RESEARCH METHODS (EST303) MCQ REVISION

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Question 1
What is a research design?
A A framework for every stage of the collection and analysis of data
B A way of conducting research that is not grounded in theory
C The choice between using qualitative or quantitative methods
D The style in which you present your research findings, e.g. a graph

Question 2
If a study is "reliable", this means that:
A The measures devised for concepts are stable on different occasions
B It was conducted by a reputable researcher who can be trusted
C The findings can be generalized to other social settings
D The methods are stated clearly enough for the research to be replicated

Question 3
"Internal validity" refers to:
A Whether or not the findings are relevant to the participants' everyday lives
B Whether or not there is really a causal relationship between two variables
C The degree to which the researcher feels that this was a worthwhile project
D How accurately the measurements represent underlying concepts

Question 4
In an experimental design, the dependent variable is:
A The one that is manipulated in order to observe any effects on the other
B A measure of the extent to which personal values affect research
C An ambiguous concept whose meaning depends on how it is defined
D The one that is not manipulated and in which any changes are observed

Question 5
What is a cross-sectional design?
A The collection of data from more than one case at one moment in time
B A study of one particular section of society, e.g. the middle classes
C One that is devised when the researcher is in a bad mood
D A comparison of two or more variables over a long period of time

Question 6
Survey research is cross-sectional and therefore:
A High in replicability but low in internal validity
B High in internal validity but low in reliability
C High in ecological validity but low in external validity
D None of the above

**Question 7**

**When planning to do social research, it is better to:**
A Approach the topic with an open mind
B Do a pilot study before getting stuck into it
C Be familiar with the literature on the topic
D Forget about theory because this is a very practical undertaking

**Question 8**

**Which comes first, theory or research?**
A Theory, because otherwise you are working in the dark
B Research, because that's the only way you can develop a theory
C It depends on your point of view
D The question is meaningless, because you can't have one without the other

**Question 9**

**We review the relevant literature to know:**
A What is already known about the topic
B What concepts and theories have been applied to the topic
C Who are the key contributors to the topic
D All of the above

**Question 10**

**A deductive theory is one that:**
A Allows theory to emerge out of the data
B Involves testing an explicitly defined hypothesis
C Allows for findings to feed back into the stock of knowledge
D Uses qualitative methods whenever possible

**Question 11**

**Which of the following is not a type of research question?**
A Predicting an outcome
B Evaluating a phenomenon
C Developing good practice
D A hypothesis

**Question 12**

**What does 'sampling cases' mean?**
A Sampling using a sampling frame
B Identifying people who are suitable for research
C Literally, the researcher’s brief-case
D Sampling people, newspapers, television programmes etc.

Question 13
Which of the following is not a data-collection method?
A Research questions
B Unstructured interviewing
C Postal survey questionnaires
D Participant observation

Question 14
Why is data analysis concerned with data reduction?
A Because far too much data is collected than is required
B Because we need to make sense of the data
C Because of the repetitions in answers to questionnaires
D Because the sample size has been exceeded

Question 15
An inductive theory is one that:
A Allows theory to emerge out of the data
B Involves testing an explicitly defined hypothesis
C Does not allow for findings to feed back into the stock of knowledge
D Uses quantitative methods whenever possible

Question 16
What is the epistemological position held by a positivist?
A There is no substitute for an in-depth, hermeneutic understanding of society
B Scientific research should be based on value-free, empirical observations
C Events and discourses in the social world prevent us from having direct knowledge of the natural order
D It is important to remain optimistic about our research, even when things go wrong

Question 17
Which of the following is an ontological question?
A Should I use questionnaires or interviews in my project?
B What can (and should) be considered acceptable forms of knowledge?
C How long is it since I last visited the dentist?
D Do social entities have an objective reality, external to social actors?

Question 18
The qualitative research strategy places a value on:
A Using numbers, measurements and statistical techniques
B Generating theories through inductive research about social meanings
C Conducting research that is of a very high quality
D All of the above

Question 19
An important practical issue to consider when designing a research project is:
A Which theoretical perspective you find most interesting
B How much time and money you have to conduct the research
C Whether or not you have time to retile the bathroom first
D Which colour of ring binder to present your work in

Question 20
How can you tell if your research questions are really good?
A If they guide your literature search
B If they are linked together to help you construct a coherent argument
C If they force you to narrow the scope of your research
D All of the above

Question 21
Which of the following should be included in a research proposal?
A Your academic status and experience
B The difficulties you encountered with your previous reading on the topic
C Your choice of research methods and reasons for choosing them
D All of the above

Question 22
Which of the following should you NOT think about when preparing your research?
A Your sample frame and sampling strategy
B The ethical issues that might arise
C Negotiating access to the setting
D Being bias

Question 23
Why is it helpful to keep a research diary or log book while you are conducting your project?
A To give you something to do in the early stages of your research when nothing is happening
B Because funding councils generally demand to see written evidence that you were working every day during the period of the research
C To keep a record of what you did and what happened throughout the research process
D It can be added to your dissertation to ensure that you reach the required word limit
Question 24
What practical steps can you take before you actually start your research?
A Find out exactly what your institution’s requirements are for a dissertation
B Make sure you are familiar with the hardware and software you plan to use
C Apply for clearance of your project through an ethics committee
D All of the above

Question 25
To read critically means:
A Taking an opposing point of view to the ideas and opinions expressed
B Skimming through the material because most of it is just padding
C Evaluating what you read in terms of your own research questions
D Being negative about something before you read it

Question 26
Why do you need to review the existing literature?
A To make sure you have a long list of references
B Because without it, you could never reach the required word-count
C To find out what is already known about your area of interest
D To help in your general studying

Question 27
A systematic literature review is:
A One which starts in your own library, then goes to on-line databases and, finally, to the internet
B A replicable, scientific and transparent process
C One which gives equal attention to the principal contributors to the area
D A responsible, professional process of time-management for research

Question 28
Why is it important that personal data about research participants are kept within secure, confidential records?
A So that the participants cannot find out what has been written about them
B In case individuals, places or organizations can be harmed through identification or disclosure of personal information
C So that government officials, teachers and other people in authority can have easy access to the data
D To enable the researcher to track down individuals and find out more about their lives

Question 29
Which method is most commonly associated with a lack of informed consent?
A In-depth interviewing
B Qualitative content analysis
C Covert observation
D Structured interviewing

Question 30
Why is it "easier said than done" to ensure that the principle of informed consent is adhered to?
A It is not practicable to present every participant with all the information about the study
B Sometimes it is desirable to withhold certain pieces of information, such as the length of time an interview will take
C If the participants knew exactly what the researcher was intending to study, they might change their behaviour
D All of the above

Question 31
Apart from the fact that it is "not a nice thing to do", what is an important ethical disadvantage of deceiving participants?
A It can damage the professional reputation of the researcher and their discipline
B It makes it more difficult to gain access to deviant or hidden populations
C It means that records of personal data about the participants cannot be made anonymous
D None of the above

Question 32
The difference between measures and indicators is that:
A Measures are unambiguous quantities, whereas indicators are devised from common sense understandings
B Indicators have a more direct relationship to the underlying concept than measures
C Measures are intuitively devised and then applied as if they were direct indicators of a concept
D Indicators are unambiguous quantities, whereas measures are subjective and value-laden

Question 33
Quantitative social researchers rarely claim to have established causality because:
A They are more concerned with publishing the results of their reliability tests
B They do not believe that this is an appropriate goal to be striving for
C They keep forgetting which of the variables they have manipulated
D They tend to use cross-sectional designs, which produce only correlations
Question 34
One of the preoccupations of quantitative researchers is with generalization, which is a sign of:
A External validity
B Internal reliability
C External reliability
D Internal validity

Question 35
Written accounts of quantitative research rarely include the results of reliability and validity tests because:
A Researchers are more interested in reporting their operational definitions
B Researchers don’t really think that these tests are important
C Journal editors have banned these kinds of articles
D Researchers are more interested in reporting their substantive findings

Question 36
A sampling frame is:
A A summary of the various stages involved in designing a survey
B An outline view of all the main clusters of units in a sample
C A list of all the units in the population from which a sample will be selected
D A wooden frame used to display tables of random numbers

Question 37
A simple random sample is one in which:
A From a random starting point, every nth unit from the sampling frame is selected
B A non-probability strategy is used, making the results difficult to generalize
C The researcher has a certain quota of respondents to fill for various social groups
D Every unit of the population has an equal chance of being selected

Question 38
It is helpful to use a multi-stage cluster sample when:
A The population is widely dispersed geographically
B You have limited time and money available for travelling
C You want to use a probability sample in order to generalise the results
D All of the above

Question 39
The standard error is a statistical measure of:
A The normal distribution of scores around the sample mean
B The extent to which a sample mean is likely to differ from the population mean
C The clustering of scores at each end of a survey scale
D The degree to which a sample has been accurately stratified

Question 40
What effect does increasing the sample size have upon the sampling error?
A It reduces the sampling error
B It increases the sampling error
C It has no effect on the sampling error
D None of the above

Question 41
Which of the following is not a type of non-probability sampling?
A Snowball sampling
B Stratified random sampling
C Quota sampling
D Convenience sampling

Question 42
Snowball sampling can help the researcher to:
A Access deviant or hidden populations
B Theorise inductively in a qualitative study
C Overcome the problem of not having an accessible sampling frame
D All of the above

Question 43
Which of the following is not a characteristic of quota sampling?
A The researcher chooses who to approach and so might bias the sample
B Those who are available to be surveyed in public places are unlikely to constitute a representative sample
C The random selection of units makes it possible to calculate the standard error
D It is a relatively fast and cheap way of finding out about public opinions

Question 44
The findings from a study of young single mothers at a university can be generalised to the population of:
A All young single mothers at that university
B All young single mothers in that society
C All single mothers in all universities
D All young women in that university
Question 45
Why is it important for structured interviews to follow a standardized procedure?
A To increase validity, as the interview can be adapted for each respondent
B To increase reliability, because all respondents receive the same interview stimulus
C To allow for an in-depth exploration of the topic
D To make it easier for untrained interviewers to carry out complex surveys

Question 46
Standardizing the interview schedule can reduce interviewer variation in terms of:
A The way in which questions are phrased by the interviewer
B The order in which questions are asked
C The procedures used to code and analyse survey data
D All of the above

Question 47
Closed ended questions are those that:
A Have a fixed range of possible answers
B Prevent respondents from allocating themselves to a category
C Encourage detailed, elaborate responses
D Relate to the basic demographic characteristics of respondents

Question 48
Which of the following might you include in an introductory letter to respondents?
A An explanation of who you are and who is funding your research
B An overview of what the research is about and how the data will be collected
C A statement of their ethical rights to anonymity, confidentiality, etc
D All of the above

Question 49
A filter question is one that:
A Ensures that all respondents are asked every question on the schedule and in the same order
B Leaves a space for respondents to write long and detailed answers
C Helps the interviewer to avoid asking irrelevant questions by directing them elsewhere on the schedule
D Allows supervisors to distinguish between good and bad interviewers

Question 50
Which of the following is not advised when planning the question order of a structured interview?
A Be wary of asking an earlier question that alters the salience of later questions
B Expect some variation in the order in which questions are asked
C Leave questions about sensitive or embarrassing issues until later in the interview
D Group the questions into logically organized sections

**Question 51**
**An open question is one that:**
A Allows respondents to answer in their own terms
B Does not suggest or provide a limited range of responses
C Can help to generate answers for closed questions
D All of the above

**Question 52**
**In order to post-code answers to open questions, it is necessary to:**
A Count the frequency with which each answer has been given
B Categorize unstructured material and assign a code number to each category
C Identify the three most commonly cited responses and give them a code
D Find out where each respondent lives and make a note of their postcode

**Question 53**
**Which of the following is not an advantage of using closed questions in a survey?**
A It reduces the risk of variability in the way answers are recorded
B It makes answers easier to process and analyse
C They prevent respondents from giving spontaneous, unexpected answers
D Closed questions are quicker and easier for respondents to complete

**Question 54**
**Which of the following is a general rule of thumb for designing questions?**
A Always bear in mind your research questions
B Never ask a closed question
C Always use vignettes rather than open questions
D Use ambiguous terms to put respondents at ease

**Question 55**
**You should avoid using double-barrelled questions in a survey because:**
A They rely too much on a respondent's memory
B They make the questions too long, so respondents lose interest
C They are too abstract and general in scope
D They confuse respondents by asking about two different things

**Question 56**
**Leading questions should also be avoided because:**
A They suggest ways of answering and so may bias the results
B They create a mismatch between the question and its possible answers
C They involve negative terms and unnecessary jargon  
D They ask about several different things at the same time

Question 57  
The value of piloting a questionnaire is that it helps you to:  
A Test out your questions on some of the people who will be in the final sample  
B Identify and amend any problems in the question wording, order and format  
C Find out what a trained pilot would think of the subject matter  
D All of the above

Question 58  
The purpose of a coding manual is to:  
A Provide a form onto which the data can be entered  
B Provide researchers with instructions about how to code the data  
C List all the categories that have been omitted from the schedule  
D Test researchers' knowledge of statistics

Question 59  
The data from each row in a coding schedule can be entered into a quantitative analysis computer program called:  
A Endnote  
B N-Vivo  
C Outlook  
D SPSS  

Question 60  
Which of the following is a method that is commonly used in qualitative research?  
A Self-completion questionnaires  
B Surveys  
C Ethnography  
D Structured observation

Question 61  
What is meant by the term “grounded theory”?  
A Theories should be tested by rigorous scientific experiments  
B As a social researcher, it is important to keep your feet on the ground  
C Theories should be grounded in political values and biases  
D Theoretical ideas and concepts should emerge from the data

Question 62  
Why do qualitative researchers like to give detailed descriptions of social settings?  
A To provide a contextual understanding of social behaviour
B Because once they have left the field, it is difficult to remember what happened
C So that they can compare their observations as a test of reliability
D Because they do not believe in going beyond the level of description

Question 63
The flexibility and limited structure of qualitative research designs is an advantage because:
A The researcher does not impose any predetermined formats on the social world
B It allows for unexpected results to emerge from the data
C The researcher can adapt their theories and methods as the project unfolds
D All of the above

Question 64
Which of the following is not a criticism of qualitative research?
A The studies are difficult to replicate
B There is a lack of transparency
C The approach is too rigid and inflexible
D The accounts are too subjective and impressionistic

Question 65
Which of the following is not a contrast between quantitative and qualitative research?
A Distance vs. proximity of researcher to participants
B Generalization vs. contextual understanding
C Hard, reliable data vs. rich, deep data
D Interpretivist vs. feminist

Question 66
Probability sampling is rarely used in qualitative research because:
A Qualitative researchers are not trained in statistics
B It is very old-fashioned
C It is often not feasible
D Research questions are more important than sampling

Question 67
Which of the following is not a type of purposive sampling?
A Probability sampling
B Deviant case sampling
C Theoretical sampling
D Snowball sampling
Question 68
What is involved in "purposive sampling" for grounded theory?
A Using a random numbers table to select a representative sample of people
B Strategically selecting respondents who are likely to provide relevant data
C Deciding on a sampling strategy early on and pursuing it relentlessly
D Sampling units of time rather than individual persons

Question 69
What is meant by the term "theoretical saturation"?
A Deciding on a theory and then testing it repeatedly
B The point at which a concept is so well developed that no further data collection is necessary
C The problem of having used too many theories in one's data analysis
D A state of frustration caused by having used every possible statistical test without finding any significant results

Question 70
Why is an ethnographic study unlikely to use a probability sample?
A Because the aim of understanding is more important than that of generalization
B Because the researcher cannot control who is willing to talk to them
C Because it is difficult to identify a sampling frame
D All of the above

Question 71
What can be generalized from a purposive sample?
A That the findings are true for broadly similar cases
B That the findings are true for the entire population
C That the opposite is true for people who are the opposite of those in the sample
D That purposive sampling is better than probability sampling

Question 72
What is one of the main disadvantages of using the covert role in ethnography?
A It can be hard to gain access to the social group
B It is difficult to take notes without arousing suspicion
C The problem of reactivity: people may change their behaviour if they know they are being observed
D It is usually too time consuming and expensive to be a realistic option

Question 73
What is the name of the role adopted by an ethnographer who joins in with the group’s activities but admits to being a researcher?
A Complete participant
B Participant-as-observer  
C Observer-as-participant  
D Complete observer  

**Question 74**  
Which of the following is not a type of qualitative interview?  
A Unstructured interview  
B Oral history interview  
C Structured interview  
D Focus group interview  

**Question 75**  
Which of the following makes qualitative interviewing distinct from structured interviewing?  
A The procedure is less standardized  
B “Rambling” off the topic is not a problem  
C The researcher seeks rich, detailed answers  
D All of the above  

**Question 76**  
Why is it helpful to prepare an interview guide before conducting semi-structured interviews?  
A So that the data from different interviewees will be comparable and relevant to your research questions  
B So that you can calculate the statistical significance of the results  
C In order to allow participants complete control over the topics they discuss  
D To make the sample more representative  

**Question 77**  
What is a “probing question”?  
A One that inquires about a sensitive or deeply personal issue  
B One that encourages the interviewee to say more about a topic  
C One that asks indirectly about people’s opinions  
D One that moves the conversation on to another topic  

**Question 78**  
Which of the following is an advantage of qualitative interviewing relative to participant observation?  
A It allows you to find out about issues that are resistant to observation  
B It is more biased and value-laden  
C It is more likely to create reactive effects  
D None of the above
Question 79
Which of the following is a disadvantage of qualitative interviewing relative to participant observation?
A It has a more specific focus
B It is more ethically dubious, in terms of obtaining informed consent
C It may not provide access to deviant or hidden activities
D It does not allow participants to reconstruct their life events

Question 80
Which of the following is not a tool of grounded theory?
A Theoretical sampling
B Coding
C External validity
D Constant comparison

Question 81
What are memos?
A Notes that researchers write to themselves
B Reminders of what is meant by key terms or phrases
C Building blocks for theorizing
D All of the above

Question 82
Why should you start coding your data as soon as possible?
A To sharpen your focus and help with theoretical sampling
B Because researchers always run out of time at the end of a project
C Because it is the easiest task to do
D To make sure that your initial theoretical ideas are imposed on the data

Question 83
What is triangulation?
A Using three quantitative or three qualitative methods in a project
B Cross-checking the results found by different research strategies
C Allowing theoretical concepts to emerge from the data
D Drawing a triangular diagram to represent the relations between three concepts

Question 84
How might qualitative research facilitate quantitative research?
A By providing hypotheses that can later be tested
B By helping with the design of survey questions
C By informing the schedule of a structured interview
D All of the above

**Question 85**

How might quantitative research facilitate qualitative research?
A By identifying specific groups of people to be interviewed
B By showing the frequency of different responses to a survey item
C By imposing a rigorous positivist framework on it
D By combining laboratory experiments with structured observation

**Question 86**

How might qualitative research help with the analysis of quantitative data?
A By identifying a sample of respondents for a follow-up study
B By providing hard, statistical data about them
C By making the research more value-laden and subjective
D By helping to explain the relationship between two variables

**Question 87**

Which of the following is not a limitation of the focus group method??
A The researcher has little control over how the discussion proceeds
B It reveals the way social meanings are jointly constructed
C It produces a large volume of data that can be difficult to analyse
D People in groups tend to agree and express socially desirable views

**Question 88**

What is the main difference between a focus group and a group interview?
A Group interviews involve fewer participants
B Focus groups are used to study the way people discuss a specific topic
C There is no moderator present in a focus group
D Focus groups save more time and money