts of the question.

Total for this question: 60 marks

- 1 Read **Items A and B** below and answer parts (a) to (f) which follow.

Item A

Item A cannot be reproduced here due to third-party copyright constraints.

Item B

Alan Quirk and Paul Lelliott investigated life on an acute psychiatric ward. Here they comment on their choice of participant observation as their main research technique.

Various research strategies have been used to investigate conditions in modern psychiatric wards. Surveys have produced quantitative data on issues such as the number of violent incidents and the amount of time nurses spend in face-to-face contact with patients. 5
Non-participant observation has described the physical environment of in-patient wards and identified some of the activities that go on within them.

However, participant observation has far greater potential to explore the causes and consequences of these activities. In our study, the principal researcher spent three separate three-month periods on different psychiatric wards. He immersed himself in the daily routine, 10 attending ward-rounds and therapy sessions, and generally ‘hanging around’ in television rooms, dining rooms and corridors in order to observe events and talk to people. This involvement generated a large amount of qualitative data about how patients interact with each other and with staff.

Source: adapted from A QUIRK and P LELLIOTT, *Acute wards: problems and solutions*, *Psychiatric Bulletin* (2002), Issue 26

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- (a) Explain what is meant by a ‘snowball’ sample (**Item A**, line 11). *(2 marks)*
- (b) Suggest **two** problems that the researchers may have faced in using the ‘doorstep survey’ (**Item A**, line 8). *(4 marks)*
- (c) Suggest **three** reasons, **apart from** those in **Item A**, ‘why some sociologists find official statistics useful’ in their research (**Item A**, line 6). *(6 marks)*
- (d) Identify and briefly explain **two** disadvantages of using interviews that are ‘informal and in-depth’ in sociological research (**Item A**, line 12). *(8 marks)*
- (e) Examine the problems that sociologists may encounter when using postal questionnaires in their research. *(20 marks)*
- (f) Using material from **Item B** and elsewhere, assess the strengths and limitations of different forms of observation in sociological research. *(20 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page