

### 1. Outline and explain two theoretical advantages of using self-completion questionnaires [10]

One theoretical advantage of using self-completion questionnaires is they have greater reliability. Self-completion questionnaires are often presented in a standardised format with a range of closed questions that can be easily completed without the presence of a researcher. As the same list of questions is given to each respondent, the findings of the research can be tested for reliability by issuing the same questionnaire to a different sample of participants, and if similar findings are reported, this improves the reliability of the questionnaire. For example, the Census is a self-completion questionnaire and every 10 years is distributed across the country, with similar questions to the census 10 years earlier. Results are collated and the changes from one census to the next are recorded. This demonstrates the reliability of the census as a measurement tool.

A second theoretical advantage of using self-completion questionnaires is that they produce quantitative data. Self-completion questionnaires often use closed questions, they are able to be pre-coded and the responses given can be converted into quantitative data with relative ease. This is beneficial as it allows researchers to be more objective in the judgements they make when they are drawing conclusions from their findings. Again, the Census is a good example of this. As it collates data from every household in the UK, the use of quantitative data is beneficial as it allows for a more objective analysis of household details, such as income, number of residents and even religious affiliation. This can then be represented in graphical forms such as charts, graphs and tables, which allows them to be used to uncover trends and patterns in society.

### 2. Outline and explain two ways society can be said to have entered a post-modern age [10]

One way society can be seen to have entered a post-modern age is through increased diversity in society. Postmodernists argue that increased diversity and choice are symptoms of postmodern society and in contemporary society there is increased diversity. This can be evidenced through examining the growth of different forms of family over the past decade. The dominant form of family in the modern age was the nuclear family, with opposite sex parents and their children, yet in contemporary society this has declined. The growth of lone person households, cohabitation and same sex relationships illustrates the decline of marriage as an institution and furthermore, the growth of families of choice – whereby people social construct their family and kinship network, illustrates the greater choice in society. In contemporary society, less than 25% of households are nuclear families, demonstrating the diversity of personal lives in the early part of this century.

A second way society can be seen to have entered a postmodern age is through greater insecurity. Beck argues that a symptom of late and postmodernity is the increased risk in society, through employment, relationships and from man-made disasters. This can be seen in contemporary society by examining changes in employment with many people moving from permanent positions to more precarious employment, such as zero-hours or fixed term contracts. Furthermore, the outsourcing of traditional manufacturing as a result of globalisation can be seen as a further threat, generating a crisis of masculinity as traditional male jobs move overseas, generating further insecurity. Additionally, relationships have become less secure, with Giddens arguing that in late modern society we have moved from romantic love to serial monogamy, seeing relationships as being worthy whilst they fulfil individuals' needs. This generates greater insecurity, a feature of postmodern society.