Research Methods in Social Sciences 7.5 ECTS
Ladok code: 22SF1D

Date of exam: 3th of November, 2015
Time: 14.00 – 19.00

Means of assistance:
This is an open book exam meaning that there are no restrictions in the use of printed material. Students are allowed to bring, e.g., books, own notes, articles and handouts. Calculators are also allowed.

No communication devices, no phones, computers, IPads or the likes.

Total amount of point on exam: 70 points

Requirements for grading:
Points on the exam part I: E ≥35 points, D ≥40 points, C ≥48 points

Points on the exam part I: B ≥52 points, A ≥60 points AND graded PASS (fail/pass) on one of the two essay questions in the exam part II

Additional information:
Answers should be written on separate sheets of paper (i.e. not in the exam), please follow the instructions given for each question. Answers should be written in English.

Next re-exam date: First available date in week 48

Good Luck!

Examiner: Eva Gustafsson, Osama Mansour, Peter Rittgen
Phone number: Eva Gustafsson, 0709 - 84 18 77
Question 1 (6 points)
Sampling: For each of the studies (a-c) presented below, state what sampling method has been used and give a short explanation to your answer.

Please write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

a) In a study of gambling addiction, the researchers soon realized that it was difficult to get in contact with gambling addicts. Register resources or meeting places did not exist for problem gamblers, which otherwise could have functioned as a starting point for the study. The researchers had however been in contact with one individual problem gambler in the initial phase of the study. When the researchers interviewed him they also asked if he had knowledge of other gamblers with possible interest to talk about their experiences. He (the problem gambler) gave references for two persons. When these two persons were interviewed, they were too asked if they knew gamblers with possible interests in joining the study. These two individuals could also give references to further gamblers. This process continued until the researchers had reached the sample size they originally had planned for.

b) The Swedish Association of Hard of Hearing People (HRF) has approximately 34,000 members. In order to investigate attitudes about hearing aid availability among the members, a survey was to be distributed to a sample of HRF members. The sample size was decided to 500 members. Every membership is catalogued in a register and numbered with a unique number. A computer program was used for the selection of 500 random numbers, which then could be matched against member numbers in the HRF member files.

c) Company X is a hotel, which for a long time has offered its customers the best quality of service for a reasonable price. The hotel is highly dependent on returning business guests and it is important that hotel service is on a consistently high level. As part of the internal quality service work, the hotel management monitors the work satisfaction of the staff annually. Each year, a survey is distributed to all employees, including temporary workers and part timers.

Question 2 (8 points)

Concepts are the building blocks of theory (Bryman and Bell, 2015, page 163), they are labels that are given to elements of the social world that seem to have common features. In writing a scientific text, it is important to define all relevant concepts, and explain what they refer to.

In the texts (a-d) below, identify and state the concept. None of the texts includes more than one concept, however a concept can consist of several words.

a) We consider organizations not as actor-networks, but rather as action nets: collective actions related to one another within a given institutional order.

b) I use the term working knowledge here as a deliberately large portmanteau within which to stow the differing perspectives and emphases found within research into user-centered design, participatory design, socio-technical systems design, end-user customization, as well as qualitative methods of requirements capture.

c) Clases and Wehner propose a model of corrective cooperation in which multiple perspectives and unexpected events (such as breakdowns in communication) are anticipated.

d) Design-science research in IS addresses what are considered to be wicked problems.
**EVA: Question 3 (10 points)**

In writing up the chapter on method, quantitative and qualitative research strategies are accounted for differently. For example: in a qualitative study it is incorrect to refer to “random sampling” when accounting for how the respondents for an open interview are chosen. Further, it is equally incorrect to use “interpretation” when one has compiled a table of survey responses.

For each of the words below (a-j), decide if the word belongs to quantitative or qualitative research, or if it fits equal in both. Write ”qualitative”, ”quantitative” or ”both”.

a) Hypothesis testing  
b) Structured interview  
c) Validity  
d) Experimental design  
e) Ethnography  
f) Triangulation  
g) Reliability  
h) Cluster sampling  
i) Deduction  
j) Secondary data

**Question 4 (10 points)**

Below you find a list of propositions (a-j), and based on the ideas and reasoning presented by Bryman and Bell, some of these are ”false”. State the propositions that you consider false, and give a short explanation to your answers.

Please write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

a) Very open-ended research can lead to the collection of too much data and to confusion about focus when writing up the results.  
b) Using the supervisor is more encouraging than having original ideas deciding research objectives.  
c) It is always good to be too broad in your research topics in the beginning of your research to be able to narrow it down when analyzing in the end of the research journey.  
d) A good research question defines the investigation, sets boundaries, and provides direction.  
e) Forming the right ‘questions’ should be seen as an iterative process that is informed by reading and doing at all stages of your research.  
f) Narrowing, clarifying, and even redefining your questions is not allowed during the research process  
g) The boundaries between ethical and unethical practices are not clear-cut  
h) Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in research is allowed when agreed by your supervisor.  
i) Honest error in research is to be regarded as scientific misconduct.  
j) Ethics in research do not differ about what is and is not ethically acceptable.
**Question 5 (12 points)**
Assume the following information is obtained from a person on his application from a home loan from a bank in Gothenburg:

a) Place of residence: Majorna, Gothenburg
b) Age: 37
c) Gender: Male
d) Monthly income: 31 300 kronor
e) Level of education: University
f) Occupation: System engineer
g) Employer: Telecom company
h) Marital status: Married
i) Loan request: 2 500 000 kronor
j) Term of loan: 25 years
k) How often in a year do you save at least 500 kronor: Each month
l) In a scale from 0 (not satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) how satisfied are you with the information provided by the bank regarding the qualifying criteria for a home loan: Answer equals "3".

Classify each of the 12 responses by type of variable / level of measurement.

Please write your answers to this question (5a to 5l) on one separate sheet of paper.

**Question 6 (8 points)**
Assume you want to investigate the factors that affect the level of criminality in a country. For a sample of 89 countries you have the number of murders per 100,000 inhabitants, the income per capita and the average level of education. For the following quantitative analysis, explain which information you obtain from the analysis:

a) You calculate the correlation coefficient between the number of murders and the income per capita.

b) You calculate a 95% confidence interval of the average number of murders for the countries with a low average level of education and a 95% confidence interval of the average number of murders for the countries with a high average level of education.

Please write your answers to this question (6a to 6b) on one separate sheet of paper.
Questions 7 to 14 are multiple choice questions where only one answer is correct. Don’t guess, wrong answers equals minus 0.5 points. Don’t give more than one answer for each question, “hedging” equals minus 2 points. Please write your answers to all of the multiple choices questions (7 to 14) on one separate sheet of paper.

**Question 7 (2 points)**
What problem does a research organization face when drawing up an ethical code?

- a) Identifying relevant legislation that should guide behavior.
- b) Reflecting the difficulty of making truly ethical decisions.
- c) Incorporating assessments for the ethical behavior of participants.
- d) All of the above.

**Question 8) (2 points)**
The role of a project supervisor is to:

- a) make sure you keep to your schedule and deadlines.
- b) provide intellectual support, guidance and critical feedback.
- c) negotiate access to the research setting on the student's behalf.
- d) give you a reading list.

**Question 9 (2 points)**
You can manage your time and resources best, by:

- a) working out a timetable.
- b) finding out what resources are readily available to you.
- c) calculating a budget for likely expenditure.
- d) all of the above.

**Question 10 (2 points)**
Which of the following should be included in a research proposal?

- a) Your academic status and experience.
- b) The difficulties you encountered with your previous reading on the topic.
- c) Your choice of research methods and reasons for choosing them.
- d) All of the above.

**Question 11 (2 points)**
Why is it helpful to keep a research diary or log book while you are conducting your project?

- a) To give you something to do in the early stages of your research when nothing is happening.
- b) Because funding councils generally demand to see written evidence that you were working every day during the period of the research.
- c) To keep a record of what you did and what happened throughout the research process.
- d) It can be added to your dissertation to ensure that you reach the required word limit.
**Question 12 (2 points)**
There is a tendency for debates about ethics in social research to focus on the most extreme cases of ethical transgression. Why might this create a misleading impression?

a) Because these studies did not actually take place.
b) Because it makes social researchers look like nasty, unscrupulous people.
c) Because this implies that ethical concerns do not pervade all social research.
d) Because most social research is in fact ethically sound and infallible.

**Question 13 (2 points)**
Why is it argued that ethical transgression is pervasive in social research?

a) Because most researchers do not bother to follow a professional code of ethics.
b) Because researchers rarely provide their participants with all the information they might want to know about a project.
c) Because it helps us to justify the more extreme forms of unethical conduct that we prefer to pursue.
d) Because sociologists want to present themselves as inconsiderate and careless.

**Question 14 (2 points)**
Why is it important that personal data about research participants are kept within secure, confidential records?

a) So that the participants cannot find out what has been written about them.
b) In case individuals, places or organizations can be harmed through identification or disclosure of personal information.
c) So that government officials, teachers and other people in authority can have easy access to the data.
d) To enable the researcher to track down individuals and find out more about their lives.

Please write your answers to all of the multiple choice questions (8 to 15) on one separate sheet of paper.

************ END OF EXAM PART I ************
PART II - this part is NOT compulsory, the questions below are for students who aim for a higher degree: B or A.

Question 15 (fail/pass)
Mars Enterprises is an international company specialized in construction engineering and contracting with thousands of employees around the globe. It performs operations in different countries around the world and project teams often need to interact with other teams for engineering consultation and also contractual support. The company had been growing in recent years with hundreds of dispersed teams that require more effective collaborative platforms to enable better interaction among team members. The leadership, headed by the knowledge management (KM) department, decided to introduce a new collaborative platform which aims at helping employees and teams from around the world to share professional knowledge, lessons learned, methods and techniques from a variety of projects. Team and project leaders were introduced into the new system by the KM department and benefits from the new system were presented so that everyone can get motivated to use it. Mars Enterprises is interested in understanding the impact the new collaborative system might have on their team and project collaboration on a global level.

Assuming that you have got a chance to investigate the case presented above at Mars Enterprises and start a research inquiry to help them get some insights into how the new system is used, you are required to provide them with a proposal that includes:

a) Writing a researchable aim and a concrete research question
b) Developing a problem statement of maximum 3 lines that captures a key concern for the company in this case
c) Selecting a suitable method (qualitative, quantitative, and qualitative) that would help you in carrying out the investigation at the company together with describing the data collection tools you plan to use. You should also outline your motivation for the choices you make and the implications of your chosen method with respect to validity and reliability as well as ethics of research

Use a separate sheet of paper to write your answers.
**Question 16 (Fail/Pass)**
For the following combination of variables: exemplify each one of them and state which measures of relationship can be used. Further explain which information is provided by each of the suggested measures.

Use a separate sheet of paper to write your answers.

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**END OF EXAM//**