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Q1(c)

Methodology is a system of rules, principles and procedures, which forms. scientific investigation. Comment.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Sociology as Science

Sociology as Science: Science, scientific method and critique; Major theoretical strands of research methodology; Positivism and its critique; Fact value and objectivity; Non-positivist methodologies.

Core demand of the question

- Methodology is a system of rules, principles and procedures, which forms scientific investigation. Comment
- Keep the comment within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Methodology is a system of principles, rules, and procedures.

It forms scientific investigation by making claims checkable.

Durkheim and **Weber** wrote method as discipline.

Blumer and feminist standpoint show theory inside procedure.

Census and NFHS are procedures, not theory-free machines.

Introduction

Methodology is the reasoned system that turns a question into a checkable inquiry. Rules, principles, and procedures do form scientific investigation. The comment is that they are not a cookbook independent of theory.

Body**What the statement gets right**

- Principles such as reliability, validity, and public procedure separate science from anecdote.
- Procedures-sampling, coding, ethnography, comparison-make replication and critique possible.
- **Emile Durkheim**'s Rules tried to fix such a system for social facts. **Max Weber**'s method essays did the same for meaning.

The subtle limit

- Methodology is theory-laden. Herbert **Blumer** warned that variable procedures can freeze living meanings.
- Feminist methodology, after Dorothy **Smith** and Ann Oakley, added standpoint as a principle, not a mood.
- Indian **Census** and NFHS procedures are scientific and still encode office categories.

Comment

- Treat methodology as a system that forms investigation.

- Do not treat it as a machine that replaces the research question.
- Mixed methods are two procedure-sets, still under one methodological argument.

Flow diagram

Principles -> Methodology
Rules -> Methodology
Procedures -> Methodology
Methodology -> Scientific investigation
Theory standpoint -> Methodology

Conclusion

- **The statement is sound:** methodology is a system of rules, principles, and procedures that forms scientific work. **Durkheim** and **Weber** built such systems. The comment is that theory and standpoint sit inside the system. Procedure without principle is only a kit.

Facts & figures

Durkheim

The Rules of Sociological Method: treat social facts as things, with stated procedures.

Weber

Methodological essays on verstehen, ideal types, and causal adequacy.

Blumer

Critique of procedure that ignores how actors define the situation.

Smith

Institutional ethnography: a methodological principle of starting from everyday work.