

428/01

SOCIOLOGY – SOC 5a

UNIT 5a - APPLIED SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS

P.M. FRIDAY, 15 June 2007

(1 hour 15 minutes)

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

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

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer **all** questions.

You are advised to spend approximately 15 minutes reading the passage and the questions and then divide your time according to the mark allocations given.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

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:

The role of religion in the lives of children.

In July 2005 a report was published by the National Children’s Bureau for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation about children’s religious beliefs. The team who carried out the research, led by Greg Smith, analysed the views of a sample of over 100 children aged between 9 and 11.

The research focused on two church primary schools serving multi-ethnic, multifaith neighbourhoods in a city in the North of England and one local authority primary school in a culturally diverse East London borough.

The research team used a range of mainly qualitative methods including interviews, classroom discussions, worksheet exercises, and school based ethnographic observation. The researchers aimed to collect detailed information about the children’s religious beliefs and practices. They wanted to find out whether the children attended a place of worship regularly and whether the teachings of their particular religion played a significant part in their lives. To achieve these aims they studied the children over a period of 18 months.

After talking to them, the researchers discovered that the children described their beliefs in terms of social practice and teachings about morality and ethics. As a result of this the researchers organised the children’s account of their experiences around three core areas:

- Religious identity
- Social practice
- Belief and spirituality

The researchers discovered that parental belief is a major influence on children’s beliefs and school is often the only place where children from different religious and ethnic backgrounds meet regularly. The children used the terms Asian and Christian as markers of racial difference which according to the researchers shows that ethnicity and religion overlap in children’s understanding.

Adapted from “Children and Religious Belief”, Joan Garrod Sociology Review, February 2006

- (a) Explain what is meant by the term **qualitative** methods. [5]
- (b) Outline and explain why using qualitative methods was appropriate for the research described in the above passage. [10]
- (c) Outline and explain, using examples where appropriate, why some sociologists are critical of qualitative methods. [15]
- (d) You intend to carry out a research project to collect **quantitative** data to investigate the role that religion plays in the lives of a representative sample of adults in your area. Describe your research design explaining and justifying your choices at each stage of the process. Identify some of the problems that you may encounter as a result of your choice of design. [30]