

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter, the student should be able to do the following:

1. Be familiar with the “blinders of personal experience” in family science research.
2. Understand theoretical perspectives, starting with the family ecology perspective.
3. Define and understand the family life course development framework.
4. Explain the structure-functional perspective in family science.
5. Discuss interaction-constructionist views of the family.
6. Be familiar with the exchange theory and its contributions to family science.
7. Explain family systems theory and how the family is viewed through this lens.
8. Define conflict, feminist and biosocial theoretical perspectives in family science.
9. Know the basics of attachment theory as it pertains to the study of the family.
10. Be familiar with the methods of data collection used in ethical scientific investigation.

LECTURE OUTLINE

I. Overview

- A. Overview
 1. Our beliefs about families based on our own personal experience may not tell the whole story and may misrepresent the actual experiences of families.
 2. The way to a clear understanding of all families is through scientific investigation via scientific methods.
- B. The Blinders of Personal Experience
 1. We often assume our own family is “normal” or “typical.”
 2. We often are highly committed to the view of family life that is shaped by our experiences.
- C. Scientific Investigation: Removing Blinders
 1. Science is based on systematic observation and empirical evidence.
 2. The scientific method can overcome researchers’ biases.
 3. Scientists are expected to follow certain norms, including honesty.

II. Theoretical Perspectives of the Family

Theoretical perspectives or theories contain concepts that help identify and explain specific aspects of family behavior. Theoretical perspectives or theories vary in what each may see as important and significant about families.

- A. The Family Ecology Perspective.
 1. This perspective explains how a family influences and is influenced by the environments that surround it.
 2. This theory focuses on how government policies—as part of the socio-cultural environment—affects families and how families can influence the environments that affect them.

3. Put another way, the family ecology model is concerned with family policy—all the procedures, regulations, attitudes, and goals of government that affect families.
 4. A strength of this theory is that it sensitizes us to significant socio-cultural issues, like globalization, that may not be addressed by other theories.
 5. A weakness of this theory is that its coverage is so broad that virtually nothing is left out, or, put differently, borders on the truism that ultimately everything affects everything else, and vice versa.
- B. The Family Life Course Development Perspective
1. This theory focuses on how families change over time.
 2. It is limited because it assumes all families are similar and traditional.
 3. It assumes almost everyone marries for a lifetime; that the patterns of the life cycle are highly predictable.
- C. The Structure-Functional Perspective
1. This theory focuses on the functions performed by the family as a social institution.
 - a. to raise children responsibly
 - b. to provide economic support
 - c. to give emotional security
 2. It is limited in that there is a tendency to assume the traditional family pattern is normative and *thus, because* it “persists or continues” must be more “functional” for society.
- D. The Interaction-Constructionist Perspective
1. This theory focuses on the interactions between family members.
 2. It is interested in how self and family identities develop as a result of family interactions.
 3. It assumes there are no common family patterns because families are composed of unique personalities who interact with distinct patterns of interaction.
 4. It is limited in that it neglects the social environment, overlooks conflict, and assumes family interactive patterns are similar across all societies.
- E. Exchange Theory
1. This theory focuses on the exchange of resources (rewards and costs) between family members.
 2. It examines how resource transactions form and stabilize relationships.
 3. It proposes that relationships will thrive when they are based on equitable exchanges and will suffer and/or dissolve when exchanges are one-sided.
 4. It has been criticized for its failure to recognize the family in emotional terms.
- F. Family Systems Theory
1. This theory views the family as a whole that is more than the sum of its parts (members).
 2. As a system (comparable to a computer or human body), families seek to maintain equilibrium.
 3. It proposes that a change in any part of the system (family member) or in the social environment will affect all other parts of the system.
 4. Physical and psychological boundaries define who is in or out of the system and regulate the flow of information and feedback with other related systems.
 5. It has been criticized for its lack of specificity, its failure to recognize class, race, and ethnicity, and its portrayal of family conflict as a system dysfunction.
- G. Conflict and Feminist Perspectives
1. The central focus of feminist perspectives is on gender issues, bringing attention to women and their experiences.

2. Like the broader conflict perspective, feminist perspectives examine the role of power within family relationships as well as the effects of politics and the economic organization of the larger society on the family.
 3. Feminist theory analyses of the family (including the division of labor) emphasize the sex-gender system in which men have more power than women.
 4. Feminist perspectives are under fire from conservatives for allegedly contributing to the breakdown of family.
- H. The Biosocial Perspectives
1. The biosocial perspectives on the family, also termed evolutionary psychology, are characterized by concepts linking psychosocial factors to physiology, genetics, and evolution.
 2. Biosociologists point out that biological propensity, or predisposition, does not mean that a person's behavior cannot be influenced or changed by social structure.
 3. Social science researchers are doing some interesting work from a biosocial perspective, although their positions are sometimes controversial.
- I. Attachment Theory
1. Counseling psychologists often analyze individuals' relationship choices in terms of attachment style.
 2. A person's general style of attaching to others develops during infancy and childhood, based on the child's attachment to primary caretakers.
 3. The three basic attachment styles are secure, insecure/anxious, and avoidant.
 4. A person unconsciously applies their attachment style to adult relationships in later life. Although difficult, one's attachment style can be changed.

III. Doing Family Research

- A. Basic Principles and Data Collection Techniques
- Scientific investigation involves collecting data systematically through a variety of techniques.
1. Historical and Cross-Cultural Data
 - a. Historical research examines demographic, economic, legal records, and historical documents for analysis of the family.
 - b. Cross-cultural studies can provide an interesting picture of family behaviors across different cultures.
 2. Cross-sectional and Longitudinal Studies
 - a. Cross-sectional research gather data just once, and a certain point in time.
 - b. Longitudinal studies gather information on individuals or families over a long period of time.
 3. Deductive versus Inductive Reasoning
 - a. Deductive reasoning begins with a hypothesis, and gathers data to test that hypothesis (generally through quantitative research methods).
 - b. Inductive reasoning begins with observation, and eventually produces generalizations (often using qualitative research methods).
 4. Quantitative versus Qualitative Research
 - a. Quantitative research gathers, analyzes, and reports data that can be quantified or understood in numbers.
 - b. Qualitative research gathers, analyzes and reports data primarily in words or stories.
 5. Interviews, Questionnaires and Surveys

- a. These can include include face-to-face or telephone interviews, distributed questionnaires, or web-based questionnaires.
 - b. Representative samples are needed so that results can be generalized to other persons not in a sample.
 - c. People do not always respond to surveys honestly (give normative answers) and real-life responses are not guaranteed.
- 6. Naturalistic Observation
 - a. While living or spending extensive time with families, researchers carefully record activities, conversations, and other aspects of family life.
 - b. Focus of technique is to identify family interrelationships and communication patterns and draw implications for understanding overall family behaviors; focus groups are one form of naturalistic observation.
 - c. Although setting is natural, technique requires a lot of researcher time and the conclusions may be highly subjective.
- 7. Laboratory Observation and Experiments
 - a. In laboratory observations, behaviors are measured under controlled conditions.
 - b. Participants in experiments are randomly assigned to treatment and control groups to determine if specific treatments are effective.
 - c. Although experiments provide direct observation of human behavior, due to laboratory settings they are artificial situations that might not represent the true behaviors observed in real life situations.
- 8. Clinicians' Case Studies
 - a. These are documented reports by clinicians who see individuals, couples, and families over a lengthy period of time.
 - b. They provide realistic and strong detail of communication patterns and other interactions between family members, but how clinicians view individuals and families is highly subjective.
- B. The Ethics of Scientific Research
 - 1. To accomplish high ethical standards, most research plans must be reviewed by an IRB (institutional review board).
 - 2. Ethical standards include informed consent, lack of coercion, protection from harm, confidentiality of data, and the possibility of compensation for participants.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION AND LECTURE SUGGESTIONS

1. The text identifies the most basic functions of the family in an advanced industrialized society. Families are responsible for reproduction, economic support, and emotional security. Expand on this material of family functions and structure-functional theory. Identify, apply, and analyze with students other functions of the family that have been performed but have changed throughout history. A lead-in to the lecture could be that:

Critics of the American family have argued that a major reason for the ‘breakdown’ of the family today is that the family has increasingly lost many of its functions. Throughout history, the family has been the major social institution, but with increasing specialization and complexity of modern society, the functions of this institution have become fragmented, with many now performed by other agencies.

Family Functions

- a. **economic** – the family used to be a self-sufficient unit in which members consumed primarily what they produced. Today, the family earns a living outside the home, pools resources, and makes consumption decisions for food, housing, clothing, shelter, health care, etc.
- b. **protection** – in the family, the father used to be the parent who provided physical protection for his family. Today it may be the father or other relatives and significant others. Throughout history, children have provided social and economic protection to their parents throughout old age.
- c. **education** – the family performed the basic function of education, not only of the young child, but also of older children in the way of vocational training and homemaking. Parents today may play a critical role in developing skills that are important for school readiness, values education, and recreational skills.
- d. **religious** – evidence that the family performed and continues to perform the religious function is seen by grace at meals, family prayers, church and Sunday school attendance, and the reading together of passages in the Bible. Today this may also include values training.
- e. **recreation** – the recreation function used to be performed by families at the homestead of some family or within the family, rather than at recreation centers outside the home. Today, families may still perform this function through the activities they choose for their children to do with other children or together as a family.
- f. **affection** – the family has always provided for its members varying degrees of affection, companionship, intimacy and support. This is true for couples as well as for children and other relatives.
- g. **procreation** – it is within the family that the procreation of children is condoned and the family name passed on through the generations.
- h. **adaptation** – it is within the family that members help one another cope with change and deal with stress and crises.

- i. **prestige** – the family has served the basic function of giving prestige and status to its members. Throughout history, the family name has been important, and a member of a family was less an individual and more a member of a family.

The following questions could then be used in the discussion:

1. Which of the functions seem to be the most important to families today?
 2. What do you think are the least important functions performed by the family today?
 3. Which are the most important functions in your family?
 4. Give an example of how your family has carried out each function.
 5. Which functions seem to have undergone the greatest change over time? Why?
 6. If the family is not performing the function, what agency is? Do you think the agency is doing a better, worse, or about the same or as good a job as the family could?
 7. Do you think the number of functions the family provides, the quality of the functions the family provides, neither, or both are important to family member's happiness and family stability?
 8. Do you feel that the family today is 'breaking down' because it is no longer performing specific functions? Why or why not?
2. The text makes it clear that one of the acknowledged functions of marriage and family is the provision of emotional support. Sociologists have observed that this function of family has become even more important in modern society than it was in the past, while the other functions have been "replaced" by other social institutions. Have your students address the question of why the emotional support function has become more important in contemporary society.
 3. The *Issues for Thought* insert for this chapter deals with "Safety and Risk in the Family Environment." It is noted that, when taken on a tour of South Central Los Angeles, Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* crew observed that more children play in the street in this urban neighborhood than are allowed to in wealthier white neighborhoods, where parents are more afraid to let their kids go out and play. Ask the members of your class to evaluate the degree of danger that exists in the average family today, regardless of what type of neighborhood it is located in.
 4. Engage your students in discussion about the various myths that surround marriage and family. Ask them to list their three favorite television shows (not counting sports or shows that would not include a portrayal of marriages or families). Second, tell them to make note of how family issues are portrayed in these shows. Ask them to vocalize how their own families are similar to or different from what they see on television. Finally, pose the question, "How do television images contribute to myths about the family?" A number of articles have appeared in the American Sociological Association journal, *Teaching Sociology*, focusing on the relationship between sociology and common sense and the implications of this linkage for the classroom. You may find these articles interesting and useful for your own considerations of the myth/fact distinction: James A. Mathisen, "A Further Look at 'Common Sense' in Sociology," *Teaching Sociology*, 17, July, 1989: 307-315; William F. Bengston and John W. Hazzard, "The Assimilation of Sociology

into Common Sense: Some Implications for Teaching,” *Teaching Sociology*, 18, January, 1990: 39-45.

5. Over the past decade, more and more attention has been devoted to teaching research methods at the undergraduate level. In an article that appears in the October, 1991 issue of *Teaching Sociology*, William T. Markham evaluates the neglect of research methods in introductory level courses. Professor Markham concludes that students need to be familiar with the basics of the entire research process in order to interpret sociological investigations. In his article, “Research Methods in the Introductory Course: To Be or Not to Be,” Markham offers a detailed strategy for teaching research methods in beginning sociology courses.
6. Encourage your students to confront how objectivity, replication, and precision of measurement are essential ingredients in studying the family. Emphasize the distinction that must be made between personal experience and family analysis. Give some examples and have your students think about this distinction. Propose a statement like, “Only-children are spoiled because they don’t have to share with their siblings.” Ask for a show of hands as to how many members of the class agree with this conclusion. Then point out that the statement lies in the realm of personal experience. Research, on the other hand, does not necessarily support this assumption; rather, some only-children are spoiled, but then, some first-born children with several brothers and sisters are also spoiled. Furthermore, you may wish to elaborate on current research suggesting that there are many benefits for only children.
7. In many ways, the problems involved with teaching sociological theory are similar to those encountered by instructors who teach methodology. Students frequently comment that theory and methods are “boring” and “not very useful.” Several articles in the publication, *Teaching Sociology*, may be helpful to you as you approach the discussion of theory in the classroom: Eleanor V. Fails suggests the incorporation of videotape in lectures about theory: “Teaching Sociological Theory Through Video” (July, 1988: 256-62); Susan Gotsch-Thomson has written an article entitled, “The Incorporation of Gender into the Teaching of Classical Social Theory: Help from *The Handmaid’s Tale*” (January, 1990: 69-73).

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. As a tool to help students review the major content of the chapter, they can complete the chapter review questions by themselves (as a class or homework assignment) or together in small groups. The questions may also be used as an activity or quiz and students may or may not use their texts. (see Chapter Two Review Sheet)
2. An excellent vehicle for understanding the conflict and feminist perspectives is the *principle of least interest*. First, discuss this principle with your class. One excellent illustration that some of your students may be able to identify with involves the division of labor among roommates, cohabitants, or spouses for that matter. For example, one roommate or significant other becomes irritated at always doing the dishes and announces that the other roommate or partner should share the responsibility. The other roommate or partner indicates that he/she doesn't care if the dishes are done; in fact, suppose that he or she suggests that paper plates be used. The other person *enjoys* eating with *real* dishes and may continue to assume responsibility for doing the dishes because he/she has *greater interest* in using real dishes. The partner who expressed *less* interest is actually in a position of greater bargaining power. Have your students consider this issue and try to think of actual situations they have been involved with that illustrate the *principle of least interest*. Then, have each student write up a short summary of the situation. These scenarios can be shared in class discussion.
3. After students have heard the lecture and read the material on family functions, have them complete an in-class exercise that provides them practice with applying the functions to real family activities. The activity would look like the following:

Match the functions with the family behavior.

Behavior

1. Mrs. Jones bought a smoke detector for the living room of her family's home.
2. The Appleyard family went to the zoo this afternoon.
3. Linda took a job as a bag girl at the local grocery store after school.
4. Mrs. Scott was teaching her preschool child to say "please" and "thank you."
5. Mr. Hoe was helping his daughter deal with her recent loss at the state volleyball championships.
6. The Simpson family has two sons and one daughter.
7. Jane and Bill planted a tomato and green bean garden in their backyard.
8. Carol always gives her children a big hug and kiss before they go to bed.
9. The Jordon family always plans for their week at their Sunday morning pancake breakfast.
10. Jennifer and Mike take turns saying the blessing at dinner meals.
11. Following the death of their cat, Mr. Newman helped his son cope with the loss.
12. Mr. Keifer took his wife out to dinner after she was recently promoted to a new job.
13. The Joneses are seeing a doctor because they cannot conceive a second child.
14. Mrs. Thomas made her five-year-old daughter bring back the candy she "took" from the store.
15. Kim and Kevin chose an upstairs apartment to live in rather than a ground floor one.

Functions

- A. economic
- B. protection
- C. education

- D. recreation
- E. religion
- F. procreation
- G. affection
- H. adaptation
- I. prestige

4. As a way to make students more familiar with the techniques used in scientific research, it is helpful to bring into the class social science masters and doctoral students who would like to share their theses or dissertations. These students can speak to the class about their research problem (including theoretical frameworks) and methodology that includes instruments and samples. It is especially useful to bring in two or three students with projects that use different designs (i.e., survey and experimental) so students can compare and contrast the methodologies for their strengths and weaknesses. Students should see examples of different data collection instruments.

(Note: This activity is not only helpful for understanding scientific investigation, it also serves as a motivator to those undergraduate students contemplating further graduate study in social sciences.)

5. To help students understand themselves and their families better, they can construct a family “genogram”. A useful reference to help students understand genograms and how to develop one is Marlin, E. (1989). *Genograms: The tool for exploring the personality, career, and love patterns you inherit*. Chicago: Contemporary Books.

According to Marlin, by constructing a genogram, students can gain better understanding and appreciation for specific traits, behaviors, preferences, talents, and personality types that may be passed down from generation to generation. It is an interesting way for students to practice conducting their own “historical” research.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which theoretical perspective are you most likely to use as you look at family life? How does that theory suit your particular view of life? Can you recognize your own “blindness of personal experience”? Which theoretical perspective do you have the most difficulty with? Why?
2. What are some practical applications of the family ecology perspective? Give several examples.
3. How have the functions of family changed over the past 100 years in American society?
4. The interactionist perspective involves the subjective nature of reality and the definition of the situation. Give several examples of how interactions between family members reflect these concepts in actual practice.
5. Feminist perspectives are often regarded by conservative critics as “radically oriented.” Do you view these perspectives as reflecting a radical approach? Why or why not?
6. Conflict perspectives are opposite of the structure-functional viewpoint; that is, not all of a family’s practices are good, not all family behaviors contribute to family well-being, and what is good for one family member is not necessarily good for another. Can you think of reasons why conflict theories are relevant in today’s society? What could they be specifically used to study? Can you use the conflict theory as a lens through which to view your own family? Why or why not?
7. Do you think that biosocial perspectives will become more or less important in the future? What is the basis for your answer?

USING POPULAR FILM IN THE CLASSROOM

The Break-Up (2006)

Content: A couple who have been cohabitating start decide to break up because of their many and varied (and horribly painful) relationship issues. Neither one wants to leave, however; so they still live together as they attempt through cruelty, manipulation and jealousy to force the other to move out.

Assignment: Watch a scene from this movie with the exchange theoretical perspective in mind. In the scene, which character shows “the principle of least interest”? How does it affect the power struggle between the characters? How does it affect the relationship?

Failure to Launch (2004)

Content: A 35-year old man still lives comfortably at home with his parents, who decide to hire someone to secretly entice him to move out. (The DVD copy of this movie has an excellent extra documentary on real-life 20- and 30-somethings who still live at home, and the dilemmas this situation poses for both parents and offspring.)

Assignment: Compare the section on “Emerging Adulthood” in your text with the funny reality in this movie of young adults who ‘fail to launch’ into the real world beyond the family home. But is this phenomenon really laughable? Is it likely to continue in our American society? What might the long-term consequences be?

13 Going on 30 (2004)

Content: The main character in this movie is a 13-year-old girl who wishes to skip the adolescent stage she is going through and enter into adulthood. Her wish comes true, and she suddenly wakes up in the adult world, with adult responsibilities and issues.

Assignment: Discuss the process of becoming an adult in our society and within families, and why it may be necessary to go through several developmental stages along the way. Are there any developmental ages that can be safely skipped? What would the consequences be, based on this movie?

CHAPTER TWO REVIEW SHEET

Theories attempt to explain and predict family behavior. For each of the family theories covered in the text, answer the following:

- a. How does this theory examine the family?
- b. What is a major assumption of this theory?
- c. What is a major strength of this theory?
- d. What is a weakness of this theory?

1. Family Ecology Theory

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

2. Family Development Theory

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

3. Structure-Functional Theory

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

4. Interactionist Theory

- a. _____
- b. _____

- c. _____
- d. _____
5. Exchange Theory
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
6. Systems Theory
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
7. Attachment Theory
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
9. How do surveys differ from experiments as techniques for scientific investigation into families?
- _____
- _____
10. How does naturalistic observation differ from clinicians' case studies?
- _____
- _____
11. How do longitudinal studies differ from historical research?
- _____
- _____

INTERNET AND INFOTRAC EXERCISES

Internet Exercises

1. Go to: <http://www.digeratiweb.com/sociorealm>. Welcome to **SocioRealm**. After you have accessed this site, click on *Social Theory*. From the *Social Theory* screen, click on *Durkheim* for a review of functionalism; click on *Marx* for a discussion of the conflict perspective; scroll down to *Erving Goffman* for a different look at the interactionist perspective. If you have time, you may wish to explore other social theorists who are highlighted within this web site. After you have explored the SocioRealm site, answer the following questions:
 - What are the core assumptions of each major theoretical perspective (functionalist, conflict, and interactionist)?
 - All of the early social theorists, such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber, had certain concerns in common. What are some of these common concerns and how do they relate to the perceived social problems during the time periods involved?
2. There is an obvious tension between those theorists who embrace the biosocial perspective and those who align with the feminist perspectives. Phylis Lasky has written a very interesting article entitled “Biosocial versus the Cultural Perspective” (<http://auden.webster.edu/~sekosha/lasky.htm>). After you have read this article, which argument do you think is more convincing? What is the basis for your conclusion?
3. Here’s a different strategy for understanding the feminist perspective. Take a look at a position paper entitled “Fairy Tales for Feminists: Jane Green’s *Jemima J* and Ugly Duckling to Swans” <http://www.womenwriters.net/bookreviews/wellsfairyale.html>. After you have read this paper, answer these questions:
 - What do you think children learn about gender roles from fairy tales?
 - Do you agree with the feminist perspective as applied to folklore and fairy tales? Why or why not?

InfoTrac Exercises

1. Enter the keywords *paradigm shifts in family sociology*. You will find an article by Susan Mann and her colleagues concerning which theoretical perspective(s) is/are dominant in family sociology today. Read the article and then write a short summary of the content and significance of this article. Which theoretical perspective do you tend to favor? Why?
2. Enter the keywords *Francis M. Kozub; the family systems theory*. Read Ms. Kozub’s article. Write a short position paper on your impressions of this particular perspective. In the paper, make at least one suggestion for a marriage and family-related topic that could be researched using this approach.
3. The *Issues for Thought* insert deals with the topic of safety and risk in the family environment. Enter the keywords *childhood injuries; issues for the family physician*. Read the article by Glotzer and Weitzman. Compare the contents of this article with the key points that are made in the *Issues* insert. What are the major similarities?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. *W* Theoretical perspectives are ways of
- discovering the absolute truth about reality.
 - conducting scientific tests and measurements of reality.
 - viewing reality; or ways an observer may view, organize and interpret reality.
 - determining the correct way to understand reality.

ANS: C PG: 29 TYP: fact LO: 2

2. Which of the following is NOT among the eight theoretical perspectives on the family discussed in the text?
- family ecology
 - containment theory
 - exchange theory
 - conflict and feminist perspectives

ANS: B PG: 29 TYP: fact LO: 2

3. Theoretical perspectives or theories can increase our _____ families and family life.
- understanding of
 - ability to control
 - ability to scientifically categorize once and for all
 - ability to label

ANS: A PG: 29 TYP: fact LO: 2

4. The _____ perspective focuses on how the family influences and is influenced by the environments that surround it.
- structure-functional
 - family system
 - attachment
 - family ecology

ANS: D PG: 29 TYP: concept LO: 2

5. The climate, soil, plants, and animals are all part of the _____ environment
- postindustrial
 - social-cultural
 - natural physical-biological
 - human-built

ANS: C PG: 30 TYP: fact LO: 2

Chapter 2

6. As modern human settlement occurs, roads and houses are built, and utility lines are strung. This activity illustrates the _____ environment.
- a. social-cultural
 - b. human-built
 - c. pre-industrial
 - d. natural physical-biological

ANS: A PG: 30 TYP: application LO: 2

7. Language, law, and social and economic systems are all part of the _____ environment.
- a. social-cultural
 - b. human-built
 - c. natural physical-biological
 - d. postindustrial

ANS: A PG: 30 TYP: fact LO: 2

8. Which is NOT among one of the environments surrounding a typical family, according to the family ecology perspective?
- a. physical-biological
 - b. neighborhood
 - c. social-cultural
 - d. internal

ANS: D PG: 29 TYP: concept LO: 2

9. *W* Increasing _____ means that job opportunities for American family members are affected by the decisions of multinational corporations.
- a. globalization
 - b. immunization
 - c. polarization
 - d. deprivation

ANS: A PG: 31 TYP: concept LO: 2

10. Today's family ecologists stress the interdependence of all the world's families, not only with one another but also with our fragile _____ environment.
- a. internal
 - b. physical-biological
 - c. family
 - d. living-learning

ANS: B PG: 30 TYP: concept LO: 2

11. Which of the following theoretical perspectives is concerned with the impact of family policy?
- a. attachment
 - b. family systems
 - c. family ecology
 - d. conflict

ANS: C PG: 31-2 TYP: concept LO: 2

12. A strength of the _____ perspective is that it sensitizes us to significant political-economic and social-cultural issues that may not be addressed in other theories.
- a. family systems
 - b. family ecology
 - c. structure-functional
 - d. attachment

ANS: B PG: 30 TYP: concept LO: 2

13. The ecology perspective helps to identify factors that are important to _____ support for all families.
- a. societal and community
 - b. dysfunctional
 - c. neurological and physical
 - d. internal

ANS: A PG: 31 TYP: fact LO: 2

14. A possible disadvantage of the family ecology perspective is that it is _____.
- a. focused inward on family functioning
 - b. ignorant of history
 - c. too broad and inclusive
 - d. too narrow and limited

ANS: C PG: 32 TYP: fact LO: 2

15. Which of the following is NOT a neighborhood risk factor which puts children at greater risk for negative outcomes including violence?
- a. poverty
 - b. low adult educational attainment
 - c. homogeneous neighborhoods
 - d. a higher percentage of female-headed households

ANS: C PG: 31 TYP: concept LO: 2

Chapter 2

16. According to the family development perspective, each developmental task has “on-time” transitions and a certain order in which major transitions to adult roles take place, called _____.
a. role sequencing
b. in a row
c. at-a-boys
d. appropriate age staging

ANS: A PG: 32 TYP: fact LO: 3

17. *W* The traditional family sequence of marriage, parenthood, grandparenthood, and widowhood is discussed in which of the following perspectives?
a. feminist
b. family life course development
c. family systems
d. interaction-constructionist

ANS: B PG: 32 TYP: concept LO: 3

18. What is the primary reason, according to the text, that the transition to adulthood has become elongated?
a. it takes longer to earn enough to support a family
b. more children are deciding not to attend college
c. freeloading is in vogue
d. young adults are marrying earlier

ANS: A PG: 33 TYP: concept LO: 3

19. According to the family development life course theory, the _____ stage of the family life cycle comes to an end with the arrival of the first child.
a. singlehood
b. newly established couple
c. families with adolescents
d. aging families

ANS: B PG: 32 TYP: concept LO: 3

20. What marks the end of the family life cycle, according to the text?
a. divorce
b. the death of the last person with the family surname
c. the death of a spouse
d. the children leaving home

ANS: C PG: 32 TYP: concept LO: 3

21. *W* The view that the family is an enduring social institution because of the important tasks it performs for society—economic security, emotional support, socialization of children—is the _____ perspective.
- structure-functional
 - feminist
 - interactionist
 - family systems

ANS: A PG: 33 TYP: concept LO: 4

22. A recent study among immigrants found that relationships “based not on blood or marriage but rather on religious rituals or close friendship ties” can serve as a functional alternative to the nuclear family. According to the text, what are these relationships called?
- non-fiction fellows
 - fake family
 - comrades in arms
 - fictive kin

ANS: D PG: 34 TYP: concept LO: 3

23. The structure-functional theoretical perspective views the family as performing at least three important functions. Which of the following is NOT one of these?
- raising children responsibly
 - providing economic support
 - promoting genetic material
 - providing emotional security

ANS: C PG: 33 TYP: application LO: 4

24. Suppose that a law states: “The husband is the head of the household. As such, he will establish a place and a mode of living and the wife must conform thereto. The husband must support his wife and minor children out of his labor. The wife must assist him insofar as she is able.” This hypothetical law is consistent with the focus of which theoretical perspective?
- conflict
 - structure-functional
 - feminist
 - family ecology

ANS: B PG: 35 TYP: application LO: 4

25. The _____ perspective points out that all social scientists assume one basic premise: that families are an important social institution performing essential social functions.
- family developmental
 - family systems
 - exchange
 - structure-functional

ANS: D PG: 34 TYP: concept LO: 4

Chapter 2

26. Though there is no “typical” American family today, advocates supporting the _____ perspective frequently argue that the heterosexual nuclear family is the norm, while their opponents refuse to view the nuclear family as normal, natural, or best.
- a. feminist
 - b. exchange
 - c. structure-functional
 - d. conflict

ANS: C PG: 35 TYP: application LO: 4

27. *W* Which of the following is NOT a style of relating, according to attachment theory?
- a. avoidant
 - b. compliant
 - c. insecure/anxious
 - d. secure

ANS: B PG: 40 TYP: fact LO: 5

28. The process by which family identity, traditions, and commitment emerge through interaction within a particular family, is an important part of which perspective?
- a. interaction-constructionist
 - b. family ecology
 - c. feminist
 - d. attachment

ANS: A PG: 35 TYP: concept LO: 5

29. The question of how two previously separate individuals come together and over time create a shared view of themselves as a couple would be best answered using which perspective?
- a. feminist
 - b. attachment
 - c. family ecology
 - d. interaction-constructionist

ANS: D PG: 35 TYP: application LO: 5

30. According to the interaction-constructionist theoretical perspective, _____ is how family members adapt culturally understood roles to their own situations and preferences.
- a. play-acting
 - b. role-making
 - c. role-mocking
 - d. watching family television show

ANS: B PG: 35 TYP: concept LO: 5

31. The conflict perspective is the opposite of the _____; it assumes that not all family behaviors and practices contribute to family well-being.
- biosocial theory.
 - feminist theory.
 - structure-functional theory.
 - family systems theory.

ANS: C PG: 38 TYP: concept LO: 4,8

32. Exchange theory stresses the importance of _____ in family relationships.
- money
 - coordinated efforts and the ability to “switch” one type of interaction for another
 - how family members use their resources to trade with other family members
 - the extent to which family members can take on each other’s statuses and roles when crisis situations demand this kind of coping strategy

ANS: C PG: 36 TYP: concept LO: 6

33. According to the exchange theory, the partner with less commitment to the relationship is the one who has more power, including the power to exploit the other. This concept is identified as:
- a power struggle
 - the principle of least interest
 - the phenomenon of disinterest
 - manipulation

ANS: B PG: 37 TYP: concept LO: 6

34. The _____ perspective looks at the family as a whole; for change to occur, the family system as a whole must change.
- interactionist
 - exchange
 - family systems
 - feminist

ANS: C PG: 37 TYP: concept LO: 7

35. *W* “Equilibrium” is an important concept in which of the following perspectives?
- attachment
 - developmental
 - interactionist
 - family systems

ANS: D PG: 37 TYP: concept LO: 7

Chapter 2

36. The central focus of the feminist perspective is _____ issues.
- a. practical
 - b. gender
 - c. interpretation
 - d. divorce

ANS: B PG: 38 TYP: concept LO: 8

37. The conflict and feminist perspectives call attention to _____ within groups—including families—and within the larger society.
- a. the cause of varying individual attitudes
 - b. agreement and consensus about values
 - c. unequal power
 - d. equilibrium

ANS: C PG: 38 TYP: concept LO: 8

38. The _____ perspective is focused on several things, including confronting and reducing oppression and patterns of subordination based on such factors as social class, race, and ethnicity, age and sexual orientation.
- a. feminist
 - b. interactionist
 - c. exchange
 - d. structure-functional

ANS: A PG: 39 TYP: concept LO: 8

39. Women's domestic work was largely invisible in social science until _____ began to treat household labor as work that has economic value.
- a. attachment theorists
 - b. family ecology scholars
 - c. family development specialists
 - d. the feminist perspective

ANS: D PG: 39 TYP: concept LO: 8

40. *Evolutionary psychology* is an alternate term for which perspective?
- a. family ecology
 - b. biosocial
 - c. family systems
 - d. exchange

ANS: B PG: 39 TYP: concept LO: 8

41. The _____ perspective argues that humans' evolutionary biology affects much of human behavior and, more specifically, many family-related behaviors.
- attachment
 - exchange
 - biosocial
 - family systems

ANS: C PG: 39 TYP: concept LO: 8

42. The _____ perspective has its roots in Charles Darwin's principle of the survival of the fittest.
- biosocial
 - family ecology
 - exchange
 - family systems

ANS: A PG: 39 TYP: concept LO: 8

43. In the contemporary version of evolutionary theory, it is the survival of one's _____ into future generations that is important.
- parents
 - artifacts
 - random selection
 - genetic material

ANS: D PG: 39 TYP: concept LO: 8

44. A photograph in the text depicts a family waiting patiently for medical attention in a neighborhood clinic. Which group of scholars might remark on the quality of the facilities or speculate about the home that these people live in?
- family ecologists
 - family developmentalists
 - structure-functionalists
 - exchange theorists

ANS: A PG: 41 TYP: application LO: 2

45. A photograph in the text depicts a mother and her children waiting patiently for medical attention in a neighborhood clinic. Which group of scholars would likely note that the woman is in the child-rearing stage of the family life cycle?
- exchange theorists
 - feminists
 - family developmentalists
 - interactionists

ANS: C PG: 41 TYP: application LO : 3

46. A photograph in the text depicts a mother and her children waiting patiently for medical attention in a neighborhood clinic. Which group of scholars would be inclined to explore the mother's body language and speculate on what the child is saying nonverbally to the mother?
- a. interaction-constructionists
 - b. exchange theorists
 - c. structure-functionalists
 - d. family developmentalists

ANS: A PG: 41 TYP: application LO: 5

47. A photograph in the text depicts a mother and her children waiting patiently for medical attention in a neighborhood clinic. Which group of scholars might speculate about the woman's personal power and resources relative to others in her family?
- a. interactionists
 - b. structure-functionalists
 - c. family ecologists
 - d. exchange theorists

ANS: D PG: 41 TYP: application LO: 6

48. A photograph in the text depicts a mother and her children waiting patiently for medical attention in a neighborhood clinic. Which group of scholars might point out that, typically, it is mothers and not fathers who are primarily responsible for their children's health—and ask why?
- a. feminists
 - b. family system theorists
 - c. structure-functionalists
 - d. interactionists

ANS: A PG: 41 TYP: application LO: 8

49. A photograph in the text depicts a mother and her children waiting patiently for medical attention in a neighborhood clinic. Which group of scholars might speculate about whether the child seems to be secure, insecure/anxious or avoidant towards the mother?
- a. attachment theorists
 - b. structure-functionalists
 - c. family ecologists
 - d. exchange theorists

ANS: A PG: 28 TYP: application LO: 9

50. In _____ (also called “participant observation” or “field research,” the researcher spends extensive time with respondents and carefully records their activities, conversations, gestures, and other aspects of everyday life
- conducting surveys
 - historical research
 - naturalistic observation
 - laboratory research

ANS: C PG: 46 TYP: application LO: 9

51. The text observes that most people grow up in some form of family and know something about what marriages and families are. But while personal experience provides us with information, it can also act as
- blindness.
 - coercion.
 - deception.
 - mystery.

ANS: A PG: 28 TYP: concept LO: 1

52. *W* While part of being a scientist is having objectivity, in reality
- all of us are objective and value-free.
 - scientists are the most biased of all.
 - total neutrality is impossible for anyone.
 - objectivity is an unattainable goal and should not be pursued.

ANS: C PG: 29 TYP: concept LO: 1

53. To help accomplish ethical standards, most researchers now must have their research plans reviewed by
- the international business machine (IBM).
 - an institutional review board (IRB).
 - the internal revenue service (IRS).
 - the public broadcasting system (PBS).

ANS: B PG: 48 TYP: fact LO: 10

54. Family researchers will often generate a _____, or “educated guess” about the way things are, based on their theoretical orientation.
- multivariate analysis
 - bivariate analysis
 - hypothesis
 - factoid

ANS: C PG: 41 TYP: concept LO: 10

Chapter 2

55. *W* When conducting _____, researchers ask a series of structured, or closed-ended questions.
- a. experiments
 - b. surveys
 - c. longitudinal investigations
 - d. participant observation

ANS: B PG: 45 TYP: concept LO: 10

56. Representative samples (like Gallup polls) are important to family survey research because they are most likely to
- a. confirm unique family experience.
 - b. produce the findings the researcher thinks are correct.
 - c. include persons who will cooperate with the researcher in collecting data.
 - d. reflect the national adult population.

ANS: D PG: 44 TYP: application LO: 10

57. The most generalizable findings are most likely to be found in a survey with
- a. a representative sample.
 - b. 2,000 rather than 10,000 people in the study.
 - c. questionnaires that gather data analyzable using computers.
 - d. fewer questions, thereby producing less data points.

ANS: A PG: 44 TYP: application LO: 10

58. Researchers conducting surveys want their samples to be
- a. simple.
 - b. unrelated.
 - c. representative.
 - d. time-series

ANS: C PG: 44 TYP: fact LO: 10

59. According to the text, a national sample of approximately _____ persons can validly represent the U.S. population.
- a. 1,500
 - b. 15,000
 - c. 50,000
 - d. 150

ANS: A PG: 44 TYP: fact LO: 10

60. According to the text, one disadvantage of survey research is the
- difficulty of manipulating so many variables at one time.
 - presence of intervening variables in the research design.
 - fact that an adequate survey must be “in person,” not a mailed questionnaire.
 - tendency of respondents to say what they think they *should* say.

ANS: D PG: 46 TYP: fact LO: 10

61. The research method called _____ is possible when the researcher has a large amount of control over the various aspects of the phenomena under study.
- participant observation
 - the experiment
 - the longitudinal study
 - the survey

ANS: B PG: 46 TYP: application LO: 10

62. Random assignment of research participants to Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 would suggest that the investigators are using which technique?
- survey
 - multiple cross-sectional study
 - experiment
 - longitudinal study

ANS: C PG: 46 TYP: application LO: 10

63. A “control group” is most likely to be found in which of the following?
- a survey
 - a cross-cultural study
 - a multiple cross-sectional study
 - an experiment

ANS: D PG: 46 TYP: concept LO: 10

64. Suzanne and Paul obtained a complete list of all 500 students in their marriage and family class. Starting with the first student on the list, each student was assigned a number ranging from 1 to 500. Then, Paul and Suzanne selected for their study every 10th number on the list. Clearly, they were trying to ensure that their research
- could have a generalizable conclusion to the U.S. population.
 - had a representative sample.
 - was free of human error.
 - was longitudinal.

ANS: B PG: 44 TYP: application LO: 10

65. The most significant disadvantage of the “naturalistic observation” research method is that
- it leads to non-representative conclusions.
 - there is a high likelihood of Type II error.
 - findings and conclusions may be highly subjective.
 - the conclusions are true for only a short span of time.

ANS: C PG: 46 TYP: fact LO: 10

66. *W* Andre is a family therapist who is interested in how husbands cope when they are the victims of physical abuse suffered at the hands of their wives. He makes an intensive study of the five husbands who are currently his clients for therapy sessions because they suffer physical abuse from this source. Andre is using which type of research method?
- cross-sectional study
 - clinician’s case study
 - clinician’s cross-sectional study
 - experiment

ANS: B PG: 47 TYP: application LO: 10

67. Realistic flavor and vivid detail are most likely to be found in which type of research method?
- longitudinal study
 - survey
 - clinician’s case study
 - experiment

ANS: C PG: 47 TYP: concept LO: 10

68. *W* Collecting data over a period of years using documented materials would reflect a(n)
- experiment.
 - clinician’s case study.
 - historical approach.
 - longitudinal study.

ANS: D PG: 43 TYP: concept LO: 10

69. Demographic and economic data, legal records, and old diaries are especially useful for analyses of families in the past. This is an argument for using
- historical research.
 - a longitudinal study.
 - a clinician’s case study.
 - an experiment.

ANS: A PG: 42 TYP: application LO: 10

70. The text points out that each data collection technique
- is equally useful.
 - must be value-free.
 - has strengths and weaknesses.
 - is unethical at times.

ANS: C PG: 45 TYP: fact LO: 10

TRUE/FALSE

1. The family ecology perspective stresses the interdependence of all the world's families—not only with one another but also with the environment.

ANS: True PG: 30 TYP: concept LO: 2

2. Family ecologists focus on current interactions within the family, not on historical, political or socioeconomic conditions.

ANS: False PG: 31 TYP: concept LO: 2

3. Children who live in poor neighborhoods are at less risk for negative social, educational, economic, and health outcomes.

ANS: False PG: 31 TYP: concept LO: 2

4. The family development perspective emphasizes the individual family as the unit of analysis and examines the orderly stages through which families are seen to move.

ANS: True PG: 32 TYP: concept LO: 3

5. The family development model assumes that family life is erratic and seldom follows usual, typical, or conventional patterns.

ANS: False PG: 32 TYP: application LO: 3

6. Typically, deductive reasoning is associated with qualitative research, and inductive reasoning, with quantitative research.

ANS: False PG: 33,43 TYP: concept LO: 2

Chapter 2

7. A politician argues: “The family must be saved somehow or society will suffer. It is the family, after all, that is primarily responsible for responsible childrearing, for the care of elderly parents, and for being the basic economic anchor of society.” This view is consistent with the structure-functional perspective.

ANS: True PG: 33-5 TYP: application LO: 4

8. The interaction-constructionist perspective looks only at the interaction between the family and the family’s external environment.

ANS: False PG: 35-6 TYP: fact LO: 5

9. The basic premise of the exchange perspective is that people use their resources to bargain and secure advantages in relationships.

ANS: True PG: 37 TYP: concept LO: 6

10. From the family systems perspective, the parts of a family are seen as making a whole that is more than the mere sum of its parts.

ANS: True PG: 37 TYP: concept LO: 7

11. Because a person’s attachment style develops so early in life, it is impossible to change as an adult.

ANS: False PG: 41 TYP: application LO: 8

12. Sociobiologists are careful to point out that biological predisposition does *not* mean that a person’s behavior cannot be influenced or changed by social structure.

ANS: True PG: 40 TYP: concept LO: 8

13. Our beliefs about families, based on our own personal experience, are usually accurate.

ANS: False PG: 28 TYP: concept LO: 1

14. Survey questions are always *closed-ended*.

ANS: False PG: 45 TYP: fact LO: 10

15. “Experimental groups” and “control groups” are terms associated with naturalistic observation.

ANS: False PG: 46 TYP: fact LO: 10

16. A potential bias of case studies is that people who present themselves for counseling may differ in important ways from those who do not.

ANS: True PG: 47 TYP: application LO: 10

17. Science can be defined as a logical system that bases knowledge on systematic observations.

ANS: True PG: 28 TYP: fact LO: 10

18. Empirical evidence includes things we know intuitively, that cannot be verified with our senses.

ANS: False PG: 28 TYP: fact LO: 10

COMPLETION

1. _____ perspectives are ways of viewing reality. (Theoretical, p. 29)
2. The _____ perspective explores how a family influences and is influenced by the environments that surround it. (family ecology, p. 29)
3. The central purpose of the _____ is to overcome researchers’ blinders, or biases. (scientific method, p. 28)
4. _____ posits that during infancy and childhood a young person develops a general style of attaching to others, which persists in adulthood. (Attachment theory, p. 40)
5. How the family changes over time, going through a series of developmental tasks and stages, is the focus of the _____ perspective. (family life development, p. 32)
6. The _____ perspective sees the family as a social institution that performs certain essential functions for a society. (structure-functional, p. 33)
7. What family members do or say, and how other family members respond verbally, by gesture, or by what they did, and what these things are interpreted to mean are major ingredients of the _____ perspective. (interaction-constructionist p. 35)
8. How family members use and bargain human and material resources to secure advantage in a relationship is the subject of _____ theory. (exchange, p. 36-7)
9. The theory most likely to compare a family to the human body with its many parts, or to a computer program with its many interrelated components, is _____. (family systems, p. 37)

Chapter 2

10. Exploring the discrimination against women, inside the family and in the broader culture, is the focus of the _____ perspective. (feminist, p. 38)
11. For the most part, feminist theories derive from the broader _____ perspective. (conflict, p. 38)
12. The _____ perspective on the family is characterized by concepts linking psychosocial factors to physiology, genetics, and evolution. (biosocial, p. 39)
13. Although we “know” about the family because we have lived in one, our _____ may not tell the whole story. (personal experience, p. 28)
14. When engaging in _____, sociologists analyze large sets of data gathered previously by other researchers. (secondary analysis, p. 45)
15. When conducting _____, researchers ask a series of structured, or closed-ended questions in person, by telephone, or online. (surveys, p. 45)
16. Treatment and control groups are part of the _____ research method. (experimental, p. 46)
17. When using the _____ research method, a researcher lives with a family, spends extensive time with them, and carefully records their activities, conversations, gestures, and everyday behaviors. (naturalistic observation, p. 46)
18. When researchers conduct follow-up investigations by means of interviews or questionnaires over a period of years, they are using the _____ research method. (longitudinal, p. 43)

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Of the nine theoretical perspectives covered in this chapter, list any five and for each of the five give a one-sentence summary of how the theory views families. (p. 29-41)
2. Briefly distinguish between the structure-functional perspective and the feminist perspective on families. (pp. 29-41)
3. Briefly distinguish between the family ecology perspective and the family systems perspective. (pp. 29-41)
4. Briefly distinguish between the interactionist and the attachment theoretical perspectives of families. (pp. 29-41)
5. How does “laboratory observation” differ from “naturalistic observation”? Give an example of each. (pp. 46)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Theories help us understand a situation or event from a particular viewpoint. Analyze your transition to college from the viewpoint of structure-functional theory. Describe the various functions your family performed in order for you to make it to college. What would you identify as having been the most important functions your family performed? Why? (pp. 33-35)
2. You have been trying to encourage a classmate to enroll in the marriage and family course you are presently taking. Your friend states that he does not need to learn about families because he knows all he needs to know from his own “experience.” Present an argument against personal experience as a means to adequately understand marriage and families. Describe what it means to study families based on scientific investigation and briefly describe a variety of techniques used in scientific investigations. (pp. 28-29)
3. You have been asked to develop a survey that examines how a wife’s employment affects marital satisfaction:
 - a. Suggest different ways you could ask people to complete your survey.
 - b. What is a representative sample? Why would you need one?
 - c. What are the advantages in using the survey technique?
 - d. What are some of the disadvantages in using the survey technique?
 - e. Why would it be problematic to study this issue using an experimental design?
 - f. What other technique could you use to explore the same question? Why?
4. Compare and contrast the differences in using either a longitudinal study to collect data, or a basic survey technique. (pp. 43-45)
5. Think of a family-related topic and consider how you might study it. What theoretical perspective would you use to help frame your research questions? What research methods and data gathering techniques would you use? (pp. 30-45)

