**10 mark exemplar from theories of the family quiz**

Item: The main sociological approaches to the study of families have been challenged by the postmodernist view, which focuses on the fragmentation of social life (that life and families no longer follow a clear direction), the diversity of families and the choices individuals can now make. They argue that the traditional theories of the family try and explain family life in only one way when it is more complicated than this. Other sociologists, however, argue that families have not changed as much as has been claimed.

Analyse two reasons why postmodernists and personal life perspectives reject other sociological theories of families [10] [*Remember to use the item to gain your reasons]*

***This answer needed you to compare the postmodern/personal life perspective to a specific argument from other theories. Meaning that you had to be quite clear as to what they didn’t like about the other theory and what their alternative view is. As such it needed evidence from both theories.***

Answer:

One reasons that postmodernists reject other theories of the family is they argue these theories are too reductionist. As stated in the item the traditional theories only try and explain the family in one way (looking at the nuclear family), when it is more complicated than this. Functionalists, for example, argue that the nuclear family is dominant. Murdock saw it as universal (found everywhere) with a range of functions that only it could undertake. Postmodernists disagree and argue families are far more diverse nowadays. Alan and Crow argue our families are now characterised by choice, which means they do not have to follow the traditional structure of married couple with children. This is evidenced by a ¼ of children now living in single parent families.

Furthermore postmodernists would argue that because we now have the freedom of choice within our families and life in general our families are more fragmented today and do not follow a clear pattern. Alan and Crow argue that we may live in a number of families over our lifetime and that families do not have a clear ‘lifecycle’ anymore. This is unlike the views of Marxists who are more deterministic, such as Zaretsky, who argues that the family ‘props up capitalism’ and provides for the economy or the needs of men. The personal life perspective argues against this, indicating there has been a ‘fragmentation of social life’ with sociologists such as Smart stating that individuals within the family will have different relationships and will place different meanings on their family lives.

10/10