

CHAPTER 2: SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Lois Benjamin's research on the life experiences of high-achiever African Americans suggests that:
 - a. race has little to do with the life experiences of successful people.
 - b. racism remains a burden even among privileged African Americans.
 - c. race is now more of a barrier to African Americans than ever before in U.S. history.
 - d. racism affects mainly lower-class African Americans.(Factual; answer: b; page 28)
2. Science can be defined as:
 - a. a logical system that bases knowledge on direct, systematic observation.
 - b. belief based on faith in ultimate truth.
 - c. belief based on a society's traditions.
 - d. a logical system that bases truth on political goals.(Conceptual; answer: a; page 29)
3. Sociologists use the term "empirical evidence" to refer to:
 - a. information that is based on a society's traditions.
 - b. information that squares with common sense.
 - c. information we can verify with our senses.
 - d. information that most people agree is true.(Conceptual; answer: c; page 29)
4. The sociological perspective reveals that:
 - a. "common sense" is usually pretty close to the truth.
 - b. much of what passes for "common sense" in the United States turns out to be at least partly wrong.
 - c. most people in the United States readily see how society shapes our lives.
 - d. "common sense" is not very popular in the United States.(Factual; answer: b; pages 29-30)
5. Which of the following terms is defined in the text as "a mental construct that represents some part of the world in a somewhat simplified form"?
 - a. variable
 - b. operationalization
 - c. measurement
 - d. concept(Conceptual; answer: d; page 31)

6. Imagine that you were going to measure the age of a number of respondents taking part in a survey. As you record the data, you are using the concept "age" as:
- a. a theory.
 - b. a hypothesis.
 - c. a variable.
 - d. an axiom.

(Applied; answer: c; page 31)

7. If you were trying to measure the "social class" of various people, you would have to keep in mind that:
- a. it is necessary to specify exactly what you are measuring.
 - b. you must measure this in every way possible.
 - c. there is no way to measure "social class."
 - d. everyone agrees on what "social class" means.

(Factual; answer: a; page 32)

8. What process involves deciding exactly what is to be measured when assigning value to a variable?
- a. operationalization
 - b. reliability
 - c. conceptualization
 - d. validity

(Conceptual; answer: a; page 32)

9. What is the term for the value that occurs most often in a series of numbers?
- a. the mean
 - b. the mode
 - c. the median
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Conceptual; answer: b; page 32)

10. What term refers to the arithmetic average of a series of numbers?
- a. the mean
 - b. the mode
 - c. the median
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Conceptual; answer: a; page 32)

11. What term refers to the value that occurs midway in a series of numbers (that is, the middle case)?
- a. the mean
 - b. the mode
 - c. the median
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Conceptual; answer: c; page 32)

12. Examine the following series of numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 10. What is the median value?
- a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4

(Applied; answer: c; page 32)

13. In the process of measurement, reliability refers to:
- a. whether you are really measuring what you want to measure.
 - b. how dependable the researcher is.
 - c. whether or not everyone agrees with the study's results.
 - d. whether repeating the measurement yields consistent results.

(Conceptual; answer: d; page 33)

14. What concept below refers to measuring exactly what one intends to measure?
- a. congruence
 - b. validity
 - c. repeatability
 - d. reliability

(Conceptual; answer: b; page 33)

15. With regard to the process of measurement, which of the following statements is true?
- a. For measurement to be reliable, it must be valid.
 - b. For measurement to be valid, it must be reliable.
 - c. All measurement is both reliable and valid.
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Applied; answer: b; page 33)

16. A theory states that increasing a person's formal education results in increased earnings over a lifetime. In this theory, "higher education" is the:
- a. independent variable.
 - b. dependent variable.
 - c. correlation.
 - d. effect.

(Applied; answer: a; page 33)

17. Two variables are said to display correlation if:
- a. they are caused by the same factor.
 - b. one occurs before the other.
 - c. both measure the same thing.
 - d. they vary together.

(Conceptual; answer: d; page 34)

18. An apparent, although false, association between two variables that is caused by some third variable is called:
- a. a spurious correlation.
 - b. an unproven correlation.
 - c. an unreliable correlation.
 - d. an invalid correlation.

(Conceptual; answer: a; page 34)

19. The ability to neutralize the effect of one variable in order to assess the relationship between two other variables is called:
- a. making the correlation spurious.
 - b. making the correlation reliable.
 - c. scientific control.
 - d. causing the correlation.

(Conceptual; answer: c; page 34)

20. Which of the following is true about cause-and-effect relationships in the social world?
- a. Most patterns of behavior have a single cause.
 - b. Most patterns of behavior have no cause at all.
 - c. Most patterns of behavior are caused by many factors.
 - d. None of the above is correct.

(Factual; answer: c; pages 33-34)

21. Three of the following statements below are part of the definition of a cause-and-effect relationship. One is not. Which one is not?
- a. Both variables must be shown to be independent.
 - b. The independent variable must come before the dependent variable in time.
 - c. The two variables must display correlation.
 - d. There must be no evidence that the correlation is spurious.

(Conceptual; answer: a; pages 33-34)

22. The ideal of objectivity means that a researcher:
- a. must not care personally about the topic being studied.
 - b. must try to adopt a stance of personal neutrality toward the outcome of the research.
 - c. must study issues that have no value to society as a whole.
 - d. must carry out research that will encourage desirable social change.

(Conceptual; answer: b; pages 34-35)

23. The sociologist who called on his colleagues to be “value-free” was:
- a. Karl Marx.
 - b. Emile Durkheim.
 - c. Herbert Spencer.
 - d. Max Weber.

(Factual; answer: d; page 354)

24. Imagine that you are repeating research done by someone else in order to assess its accuracy. You are doing which of the following?

- a. replication
- b. objectification
- c. reliability
- d. scientific control

(Conceptual; answer: a; page 35)

25. Sociologists cannot precisely predict any person's behavior because:

- a. human behavior is highly complex and has many causes.
- b. social patterns that are found in one time and place may not be found in others.
- c. humans may respond to the presence of an observer in unexpected ways.
- d. All of the above are correct.

(Factual; answer: d; page 36)

26. Interpretive sociology is sociology that:

- a. focuses on action.
- b. sees an objective reality "out there."
- c. focuses on the meaning people attach to behavior.
- d. seeks to bring about change.

(Conceptual; answer: c; pages 36-37)

27. Which of the following is true about scientific sociology?

- a. It focuses on the meaning people attach to behavior.
- b. It seeks to bring about desirable social change.
- c. It favors qualitative data.
- d. It favors quantitative data.

(Factual; answer: d; page 37)

28. Which of the following statements about critical sociology is true?

- a. Critical sociology focuses on the meaning people attach to behavior.
- b. Critical sociology seeks to bring about desirable social change.
- c. Critical sociology endorses the principle of being value-free.
- d. All of the above are correct.

(Factual; answer: b; page 37)

29. Critical sociology can best be described as a(n) _____ approach.

- a. activist
- b. scientific
- c. qualitative
- d. value-free

(Factual; answer: a; page 37)

30. In making judgments about how society should be improved, the _____ approach in sociology rejects Max Weber's goal that researchers be value-free.
- a. interpretive
 - b. critical
 - c. scientific
 - d. positivist

(Factual; answer: b; page 39)

31. Which of the following statements describing the link between sociology's methodological approaches and its theoretical approaches is correct?
- a. Scientific methodology is most closely linked to structural-functional theory.
 - b. Interpretive methodology is linked to social-conflict theory.
 - c. Critical methodology corresponds to the symbolic-interaction theory.
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Factual; answer: a; pages 37-38)

32. Qualitative research has special appeal to investigators who favor which theoretical approach?
- a. the structural-functional approach
 - b. the symbolic-interaction approach
 - c. the social-conflict approach
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Factual; answer: b; page 37)

33. Which German word meaning "understanding" was used by Max Weber in describing his approach to sociological research?
- a. Gemeinschaft.
 - b. Gesellschaft.
 - c. Verstehen.
 - d. Verboten.

(Conceptual; answer: c; page 36)

34. If you have been criticized for "androcentricity" in your research, you are being criticized for:
- a. overgeneralizing your results.
 - b. ignoring gender entirely.
 - c. doing the research from a male perspective.
 - d. using double standards in your research.

(Applied; answer: c; page 37)

35. Drawing conclusions about all of humanity based on research using only males as subjects is the problem called:
- a. androcentricity.
 - b. overgeneralization.
 - c. gender blindness.
 - d. using double standards.

(Conceptual; answer: b; page 38)

36. You are doing research and you never stop to think about the possible importance of gender at all. Your work could be criticized for the problem called:
- a. androcentricity.
 - b. overgeneralization.
 - c. gender blindness.
 - d. employing double standards.

(Conceptual; answer: c; page 38)

37. All of the following—except for one—are statements about ethical research made by the American Sociological Association. Which one is NOT one of the ASA’s guidelines for ethical research?
- a. Researchers must always perform their research several times in order to ensure its accuracy.
 - b. Researchers must disclose their sources of funding for the research.
 - c. Researchers must protect the privacy of subjects taking part in a research project.
 - d. Researchers must ensure the safety of subjects taking part in a research project.

(Factual; answer: a; page 38)

38. If you are conducting sociological research that very closely follows the logic of science, which research method are you most likely to be using?
- a. interviews
 - b. the experiment
 - c. questionnaires
 - d. participant observation

(Applied; answer: b; pages 38-40)

39. “A statement of a possible relationship between two or more variables” is the definition of which concept?
- a. theory
 - b. correlation
 - c. spurious correlation
 - d. hypothesis

(Conceptual; answer: d; page 39)

40. Three researchers wish to test the effects of playing soft music during an exam on the test performance of their sociology students. They conduct an experiment in which one test-taking class hears music and another does not. In experimental terms, the class hearing the music is called:
- a. the placebo.
 - b. the control group.
 - c. the experimental group.
 - d. the dependent variable.

(Applied; answer: c; page 40)

41. What term refers to any change in a subject's behavior caused by the awareness of being studied?
- a. invalid response
 - b. unreliable response
 - c. the Stanford effect
 - d. the Hawthorne effect

(Conceptual; answer: d; page 41)

42. What research method was used in Philip Zimbardo's study, the "Stanford County Prison"?
- a. the experiment
 - b. the survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Conceptual; answer: a; pages 40)

43. Which research method asks subjects to respond to a series of items in a questionnaire or an interview?
- a. secondary research
 - b. participant observation
 - c. the experiment
 - d. the survey

(Conceptual; answer: d; page 41)

44. A smaller number of people used to represent an entire population is called a:
- a. target group.
 - b. sample.
 - c. closed-format group.
 - d. sampling frame.

(Conceptual; answer: b; page 41)

45. In a questionnaire, asking respondents to identify their income level from a number of possible categories represents which of the following?
- a. a closed-ended format
 - b. an open-ended format
 - c. a self-administered format
 - d. None of the above is correct.

(Conceptual; answer: a; page 41)

46. In a questionnaire, the question, "Please state your opinions about the likelihood of another major terrorist attacks at home," is an example of which of the following?
- a. closed-ended format
 - b. open-ended format
 - c. experimental design
 - d. dependent variable

(Conceptual; answer: b; page 42)

47. One disadvantage of conducting interviews is that this research method:
- a. does not permit follow-up questions.
 - b. does not allow subjects' answers to be detailed.
 - c. results in a very low response rate.
 - d. may easily allow the researcher to influence subjects' responses.

(Factual; answer: d; pages 42-43)

48. From a research point of view, what is the problem with the question, "Do you think that the government should spend less for defense and more for health care?"
- a. Most people will have no opinion on these issues.
 - b. The question may spark an emotional response.
 - c. Two different questions are being asked, so that a simple "yes" or "no" will distort the subject's actual opinion.
 - d. The question asks for a personal opinion, which involves a value judgment.

(Applied; answer: c; pages 43-44)

49. Lois Benjamin's investigation of racism may be criticized because:
- a. her sample included as many whites as blacks.
 - b. she conducted her interviews by telephone.
 - c. her sample may not be representative of all African Americans.
 - d. people cannot respond to questions they find painful.

(Applied; answer: c; pages 43-44)

50. Lois Benjamin's research shows that interviews:
- a. take a lot of time to complete.
 - b. may have to be conducted wherever the situation requires.
 - c. allow the researcher to ask follow-up questions.
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Factual; answers: d; pages 43-44)

51. William Foote Whyte's study of Cornerville (*Street Corner Society*) used which sociological research method?
- a. experiment
 - b. survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Factual; answer c; pages 45-46)

52. William Foote Whyte's study of Cornerville (*Street Corner Society*) showed that:
- a. Cornerville was a liberal community with many Harvard students.
 - b. Cornerville was a chaotic and very dangerous slum.
 - c. Cornerville was a complex community that did not fit simple stereotypes.
 - d. a Harvard sociologist was unable to work in a low-income community.

(Factual; answer: c; pages 45-46)

53. You wish to conduct an exploratory and descriptive study of people in a particular neighborhood. You have plenty of time, but little money or other resources. What research method should you use?
- a. an experiment
 - b. a survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Applied; answer: c; pages 45-46)

54. A researcher doing participant observation may "break in" to a setting more easily with the help of a:
- a. key informant.
 - b. research assistant.
 - c. bigger budget.
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Factual; answer: a; page 46)

55. E. Digby Baltzell's historical study, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia*, illustrates which research method?
- a. the experiment
 - b. the survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Factual; answer: d; pages 47-48)

56. E. Digby Baltzell's study, *Puritan Boston and Quaker Philadelphia*, showed that a very high number of "top achievers" listed in the *Dictionary of American Biography* came from:
- a. the South.
 - b. Pennsylvania.
 - c. Massachusetts.
 - d. Philadelphia.

(Factual; answer: c; pages 47-48)

57. Inductive logical thought involves:
- a. turning theories into hypotheses suitable for testing.
 - b. selecting a research method based on available resources.
 - c. doing research about the past.
 - d. transforming specific observations into general theory.

(Conceptual; answer: d; page 48)

58. Deductive logical thought involves:
- a. turning theories into hypotheses suitable for testing.
 - b. selecting a research method based on available resources.
 - c. doing research about the past.
 - d. transforming specific observations into general theory.

(Conceptual; answer: a; page 49)

59. Which sociological research method is most likely to produce quantitative data that will identify cause-and-effect relationships?
- a. the experiment
 - b. the survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Applied; answer: a; page 49)

60. Which sociological research method is best used to study what cannot be directly observed, such as attitudes and values, among large numbers of people?
- a. the experiment
 - b. the survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Applied; answer: b; page 49)

61. Which sociological research method provides the best chance to understand social behavior in a natural setting?
- a. the experiment
 - b. the survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Applied; answer: c; page 49)

62. Which sociological research method is likely to be most difficult to replicate (repeat)?
- a. the experiment
 - b. the survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Applied; answer: c; page 49)

63. Which sociological research method saves the time and expense of data gathering, but the researcher has no control over possible data bias?
- a. the experiment
 - b. the survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis

(Applied; answer: d; page 49)

64. Which of the following is a way in which people can mislead others with statistics?
- a. People select the data they present.
 - b. People interpret the data to lead their readers to a desired conclusion.
 - c. People use graphs to "spin" the truth.
 - d. All of the above are correct.

(Factual; answer: d; page 51)

TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

65. Two simple requirements that underlie the process of sociological investigation are (1) looking at the world using the sociological perspective, and (2) becoming curious and asking questions.
(Factual; answer: T; page 29)
66. The sociologist recognizes that there are various kinds of "truth."
(Factual; answer: T; pages 28-29)
67. Empirical evidence is what people in a society agree is true.
(Conceptual; answer: F; page 29)
68. Science is a logical system based on intuition and insight.
(Conceptual; answer: F; page 29)
69. Empirical evidence refers to what we can verify with our senses.
(Conceptual; answer: T; page 29)
70. A positivist approach assumes that reality exists "out there."
(Factual; answer: T; page 31)
71. The mean is always a better statistical measure than the mode or median.
(Factual; answer: F; page 32)
72. Reliability refers to the quality of consistency in measurement.
(Conceptual; answer: T; page 33)
73. Validity is the quality of measurement gained by actually measuring what you want to measure.
(Conceptual; answer: T; page 33)
74. A variable that is changed by another variable is called the "independent variable."
(Conceptual; answer: F; page 33)
75. The variable that causes change in another variable is called the "dependent variable."
(Conceptual; answer: F; page 33)
76. Any time two variables are statistically related, a cause-and-effect relationship exists.
(Factual; answer: F; pages 33-34)
77. A false correlation between two variables, caused by some third variable, is described as a "spurious" correlation.
(Conceptual; answer: T; page 34)

78. Natural scientists often have an easier time than social scientists in identifying cause-and-effect relationships.
(Factual; answer: T; page 34)
79. Sociologists always achieve complete personal objectivity in their work.
(Factual; answer: F; pages 34-35)
80. Max Weber urged sociologists to strive toward the goal of being value-free.
(Factual; answer: T; page 34)
81. Replication is one way to assess the accuracy of existing research.
(Conceptual; answer: T; page 35)
82. The logic and methodology of science guarantee that sociological research will result in objective, absolute truth.
(Factual; answer: F; page 35)
83. Interpretive sociology focuses less on action itself and more on the meaning people attach to their actions.
(Conceptual; answer: T; page 36)
84. Scientific sociologists make use of what Max Weber called "*verstehen*" to make sense of their surroundings.
(Conceptual; answer: F; page 36)
85. Interpretive sociology considers subjective feelings to be a source of bias.
(Factual; answer: F; page 37)
86. Critical sociology both studies society and tries to bring about social change.
(Factual; answer: T; page 36)
87. The analysis of Karl Marx represents the critical approach in sociology.
(Factual; answer: T; pages 36-37)
88. Gender blindness is the problem of failing to consider the importance of gender in sociological research.
(Factual; answer: T; pages 37-38)
89. Sociological research can never be harmful to subjects.
(Factual; answer: F; page 38)
90. Carrying out research with Hispanics, Asians, or people of any distinctive category demands that a researchers be sensitive to how subjects will interpret their words and actions.
(Applied; answer: T; page 39)

91. To identify cause-and-effect relationships, it is usually necessary to exercise experimental control of variables.
(Factual; answer: T; pages 39-41)
92. The very act of observing people may affect their behavior.
(Factual; answer: T; pages 40-41)
93. A random sample is likely to represent the population from which it is drawn.
(Factual; answer: T; page 41)
94. Haphazardly selecting people as they walk down the street is a convenient and useful way to generate a random sample.
(Applied; answer: F; page 41)
95. A survey is a research method in which subjects respond to a series of items or questions.
(Conceptual; answer: T; page 41)
96. A closed-ended questionnaire format generally makes it easier to analyze results compared to an open-ended questionnaire format.
(Factual; answer: T; pages 41-42)
97. Conducting interviews takes no more time than completing questionnaires and gives just as good results.
(Factual; answer: F; page 42)
98. Participant observation is a research method by which researchers stand back, watch, and carefully record the behavior of others.
(Factual; answer: F; pages 43-44)
99. Participant observation research is usually explanatory, identifying cause and effect relationships.
(Factual; answer: F; pages 43-44)
100. The use of existing data and documents (secondary analysis) makes most historical research possible.
(Factual; answer: T; pages 47-48)
101. Baltzell found that a surprisingly large share of high-achieving people in our country's history came from the Boston area.
(Factual; answer: T; page 48)
102. Inductive logical thought turns theory into testable hypotheses.
(Conceptual; answer: F; page 48)
103. "Statistical evidence" may or may not be the same as truth.
(Factual; answer: T; pages 50-51)

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

104. How does a researcher transform a concept into a variable?
(Applied; page 31)
105. Thinking about measuring a variable, how is reliability different from validity? Which concept implies the other?
(Conceptual; pages 31-33)
106. List the three conditions required to establish cause and effect in social scientific research.
(Factual; page 35)
107. What is a spurious correlation?
(Conceptual; page 34)
108. What did Max Weber mean by “value-free” research?
(Conceptual; page 34)
109. What are the essential differences between scientific sociology, interpretive sociology, and critical sociology?
(Applied; pages 30-37)
110. Provide one strength and one limitation of each of the major research methods described in this chapter: experiment, survey, participant observation, and secondary analysis.
(Applied; pages 39-49)

ESSAY QUESTIONS/TOPICS FOR SHORT PAPERS

111. What makes science a special “way of knowing”? What are important traits of scientific sociology? How does interpretive sociology differ from scientific sociology?

(Conceptual)

112. How does critical sociology differ from scientific sociology? What are the differences in terms of the basic image of society as well as the goals of research?

(Conceptual)

113. None of the major methods of sociological research—experiment, survey, participant observation, and secondary research—is better than any other in an absolute sense, but each is suitable for addressing a certain type of question or situation. Explain why this is true, and provide illustrations along with your arguments.

(Applied)

114. How does inductive logical thought differ from deductive logical thought? How can a researcher benefit from using both kinds of thinking?

(Conceptual)

115. Outline the ten steps in the process of carrying out sociological investigation. You may use the format presented in the text; that is, what specific questions must be answered as a researcher moves along?

(Factual)

116. How and why is gender important in research? What are some of the problems in research that involve gender? How about race and ethnicity? How should a research take account of race and ethnicity when planning research?

(Applied)

117. Look at the “*Seeing Sociology in the News*” box on page 46. Describe the findings reported in this article. Identify several ways that the findings in this research report might be useful, indicating for whom they would be useful and why.

(Applied)

118. Why is it necessary for researchers to understand a good deal about the way of life of the people they are studying? What problems could arise if, say, a researcher started research on the Amish, Korean Americans, or some distinctive other category of people and had no understanding of their way of life?

(Applied)

Name _____

Quick Quiz: Chapter 2

Sociological Investigation

Multiple Choice:

1. Critical sociology can best be described as a(n) _____ approach.
 - a. activist
 - b. scientific
 - c. qualitative
 - d. value-free
2. Qualitative research has special appeal to investigators who favor which theoretical approach?
 - a. the structural-functional approach
 - b. the symbolic-interaction approach
 - c. the social-conflict approach
 - d. All of the above are correct.
3. A researcher doing participant observation may "break in" to a setting more easily with the help of a:
 - a. key informant.
 - b. research assistant.
 - c. bigger budget.
 - d. All of the above are correct.
4. The sociologist who called on his colleagues to be value free was:
 - a. Karl Marx.
 - b. Emile Durkheim.
 - c. Herbert Spencer.
 - d. Max Weber.
5. In making judgments about how society should be improved, the _____ approach in sociology rejects Max Weber's goal that researchers be value-free.
 - a. interpretive
 - b. critical
 - c. scientific
 - d. positivist
6. William Foote Whyte's study of Cornerville (*Street Corner Society*) used which sociological research method?
 - a. experiment
 - b. survey
 - c. participant observation
 - d. secondary analysis
7. Which German word meaning "understanding" was used by Max Weber in describing his approach to sociological research?
 - a. Gemeinschaft.
 - b. Gesellschaft.
 - c. Verstehen.
 - d. Verboten.

True/False

- _____ 8. A positivist approach assumes that reality exists “out there.”
- _____ 9. Natural scientists often have an easier time than social scientists in identifying cause-and-effect relationships.

Short Answer

10. List the three conditions required to establish cause and effect in social scientific research.

Name _____

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b. Gesellschaft. d. Verboten.

True/False

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