

1.4 Operationalisation and source evaluation

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Total: 12 marks

KEY WORDS operationalisation 操作化 • authority 权威性 • currency 时效性 • bias 偏见

Objective

Evaluate social-science evidence by checking definitions, authority, currency, and bias.

You must be able to:

- explain operationalisation
- identify the definition behind a statistic
- evaluate a source beyond whether it sounds accurate

1 Worked examples

■ Ask what the number counted

Operationalisation 操作化 turns an abstract idea into something measurable. A statistic about unemployment depends on the definition used, so different definitions can produce different rates.

Check **authority** 权威性, currency, and **bias** 偏见. Bias can appear in what a source measured or left out, not only in its wording.

2 Practice

2.1 Define operationalisation. [1]

2.2 State one question to ask about a source's authority. [1]

2.3 Explain why changing a definition can change a statistic.

[2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Explain why a researcher should ask what an unemployment statistic counted before using it as evidence.

[4]

3.2 Evaluate a recent report funded by a company selling a product connected to the report's conclusion.

[4]

Solutions

2.1

- Turning an abstract idea into something measurable.

2.2

- Who produced it and what relevant knowledge they have.

2.3

- The definition decides which people or cases are included.
- A different group counted produces a different total or rate.

3.1

- Unemployment is an abstract idea that needs a definition.
- The measure may include or exclude particular job-seekers.
- This changes what the rate actually describes.
- The researcher can judge whether it answers their question only after checking this.

3.2

- The report may be recent, which supports currency.
- The company's financial interest creates a possible bias.
- Check the method, definitions, and evidence as well as the conclusion.
- Compare it with independent sources before relying on it.