CHAPTER 2 SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Using the P.O.W.E.R. Learning Process in Your Instruction

Whether you are learning to learn or learning to teach, the P.O.W.E.R. Learning process is a useful tool. Use the P.O.W.E.R. Framework to prepare and organize your lesson.

PREPARE

Have students use the Learning Objectives to understand the goals of the material in each module.

Learning Objectives

MODULE 4 What Is the Scientific Method?
LO 4-1 Explain how sociologists use the scientific method to answer questions of interest.
LO 4-2 Outline and describe the steps in the scientific method and how sociologists use it.

MODULE 5 Major Research Designs and Developments
LO 5-1 Summarize the characteristics, advantages, and limitations of the major research designs.
LO 5-2 Describe the impact of feminist theory and queer theory on sociological research practices.
LO 5-3 Discuss the benefits and challenges of conducting research online.

MODULE 6 Ethics of Research
LO 6-1 List the basic principles of the American Sociological Association's *Code of Ethics.*
LO 6-2 Apply ethical principles—including conflict of interest and value neutrality—to the challenges that researchers encounter in conducting research.
LO 6-3 Analyze through a sociological lens the challenges in conducting research on human sexuality and the potential impact of such research on social policy.

ORGANIZE

Each module has an outline that provides an overview of the module so that the material that will be covered can be considered in advance.

Chapter Outline

MODULE 4 WHAT IS THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD?

- Conducting Effective Sociological Research
- Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method
  - Defining the Problem
  - Reviewing the Literature
  - Formulating the Hypothesis
  - Collecting and Analyzing Data
  - Developing the Conclusion
- In Summary: The Scientific Method

MODULE 5 MAJOR RESEARCH DESIGNS AND DEVELOPMENTS

- Elements of Design
  - Surveys
  - Ethnography
  - Experiments
  - Use of Existing Sources
- Developments of Methodology
  - Feminist Methodology
  - Queer Theory and Methodology
- The Data-Rich Future

MODULE 6 ETHICS OF RESEARCH

- The ASA Code of Ethics
  - Confidentiality
  - Conflict of Interest
  - Value Neutrality
- Social Policy and Sociological Research
- Studying Human Sexuality

RESEARCH TODAY: GENDER MESSAGES IN SCOUTING

SOCIOLOGY AT WORK: MARKET RESEARCHER

CASE STUDY: THE CASE OF… THE FOREGONE CONCLUSION

P.O.W.E.R. LEARNING: SETTING EFFECTIVE GOALS

WORK

Make sure students write, speak, and listen. Encourage them to take notes and jot down questions.

Chapter Summary

Sociologists are committed to the use of the **scientific method** in their research. The basic steps in the scientific method are defining the problem, reviewing the literature, formulating the hypothesis, selecting the research design, and collecting and analyzing the data. Finally, the researcher develops a conclusion based on the findings of the research.

An **operational definition** is an explanation of an abstract concept that allows a researcher to assess or measure the concept. For example, a sociologist interested in status might use membership in exclusive social clubs as an operational definition of status.

A review of the relevant literature helps to refine the problem, consider previous attempts to investigate it, and reduce avoidable mistakes.

A **hypothesis** is a speculative statement about the relationship between two or more variables. **Variables** are measurable traits or characteristics that are subject to change under certain conditions. The variable hypothesized to cause or influence another variable is called the **independent variable** (sometimes referred to as the "causal" variable). The variable that is changed or dependent on the independent variable is called the **dependent variable. Causal logic** involves the relationship between a condition or variable and a particular consequence, with one leading to the other. A **correlation** exists when a change in one variable coincides with a change in the other. A correlational relationship does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship, however. **Control variables** are those factors that are held constant to test the strength of a relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

In most studies, social scientists carefully select a sample. A **sample** is a selection from a larger population that is statistically representative of the population. In a **random sample**, every member of the population being studied has the same chance of being selected for the study.

The scientific method requires both validity and reliability. **Validity** refers to the degree to which a measure or scale truly reflects the phenomenon under study. **Reliability** refers to the extent to which a measure produces consistent results.

In formulating a conclusion, sociological studies sometime fail to support the original hypothesis and researchers must reformulate their conclusions.

A **research design** is a detailed plan or method for obtaining or collecting data. **Surveys** are a common method of **quantitative research** used by researchers to collect data. A quantitative method is one in which data are represented as numbers or statistics. Surveys may consist of oral **interviews** or written **questionnaires**. **Ethnography** is a **qualitative research** method that allows researchers to collect data through everyday interaction with a group or community under study. **Observation** is the basic technique of ethnography. Qualitative research involves smaller samples and different research methodologies. **Experiments** are artificially created situations in which researchers can manipulate variables. Typically, an experimental group is exposed to the independent variable (or "stimulus") and the **control group** is not. Sometimes experiments can suffer from the **Hawthorne effect**, a term sociologists have used to refer to the unintended influence that observers of experiments can have on their subjects.

Analyzing existing data that has been previously collected is called **secondary analysis**. **Content analysis** involves the systematic coding and objective recording of data, such as using newspapers, periodicals, and other common documents or venues to interpret and test the significance of data.

All researchers must abide by a **code of ethics** to ensure that researchers are not causing harm or violating a person's privacy. The American Sociological Association (ASA) is responsible for publishing a code of ethics for researchers in the field of sociology. Most research seeks to remain **value neutral** in its judgments when interpreting research results. However, some have suggested neutrality may be impossible to attain. As the feminist perspective gains influence among sociological

researchers, feminist methodology is changing both how issues are defined and how data is collected. Queer theory is also exposing some of the inherent sexuality bias in sociology that can lead to underreporting of gay and lesbian groups in a research process. Computers and the Internet are exciting technologies that are having a major impact on research.

Lecture Outline

I. Module 4 What Is the Scientific Method?

- A systematic, organized series of steps that ensures maximum objectivity and consistency in researching a problem. It is important to be able to distinguish between scientific and popular sources, as we are constantly bombarded with information and so-called "facts."

A. LO 4-1 Conducting Effective Sociological Research

- Imaginative, responsible research is crucial for any sociological inquiry.
- It is important to understand the scientific method. It plays a major role in the workings of our society.

B. LO 4-2 Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

1. Defining the Problem

- An operational definition is necessary to assess or measure a concept. ***Example***: A sociologist may use membership in exclusive social clubs as an operational definition of "status."

2. Reviewing the Literature

- This process serves to refine the problem under study, clarify data collection techniques, and reduce avoidable mistakes.

3. Formulating the Hypothesis

- Hypothesis: a speculative statement about the relationship between two or more variables (a variable being a measurable trait or characteristic)
- Independent variables cause or influence change in dependent variables.
- Dependent variables are changed by the independent variables or are dependent on them.
- *Causal logic* refers to the relationship between a condition or variable and a particular consequence, with one event leading to the other. ***Example***: Time spent studying may result in a higher grade on an exam.
- Correlation is only an indication that causality *may* be present. Other factors are necessary to determine causation.

4. Collecting and Analyzing Data

- Research designs guide researchers in collecting data.

a. Selecting the Sample

- Sample: a statistically representative selection from a larger population.
- Researchers collect samples because the population is too large to be studied.
- A random sample occurs when every member of an entire population has the same chance of being selected for the study.

b. Ensuring Validity and Reliability

- *Validity* refers to the degree to which a measure or scale accurately reflects the phenomenon under study.
- *Reliability* refers to the extent to which a measure produces consistent results.

5. **Developing the Conclusion**
    - The conclusion represents both an end and a beginning in research.

    a. **Supporting Hypotheses**
        - Some studies refute a hypothesis, which leads to reformulations about a conclusion and adjustments in research designs.

    b. **Controlling for Other Factors**
        - A control variable is a factor held constant to test the relative impact of the independent variable. ***Example***: If researchers wanted to know how adults in the United States feel about restrictions on smoking in public places, they would probably attempt to use a respondent's smoking behavior as a control variable.

6. **In Summary: The Scientific Method**

II. Module 5 Major Research Designs and Developments

- A research design is a detailed plan or method for obtaining data scientifically.

A. LO 5-1 Elements of Design

1. **Surveys**
    - Surveys are generally in the form of an interview or questionnaire, providing researchers with information about how people think or act.
    - The survey is an example of quantitative research, which collects and reports data primarily in numerical form. For a survey to be accurate, the researcher must develop a representative sample.
    - The two main survey forms are: the interview, in which a researcher obtains information through face-to-face, telephone, or online questioning; and the questionnaire, in which the researcher uses a printed or written form to obtain information from a respondent.
    - Survey questionnaires have the advantage, over most other methods, of being cheaper to administer. They also offer the advantage of uniform questions and answers, thereby allowing researchers to make comparisons across the sample. Samples for survey research are often quite large.
    - Quantitative research collects and reports data primarily in numerical form.
    - Qualitative research relies on what is seen in field and naturalistic settings, and it often focuses on small groups and communities. Ethnography is the most common form.
2. **Ethnography**
    - Ethnography is the study of an entire social setting through extended systematic fieldwork. Observation, or direct participation in closely watching a group or organization, is the basic technique of ethnography. ***Example***: A researcher might observe gang life or homeless persons through close study that may include personal interviews and research into the history of these groups.
    - William F. Whyte's 1930s study, in which he moved into a low-income Italian neighborhood in Boston, is a classic example of participant observation research.
3. **Experiments**
    - An experiment is an artificially created situation that allows a researcher to manipulate variables. Classic experiment form uses an experimental group exposed to an independent variable, and a control group that is not exposed to the independent variable.

- The *Hawthorne effect* refers to the tendency for subjects of research to deviate from typical behavior because they are under observation.

4. Use of Existing Sources

- *Secondary analysis* refers to making use of previously collected or publicly accessible information and data. ***Example***: census data
- Secondary analysis is nonreactive, since it does not influence people's behavior; thus, researchers can avoid the Hawthorne effect by using secondary analysis. ***Example***: Durkheim's research on suicide
- Content analysis is the systematic coding and objective recording of data. ***Example***: To assess children's awareness of the environment, sociologists conducted a content analysis of award-winning picture books over the last seventy years.

B. LO 5-2 Developments of Methodology

1. Feminist Methodology

- The feminist perspective has had an impact on sociological research, both in terms of methodology and in terms of substantive content. ***Example***: Research is now being conducted on the integration of work and family, rather than viewing the two topics as unrelated. Feminist scholars were among the first to identify unpaid, domestic labor as a form of work.
- Historically, sociologists researched men's work, associations, and communities, and generalized this research to all people, resulting in a biased picture of social life.
- Recent feminist scholars have shown substantive interest in female self-injury and in drawing links between the role of women in developed and developing nations.
- Feminist scholarship often employs a multidisciplinary approach to the research itself and its application.

2. Queer Theory and Methodology

- Queer theorists draw attention to the underreporting of gays and lesbians in the collection of research, often due to the nature in which the questions are asked ("veiled reporting").
- Because it is a sensitive topic, researchers that want to generalize about both heterosexuals and homosexuals should be extremely careful in wording questions about respondents' sexual orientation

C. LO 5-3 The Data-Rich Future

- Impact of computers and Internet on research
- ***Example***: Sociologists can now access real-time, geocoded (that is, location specific) incident reports instead of relying on victim complaints or police reports.

III. Module 6 Ethics of Research

- Sociologists must abide by a code of ethics that sets forth certain specific standards in conducting research.

A. LO 6-1 The ASA Code of Ethics

- The American Sociological Association's *Code of Ethics* for sociologists was first published in 1971. Its principles included objectivity; integrity; privacy and protection from harm for subjects; confidentiality; informed consent; acknowledgement of collaboration and assistance; and disclosure of sources of financial support.

1. Confidentiality

- Rik Scarce was jailed for refusing to divulge what he knew about a 1991 raid on a university lab by animal rights activists.
- The Supreme Court has failed to clarify the rights of scholars preserving the confidentiality of research subjects.

2. LO 6-2 Conflict of Interest

- When accepting funding for their research, sociologists must be careful that the funding source does not taint the objectivity of the research. ***Example***: Exxon funded research on jury deliberations after the *Valdez* disaster.

3. LO 6-2 Value Neutrality

- Weber argued that value neutrality must be employed in research. Some sociologists argue that true value neutrality in research may be impossible, but it should not be ignored.

B. LO 6-3 Social Policy Research and Sociological Research

1. Studying Human Sexuality

- Human sexuality is a difficult topic to research due to privacy concerns as well as the myths, beliefs, and preconceptions people attach to the subject.

a. Applying Sociology

- There have been few reliable studies of patterns of sexual behavior in the United States. The sensitive nature of the subject makes it difficult to obtain accurate information, and until the AIDS crisis, there was little scientific demand for data on sexual behavior.
- Government funding for studies of sexual behavior is controversial.

b. Initiating Policy

- Sociologists may fear studying and objectively reporting findings for fear of losing government funds in the event the research criticizes government policies.
- In 1987, the federal government's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development sought research proposals for a national survey of sexual behavior.
- In 1991, the U.S. Senate voted to forbid funding any survey on adult sexual practices.
- Researchers secured private funding for the research to go forth: National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS). Careful procedures helped establish validity of the NHSLS findings.
- Authors of the study contend their data will allow sociologists and policymakers to better address such issues as AIDS, sexual harassment, welfare reform, sex discrimination, abortion, teenage pregnancy, and family planning.
- The research findings countered conventional notions about abortion and birth control. ***Example***: Researchers found that women do not regularly use abortion for birth control and that affluent women are more likely to have abortions than poor teens. Both of these findings challenge conventional wisdom and common sense about abortion.

EVALUATE

This material should help students determine how much they have retained after reading the material.

Key Terms

Causal logic The relationship between a condition or variable and a particular consequence, with one event leading to the other.

Code of ethics The standards of acceptable behavior developed by and for members of a profession.

Content analysis The systematic coding and objective recording of data, guided by some rationale.

Control group The subjects in an experiment who are not introduced to the independent variable by the researcher.

Control variable A factor that is held constant to test the relative impact of an independent variable.

Correlation A relationship between two variables in which a change in one coincides with a change in the other.

Dependent variable The variable in a causal relationship that is subject to the influence of another variable.

Ethnography The study of an entire social setting through extended systematic observation.

Experiment An artificially created situation that allows a researcher to manipulate variables.

Experimental group The subjects in an experiment who are exposed to an independent variable introduced by a researcher.

Hawthorne effect The unintended influence that observers or experiments can have on their subjects.

Hypothesis A speculative statement about the relationship between two or more variables.

Independent variable The variable in a causal relationship that causes or influences a change in a second variable.

Interview A face-to-face, telephone, or online questioning of a respondent to obtain desired information.

Observation A research technique in which an investigator collects information through direct participation, by closely watching a group or community.

Operational definition An explanation of an abstract concept that is specific enough to allow a researcher to measure the concept.

Qualitative research Research that relies on what is seen in field or naturalistic settings more than on statistical data.

Quantitative research Research that collects and reports data primarily in numerical form.

Questionnaire A printed or written form used to obtain information from a respondent.

Random sample A sample for which every member of an entire population has the same chance of being selected.

Reliability The extent to which a measure produces consistent results.

Research design A detailed plan or method for obtaining data scientifically.

Sample A selection from a larger population that is statistically representative of that population.

Scientific method A systematic, organized series of steps that ensures maximum objectivity and consistency in researching a problem.

Secondary analysis A variety of research techniques that make use of previously collected and publicly accessible information and data.

Survey A study, generally in the form of an interview or questionnaire, that provides researchers with information about how people think and act.

Validity The degree to which a measure or scale truly reflects the phenomenon under study.

Value neutrality Max Weber's term for objectivity of sociologists in the interpretation of data.

Variable A measurable trait or characteristic that is subject to change under different conditions.

Essay Questions

1. Identify and briefly explain the five basic steps in the scientific method.
2. Discuss the differences in qualitative and quantitative research processes.
3. Describe what is meant by the need to ensure that research results are both valid and reliable.
4. Provide the students with a research question and ask them to identify which research method would be best suited to studying it and to discuss why.
5. How is a sociological analysis of whether it pays to go to college different from a study of the same question conducted by a television station or magazine?
6. Distinguish among independent variables, dependent variables, causal logic, and correlations.
7. Explain why it is important to develop a representative sample when doing survey research and why some survey methods will not produce this kind of sample.
8. Why are control variables important in testing hypotheses?
9. Explain how sociological research methods would be useful in conducting a poll in Baghdad.
10. Identify and briefly describe the four different types of research designs for collecting data presented in the text.
11. Why is the wording of survey questions an important issue?
12. What are the advantages of interviews and questionnaires as forms of survey research?
13. What are the strengths and difficulties of the ethnographic method of research?
14. Which type of sociological research is considered to be more effective, qualitative or quantitative?
15. What conclusions can be drawn from William F. Whyte's participant observation research in a low-income neighborhood?
16. Explain the origin of the Hawthorne effect and its significance for researchers.
17. In what types of situations do researchers find secondary analysis useful?
18. What are the principles put forth by the American Sociological Association in its *Code of Ethics*?
19. How does the case of Rik Scarce show the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of sources in observation research?
20. Describe the ideal of *value neutrality* as developed by Max Weber.
21. Summarize the views of Joyce Ladner and Shulamit Reinharz with respect to value neutrality.
22. What impact has the feminist perspective had on global sociological research?
23. How has queer theory attempted to address the generalizations that may be inherent in research?
24. What are the ethical concerns of receiving funding from corporate sources?

25. What has been the impact of technology on sociological research?
26. Why is it important for sociologists to do studies of human sexuality?

RETHINK

To help students get a deeper understanding of the material, these questions should be considered.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Discuss why it is so difficult for sociologists to achieve true value neutrality in their research. Consider what kinds of research and experiments might impact researchers' capacity for value neutrality more than others.
2. Consider various ways in which you might try to disguise your identity in performing a participant observation study of street gangs, and whether or not it would be ethical to do so. Discuss the value of obtaining qualitative data compared to obtaining quantitative data.
3. Provide examples of any societal dangers that might occur when the results of poor research are publicized. Can you recall any recent instances of this?
4. Discuss how social research could provide assistance in fighting the war on terrorism. What type of research design would one employ to research terrorism?
5. Describe how social research could aid in the passage of laws or potentially prevent the enactment of poor laws.

Sociological Research 2

Sociology in Your Life with P.O.W.E.R. Learning

1st edition

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What Is the Scientific Method?

- ***Conducting Effective Sociological Research***
  - **Scientific method**: a systematic, organized series of steps that ensures maximum objectivity and consistency in researching a problem
    - Defining the problem
    - Reviewing the literature
    - Formulating the hypothesis
    - Selecting the research design and collecting and analyzing data
    - Developing the conclusion

Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

- ***Defining the Problem***
  - **Operational definition**: explanation of an abstract concept that is specific enough to allow researchers to assess the concept

Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

- ***Reviewing the Literature***
  - Literature reviewed consists of relevant scholarly studies and information
    - Refine the problem
    - Clarify possible techniques for collecting data
    - Eliminate or reduce avoidable mistakes

Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

- ***Formulating the Hypothesis***
  - **Hypothesis**: speculative statement about the relationship between two or more factors known as variables
  - **Variable**: measurable trait or characteristic subject to change under different conditions
    - **Independent variable**: variable hypothesized to cause or influence another
    - **Dependent variable**: action depends on influence of the independent variable

Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

- ***Formulating the Hypothesis*** *(continued)*
  - **Causal logic**: involves relationships between a condition or variable and a particular consequence, with one event leading to the other
  - **Correlation**: exists when change in one variable coincides with change in another
    - Correlation does not necessarily indicate causation

Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

- ***Collecting and Analyzing Data***
  - ***Selecting the Sample***
    - **Sample**: selection from a larger population that is statistically typical of that population
    - **Random sample**: when every member of a population has the same chance of being selected
    - *Snowball* or *convenience samples*: participants recruited through word of mouth or by posting notices on the Internet

Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

- ***Collecting and Analyzing Data*** *(continued)*
  - ***Ensuring Validity and Reliability***
    - **Validity**: degree to which the measure reflects the phenomenon being studied
    - **Reliability**: extent to which the measure provides consistent results

Outlining the Steps of the Scientific Method

- ***Developing the Conclusion***
  - ***Supporting Hypotheses***
    - Sociological studies do not always generate data that support original hypothesis
  - ***Controlling for Other Factors***
    - **Control variable**: factor held constant to test the impact of the independent variable

In Summary: The Scientific Method

- Defining the problem
- Reviewing the literature
- Formulating a hypothesis
- Collecting and analyzing data
- Developing the conclusion

Figure 2-1: The Scientific Method

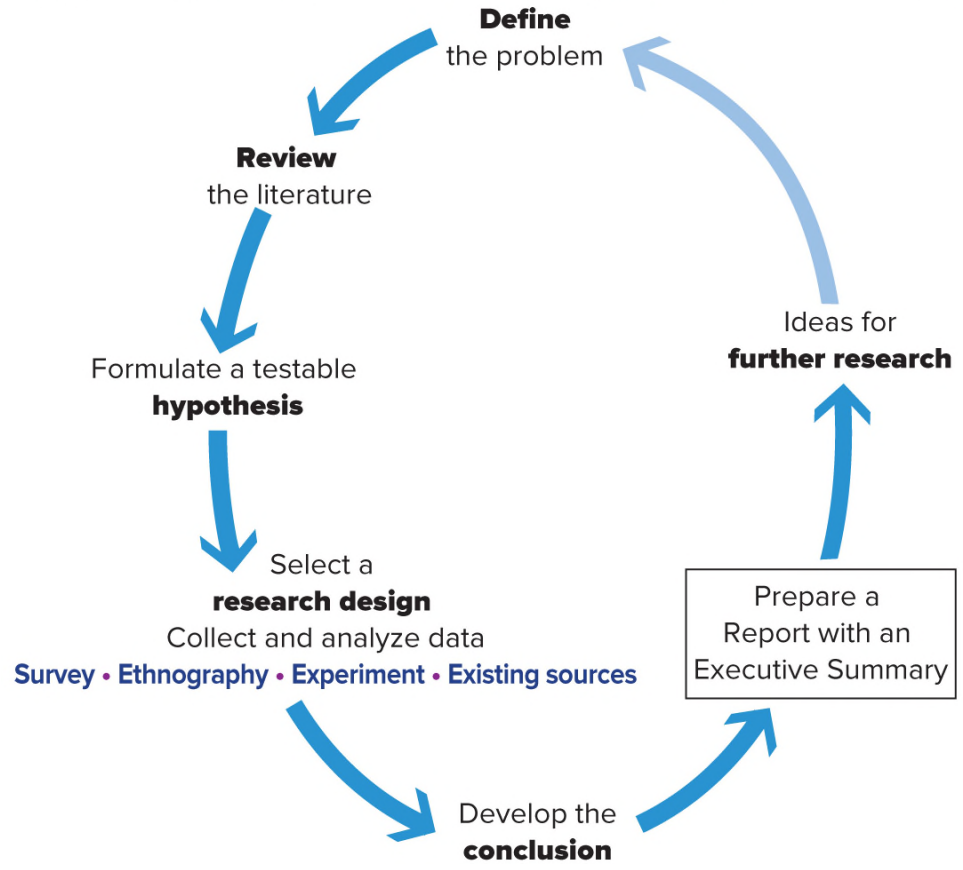
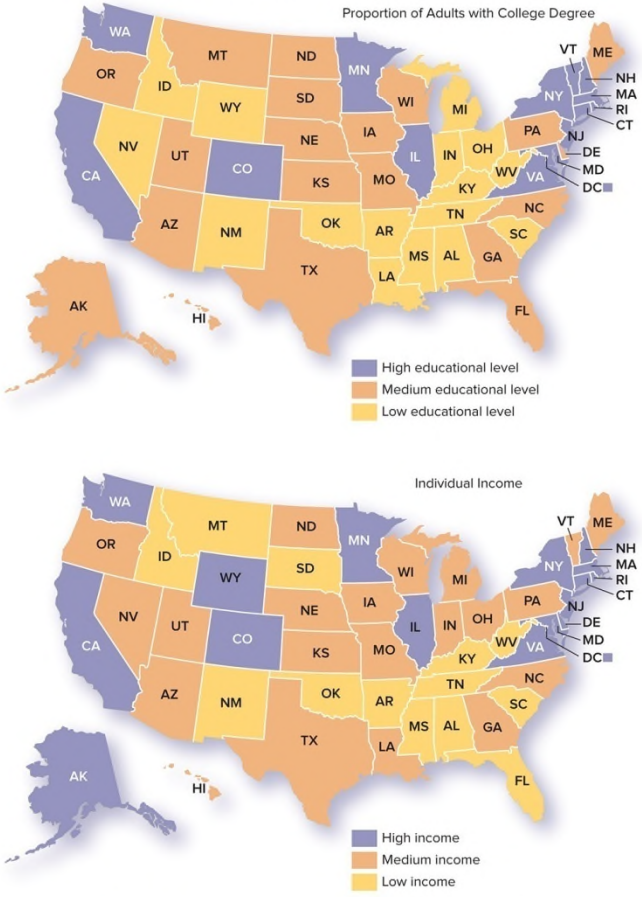


Figure 2-2: Educational Level and Household Income in the United States



Notes: Cutoffs for high/medium and medium/low educational levels in 2012 were 31 percent and 25.7 percent of the population with a college degree, respectively; median for the entire nation was 29.1 percent. Cutoffs for high/medium and medium/low individual income levels in 2011 were $54,000 and $45,000, respectively; national median income was $51,371 in 2011.

Source: American Community Survey in Bureau of the Census 2013a:Table 80201.

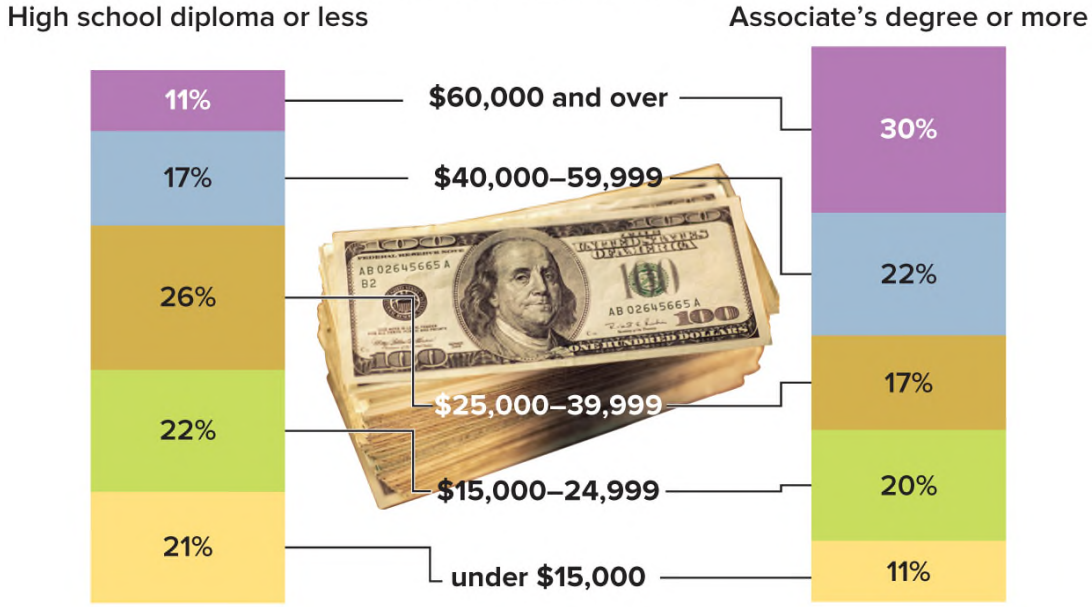
Figure 2-3: Causal Logic

Independent variable		Dependent variable
x	→	*y*
Level of educational degree	→	Level of income
Degree of lack of integration into society	→	Likelihood of suicide
Availability of affordable housing	→	Level of homelessness
Parents' church attendance	→	Children's church attendance
Time spent preparing for quiz	→	Performance on quiz
Parents' income	→	Likelihood of children's enrolling in college

In *causal logic*, an independent variable (often designated by the symbol *x*) influences a dependent variable (often designated as *y*); thus, *x* leads to *y*. For example, parents who attend church regularly (*x*) are more likely to have children who are churchgoers (*y*). Notice that the first two pairs of variables are taken from studies already described in this textbook.

Source: Developed by author.

Figure 2-4: Impact of a College Education on Income



Forty-three percent of people with a high school diploma or less (left) earn under $25,000 a year, while only 28 percent earn $40,000 or more. In contrast, only 31 percent of those with an associate's degree or higher (right) earn less than $25,000, while 52 percent earn $40,000 or more.

Source: Author's analysis of DeNavas-Walt et al. 2013, Detailed Table PINC-03. Only people with earnings included.

Major Research Designs and Development

- **Research design**: detailed plan or method for obtaining data scientifically
  - Surveys
  - Ethnography
  - Experiments
  - Existing sources

David Gould/Photographer's Choice RF/SuperStock

Elements of Design

- ***Surveys***
  - Study that provides sociologists with information about how people act or think
    - **Interview**: researcher obtains information through face-to-face or telephone questioning
    - **Questionnaire**: researcher uses printed or written form to obtain information from respondent

Surveys

- **Quantitative research**: collects and reports data primarily in numerical form
- **Qualitative research**: relies on what is seen in field and naturalistic settings; often focuses on small groups and communities

Table 2-1: Top Reasons Why Men and Women Had Sex

TABLE 2-1 TOP REASONS WHY MEN AND WOMEN HAD SEX

Reason	Men	Women
I was attracted to the person	1	1
It feels good	2	3
I wanted to experience the physical pleasure	3	2
It's fun	4	8
I wanted to show my affection to the person	5	4
I was sexually aroused and wanted the release	6	6
I was "horny"	7	7
I wanted to express my love for the person	8	5
I wanted to achieve an orgasm	9	14
I wanted to please my partner	10	11
I realized I was in love	17	9
I was "in the heat of the moment"	13	10

Source: Meston and Buss 2007:506.

Ethnography

- Collecting information through direct participation and/or by closely watching a group or community
  - **Ethnography**: efforts to describe an entire social setting through extended systematic observation
  - **Observation**: sociologist joins group to get accurate sense of how it operates; the basic technique of ethnography

Experiments

- **Experiment**: artificially created situation that allows researcher(s) to manipulate variables
  - **Experimental group**: exposed to independent variable
  - **Control group**: not exposed to independent variable
  - **Hawthorne effect**: unintended influence of observers or experiments on subjects

Use of Existing Sources

- **Secondary analysis**: techniques that make use of previously collected and publicly accessible information and data
- **Content analysis**: systematic coding and objective recording of data, guided by some rationale

Table 2-2: Existing Sources Used In Sociological Research

TABLE 2-2 EXISTING SOURCES USED IN SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Most Frequently Used Sources
Census data
Crime statistics
Birth, death, marriage, divorce, and health statistics
Other Sources
Newspapers and periodicals
Personal journals, diaries, e-mail, and letters
Records and archival material of religious organizations, corporations, and other organizations
Transcripts of radio programs
Motion pictures and television programs
Web pages, blogs, and chat rooms
Song lyrics
Scientific records (such as patent applications)
Speeches of public figures (such as politicians)
Votes cast in elections or by elected officials on specific legislative proposals
Attendance records for public events
Videos of social protests and rallies
Literature, including folklore

Summing Up

Source: Developed by author.

Table 2-3: Major Research Designs

TABLE 2-3 MAJOR RESEARCH DESIGNS

Summing Up

Method	Examples	Advantages	Limitations
Survey	Questionnaires Interviews	Yields information about specific issues	Can be expensive and time-consuming
Ethnography	Observation	Yields detailed information about specific groups or organizations	Involves months if not years of labor-intensive data
Experiment	Deliberate manipulation of people's social behavior	Yields direct measures of people's behavior	Ethical limitations on the degree to which subjects' behavior can be manipulated
Existing sources/ Secondary analysis	Analysis of census or health data Analysis of films or TV commercials	Cost-efficiency	Limited to data collected for some other purpose

Developments of Methodology

- ***Feminist Methodology***
  - Feminist perspective had a great impact on current generation of researchers
    - See work and family as closely integrated
    - Recently interested in self-injury
    - Other studies tend to overlook women
    - New impact on global research
    - Tend to involve and consult subjects more than other researchers

Developments of Methodology

- ***Queer Theory and Methodology***
  - Queer theorists challenge the sexual orientation generalizations inherent to much research
    - "Veiled reporting" technique may result in underreporting of gays and lesbians in research due to wording of survey or interview questions and the manner in which they are asked

The Data-Rich Future

- Massive increases in available data allow sociologists to undertake new research
  - H1N1 flu strain
  - Crime patterns
  - Increased data raises concern about individual privacy

Ethics of Research

- *Code of Ethics* (ASA, 1997)
  - Maintain objectivity and integrity in research
  - Respect subjects' right to privacy and dignity
  - Protect subjects from personal harm
  - Preserve confidentiality
  - Seek informed consent
  - Acknowledge collaboration and assistance
  - Disclose sources of financial support (1999)

Confidentiality

- Rik Scarce: doctoral candidate in sociology, jailed for refusing to divulge what he knew about a 1991 raid on a university lab by animal rights activists

Conflict of Interest

- Money given in support of basic research can come with strings attached
- Example: Exxon Corporation's support for research on jury verdicts

Value Neutrality

- Investigators have ethical obligation to accept research findings even when the data run counter to their personal views, to theoretically based explanations, or to widely accepted beliefs

Social Policy and Sociological Research

- ***Studying Human Sexuality***
  - Important to increase scientific understanding of human sexuality
    - Privacy concerns
    - Preconceptions
    - Myths
    - Beliefs
  - Many people oppose research on human sexuality

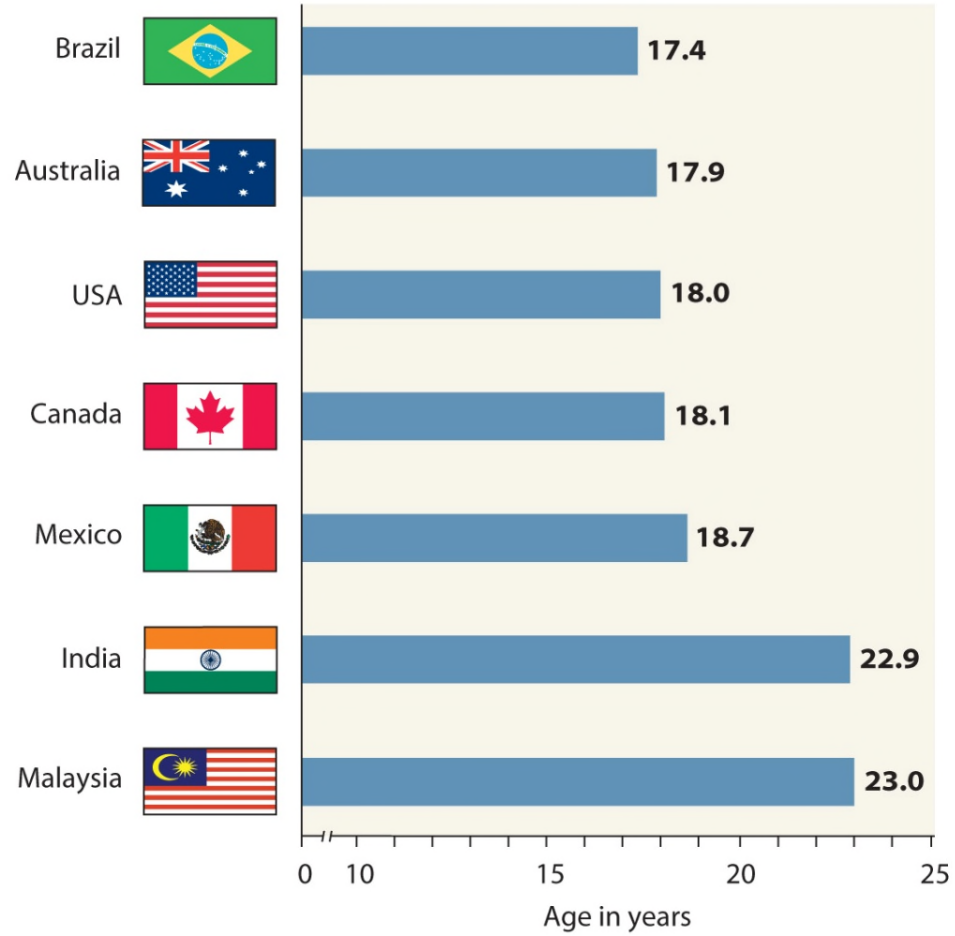
Social Policy and Sociological Research

- ***Applying Sociology***
  - Little reliable national data on patterns of sexual behavior in U.S.
  - Government funding for studies of sexual behavior is controversial
  - Federal government is major source of funding for sociological research
  - Weber's ideal of value neutrality: sociologists must remain free to reveal information that is embarrassing to or supportive of government institutions

Social Policy and Sociological Research

- ***Initiating Policy***
  - Sociologists developed the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS) to better understand sexual practices of adults in U.S.
    - Private funding
    - NHSLS data allow interest groups to address public policy issues

Figure 2-5: Median Age of First Sex



Source: Durex 2007.

Research Today

2-1: Gender Messages in Scouting

- Did you participate in scouting as a child? If so, were you aware of the gender messages you were receiving as part of the scouting experience? How did you react?
- If you were a Scout leader yourself, what kind of gender model would you attempt to be? How would you become that kind of model?

Case Study

The Case of…Parenting Options

1. Which steps of the scientific method of research does Kyle appear to have followed? Which steps did he ignore? How do you think the steps he skipped affected his conclusion?
2. Kyle's instructor commented, "Fuel efficiency isn't just about engine size." How could a review of the literature have helped Kyle to avoid this mistake? What sources could have been used?

(Continued…)

Case Study

The Case of…Parenting Options

3. What problems do you see with Kyle's research design? How could it have been improved?
4. How did Kyle's lack of value neutrality impact each of the five basic steps of the scientific method?

Study Strategies: Setting Effective Goals

P Prepare

- Think about for what aspects of your life you want to set goals for
  - Focus on one at a time
- Identify long-term goals that are genuinely important to you
  - Write them down on a chart
- Share your goals with others in your family or study group

Study Strategies: Setting Effective Goals

Organize

- Prioritize your goals
  - Choose only the most important ones to work on
- Be realistic about your ability to focus
  - The fewer goals the better

Study Strategies: Setting Effective Goals

Work

- Turn each goal into an action plan
  - Break them down into sub-goals
- Be specific
  - Goals should be particular and measurable
- Include a specific time in your sub-goals
- Be realistic

Study Strategies: Setting Effective Goals

E Evaluate

- Track your progress on a written chart
- Share your progress with others

Study Strategies: Setting Effective Goals

R Rethink

- Revisit your progress toward your ultimate goal after a reasonable amount of time has passed
- Celebrate your sub-goal successes and accept your failures
- Persist and recommit
  - Adjust where necessary to make your next progress report better