

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS DEVIANT BEHAVIOR?

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which of the following statements about the definition of deviance is TRUE?

- a) Almost all persons in a society will agree on the nature of deviant behavior.
- b) Definitions of deviant behavior are determined by a nation's economy.
- c) There is usually a great deal of disagreement among people as to what they consider deviant.
- d) Few persons in a society are concerned about the definition of deviance.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: c) There is usually a great deal of disagreement among people as to what they consider deviant.

2. Millions of people at one time or another have smoked marijuana. If sociologists asked a sample of U.S. citizens about this behavior, they would most likely discover that

- a) almost everyone agreed that smoking marijuana is deviant.
- b) many people disagreed about the deviant status of marijuana.
- c) almost everyone did not really care about whether smoking marijuana is deviant or not.
- d) almost everyone in the sample had smoked marijuana.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: b) many people disagreed about the deviant status of marijuana.

3. In 1965, J. L. Simmons asked a sample of the general public who they thought were deviant. Which of the following did significant numbers of people feel were deviant?

- a) homosexuals and prostitutes
- b) communists and atheists
- c) psychiatrists and priests
- d) all of the above

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3

Answer: d) all of the above

4. Among sociologists, there is

- a) much involvement in illegal deviant behavior.
- b) little interest in the study of deviance.
- c) widespread agreement about what behavior should be considered deviant.
- d) a lack of consensus about what behavior should be seen as deviant.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: d) a lack of consensus about what behavior should be seen as deviant.

5. All of the following are definitions of deviance proposed by different sociologists, EXCEPT that deviance is

- a) behavior that is labeled negative by politicians and the police.
- b) a departure from the normative standards of a common culture.
- c) always immoral behavior.
- d) behavior eliciting anger or disapproval from large numbers of people.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: c) always immoral behavior.

6. Which statement about the definition of deviance is TRUE?

- a) Deviance should include only important violations of the norms.
- b) All sociologists agree that deviance includes mundane, routine, and normal violations of the norms.
- c) Deviance is not an important subject anymore.
- d) Sociologists cannot agree on a precise definition of deviance.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: d) Sociologists cannot agree on a precise definition of deviance.

7. Which of the following types of people are examples of positive deviants?

- a) the saint, the intellectual, and the genius
- b) those who show bad manners at the dinner table
- c) the badly scarred, the blind, and the deaf
- d) murderers, rapists, and kidnappers

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: a) the saint, the intellectual, and the genius

8. Sociologists who study the role of power in the definition of deviance have discovered that the rich and powerful

- a) are rarely deviant.
- b) can avoid the label of deviance.
- c) are prejudiced toward most types of deviant behavior.

d) ignore most forms of deviant behavior.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: b) can avoid the label of deviance.

9. According to sociologists who study the role of power in the definition of deviance, deviance is any act that

a) violates the criminal law.

b) violates deeply held moral values.

c) the powerful consider to be a violation of some social rule.

d) involves the behavior of the poor.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: c) the powerful consider to be a violation of some social rule.

10. Definitions of deviance fall into two opposing perspectives, the positivist and the

a) traditional.

b) moral.

c) constructionist.

d) modernist.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 4

Answer: c) constructionist

11. Determinist, objectivist, and absolutist are other terms for aspects of the _____ perspective on deviance.

a) constructionist

b) humanist

c) modern

d) positivist

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 4

Answer : d) positivist

12. According to the labeling theory, deviance is

a) an objective reality.

b) a property inherent in the actor.

c) a label created by the person who commits a deviant act.

d) a label imposed by others upon a given behavior.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4

Answer : d) a label imposed by others upon a given behavior.

13. All of the following are part of the positivist perspective on deviance, EXCEPT that deviance is

- a) a label.
- b) intrinsically real.
- c) an objective fact.
- d) determined behavior.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4-7

Answer : a) a label.

14. If you believe that deviant behavior has characteristics that distinguish it from conforming behavior, you believe deviance is

- a) a label.
- b) a biased concept.
- c) biologically determined.
- d) intrinsically real.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4-5

Answer: d) intrinsically real.

15. Early criminologists believed deviance was intrinsically real because they believed criminals possessed

- a) a superior way of life.
- b) the same biological traits found in non-criminals.
- c) a distinctive set of labels that set them apart from non-criminals.
- d) certain biological traits absent in non-criminals.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4-5

Answer: d) certain biological traits absent in non-criminals.

16. Early in the twentieth century, criminologists believed that

- a) criminals are made, not born.
- b) criminals are born, not made.

- c) criminal status varies within time and space.
- d) crime is determined by the social environment.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4

Answer: b) criminals are born, not made.

17. Today's positivist sociologists now recognize the importance of _____ for understanding deviant behavior.

- a) religion
- b) psychological traits
- c) heredity
- d) social factors

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 5

Answer: d) social factors

18. Most positivist sociologists today continue to reject the idea of free will as an explanation of deviance because free will cannot explain why one person

- a) commits deviant acts while others do not.
- b) refrains from committing deviant acts.
- c) commits both deviant and non-deviant acts.
- d) is born with a tendency toward deviance.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 6

Answer: a) commits deviant acts while others do not.

19. Deviance as an "observable object" means that deviance

- a) is largely a subjective phenomenon.
- b) can be studied in a factual way.
- c) is behavior that at least a few people agree is deviant.
- d) actually exists in the minds of the beholder.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7

Answer: b) can be studied in a factual way.

20. One problem positivist sociological researchers face that natural scientists do not is

- a) sociologists are able to use more objective criteria than natural scientists are.
- b) natural scientists have a bigger problem with personal bias than sociologists.

- c) sociologists have difficulties with personal biases and making moral judgments about research subjects.
- d) sociologists find studying human behavior is substantially easier than studying the natural environment.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 5

Answer: c) sociologists have difficulties with personal biases and making moral judgments about research subjects.

21. The positivist perspective assumes that deviance is

- a) a matter of choice.
- b) relativistic.
- c) determined behavior.
- d) unimportant behavior.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 6-7

Answer: c) determined behavior.

22. To say that deviance is determined behavior implies that humans

- a) gain benefits from deviant behavior.
- b) can choose to be good or bad.
- c) have free will.
- d) cannot choose between good and bad.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 6-7

Answer: d) cannot choose between good and bad.

23. Attributing deviant behavior to choice is a form of pseudo explanation because the concept of choice

- a) does not explain why someone chooses either deviance or normal behavior.
- b) is more of a religious concept.
- c) is not a relevant concept for science.
- d) most explanations of deviance involve false claims.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 6-7

Answer: a) does not explain why someone chooses either deviance or normal behavior.

24. The main purpose of the positivist approach to deviance is

- a) developing empathy with deviant persons.
- b) seeking out the causes of deviant behavior.

- c) to make moral judgments about deviant behavior.
- d) to study biases toward persons seen as deviant.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 6-7

Answer: b) seeking out the causes of deviant behavior.

25. All of the following are assumptions of the constructionist perspective on deviance, EXCEPT that deviance should be seen as

- a) a label.
- b) an objective fact.
- c) subjective experience.
- d) a voluntary act.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7-10

Answer: b) an objective fact.

26. The fact that the same behavior can be seen as normal by some and as deviant by others is called the

- a) relativist view.
- b) deviance principle.
- c) positivist.
- d) subjectivist.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 8

Answer: a) relativist view.

27. Which ONE of the following questions reflects the constructionist and labeling perspective on deviance?

- a) Why do people become deviant?
- b) Why is a given act defined by society as deviant?
- c) Why are so many sociologists seen as deviant?
- d) Why is deviance an objective fact?

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7-8

Answer: b) Why is a given act defined by society as deviant?

28. Which of the following statements does NOT belong to the constructionist perspective on deviant behavior?

- a) Deviance is largely the product of others labeling behavior as deviant.
- b) Deviance is an observable, objective set of behaviors.
- c) Deviance is often a voluntary act.
- d) Deviance involves important subjective experiences.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7, 10

Answer: b) Deviance is an observable, objective set of behaviors.

29. Which of the following aspects of deviance would be of special interest to constructionist sociologists?

- a) surface facts about deviance
- b) statistical data
- c) how deviants seek positive meanings in deviant activity
- d) moral reactions to deviant behavior

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 9

Answer: c) how deviants seek positive meanings in deviant activity

30. To say that deviance is a subjective experience means that the deviant person is

- a) a determined subject.
- b) a morally degenerate person.
- c) a secret deviant.
- d) a conscious, feeling, thinking subject.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 8-9

Answer: d) a conscious, feeling, thinking subject.

31. According to the constructionist perspective, sociologists need to

- a) treat deviance as immoral and unpleasant.
- b) objectively measure types of deviant behavior.
- c) develop an internal, subjective view of people.
- d) adopt an external, objective view of deviance.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 8-9

Answer: c) develop an internal, subjective view of people.

32. Positivists treat deviance as if it were unpleasant and harmful to society, while constructionists

- a) have an appreciation for and empathy with deviants.

- b) emphasize the importance of social control of deviant behavior.
- c) stress the importance of being deviant themselves.
- d) study the biological aspects of human behavior.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 9

Answer: a) have an appreciation for and empathy with deviants.

33. According to the constructionist perspective, deviant behavior is

- a) determined behavior.
- b) an expression of human volition.
- c) robot-like behavior.
- d) passive reaction to social forces.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 9-10

Answer: b) an expression of human volition.

34. From the constructionist perspective, deviants are

- a) actively seeking meaning in the deviant activities.
- b) totally different from normal people.
- c) biologically defective.
- d) propelled by well-defined social forces.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7-8

Answer: a) actively seeking meaning in the deviant activities.

35. The author argues that an integrated definition of deviant behavior must focus on

- a) the deviant behavior itself.
- b) the deviant label.
- c) the methods of sociologists.
- d) both deviant behavior and the deviant label.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 10-11

Answer: d) both deviant behavior and the deviant label.

36. The _____ perspective is more pertinent for studying less serious kinds of deviance.

- a) objective
- b) constructionist
- c) deterministic

d) psychological

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 12

Answer: b) constructionist

37. Which of the following kinds of deviance is best understood through a positivist perspective?

- a) higher-consensus deviance
- b) lower-consensus deviance
- c) immoral deviance
- d) criminal deviance

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 11-12

Answer: a) higher-consensus deviance

38. Deviant behavior is any behavior that

- a) violates the law.
- b) violates the norms.
- c) is considered deviant by public consensus, which may range from maximum to minimum.
- d) is considered deviant by the police and officials of society, which may range from high to low.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 12

Answer : c) is considered deviant by public consensus, which may range from maximum to minimum.

39. Which of the following conditions separates the positivist and constructionist perspectives on deviance?

- a) the variety and type of religious attitudes toward deviant behavior.
- b) the amount of private consensus about what is deviant behavior
- c) the number of persons involved in deviant behavior
- d) the amount of public consensus about what type of behavior is deviant.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 12

Answer: d) the amount of public consensus about what type of behavior is deviant.

40. Which of the following is one reason why, for U.S. citizens, deviant behavior is more or less, rather than completely, deviant?

- a) Most deviance in the U.S. is low-consensus deviance.
- b) The causes of deviance are largely unknown.

- c) U.S. society is pluralistic.
- d) Most people in the U.S. are immoral.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 12

Answer: c) U.S. society is pluralistic.

True/False Questions

1. Most U.S. residents generally agree about the definition of deviant behavior.

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 3

Answer: False

2. Despite years of research, most sociologists today cannot agree upon a precise definition of deviant behavior.

True

False

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: True

3. Most sociologists agree that extreme positive behavior such as a religious fanaticism or social reform is not really “deviant.”

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: False

4. Labeling theorists define deviance as a label imposed upon a given behavior.

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 3-4

Answer: True

5. For some sociologists, deviance is any act considered by the powerful at a given time and place to be a violation of some social rule.

True

False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 3-4
Answer: True

6. Early positivist criminologists were convinced that a person's criminal status changed through time and from culture to culture.

True
False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 4
Answer: False

7. The positivist perspective is associated with the humanities, such as art and philosophy, while the constructionist perspective is associated with the sciences, such as physics and biology.

True
False

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 4-7
Answer: False

8. Positivist sociologists today realize that they are not free from personal bias.

True
False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 5
Answer: True

9. According to the positivist perspective, deviance is seen as both real and separate from conforming behavior.

True
False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 7
Answer: True

10. Many traditional criminologists, using the positivist perspective, believed that criminals possessed specific biological and psychological traits that made them different from non-criminals.

True
False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 4-5
Answer: True

11. The positivist perspective on deviance assumes that humans are active in determining their own lives, and are not passive subjects of powerful forces.

True
False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 6-7
Answer: False

12. The positivist perspective on deviance implies that if the deviant is treated as an object, he or she can be studied objectively.

True
False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 5-6
Answer: True

13. According to constructionist sociologists using the labeling perspective, if deviant behavior is not labeled as such, the behavior is not seen as deviant.

True
False

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 7-8
Answer: True

14. According to the positivist perspective, the definition of deviant behavior is subjective.

True
False

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 4-7
Answer: False

15. The constructionist perspective on deviance centers on the behavior of deviants and does not examine the role of the police or courts in creating deviance.

True
False

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 8

Answer: False

16. Sociologists using the constructionist perspective believe that deviants are passive objects whose behavior is determined by the environment.

True

False

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 10-11

Answer: False

17. Constructionists tend to present deviants as basically the same as conventional people.

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 8-9

Answer: True

18. Murder is one example of lower-consensus deviance.

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 11

Answer: False

19. Deviant behavior is any behavior considered deviant by public consensus, which may range from the maximum to the minimum.

True

False

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 11-12

Answer: True

20. The constructionist perspective on deviance is best suited for the study of low-consensus deviance.

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 11

Answer: True

21. A sociologist is interested in studying the deviant behavior of prostitutes and other night people. He or she could utilize a constructionist perspective.

True

False

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 11

Answer: True

22. An attorney, pleading leniency for his guilty client, asks the judge to take into consideration his client's unfortunate background, including child abuse and abandonment, before passing sentence. It is logical to conclude that the attorney is asking the judge to view deviance from a positivist perspective.

True

False

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4-7

Answer: True

23. Culture plays a role in determining the definition of deviant behavior.

True

False

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4-7

Answer: True

24. All deviant behaviors are crimes.

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 12-13

Answer: False

25. Crime is a violation of a formal norm.

True

False

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 13

Answer: True

26. Attributing deviant behavior to one's genetic disposition is viewing deviant behavior from a constructionist perspective.

True
False

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 7-10
Answer: False

27. Those in positions of power do NOT have the ability to define what behavior is deviant or not.

True
False

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 9-10
Answer: False

Fill-In Questions

1. According to the _____ perspective, deviance is a property conferred upon behavior by audiences which directly or indirectly witness them.

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 3-4
Answer: labeling

2. According to the _____ perspective on deviance, deviance is intrinsically real and an objective fact.

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 4-5
Answer: positivist

3. One aspect of the constructionist perspective on deviance is _____, or studying how the world appears to and is interpreted by the deviant.

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 8-9
Answer: subjectivism

4. The _____ perspective is more pertinent for understanding relatively serious types of deviant behavior.

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 11
Answer: positivist

5. _____ behavior is any behavior considered deviant by public consensus, which may range from the maximum to the minimum.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 11-12

Answer: Deviant

6. A judge who takes a guilty person's unfortunate family background into consideration before passing sentence is viewing deviance from a _____ perspective.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 4-7

Answer: positivist

7. If you tell a child that he or she is a thief often enough, he or she is going to believe it. This statement best fits the _____ perspective on deviance.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7-10

Answer: constructionist

8. The _____ approach believes that deviant behavior is a natural disposition.

Difficulty: 1

Page Reference: 4-7

Answer: positivist

9. A prosecution attorney trying to prove malice aforethought is approaching deviant behavior from a _____ perspective.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7-10

Answer: constructionist

Essay Questions

1. Discuss why the general public and sociologists have failed to agree upon a definition of deviance. Why is achieving a definition so difficult?

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

2. Assess the significance of cultures, norms, and values in the definition of deviant behavior.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 3-4

3. Explain and evaluate the labeling approach to deviant behavior. How do labeling sociologists define deviance, and why have other sociologists criticized this approach?

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 3-4

4. In what ways have some sociologists expressed bias in their study of deviant behavior? What kinds of biases do they have, and how do they try to address them?

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 5-6

5. Compare and contrast the positivist and constructionist perspectives on deviance. How do they differ but also work together to provide a better definition of deviance?

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 4-12

6. Comparing the positivist and constructionist approach, which is more effective in addressing the subject of deviant behavior? What are the inherent strengths and weakness in the theory of your choice? Does the integrated approach totally enhance the strengths and weaknesses of the theory of your choice?

Difficulty: 3
Page Reference: 4-12

7. Define and discuss higher- and lower-consensus deviance. What are some examples of each type of deviance, and why does the public often disagree over whether a form of deviance is higher or lower?

Difficulty: 3
Page Reference: 11-13

8. Assess the difference between deviant behavior and crime.

Difficulty: 1
Page Reference: 13-14

9. Deviant behavior is a natural disposition. What theoretical approach best explains deviant behavior this way? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

Difficulty: 2
Page Reference: 4-7

10. Which theoretical approach argues that deviant behavior is a personal choice? What is the strength and weaknesses of this approach?

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 7-10

11. Does the U.S. court system lean toward the positivist or constructionist approach to deviance? Provide explanations for your choice.

Difficulty: 2

Page Reference: 4-10