

Question 3 (6 marks)

Marks

- (a) Distinguish between the research techniques of observation and participant observation. 2

Observation involves simply watching and viewing a social situation eg. a parent watching her child in a school classroom. However, participant observation is being actively involved, immersing oneself in the social situation eg. researching the behaviour of your school friends

- (b) Assess the value of participant observation in a study of teenage gangs. 4

An invaluable research methodology enables a researcher to communicate with the gang and perhaps come to understand their behaviour and ways of thinking. It could however be a risky operation if the gang discovered the researchers intentions. It would also be a lengthy process to gain entry and trust from the gang. Gangs are also very exclusive, protective and sometimes violent. Though this would be risky, participation would be a very useful methodology. There are however inbuilt biases into your understanding of the gang.