SOC 101 CH 2: SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

If you were given a grant of time and money to study something in or about society, __________ in society would you study?

Intro to Sociological Research. We often have __________ about social situations, but these may be biased by our expectations or based on limited data. This can lead to the development of myths—a widely held but __________ notion. This chapter opens with the question of whether there is more crime, emergency room visits or other problems when there is a __________ moon. What do you think?

Instead of guessing or __________, scientific research is based on empirical evidence, which is evidence that comes from direct experience, scientifically gathered __________, or experimentation. Meta-analysis is a technique in which the results of virtually all previous studies on a specific subject are evaluated together. A __________ is a testable educated guess about predicted outcomes between two or more variables; it’s a possible __________ for specific happenings in the social world. It is important to note that not everything can be studied using the scientific method, however the scientific method can __________ increase our understanding of the world we live in.

2.1 Approaches to Sociological Research. The Normative approach and the Scientific Method. The Normative approach is based on the __________ of a society—is that always bad?

The Scientific Method: The basic steps are: A) Ask a Question B) Research Existing __________ C) Formulate a Hypothesis D) Design and Conduct a Study E) Draw Conclusions F) Report __________.

In this field, results of studies tend to provide people with access to knowledge they did not have before—knowledge of other cultures, knowledge of rituals and __________, or knowledge of trends and attitudes. No matter what research approach they use, researchers want to maximize the study’s __________, which refers to how likely research results are to be replicated if the study is reproduced. Reliability increases the likelihood that what happens to one person will happen to __________ people in a group. Researchers also strive for __________, which refers to how well the study measures what it was designed to measure.

Sociologists can use the scientific method not only to __________ but also to interpret and analyze the data. They deliberately apply scientific logic and objectivity as much as is possible. The goal is accuracy, reliability, and validity. There are an immense number of social questions to look at and study! What are some social research __________ that you have heard lately?

Ask a Question
The first step of the scientific method is to ask a question, describe a __________, and identify the specific area of interest. The topic should be narrow enough to study within a geographic area and a reasonable time frame, but also be broad enough to be __________.

Research Existing Sources The next step researchers undertake is to conduct background research through a literature review, which is a __________ of any existing similar or related studies. This step helps researchers gain a broad understanding of __________ previously conducted on the topic at hand and enables them to position their own research—to build on or add to __________ knowledge.

Formulate a Hypothesis A hypothesis is an assumption about how two or more variables are __________; it makes a conjectural statement about the relationship between those variables. In sociology, the hypothesis will often predict how one __________ of human behavior influences another. In research, independent variables are the cause of the change. The dependent variable is the __________ or thing that is changed.
Interpretive Framework. While many sociologists rely on the scientific method as a research approach, others __________ from an interpretive framework. While systematic, this approach doesn't follow the hypothesis-testing model that __________ to find generalizable results. Instead, an interpretive framework, sometimes referred to as an interpretive perspective, seeks to understand social __________ from the point of view of participants, which leads to in-depth knowledge. Interpretive research is generally more _______________ or narrative in its findings.

2.2 Research Methods

Surveys a survey collects __________ from subjects who respond to a series of questions about behaviors and opinions, often in the form of a questionnaire. While surveys are not great at capturing the ways people __________ behave in social situations, they are a great method for discovering how people feel and think—or at least how they say they feel and think. In a random sample, every person in a population has the __________ chance of being chosen for the study. According to the laws of probability, random samples represent the population as a whole. For instance, a Gallup Poll, if conducted as a __________ random sampling, should be able to provide an accurate estimate of public opinion whether it contacts 2,000 or 10,000 people.

Quantitative data this is research collected in numerical form that can be ___________.

Qualitative data results that are more subjective and often based on what is __________ in a natural setting. Qualitative information is harder to organize and tabulate. An __________ is a one-on-one conversation between the researcher and the subject, and it is a way of conducting surveys on a topic. Interviews are similar to the short-answer __________ on surveys in that the researcher asks subjects a series of questions.

Field Research sociologists using this method __________ out into the world. They meet subjects where they live, work, and play. Field research refers to gathering primary data from a __________ environment without doing a lab experiment or a survey. It is a research method suited to an interpretive framework rather than to the scientific ___________.

Participant observation, in which researchers __________ people and participate in a group’s routine activities for the purpose of observing them within that context. This method lets researchers experience a specific aspect of social life. A researcher might go to __________ lengths to get a firsthand look into a trend, institution, or behavior. This type of research is what journalist Barbara Ehrenreich conducted for her book Nickel and Dimed. She wanted to see what living on __________ wage was like.

Ethnography Ethnographic study is the extended observation of the __________ perspective and cultural values of an entire social setting. Ethnographies involve __________ observation of an entire community. The heart of an ethnographic study focuses on how subjects view their own social ___________ and how they understand themselves in relation to a community.

Experiments One way researchers test social theories is by conducting an ___________, meaning they investigate relationships to test a hypothesis—a scientific approach. Classically, the sociologist selects a __________ of people with similar characteristics, such as age, class, race, or education. Those people are randomly divided into two or more groups. One is the experimental group and the other is the __________ group. The experimental group is exposed to the independent variable(s) and the control group is not. The change that (possibly) occurs is measured in the __________ variable.

The Hawthorne Effect This is where people ___________ their behavior because they know they are being watched as part of a study. Would you change the way you ___________ if you knew you were being studied?
Secondary Data Analysis: Secondary don’t result from firsthand research collected from primary sources, but are the already completed of other researchers. Sociologists might study works written by historians, economists, teachers, or early sociologists. They might through periodicals, newspapers, or magazines from any period in history. Using available information not only saves and money but can also add depth to a study.

2.3 Ethical Concerns

The American Sociological Association, or ASA, is the professional organization of sociologists in North America. The ASA is a great resource for students of sociology as well. The ASA maintains a of ethics—formal guidelines for conducting sociological research—consisting of principles and ethical standards to be used in the discipline. Some of the guidelines state that researchers must to be skillful and fair-minded in their work, especially as it relates to their subjects. Researchers must obtain participants’ informed and inform subjects of the responsibilities and of research before they agree to participate. During a study, sociologists must ensure the safety of participants and immediately work if a subject becomes potentially endangered on any level. Researchers are required to protect the of research participants whenever possible. Even if pressured by authorities, such as police or courts, researchers are not ethically allowed to confidential information. Researchers must available to other sociologists, must make public all sources of support, and must not accept funding from any organization that might cause a conflict of interest or seek to influence the research results for its purposes.

Max Weber stated that sociologists establish value neutrality, a practice of remaining impartial, without bias or judgment, during the course of and in publishing results. Other sociologists question whether complete value neutrality is even

While research is not the only way to accurate information about society, it is the major supplier of social for understanding society!