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Chapter 02
Sociological Research

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which of the following is true of sociology?
A. It is conducted primarily in a lab setting.
B. It represents a conversation between theory and research.
C. Its theories rely primarily on common sense assumptions.
D. It focuses on identifying biological differences that affect relationships.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Social Sciences
Topic: Sociological Research
Topic: Sociological Theory

2. The scientific method
A. hinders the objectivity of scientists.
B. maximizes consistency in research.
C. enables researchers to prove their ideas are correct.
D. ensures value neutrality.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Scientific Method

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3. If you were interested in studying the relationship between date and acquaintance rape victims and the characteristics of the rapist, your first step would be to
A. conduct interviews.
B. define a problem to study.
C. create a hypothesis.
D. choose a research design.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Scientific Method
Topic: Sociological Research

4. Defining a sociological problem involves
A. explicitly identifying the concepts you want to learn more about.
B. the creation of new social theory.
C. extensive field study and use of the scientific process.
D. decades of experience in the field and research into other theories.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Scientific Method
Topic: Sociological Research

5. An operational definition is
A. a speculative statement about the relationship between two variables.
B. the extent to which a measure provides consistent results.
C. the transformation of an abstract concept into indicators that are observable and measurable.
D. a relationship between two variables whereby a change in one coincides with a change in the other.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Operational Definitions
Topic: Scientific Method

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6. Which of the following best describes theories?
A. They are objective statements that are known for a fact to be true.
B. They are measurable traits that are subject to change under different conditions.
C. They are testable statements about the relationship between two or more variables.
D. They are our most informed explanations of what happens and why.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Scientific Method
Topic: Sociological Theory

7. Which of the following would be *least* likely to be used in formulating an operational definition for a study on racial bias in the workplace?
A. racial discrimination complaints to the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission
B. racial discrimination lawsuits filed in court
C. the narrative of a single person describing an incident of employment discrimination
D. racial discrimination complaints to Human Resources directors at Fortune 500 companies

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Operational Definitions
Topic: Scientific Method

8. When researching a concept, why do sociologists conduct a review of the available literature?
A. to refine the problem under study
B. to clarify possible techniques to be used in collecting data
C. to eliminate or reduce avoidable mistakes
D. All of the answers are correct.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Sociological Research

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9. A testable statement about the relationship between two or more variables is known as a
A. correlation.
B. hypothesis.
C. sample.
D. research design.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Hypotheses

10. The statement "Women who receive welfare are less likely than other women to have babies" is an example of
A. an operational definition.
B. a hypothesis.
C. a research design.
D. causal logic.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Hypotheses

11. A variable is
A. a measurable trait or characteristic that is subject to change under different conditions.
B. the extent to which a measure provides consistent results.
C. the unintended influence that observers or experiments can have on their subjects.
D. a speculative statement about the relationship between two traits.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Variables

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12. Which of the following can serve as a variable in a study?
A. marital status
B. ethnic background
C. age
D. All of the answers are correct.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Variables

13. The relationship between variables in which a change in one leads to a change in the other is known as
A. observation.
B. causal logic.
C. a correlation.
D. an index.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Causation
Topic: Variables

14. The statement "People who live in poverty have shorter life expectancies than wealthier citizens" is an example of
A. a dependent variable.
B. a hypothesis.
C. an independent variable.
D. the Hawthorne effect.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Hypotheses

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15. The causal variable that brings about change is known as a(n)
A. independent variable.
B. dependent variable.
C. spurious variable.
D. operational variable.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Causation
Topic: Variables

16. Which of the following would be considered the independent variable in the statement "People who live in poverty have shorter life expectancies than wealthier citizens"?
A. life expectancy
B. level of income
C. source of income
D. quality of life

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Variables

17. Sociological studies have indicated that people who are married are less likely to commit suicide than people who are divorced. In this example, marital status is a(n)
A. hypothesis.
B. independent variable.
C. dependent variable.
D. index.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Variables

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18. The race of a criminal offender is associated with the frequency with which capital punishment is administered. In this example, capital punishment would be considered the
A. hypothesis.
B. independent variable.
C. dependent variable.
D. index.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Variables

19. The relationship between two variables in which a change in one coincides with a change in the other is known as a(n)
A. index.
B. correlation.
C. operational definition.
D. scale.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Correlation
Topic: Variables

20. Individuals who have divorced parents are more likely to experience long-term adverse effects than individuals who have parents who did not divorce. This statement is an example of a(n)
A. theory.
B. correlation.
C. independent variable.
D. law.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Correlation

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21. In which type of sample does each member of the entire population have the same chance of being selected?
A. a random sample
B. a quota sample
C. an index sample
D. a Roper sample

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

22. If researchers wanted to examine the opinions of people listed in a city directory, they might call every tenth or fiftieth or hundredth name listed. This would constitute a
A. scale.
B. control variable.
C. quota sample.
D. random sample.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

23. Valid research measures
A. always provide consistent results.
B. are always independent, rather than dependent, variables.
C. accurately reflect the phenomenon under study.
D. are typically ambiguous when put into words.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods
Topic: Variables

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24. Which of the following would be considered a valid measure of an individual's intelligence?
A. the individual's employment
B. the researcher's opinion
C. the number of years of school that the individual has completed
D. None of the answers are correct.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

25. A research measure that provides consistent results is considered
A. valid.
B. reliable.
C. an index.
D. a scale.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

26. A factor held constant to test the relative impact of the independent variable is known as a
A. control variable.
B. dependent variable.
C. correlation.
D. cross-tabulation.

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods
Topic: Variables

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27. Which of the following is true about a research design?
A. It is a specific explanation of an abstract concept that allows researchers to measure the concept.
B. It is a speculative statement about the relationship between two or more variables.
C. It is an indicator of attitudes, behavior, or characteristics of people or organizations.
D. It is a detailed plan or method for scientifically obtaining data.

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

28. Developing an effective research design is important because it directly influences both the amount of time needed to collect the data and the
A. ethics of the study.
B. cost of the project.
C. purpose of the project.
D. general interest in the study.

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

29. To conduct a cross-cultural study of job discrimination against women, a sociologist interviews 75 women between the ages of 20 and 40 in an American city, and 75 women in the same age group in a Canadian city. This study would be classified as
A. a secondary analysis.
B. participant observation.
C. a survey.
D. a content analysis.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

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30. In order to provide information that is useful, open-ended survey questions
A. must require a yes or no answer.
B. should be varied for each respondent.
C. should contain the answer that will confirm the study.
D. must be worded accurately and without bias.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

31. The results of an interview may be influenced by
A. the gender of the interviewer.
B. the race of the interviewer.
C. Neither answer is correct.
D. Both answers are correct.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

32. Surveys most often represent _____ research, which collects and reports data primarily in numerical form.
A. qualitative
B. quantitative
C. descriptive
D. ethnographic

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

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33. The number calculated by adding a series of values and then dividing by the number of values is referred to as the
A. mean.
B. mode.
C. median.
D. percentage.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

34. The midpoint, or number that divides a series of values into two groups of equal numbers of values, is referred to as the
A. mean.
B. mode.
C. median.
D. percentage.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

35. Which number would be considered the mode of the following: 10-10-9-9-8-8-7-7-7-6-5?
A. 10
B. 8
C. 7
D. 5

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

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36. Research that relies on what sociologists observe in the field and naturalistic settings, and that often focuses on small groups and communities, is referred to as
A. qualitative research.
B. quantitative research.
C. ethnographic research.
D. experimental research.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods
Topic: Sociological Research

37. Researchers who use sociological observation to collect data do so by either watching a group or by
A. directly participating in a group.
B. reading literature about a group.
C. interviewing members of a group.
D. giving questionnaires to a group.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

38. A sociologist attends meetings at all the schools and churches in his community over several years, and meets as many residents as he can for the purpose of exploring all facets of the community's social life. He then compiles a detailed description of the community. He is conducting a(n)
A. content analysis.
B. secondary analysis.
C. quantitative study.
D. ethnography.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

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39. The initial obstacle participant observers encounter is
A. maintaining their objectivity when studying people face-to-face.
B. formulating the sequence of questions in an interview.
C. determining which group will be the experimental group.
D. gaining acceptance into an unfamiliar group.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

40. Once a researcher has been accepted into a group, a major challenge of participant observation is
A. maintaining a degree of detachment.
B. finding a group to study.
C. getting funding.
D. collecting enough useful information.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

41. An artificially created situation that allows a researcher to manipulate variables is known as a(n)
A. survey.
B. experiment.
C. replication.
D. research design.

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

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42. In an experiment, the group that is not exposed to the independent variable is called the
A. experimental group.
B. representative group.
C. study group.
D. control group.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

43. Sociologists performing research
A. tend to use laboratory experiments as their primary method of gathering data about a study.
B. tend not to use laboratory experiments because the information fails to capture the subtleties of field work.
C. tend to combine laboratory experiments and field work.
D. tend to use both laboratory experiments and field work, but not in conjunction with each other.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

44. A sociologist decides to study the interaction among students in the college's computer center. When the students realize they are under observation, they become shy and reserved in their interactions. This is an example of
A. replication.
B. secondary analysis.
C. the Hawthorne effect.
D. value neutrality.

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Topic: Research Methods

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45. Which of the following is true about Devah Pager's research?
A. It found that white ex-convicts have a harder time becoming employed than blacks with no criminal records.
B. It attempted to approximate experimental conditions in the field.
C. It was hampered by the Hawthorne effect.
D. It found that most convicts released from prison each year are white.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

46. Secondary analysis includes a variety of research techniques that
A. conduct surveys in order to obtain information for a study.
B. utilize participant observation to collect information and data.
C. use previously collected and publicly accessible information and data.
D. use control groups to assess the effects of variables in an experiment.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

47. If a sociologist uses information gathered by the United States Census Bureau in a study, that sociologist is performing
A. an experiment.
B. a questionnaire.
C. a secondary analysis.
D. participant observation.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

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48. Sociologists consider secondary analysis to be
A. more valid than other forms of research.
B. more reliable than other forms of research.
C. a nonreactive form of research.
D. an outdated mode of research.

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

49. An inherent problem in using secondary sources of data is that
A. researchers may not find the exact data needed for their research.
B. the data are plagued with statistical errors.
C. researchers may be more careless when using someone else's data.
D. all of the analysis has been completed by an initial research team.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

50. A researcher studies adolescent attitudes about senior citizens by analyzing depictions of the elderly in the lyrics of popular music and the content of teen magazines. This is an example of
A. content analysis.
B. replication.
C. survey research.
D. an experiment.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

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51. Erving Goffman's pioneering exploration of how advertisements portray women as dependent upon men is an example of
A. survey research.
B. content analysis.
C. census analysis.
D. participation observation.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

52. Which of the following is included in the code of ethics for sociology?
A. using appropriate research techniques
B. maintaining integrity in research
C. remaining unbiased and non-discriminatory
D. All of the answers are correct.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Ethics
Topic: Sociological Research

53. Which of the following is *not* incorporated into the basic principles of the code of ethics for sociology?
A. a required number of data sources
B. respect for subjects' privacy
C. acknowledgment of research collaboration
D. disclosure of sources of financial support

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Ethics
Topic: Sociological Research

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54. Rik Scarce's jail experience in 1993 revealed the potential consequences of
A. forging transcripts.
B. raiding a university laboratory.
C. maintaining the confidentiality of sources.
D. "snitching" on university administrators.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Ethics

55. After the 1989 *Valdez* disaster, the Exxon Corporation sought out many experts, including sociologists, to study jury deliberations. Which of the following was a major ethical concern for these sociologists?
A. Jury members might have their privacy violated.
B. Results of the studies might not be kept confidential.
C. Funding from Exxon might influence the results of the studies.
D. Researchers might not be able to secure the required number of research sources.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Ethics

56. According to value neutrality, investigators have an ethical obligation to accept research findings even when the data run counter to which of the following?
A. their own personal views
B. theoretically based explanations
C. widely accepted beliefs
D. All of the answers are correct.

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Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Ethics
Topic: Sociological Research

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57. Joyce Ladner's *The Death of White Sociology* called attention to
A. the rising number of African American sociologists.
B. the tendency of White sociologists to view African Americans as inferior.
C. the tendency of mainstream sociology to investigate the lives of African Americans only in the context of social problems.
D. the tendency of mainstream sociologists to avoid investigating the lives of White Americans in reference to social problems.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Ethics
Topic: Sociological Research

58. Which of the following is true about Shulamit Reinharz?
A. She argued that sociological research should be open to drawing on relevant research by nonsociologists.
B. She argued that sociologists cannot hope to achieve value neutrality as long as racism exists.
C. She described the American Sociological Association's code of ethics as sexist.
D. She refused to classify herself as a feminist scholar.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Ethics
Topic: Sociological Research

59. Feminist sociologists
A. have had little impact outside of feminist academic circles.
B. view work and family as interrelated topics.
C. view work and family as distinct topics.
D. are generally considered to be biased.

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Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Feminist Theory
Topic: Sociological Research

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60. Which of the following statements is true about the contributions of feminist sociologists?
A. They have contributed to a greater global awareness within sociology.
B. They tend to involve and consult their subjects less often than other researchers.
C. They have difficulty maintaining value neutrality due to the subject of their research.
D. They are typically more reluctant to seek change than other researchers.

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Feminist Theory

True / False Questions

61. One important goal of applying the scientific method to the study of society is to ensure that the researchers' own values and opinions are allowed to influence the results.
FALSE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Scientific Method
Topic: Sociological Research

62. The purpose of transforming a concept into its operational definition is to make the concept easier to observe and measure.
TRUE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Operational Definitions

63. In the hypothesis "the more socially integrated a person, the less likely that person is to commit suicide," level of social integration is the independent variable.
TRUE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Application
Topic: Hypotheses
Topic: Variables

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64. If x is correlated with y, then by definition, x must be the cause of y.
FALSE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Causation
Topic: Correlation
Topic: Variables

65. If x causes y, then by definition, x must be correlated with y.
TRUE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Causation
Topic: Correlation
Topic: Variables

66. For the purposes of data analysis, the most important quality of a sample is that it is representative of the population from which it is drawn.
TRUE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

67. One way to ensure that a sample is representative of the broader population from which it is taken is to ensure that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample.
TRUE

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Bloom's Level: Application
Topic: Research Methods

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68. If the same questionnaire about income and education is given to the same person at two different times, and nothing significant has changed between the two times, the responses should be the same, and if they are not, the questionnaire can best be described as invalid.
FALSE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Application
Topic: Research Methods

69. Of the two main types of survey instrument—the face-to-face interview and the questionnaire—the use of a questionnaire is likely to generate the higher response rate because it allows more time for the respondent to respond.
FALSE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Topic: Research Methods

70. While sociologists use a variety of different approaches to the study of social phenomena, they all accept that value-neutrality is essential in the interpretation of data.
FALSE

Accessibility: Keyboard Navigation
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Ethics

Essay Questions

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71. What is the *scientific method?* Briefly describe the five basic steps that comprise the scientific method. What are the benefits and drawbacks of using the scientific method to study sociological phenomena?

Answers will vary.

Bloom's Level: Evaluation
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Hypotheses
Topic: Scientific Method
Topic: Variables

72. Explain the difference between correlation and causation. Give an example of two variables that are correlated but not causally connected. Which is more important to establish, correlation or causation? Explain your answer.

Answers will vary.

Bloom's Level: Application
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Bloom's Level: Evaluation
Topic: Causation
Topic: Correlation
Topic: Variables

73. Why is it important for researchers to use *random* samples of a given population? Define the term random, and suggest ways in which randomness can be achieved.

Answers will vary.

Bloom's Level: Analysis
Bloom's Level: Comprehension
Bloom's Level: Knowledge
Topic: Research Methods

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74. There are various types of research design that researchers can use including surveys, observation, experiments, and existing sources/secondary analysis. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each of these designs using real world examples to illustrate. Which, in your view, provides the most powerful framework to conduct research?

Answers will vary.

Bloom's Level: Analysis
Bloom's Level: Evaluation
Topic: Research Methods

75. To what extent is the type of research design adopted likely to be influenced by the sociological perspective of the researcher, and to what extent by the nature of the research question being asked?

Answers will vary.

Bloom's Level: Application
Bloom's Level: Synthesis
Topic: Research Methods
Topic: Sociological Perspectives
Topic: Sociological Research
Topic: Sociological Theory

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