UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER MAY 2005

TITLE OF PAPER : RESEARCH METHODS IN GEOGRAPHY

COURSE NUMBER : GEP 323

TIME ALLOWED : THREE HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS : 1. ANSWER THREE (3) QUESTIONS.

2. QUESTION ONE IS COMPULSORY.

3. ANSWER TWO (2) QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B.

4. WHERE APPROPRIATE, ILLUSTRATE YOUR ANSWER WITH EXAMPLES.

MARK ALLOCATION : QUESTION ONE IS WORTH FORTY (40) MARKS AND THE OTHER QUESTIONS THIRTY (30) MARKS EACH.

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GEP 323   RESEARCH METHODS IN GEOGRAPHY

SECTION A: COMPULSORY QUESTION (40 MARKS)

QUESTION 1

a) Evaluate the following research design with respect to methods used and the control provided.

A researcher wanted to ascertain if homogeneous grouping improves learning in a first course in biology. The researcher designated one of two high schools in a small town to serve as the experimental school and the other, as the control. Both schools had about the same number of students in each of four sections of science. In the experimental school pupils were grouped homogeneously on the basis of Intelligent Quotient (IQ) and scores on the achievement tests in science. In the control school pupils were placed in sections at random. At the end of the year all pupils were given a standardized test in biology. Statistical tests showed the experimental group to be superior on the test. The researcher concluded that homogeneous grouping results in greater learning in biology.   (12 marks)

b) Distinguish the four main types of experimental (true) research designs and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each.   (28 marks)

SECTION B: ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS

QUESTION 2

Compare face-to-face interviews, telephone and self-administered questionnaires with respect to:
(a) Response rates and sampling quality   (12 marks)
(b) Time and cost: and   (8 marks)
 (c) Type – complexity and sensitivity of questions asked.   (10 marks)

QUESTION 3

a) Using examples, explain how you would go about conducting survey research on the Internet. (15 marks)

b) Describe sources of measurement error in surveys attributable to the (i) interviewer and (ii) respondent.
                    (15 marks)

QUESTION 4

a) Compare validity and reliability with respect to the:
   i)   Meaning of each concept
   ii) Relative importance of each concept
   iii) Extent to which one depends on the other.

                                        (10 marks)

b) Using examples, explain how the pretest-post-test control group
   design adequately controls for each of the major threats to
   internal validity.   (20 marks)

QUESTION 5

   a) Describe the purposes for which evaluation research is
       conducted.   (6 marks)

   b) Using examples explain the differences between formative, diagnostic
       and summative evaluation.   (24 marks)