



Worksheet 5: Developing strengths and limitations answers

Complete the following tables for the given research scenario. Use the scenario to make sure the development is in context. Give two strengths and two limitations.

- 1 A researcher wants to investigate the effect of labelling on learners in school. They decide to carry out a field experiment to test whether labelling changes attainment for learners.

Strength	Limitation
<i>The teacher and learners may not be aware that they are taking part.</i>	<i>The researcher is not able to control all the variables and other factors may have had an effect.</i>
<i>The teacher and learners will be in their natural environment.</i>	<i>The research may be unethical as there is no informed consent.</i>

- 2 A researcher wants to investigate the effect of media violence on young children. They decide to carry out a laboratory experiment.

Strength	Limitation
<i>The researcher can control the variables in the research.</i>	<i>The research is carried out in an artificial environment and so may not reflect real life.</i>
<i>Other researchers would be able to replicate the research giving it high reliability.</i>	<i>The researcher would only be able to use a small sample and this would decrease the representativeness.</i>

- 3 A researcher wants to investigate suicide. They decide to use official statistics to determine the trend in suicide in a country.

Strength	Limitation
<i>The researcher would be able to access statistics for the whole country making the study representative.</i>	<i>The researcher would only have statistics for deaths that had been classified as suicide.</i>
<i>The statistics would be available to another researcher and so the study would be reliable.</i>	<i>The researcher would not be able to gain any information about why the people in the statistics had committed suicide.</i>



- 4 A researcher wants to investigate a criminal gang to find out what caused them to be criminal. They decide to use covert participant observation.

Strength	Limitation
<i>The researcher would be able to see the participants in their natural environment as they would be unaware of the research.</i>	<i>The researcher would need to access the group. This would mean having the right characteristics such as gender and ethnicity.</i>
<i>The researcher would be able to gain verstehen by being part of the gang.</i>	<i>The researcher may face danger due to being part of a gang or if he/she was discovered to be undercover.</i>

- 5 A researcher wants to investigate girls experience in school. They decide to use unstructured interviews.

Strength	Limitation
<i>The researcher would be able to get in-depth information from girls in education. The data would be high in validity. The girls would feel empowered by being able to tell their story and give their own meanings to the researcher.</i>	<i>Any cultural or gender differences between the researcher and the participants may affect the responses and reduce validity. The free-flowing nature of the interview would mean it would be hard to replicate by another researcher and so would lack reliability.</i>