

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND PLANNING

MAIN EXAMINATION PAPER DECEMBER 2013

B.A, BASS, B.Sc. and B.Ed.

TITLE OF PAPER : RESEARCH METHODS IN GEOGRAPHY

COURSE NUMBER : GEP 323

TIME ALLOWED : THREE HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS : 1. ANSWER THREE (3) QUESTIONS.

2. QUESTION 1 IS COMPULSORY

ANSWER ANY TWO (2) QUESTIONS FROM  
SECTION B.

3. WHERE APPROPRIATE ILLUSTRATE YOUR  
ANSWER WITH DIAGRAMS.

MARK ALLOCATION : QUESTION ONE (1) CARRIES 40 MARKS. THE  
REST OF THE QUESTIONS CARRY 30 MARKS  
EACH.

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY  
THE INVIGILATOR.

## GEP 323 RESEARCH METHODS IN GEOGRAPHY

### SECTION A: COMPULSORY QUESTION

#### QUESTION 1

(a) 'Every project requires a research design that is carefully tailored to the exact needs of the researchers as well as the problem. However, experimental research designs are considered to have a high level of scientific rigour involved in proving cause-effect relationships.'

Using examples, identify and discuss any three types of experimental designs.

(20 marks)

b) 'In general, experimental designs are able to reduce threats to the internal validity of a study. But this is not the case with quasi-experimental and pre-experimental designs.'

Discuss eight (8) major threats to internal validity that may affect the research designs identified in (b) above.

(20 marks)

**[40 MARKS]**

### SECTION B: ANSWER TWO (2) QUESTIONS

#### QUESTION 2

(a) Using your own research study:

(i) Describe the study (in terms of the title, problem statement, objectives, study area and methodology) (15 marks)

(ii) Explain how you have addressed the 'time-dimension.' (5 marks)

(20 marks)

(b) Compare and contrast cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. (10 marks)

**[30 MARKS]**

**QUESTION 3**

Identify and explain three of the most common categories of bias that can affect the validity of a research study. (30 marks)

**[30 MARKS]**

**QUESTION 4**

Discuss the concept of research ethics with regard to the following issues:

- i) Research with human subjects. (20 marks)
- ii) Data management. (10 marks)

**[30 MARKS]**

**QUESTION 5**

a) 'Survey research generally involves studies in which individual people respond to questions asked in a telephone or in-person interview or on a written questionnaire.'

- i) Explain the rationale of each type of mode of data collection cited above. (6 marks)
- ii) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of two modes of data collection identified in (a) above. (24 marks)

**[30 MARKS]**