

CHAPTER 2: Methods

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The two broad methodological approaches social scientists use to gather data about the social world are:
- a. deductive and inductive.
 - b. qualitative and quantitative.
 - c. implicit and explicit.
 - d. correlational and causal.

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Remembering

2. Which of the following describes a research problem that sociologists have to deal with?
- a. Most important topics in sociology have already been researched sufficiently.
 - b. It is too difficult to test most hypotheses in sociology.
 - c. A sociologist is part of the very subject he or she is studying.
 - d. The causes of social behavior are usually obvious and don't require research.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Understanding

3. Selena wants to study the bond between pets and their owners. She chooses between the two major methodological approaches to research and decides to view and collect data in a numerical form. Which of the two major methodological approaches did she choose?
- a. qualitative
 - b. quantitative
 - c. traditional
 - d. experimental

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Applying

4. Norm is interested in whether pet owners are more likely than those who do not own pets to have healthier lifestyles (e.g., exercise regularly, drink moderately, and refrain from nicotine use). By comparing the numbers he gathers on both groups, Norm will most likely be using what type of research method?
- a. quantitative
 - b. inductive
 - c. speculative
 - d. qualitative

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Applying

5. Which of the following is an example of a quantitative research project?
- a. conducting a survey about how often people attend church
 - b. interviewing people about the role of religion in their lives
 - c. observing how people behave and interact with each other in a church setting
 - d. participating in a weekly Bible study meeting for 12 months to understand its importance in people's lives

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Applying

6. What type of research describes people's behavior in rich detail and focuses on the meanings people give to their actions?
- a. intuitive
 - b. qualitative
 - c. quantitative
 - d. correlational

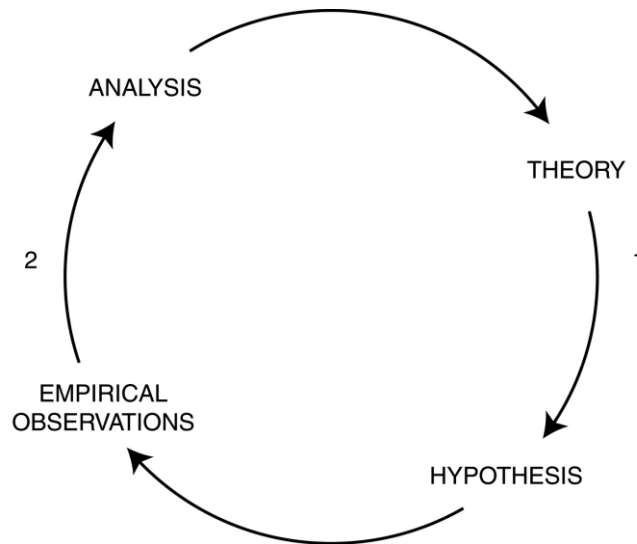
ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Understanding

7. Elizabeth would like to conduct a study to determine how women define spousal abuse and the meanings they attach to their experiences. What research method will Elizabeth most likely use?

- a. quantitative
- b. inductive
- c. qualitative
- d. deductive

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Applying

8. Researchers start in different places on the research cycle. Point 1 indicates a/n _____ approach to research; point 2 indicates a/n _____ approach to research.



- a. theoretical; empirical
- b. deductive; inductive
- c. philosophical; experimental
- d. qualitative; quantitative

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Remembering

9. If Kate begins her research with a theory, then forms hypotheses and makes some observations, what approach is she using?

- a. independent
- b. dependent
- c. inductive
- d. deductive

ANS: D DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Applying

10. Which of the following explains the deductive approach to research? The researcher:
- a. makes some observations and develops a theory based on these observations.
 - b. develops some hypotheses to explain a correlation observed between two variables.
 - c. starts with a theory, forms hypotheses, makes observations, and then analyzes the data.
 - d. develops some hypotheses that lead to a theory about human behavior.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Understanding

11. Paula begins to notice that there are patterns to where people sit on the bus, and these patterns differ depending on whether the rider is male or female. Based on these observations, she generates a theory about the behaviors of men and women. This is an example of which kind of research approach?

- a. deductive
- b. inductive
- c. quantitative
- d. a case study

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Applying

12. When one factor is said to influence another factor, it is called:

- a. correlation.
- b. association.
- c. causality.
- d. mediation.

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

13. Which of the following factors is needed to establish causality?

- a. validity
- b. time order
- c. spuriousness
- d. the deductive approach

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

14. Which of the following is most difficult to do in social science research?

- a. say that two things change at the same time
- b. establish that something is the cause of something else
- c. argue that two things are related
- d. propose a relationship between two variables

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

15. A sociologist finds a strong relationship between education and income. If he only assumes that the amount of education people receive directly causes them to earn a certain income, and not that a family's income can determine educational attainment, he is forgetting to consider:

- a. luck.
- b. reverse causality.
- c. correlation.
- d. deduction.

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

16. Andy hypothesized that the stress created during economic downturns would increase the probability of spousal abuse. Stress would be considered the _____ variable, and spousal abuse would be considered the _____ variable.

- a. dependent; independent
- b. key; affected
- c. moderating; dependent
- d. independent; dependent

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

17. Professor Clayton hypothesizes that travel to other countries increases students' abilities to do well in advanced sociology classes. Which variable is the independent variable?

- a. Professor Clayton
- b. travel to other countries
- c. the research methods
- d. students' abilities

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

18. Some factors are called moderating variables because they:

- a. affect the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable.
- b. interfere with the dependent variable but not the independent variable.
- c. diminish the validity of the study.
- d. can act as either independent or dependent variables.

ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Understanding

19. A variable that is thought to be influenced by another variable is known as the:
- dependent variable.
 - independent variable.
 - key independent variable.
 - spurious variable.

ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Understanding

20. A variable that is thought to cause a change in another variable is called the:
- dependent variable.
 - independent variable.
 - spurious variable.
 - inductive variable.

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Understanding

21. Which of the following is an example of a negative relationship?
- A diet high in fat greatly increases an individual's risk for obesity and other chronic diseases.
 - The less fat an individual consumes, the lower his or her risk of heart disease.
 - As nicotine consumption increases, the risk for cancer increases.
 - As the number of people vaccinated against measles increases, the occurrence of measles decreases.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Applying

22. You may do a study of college wrestling and use your experience as a student-athlete to access wrestling spaces, athletes, and coaches. Considering how your past opportunities and privileges influence your study and its findings is:

- opportunism.
- experimenter effects.
- reflexivity.
- common sense.

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Applying

23. Shamus Khan used his status and privilege to study how:



- racial exclusion works at golf clubs.
- national wealth influences individual success at the Olympics.
- gender shapes prison experiences.
- students are trained at an elite private school.

30. The likelihood that a researcher will obtain the same result using the same measures the next time he or she tests a hypothesis is:
- a. validity.
 - b. reliability.
 - c. response rate.
 - d. generalizability.

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

31. The more consistent the results given by repeated measurements, the higher the _____ of the measurement procedure.
- a. reliability
 - b. validity
 - c. efficiency
 - d. correlation

ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

32. The extent to which a researcher can claim that his or her findings are applicable to a larger population than was studied is known as:
- a. validity.
 - b. reliability.
 - c. causality.
 - d. generalizability.

ANS: D DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

33. Sandra wants to study how students in their senior year of high school prepare for college. She starts by visiting an elite boarding school nearby. Sandra knows that to make general claims about seniors preparing for college, she will need to:
- a. randomly select from the population she wants to generalize to.
 - b. return to the high school next year to study the new seniors.
 - c. be aware of her intentions, so the study will be valid and reliable.
 - d. visit more schools so that her sample is representative of the group she wants to generalize to.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

34. Because they are an accessible population, undergraduate students are sometimes used in sociological research. In relation to the concept of *generalizability*, this tendency could represent a potential defect in research because:
- a. college undergraduates do not have the right to refuse without suffering negative consequences.
 - b. the experiences of college undergraduates do not provide a legitimate empirical resource.
 - c. college undergraduates are not a subset of the general population.
 - d. college undergraduates are not typical of the public at large.

ANS: D DIF: Difficult REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

35. Ethnographer Mitchell Duneier spent five years hanging out with booksellers on the streets of Manhattan. His role as both researcher and participant provides a great example of the importance of:



- a. maintaining firm boundaries between the role of researcher and the role of participant.
- b. staying true to the ethical principles of the scientific method in our research.
- c. critically assessing how our role as researchers may affect the people we study.
- d. maintaining distance from those we study so that our results are not contaminated.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

36. A qualitative researcher who assumes everything he observes would have happened exactly the same way if he wasn't there observing lacks:
- a. generalizability.
 - b. reflexivity.
 - c. validity.
 - d. reliability.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

37. Juanita is a graduate student studying male prisoners. She carefully considers how her gender, age, and education may affect the prisoners and their responses to her. Juanita is practicing:
- a. reflexivity.
 - b. comparative research.
 - c. content analysis.
 - d. operationalization.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

38. Positivist sociologists tend to use which of the following types of methodological approaches?
- a. quantitative
 - b. qualitative
 - c. feminist
 - d. scientific

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

39. Interpretive sociologists examine meanings attached to behaviors. This most commonly leads them to use which of the following approaches to research?
- a. quantitative
 - b. qualitative
 - c. deductive
 - d. scientific

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

40. Sandra is doing research to determine how common cheating is among students at Duke University. The student body at Duke will serve as her:
- a. dependent variable.
 - b. population.
 - c. random sample.
 - d. hypothesis.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

41. Charles is a sociologist studying a population of gay fathers in the United States. He interviews 200 men in his data collection. These 200 men constitute what researchers call a:
- a. census.
 - b. case study.
 - c. sample.
 - d. participant observation.

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

42. If a sociologist collects data on only one high school in a study of the effectiveness of its parent-teacher association, he or she is using which of the following research methods?
- a. experiment
 - b. case study
 - c. panel survey
 - d. content analysis

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

43. Which of the following might be an advantage of participant observation research?
- a. The researcher has considerable control over the conditions of the research.
 - b. The researcher can uncover what people do rather than simply what they *say* they do.
 - c. The researcher maintains objectivity by staying in the “white coat” role.
 - d. It is a useful method for studying large and diverse populations.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

44. The main reason that achieving high response rates and limiting selection bias are so important is that they:
- a. increase generalizability.
 - b. decrease generalizability.
 - c. increase validity.
 - d. decrease validity.

ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

45. _____ is generally the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data to describe a population too large to observe directly.
- a. Survey research
 - b. Content analysis
 - c. Comparative research
 - d. An experiment

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

46. A potential shortcoming of survey research is that surveys:
- a. tend to focus more on what people do than what they say.
 - b. rely on people’s honesty and willingness to cooperate.
 - c. cannot reflect the total population.

d. cannot be used on large populations.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

47. The General Social Survey (GSS) is replicated yearly with a new sample of 2,000 respondents. This is an example of:
- a. an experiment.
 - b. participant observation.
 - c. a repeated cross-sectional survey.
 - d. a census.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

48. A type of longitudinal study in which the same sample of respondents is tracked over a long period of time is known as:
- a. an experiment.
 - b. participant observation.
 - c. the historical method.
 - d. a panel survey.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Understanding

49. Which of the following methods involves collecting data from written reports or other artifacts in order to discover patterns in behaviors or attitudes dating to an earlier time period?
- a. experiments
 - b. audit studies
 - c. panel surveys
 - d. historical methods

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

50. Jackson is using newspaper articles dating from the early 1950s to study unofficial attitudes toward working women post–World War II. Jackson is using what research method?
- a. experimental
 - b. content analysis
 - c. comparative research
 - d. historical methods

ANS: D DIF: Difficult REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

51. Roger Brubaker’s study analyzed notions of citizenship in both France and Germany. His method of research is known as:
- a. comparative research.
 - b. a case study.
 - c. an experiment.
 - d. content analysis.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Remembering

52. Harry’s study compared how the posts on Craigslist of “men seeking women” differed from the posts of “women seeking men.” What method was Harry using when he catalogued the traits mentioned in posts?
- a. historical methods
 - b. comparative research
 - c. content analysis
 - d. interviews

ANS: C DIF: Difficult REF: 2.1 Research 101
MSC: Applying

53. Which of the following is one of the golden rules of ethical conduct in social research?
- a. Always remain completely objective and neutral.

- b. Never interact directly with research subjects.
- c. Do no harm.
- d. Never debrief.

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: 2.2 Ethics of Social Research
MSC: Remembering

54. Research subjects have a right to know that they are participating in a study and what the study consists of. This is known as:
- a. involuntary participation.
 - b. informed consent.
 - c. manifest content.
 - d. latent content.

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.2 Ethics of Social Research
MSC: Remembering

55. A sociologist studies children at a day care center. She must get approval from an ethics board because children are a _____ population.
- a. qualitative
 - b. census
 - c. protected
 - d. total

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: 2.2 Ethics of Social Research
MSC: Applying

56. You conduct a study of romantic love among college students. You ask one student to participate, and she says she is annoyed and offended that you asked her. You have caused her harm, but does this level of harm constitute an ethics violation?
- a. No, because this harm is not physical.
 - b. No, because this harm is not greater than that which people encounter in everyday life.
 - c. Yes, because researchers should not annoy or offend people.
 - d. Yes, because in her subjectivity, this constitutes harm.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: 2.2 Ethics of Social Research
MSC: Applying

57. When cities such as Detroit requested adjustment of census data, why did this research issue become a political battle? Because:
- a. an institutional review board took the case to federal court.
 - b. federal dollars are tied to census study results.
 - c. it is women, children, and minorities who are most often undercounted.
 - d. the mayor of Detroit had a PhD in sociology.

ANS: B DIF: Easy REF: 2.2 Ethics of Social Research
MSC: Remembering

ESSAY

1. Compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative research methods. List and explain two points of comparison (similarity). List and explain two points of contrast (difference).

ANS:

Qualitative methods seek to obtain information about human beings and the social world that cannot be readily converted to numeric form. The information gathered is often used to document the meanings that actions engender in social participants or to describe the mechanisms by which social processes occur. Examples of qualitative methods are participant observations and case studies (the latter method is directly linked to this methodology in the figure labeled “The Research Process”).

Quantitative methods seek to obtain information about human beings and the social world that is already in or can be converted into numeric form and statistical analysis. Examples of quantitative methods are surveys and weighing people on a scale.

DIF: Moderate REF: 2.0 Methods MSC: Analyzing

2. What is an important difference between *correlation* and *causation*? Which is harder to establish, and why? Use an example to explain your answer.

ANS:

To say that two things are *correlated* is simply to say that two things vary at the same time (simultaneously). Causation, however, asserts that one thing *causes* the other. It is much easier to say that two things are correlated but very difficult to assert that a change in one factor causes a change in another. One reason it is difficult to establish *causality* is because we need to be careful to rule out other factors (*alternative explanations*) that might be causing the variation and thus explaining the relationship. To establish causality, you also need to know which variable precedes the other in time (*time order*). You don't need to go to all of this trouble to say that two things are related (*correlated*).

An example of a correlation would be ice cream sales and the number of reported rapes. As ice cream sales increase, the number of reported rapes increases. There is a relationship between the two (correlation), but it would be far-fetched to argue that ice cream sales *cause* rapes to increase (or vice versa). In reality, there is a third variable (heat of the summer) that causes both: Ice cream sales increase in warmer weather and rapes are more likely to occur in warmer weather.

DIF: Difficult REF: 2.1 Research 101 MSC: Analyzing

3. Define *hypothesis*. State a hypothesis of your own using, for example, the variables *weight* and *eating habits* or *access to healthful foods* and *eating habits*. Identify the independent variable (X). Identify the dependent variable (Y).

ANS:

A *hypothesis* is a proposed relationship between two variables, usually with a stated direction clearly predicting whether the variables move together in a positive direction or in opposite, negative directions.

One example of a hypothesis is, “Poor eating habits are likely to lead to people being over their ideal weight” (X = poor eating habits; Y = weight). Another is, “The less access a person has to healthful foods, the greater the likelihood that he or she has poor eating habits” (X = weight; Y = eating habits).

A null hypothesis could read, “A person's eating habits have nothing to do with his or her weight or his or her access to healthful foods” (X = eating habits; Y = weight).

DIF: Moderate REF: 2.1 Research 101 MSC: Analyzing

4. Create a hypothesis about the relationship between student engagement in college and academic performance. Identify the independent and dependent variables. Operationalize these variables. Justify the validity of your operationalization.

ANS:

The hypothesis should be stated in causal terms: More student engagement *leads to* or *causes* better academic performance. The dependent variable is the outcome the hypothesis seeks to explain, and the independent variable is the factor that has an impact on the dependent variable. In this case, it could be hypothesized that more student engagement leads to better academic performance.

Operationalization is the precise ways in which the variables are measured. Student engagement could be operationalized with measures of class attendance, class participation, participation in extracurricular activities, or visiting faculty during office hours. Academic performance could be measured with GPA, scores on exams, or some test of understanding.

DIF: Difficult

REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Evaluating

5. A sociologist is interested in understanding the ways in which inmates experience prison and the effect prison has on their post-sentence employment prospects. Describe a study design (that is, a methodological approach) that would address this question. List two advantages of this design. List two disadvantages of this design.

ANS:

Students could design a qualitative study, which would involve observations or interviews, or a quantitative study involving a survey or analysis of prison records. The pros of a survey would be the generalizability of the results, the relative ease of administering it, and its safety and feasibility in this context. The cons of such a method would be the difficulty in gaining an in-depth understanding about well-being. The pros of a qualitative approach would be the ability to get an in-depth sense of the kinds of problems prisoners experience both in prison and when trying to get a job. The cons would include ethical issues and its lack of generalizability.

DIF: Moderate

REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Evaluating

6. Describe one significant difference between *white coat effects* and *reflexivity* in social research. Offer one reason why awareness of white coat effects is important. Offer one reason why reflexivity is important.

ANS:

White coat effects are the ways that researchers affect (mostly unintentionally) the people they study. When a researcher's presence impacts the very processes and relationships he or she is looking at, this could be problematic and could lead to "faulty" data. An example of a white coat effect is how I act differently at work when the manager is around. Not only can the manager fire me, but also I don't want her to think I'm "goofing off."

Reflexivity is when a researcher is aware of the white coat effects that he or she might be causing. To be reflexive is to examine one's potential role in, and the effect it might have on, the research itself. When the researcher's own perception and experience of events become the data from which he or she makes claims, it is important to acknowledge any potential bias. If researchers are not reflexive, they may believe that their presence has absolutely no effect on subjects' attitudes and behavior, which is unlikely.

DIF: Difficult

REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Analyzing

7. List two of the elements that Sandra Harding proposed as essential to feminist methodologies. Explain how one of them would influence a study about violence in society.

ANS:

Harding proposed that the following three elements are essential to feminist methods in social research:

- (1) Treat women's and girls' experiences as legitimate empirical and theoretical resources.
- (2) Engage in social science that may bring about policy changes (that is, public sociology) to help improve women's (and perhaps men's) lives.
- (3) Take into account the researcher as much as the overt subject matter. When we enter a research situation, an imbalance of power usually exists between the researcher and the research subjects, and we need to take that power dimension seriously. The point of adopting feminist methods is not to exclude men or male perspectives. It means taking all subjects seriously rather than privileging one type of data, experience, or worldview over another.

DIF: Difficult

REF: 2.1 Research 101

MSC: Analyzing

8. The instructor of an introductory sociology class asks his students to fill out a questionnaire that he hopes to analyze and eventually publish. He tells the students that if they choose not to fill out the questionnaire, they will have points deducted from their next test. Which *golden rule(s)* of research does this situation violate? How could this ethical breach cause harm, and to whom? Revise the study, offering one suggestion of how the instructor could handle the situation in a more ethical manner.

ANS:

The instructor clearly violates the rule of *voluntary participation*, for the students should have the right to refuse to participate in the study without being penalized.

In terms of the *white coat effects*, the students are in a precarious situation because the instructor has more power. Even if the students had been told that their participation in the survey was completely voluntary (as it should have been), they may still fear that nonparticipation would adversely affect their grade and/or the instructor's feelings toward them.

The students should be told that their participation is completely voluntary—they should *not* be penalized in any way for nonparticipation. The students also should be guaranteed *complete anonymity*. The instructor could accomplish this in a variety of ways: He or she could leave the room while the questionnaires are being completed, the students could be asked to return the questionnaires by mail, or the students could be asked to drop them in a box near the door on their way out of the classroom.

DIF: Difficult

REF: 2.2 Ethics of Social Research

MSC: Evaluating