

Chapter 3 Research Methods

Topic 1 Choice of research methods

Answers to QuickCheck Questions on page 99

1. (a) Participant observation or unstructured interviews; (b) official statistics.
2. Time and money; requirements of funding bodies; personal skills and characteristics; subject matter; research opportunities.
3. Any three of the following: informed consent; confidentiality and privacy; possible harm to participants; effects on vulnerable groups; the issue of whether covert research is ethical.
4. Reliability means replicability. A replica is an exact copy of something, so a reliable method is one which, when repeated by another researcher, gives the same results.
5. False.
6. (a) False; (b) true .
7. Any two from each of the following: (a) questionnaires, structured interviews, experiments, official statistics; (b) participant observation, unstructured interviews, personal documents.
8. A possible explanation that can be tested by collecting evidence to prove it true or false.
9. Most sociologists would use parental occupation as an indicator of social class. (However, other indicators could be used, e.g. parental income.)
10. (a) The whole group that we are interested in; (b) a smaller sub-group drawn from the wider group (or research population) that we are interested in; (c) a list of all the members of the research population.