

Methods

Sociology Honours
IDS511E Methodology and Research

JUNE EXAMINATION 2023

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

EAST LONDON CAMPUS

IDS511E

EXTERNALISED EXAMINATION

JUNE 2023

Time: 3hrs

Marks: 100

Subject: Methodology and Research Methods

This paper consists of 6 pages, including the cover page

Internal Examiners:

External Examiner:

Mr A. Dloto

Professor L . Sinwell

Instructions

THERE ARE TWO SECTIONS FOR THIS EXAM.

SECTION A CONSISTS OF TWO COMPULSORY 50 MARKS QUESTIONS; CHOOSE ONE QUESTION BETWEEN QUESTION 1 AND QUESTION 2 IN SECTION A.

SECTION B CONSISTS OF THREE QUESTIONS; CHOOSE ONLY TWO QUESTIONS BETWEEN QUESTIONS 3, 4, AND 5.

This is a CLOSED book Examination.

Read the questions carefully and answer only what is asked. Number your answers clearly.

Write neatly and legibly.

Structure your answers by using appropriate headings and sub-headings.

The general University of Fort Hare policies, procedures, and rules about written examination apply to this examination.

SECTION A

QUESTION 1 (50 marks)

Research is about systematically investigating, generating and analysing scientific data in pursuit of knowledge. Hence, before embarking on this process, it is essential to consider the “nature of knowledge” and how knowledge is generated.

This question focuses on the theory of knowledge, research paradigms, epistemological approaches and their relationship to specific research methods. Candidates are required to discuss various epistemological approaches, and their relationships to specific research methods

including their strengths and weaknesses. You will focus on three paradigms: positivist, feminism and interpretative difference. You are required to also provide a substantial example for each paradigm.

QUESTION 2 (50 Marks)

Read the following abstract: The solidarity economy of marginalised communities, Master thesis by research, university of Johannesburg.

This research aimed to investigate the solidarity economy (SE) of marginalised communities by conducting a sociological analysis of a buying club and a savings club in a socio-economically deprived area of Port Elizabeth, EasternCape, South Africa. The study was grounded on the widely-accepted idea that we have to explore alternatives to the current forms of neoliberal development in South Africa and the rest of the world, and that analysis of the solidarity economy is a substantial area for research in this regard, since it is more than an intermediary intervention between the market and the state: it is “a concept identifying all those struggles and initiatives that move beyond protest and beyond amelioration to demonstrate in practice – and in struggle – the possibility of a mode of production with human creativity and solidarity at its core” (Wainwright 2014: 94).

The research question was addressed using a qualitative method. This helped to obtain critical information needed to understand the perceptions of members of the two clubs from which the data was collected. Both the approach and the methodological design for the study were qualitative, so it fell under the interpretive paradigm.

In defining qualitative research, Berg (2009: 3) claims that it refers to “descriptions of things, definitions, concepts, the meanings, characteristics, symbols and metaphors”. The framework of interpretivism hinges on understanding social life and discovering how individuals construct meaning in natural settings (Neuman, 2014: 104). Working within an interpretive framework, the objective of this study was to learn what was meaningful or relevant to members of buying and savings clubs, as well as how their membership influenced their daily lives.

In South Africa, poverty, unemployment and inequality are a historical legacy of the pre-democratic government. Poverty is widespread and cannot be regarded merely as a lack of financial resources; in South Africa, it is multi-dimensional, racialised and associated with gender. According to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Report (2010), 16.5 million South Africans live below the poverty line of \$2.50 per day. Their predicament remains deeply entrenched and serves as a serious developmental challenge for the current government. The report predicted, correctly, that the 2015 target, which was to halve poverty, would not be achieved (MDG Report 2010).

Unemployment, under-employment and forced inactivity “confront many people in both developing and developed countries, leading to high levels of poverty and inequality” (Antonopoulos 2007: 4). In South Africa, attempts by the government to create employment, such as expanded public and community works programmes (EPWP), are often short-lived and unsustainable and do not contribute towards solving the structural problems of unemployment and poverty. Instead, according to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) they have often perpetuated the structural weaknesses that caused them (StatsSA 2017). Currently, South Africa’s unemployment rate was at 27.7 percent in the second quarter of 2017, unchanged from the previous period’s thirteen-year high.

Answer all of the following questions:

- 2.1 Write a research question for the case study that addresses the research problem.
- 2.2 Explain what the aim of the study is?
- 2.3 Write the research problem for the research study.
- 2.4 Write the Objectives for the research of this research study.
- 2.5 What was the study's data collection method?
- 2.6 Describe the type of respondent (one type) you would want to sample to address the research question. Be clear in your arguments as to why their perspective would be important.
- 2.7 The researcher mentions that the study is located in the Interpretivists epistemological approach. How does interpretivism differ from the positivism epistemological approach?
- 2.8 What features outlined in the methodology are characteristic of a qualitative study?

SECTION B

QUESTION 3 (25 marks)

Please read the following abstract: Strategic Planning and Its Relationship With Business Performance Among Small And Medium Enterprises In South Africa Maxwell Sandada, Vaal University of Technology, South Africa David Pooe, Vaal University of Technology, South Africa Manilall Dhurup, Vaal University of Technology

South Africa Strategic planning is a business tool that small and medium businesses need in today's dynamic and highly competitive business environment. It has the potential to cushion these enterprises from such unpredictable harsh business conditions.

The purpose of this paper was to establish the relationship between strategic planning practices and business performance among SMEs in Gauteng were used in order to extract the dimensions of strategic planning and the province of South Africa. Data were analysed from 200 usable questionnaires that were distributed to SME owners/managers.

Factor analysis, correlations, and regression techniques their relationships with business performance. Environmental scanning, business mission and vision, the formality of strategic plans, evaluation and control, informing sourcing, strategy implementation incentives, employee participation, and time horizons emerged as strategic planning dimensions. The results confirm that strategic planning has a positive association and predictive relationship with the performance of SMEs. The results of this study can serve as a guide to SME owners and managers to properly implement strategic planning practices which will enable them to propel and sustain their businesses in turbulent and uncertain business environments

Use the abstract and its contents to answer the following:

3.1 Identify whether the epistemology of this research makes a positivist or interpretivist assumption.

3.2 Using four (4) quotes from the abstract, clearly show the argument for your choice in 3.1.

QUESTION 4: LITERATURE REVIEW (25 Marks).

Chapter 1 presented the background to the research and touched upon the gap in the literature relating to the solidarity economy. This chapter reviews existing literature on various aspects of the solidarity economy. First, there are summaries of what is meant by the social market economy; an account of the solidarity economy follows this, and the two systems are compared and contrasted. The solidarity economy is then related to marginalised communities in South Africa. Different aspects of poverty and unemployment are set out, particularly regarding the functions of stokvels in impoverished and marginalised communities. Links between poverty and gender are also discussed, including the ways in which shifts in gender roles have allowed women to make gains through their involvement in the solidarity economy as a hidden form of resistance to unemployment and poverty.

Use the abstract and its contents to answer the following:

- 4.1 Discuss the value of a literature review in conducting a research study.
- 4.2 Explain how you would conduct the literature review and the data resources you could access and search to complete the literature review.

QUESTION 5 (25 Marks)

Trustworthiness is a primary criterion for assessing the quality of a qualitative research design. Describe each of the following design elements you should consider for ensuring or assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research.

- 5.1 Credibility
- 5.2 Transferability
- 5.3 Dependability
- 5.4 Confirmability
- 5.5 Trustworthiness

END OF THE EXAMINATION PAPER.