Sociology Understanding and Changing the Social World Comprehensive Edition Version 2 0 2nd edition Barkan Test Bank

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Chapter 2
Eye on Society: Doing Sociological Research

True/False Questions

1. Sociology as a social science relies heavily on systematic research that follows the standard rules of the scientific method.
   True; Easy

2. An overriding principle of the scientific method is that research should be conducted as subjectively as possible.
   False; Moderate

3. A generalization always implies that all people will fit the pattern.
   False; Moderate

4. Personal experience often offers only a very limited understanding of social reality other than our own.
   True; Easy

5. Because everyone's personal experience is unique, we should not rely solely on our own personal experience in order to help us understand everything about a topic.
   True; Moderate

6. Common sense is not contradictable.
   False; Moderate

7. Teachers, parents, and government officials give us a true, complete picture of social reality.
   False; Moderate

8. The news media often overly simplify complex topics, thus providing a misleading picture of social reality.
   True; Easy

9. Tradition can be a source of knowledge and understanding of social reality.
   True; Easy

10. Traditional ways of thinking about social reality often turn out to be inaccurate and incomplete.
    True; Easy

11. The scientific method helps reduce the potential for bias.
    True; Moderate

12. Choosing a research topic is the first step in the scientific method of research.
    False; Moderate

13. The independent variable coming before the dependent variable in time and logic is one of the criteria of causality.
    True; Moderate

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14. When sociological research tests relationships between variables, it is normally testing whether a dependent variable affects an independent variable.
False; Moderate

15. One of the important goals of literature review is to determine that the study the researcher has in mind has not already been done.
True; Moderate

16. A hypothesis is a statement of the relationship between two variables concerning the units of analysis the researcher is studying.
True; Easy

17. A variable that is influenced by an independent variable is called a dependent variable.
True; Easy

18. Data gathered through observation and/or intensive interviewing are usually quantitative data.
False; Easy

19. A random sample is a subset drawn from the larger population in which every unit in the population has the same chance of being included in the subset.
True; Easy

20. A random sample allows us to generalize the results of the sample to the population from which the sample comes.
True; Moderate

21. Convenience samples are random samples which are quick but expensive to obtain.
False; Easy

22. Quota samples are also known as captive-audience samples.
False; Easy

23. The saying that "correlation does not mean causation" reflects the concept of spurious relationship, the third criteria of causality.
False; Moderate

24. Large surveys are usually cost-effective.
False; Moderate

25. Observation studies do not involve random samples of the population and hence their results can readily be generalized to the population.
False; Moderate

26. Experiments do not help in establishing cause-and-effect relationships.
False; Easy

27. Observational studies can automatically be generalized to other settings and members of the population.
False; Moderate

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28. Participant observation is field research in which the researcher merely observes a group or setting.
False; Easy

29. Secondary data analysis provides the researcher with data on all the variables that he or she may be interested.
False; Easy

30. An informed consent form summarizes the aim of the study and the possible risks of being a subject.
True; Easy

Multiple Choice Questions

1. _____ refers to a conclusion drawn from sociological research that is meant to apply to broad categories of people but to which many exceptions will always exist.
   a. Specialization
   b. Generalization
   c. Stereotype
   d. Mutual exclusion
   e. Systematization
   b; Easy

2. _____ is a statement of a tendency, rather than a hard-and-fast law.
   a. Debunking motif
   b. Hypothesis
   c. Controlled conclusion
   d. Contact theory
   e. Generalization
   e; Moderate

3. Alex grew up in the suburbs of Vermont where 99% of the population is white. While working on a sociology research report involving how many persons of color live in the United States, Alex predicted that almost 98% of the U.S population is white, which is not correct. This prediction made by Alex is more likely to be the result of his _____.
   a. common sense
   b. traditional beliefs
   c. expert advice
   d. media exposure
   e. personal experience
   e; Hard

4. Media coverage _____.
   a. may overly simplify complex topics
   b. corresponds with what the best evidence from systematic research seems to be telling us
   c. provides a truthful picture of social reality
   d. is not very important
   e. offers us an enormous understanding of social reality including our own
   a; Moderate

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5. The basic steps involved in the scientific method are: a) formulating a hypothesis, b) measuring and gathering data, c) analyzing these data, and d):
   a. drawing appropriate conclusions.
   b. conducting data review.
   c. unit of analysis.
   d. screening secondary data.
   e. balancing variables.
   a; Easy

6. The _____ is the classic steps by which research is conducted, including the formulation of a hypothesis, the gathering and analysis of data and drawing appropriate conclusions.
   a. traditional method
   b. scientific method
   c. debunking motif
   d. SCCS method
   e. relational method
   b; Moderate

7. In the scientific method of research, which of the following is the next step after measuring and gathering data?
   a. Screening secondary data
   b. Setting variables
   c. Analyzing data
   d. Drawing a conclusion
   e. Conducting a literature review
   c; Moderate

8. The third step in the sociological research process is to:
   a. conduct a literature review.
   b. screen secondary data.
   c. measure variables and gather data.
   d. formulate a hypothesis.
   e. choose a topic.
   d; Easy

9. Determining if the study that the researcher has in mind has not already been done is a part of this stage in the sociological research process:
   a. choosing a research topic
   b. measuring variables
   c. gathering data
   d. conducting a literature review
   e. formulating the hypothesis
   d; Easy

10. A researcher wanted to test the hypothesis that "the number of goals a team scores depends on the number of games the team gets to play." The "number of games" in this hypothesis is a/an:
   a. psychographic variable.
   b. dependent variable.
   c. independent variable.
   d. scale variable.
   e. indeterminable variable.

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c; Hard

11. _____ refers to the type of entity a researcher is studying.
    a. Hypothesis
    b. Variable
    c. Unit of analysis
    d. Sample
    e. Randomization
    c; Easy

12. When using the scientific method in sociological research, after the formulation of hypothesis, the next step the researcher takes is to:
    a. measure and gather data to test the hypothesis.
    b. repeat the experiment.
    c. draw conclusions.
    d. choose the research the topic.
    e. determine the criteria of causality.
    a; Easy

13. A subset drawn from the larger population in which every unit in the population has the same chance of being included in the subset is termed as a:
    a. quota sample.
    b. random sample.
    c. nonrandom sample.
    d. relative sample.
    e. convenience sample.
    b; Easy

14. The independent variable and the dependent variable must be statistically related. This is the first:
    a. scale variable in a research study.
    b. criteria of causality.
    c. logic of research.
    d. spurious relationship between variables.
    e. sampling method.
    b; Moderate

15. A _____ is a nonrandom sample in which units in the sample are chosen according to one or more characteristics so that the sample resembles these characteristics of the population as closely as possible.
    a. captive audience sample
    b. relative sample
    c. sub sample
    d. convenience sample
    e. quota sample
    e; Easy

16. A convenience sample is sometimes also called a _____.
    a. relative sample
    b. cohesive sample
    c. captive-audience sample
    d. sub sample

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e. psychographic sample

c; Easy

17. A nonrandom sample that is used because it is relatively quick and inexpensive to obtain is a _____.
    a. convenience sample
    b. quota sample
    c. sub sample
    d. relative sample
    e. psychographic sample

    a; Moderate

18. The third criteria of causality details:
    a. causal order.
    b. statistical relation between the variables.
    c. best explanation.
    d. spurious relationship.
    e. factual relativism.

    d; Moderate

19. A relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable that exists only because the effects of a third variable have not been taken into account is referred to as a _____.
    a. factual relationship
    b. spurious relationship
    c. statistical relationship
    d. convenient relationship
    e. variable relationship

    b; Moderate

20. Which of the following is an advantage of a face-to-face survey?
    a. It is cost-effective.
    b. It can yield a high response rate.
    c. It is very useful for establishing cause-and-effect relationships.
    d. It is the only method that provides a full account of people's lives.
    e. It provides more quantitative data than qualitative data.

    b; Moderate

21. Which of the following is perhaps the most important problem with experiments?
    a. They give relatively insignificant insights into the sources of attitudes and behavior.
    b. They do not provide an adequate account of people's lives.
    c. Their results are not generalizable beyond the specific subjects studied.
    d. The analysis may contain data on variables that are not measured in ways the sociologist might prefer.
    e. The analysis may not contain data on all the variables in which a sociologist may be interested.

    c; Hard

22. Which of the following is an advantage of field research?
    a. It may provide rich, detailed information about the people who are observed.
    b. The results can readily be generalized to the population.
    c. It is cost-effective.

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d. It does not take much time.
e. It can yield a high response rate.

a; Moderate

23. Which of the following is a disadvantage of existing data?
    a. The researcher has to spend the time to gather the data.
    b. The analysis may contain little data on all the variables in which a sociologist may be interested.
    c. The researcher has to spend money to gather the data.
    d. It can yield a high response rate.
    e. It contains data on variables that are measured in the way a sociologist prefers.

    b; Moderate

24. When this research method is used, many people can be included in a given study and results can be generalized to the population, but the information can be relatively superficial.
    a. Experiments
    b. Observation
    c. Existing data
    d. Field Research
    e. Survey

    e; Moderate

25. The major advantage of the experimental method is that:
    a. the information collected is relatively superficial.
    b. their results can readily be generalized to the population.
    c. the data set that is being analyzed contains data on all the variables in which a sociologist is interested.
    d. the researcher can be fairly sure of a cause-and-effect relationship.
    e. the researcher does not have to spend much time and money to gather data.

    d; Moderate

26. The most common method used by sociologists to gather data for a research study is:
    a. survey.
    b. experiment.
    c. observation.
    d. field study.
    e. existing data.

    a; Moderate

27. _____ refers to the percentage of a sample that agrees to be included in a study, usually a survey.
    a. Respondent turnover
    b. Response rate
    c. Percent response
    d. Research rate
    e. Polling rate

    b; Easy

28. _____ involves the analysis of existing data.
    a. Variable analysis
    b. Primary data analysis
    c. Secondary data analysis

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d. Experimental analysis
e. Collective analysis
c; Easy

29. Before a researcher can begin obtaining data, the subjects of the research must normally sign a/an _____. This form summarizes the aim of the study and the possible risks of being a subject.
a. privacy form
b. primary data analysis form
c. informed consent form
d. collaborative form
e. random analysis form
c; Easy

30. One of the most important ethical guidelines in sociological and other human subject research concerns _____.
a. privacy and confidentiality
b. compensation
c. openness and behavior
d. behavior and resistance
e. support and rehabilitation
a; Moderate

Short Answer Questions

1. What is generalization?
Generalization is a conclusion drawn from sociological research that is meant to apply to broad categories of people but for which many exceptions will always exist.
Easy

2. What are the five sources of social reality?
Our knowledge and understanding of social reality come from at least five sources: (a) personal experience, (b) common sense, (c) the media (including the Internet), (d) "expert authorities," such as teachers, parents, and government officials, and (e) tradition.
Easy

3. Why is sociology considered a social science?
Sociology uses research to try to understand various aspects of human thought and behavior. When we say that sociology is a social science, we mean that it uses the scientific method to try to understand the many aspects of society that sociologists study.
Moderate

4. Sociology can be a fascination as well as frustration. Explain.
Sociology is fascinating because no matter how much sociologists are able to predict people's behavior, attitudes, and life chances, many people will not fit the predictions. Sociology is frustrating for the same reason. Because people can never be totally explained by their social environment, sociologists can never completely understand the sources of their behavior, attitudes, and life chances.
Moderate

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5. What is the limitation of using media as a means to enhance our knowledge and understanding of social reality?
   Though we learn a lot about current events and social and political issues from various media sources, it has been seen that media coverage may oversimplify complex topics or even distort what the best evidence from systematic research seems to be telling us.
   Moderate

6. What is the limitation of using tradition as a source to influence our understanding of social reality?
   Tradition is generally valuable, because a society should always be aware of its roots. However, traditional ways of thinking about social reality often turn out to be inaccurate and incomplete.
   Moderate

7. List the basic steps of the scientific method.
   The scientific method involves these basic steps: (a) formulating a hypothesis, (b) measuring and gathering data to test the hypothesis, (c) analyzing these data, and (d) drawing appropriate conclusions.
   Easy

8. What are the various steps involved in the sociological research process?
   The various steps involved in the reserch process are: (a) choosing the research topic, (b) reviewing the literature, (c) formulation of the hypothesis, (d) gathering data and measuring the variables, (e) data analysis, and (f) drawing a conclusion.
   Easy

9. What is a unit of analysis? Briefly explain the different types of units of analysis in sociology.
   A unit of analysis refers to the type of entity a researcher is studying. It is the focus of sociological research, usually a person, organization, or geological region. If we conduct research on the actions or behaviors of a person, then we are studying characteristics, or variables, involving people, and the person is the unit of analysis. When the focus is on how an organization and the members within it operate, then the unit of analysis is the organization. When a specific city, state, region, or whole society is studied then the unit of analysis is the geographical region.
   Moderate

10. What is the difference between an independent variable and a dependent variable?
    An independent variable is a variable we think can affect another variable. This other variable is the dependent variable, or the variable we think is affected by the independent variable.
    Easy

11. Define a variable and list a few variables used in sociological studies of people as units of analysis.
    A variable is any characteristic that varies among units of analysis. Key variables in sociological studies of people as the units of analysis include gender, race and ethnicity, social class, age, and any number of attitudes and behaviors.
    Easy

12. What is a random sample and how is it different from a nonrandom sample? What is the most important advantage of a random sample?
    A random sample is a subset drawn from the larger population in which every unit in the population has the same chance of being included in the subset. Nonrandom samples are samples

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in which members of the population do not have the same chance of being included in the study. The advantage of a random sample is that it allows us to generalize the results of the sample to the population from which the sample comes.
Easy

13. What are the two specific types of nonrandom samples used by researchers? Define each of them.
The two specific types of nonrandom samples are convenience samples and quota samples. A convenience sample is a nonrandom sample that is used because it is relatively quick and inexpensive to obtain. A quota sample is a nonrandom sample in which units in the sample are chosen according to one or more characteristics so that the sample resembles these characteristics of the population as closely as possible.
Easy

14. What do you understand by criteria of causality? List the four criteria of causality that must be satisfied for a successful research.
When researchers analyze their data, they naturally try to determine whether their analysis supports their hypothesis. When we test a hypothesis, we want to be able to conclude that an independent variable affects a dependent variable. The following four criteria must be satisfied before we can conclude this.
1. The independent variable and dependent variable must be statistically related.
2. The independent variable must precede the dependent variable in time and/or in logic.
3. The relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable must not be spurious.
4. No better explanation exists for the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.
Moderate

15. Explain with an example the third criterion of causality.
The third criterion of causality involves spurious relationships. A relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable is spurious if a third variable accounts for the relationship because it affects both the independent and dependent variables. For example, if you did a survey of Americans 18 and older, you would find that people who attend college have worse acne than people who do not attend college. Does this mean that attending college causes worse acne? Certainly not. You would find this statistical relationship only because a third variable, age, affects both the likelihood of attending college and the likelihood of having acne: young people are more likely than older people to attend college, and also more likely—for very different reasons—to have acne. Controlling for age makes it clear that the original relationship between attending college and having acne was spurious.
Hard

16. What are the advantages and disadvantages of surveys?
An advantage of using a survey as a research method are that many people can be included. If given to a random sample of the population, a survey's results can be generalized to the population. A disadvantage of using a survey as a research method are that large surveys are expensive and time-consuming. Although much information is gathered, this information is also relatively superficial.
Moderate

17. What are the advantages and disadvantages of experiments?
The advantage of using an experiment as a research method is that if random assignment is used, experiments provide fairly convincing data on cause and effect. The disadvantage of using a

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survey as a research method is that because experiments do not involve random samples of the population and most often involve college students, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population.
Moderate

18. What are the advantages and disadvantages of field research?
The advantage of using observation or field research is that observational studies may provide rich, detailed information about the people who are observed. Because observation studies do not involve random samples of the population, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population which can be a disadvantage of using observation or field research.
Moderate

19. What are the advantages and disadvantages of existing data?
The advantage of using existing data is that it has already been gathered, so the researcher does not have to spend the time and money to gather the data. The disadvantages of using existing data are that the data set that is being analyzed may not contain data on all the variables in which a sociologist may be interested, or may contain data on variables that are not measured in ways the sociologist might prefer.
Moderate

20. What are the major sociological research methods? Give a brief description of each.
The major methods of conducting sociological research are surveys, experiments, observation (field research), and existing data. The survey is the most common research design in sociological research. For a survey, the respondents either fill out questionnaires themselves or provide verbal answers to interviewers asking them the questions. There are many different experimental designs, but a typical experiment consists of an experimental group and a control group, with subjects randomly assigned to either group. For observational research, also called field research, the researcher will go into the field to observe people and social settings in order to provide rich descriptions and analyses of behavior. Researchers may also analyze existing data, rather than gathering their own, which is called secondary data analysis.
Moderate

21. What is a face-to-face survey? What are its advantages and disadvantages?
A face-to-face survey is a survey in which interviewers meet with respondents to ask them questions. This type of survey can yield a lot of information, because interviewers typically will spend at least an hour asking their questions, and a high response rate, which is important to be able to generalize the survey's results to the entire population. On the downside, this type of survey can be very expensive and time-consuming to conduct.
Moderate

22. How are telephone surveys and mail surveys conducted? What are their advantages and drawbacks?
Telephone surveys are conducted by random digit dialing through computers which results in a random sample of all telephone numbers being selected. Although the response rate and the number of questions asked are both lower than in face-to-face surveys (people can just hang up the phone at the outset or let their answering machine take the call), the ease and low expense of telephone surveys are making them increasingly popular. Mailed surveys, done by mailing questionnaires to respondents, are still used, but not as often as before. Compared with face-to-face surveys, mailed questionnaires are less expensive and time consuming but have lower response rates, because many people simply throw out the questionnaire along with other junk mail.

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Moderate

23. What is a response rate? Does the response rate depend on the type of survey used?
A response rate is the percentage of a sample that agrees to be included in a study, usually a survey. The response rate tends to vary depending upon the type of survey conducted. Face-to-face survey has a high response rate. Telephonic surveys and mailed surveys yield lower response rate compared to the face-to-face survey. Web surveys generally have a high response rate as it has the potential to reach many people with much lesser expense.
Easy

24. Differentiate between the participant and nonparticipant observation methods.
Participant observation is field research in which the researcher is an active member of the group or setting being observed. Nonparticipant observation is field research in which the researcher merely observes a group or setting.
Moderate

25. What is intensive interviewing? What are its major advantages and disadvantages?
Intensive interviewing is a type of research design where the researcher does not necessarily observe a group of people in their natural setting but rather sits down with them individually and interviews them at great length, often for one or two hours or even longer. The researcher typically records the interview and later transcribes it for analysis. The advantage of this type of interviewing is that it provides much information about the subjects being interviewed. The disadvantage is that the results of such interviewing cannot necessarily be generalized beyond the subjects.
Moderate

26. What are experimental groups and control groups in experimental research?
A typical experiment consists of an experimental group and a control group, with subjects randomly assigned to either group. The experimental group is the group that experiences the experimental condition. The control group is the group that does not experience the experimental condition.
Easy

27. What is secondary data analysis? What are its advantages and disadvantages?
Secondary data analysis occurs when sociologists do not gather their own data but instead analyze existing data that someone else has gathered. The advantage of using existing data is that it has already been gathered, so the researcher does not have to spend the time and money to gather the data. The disadvantages of using existing data are that the data set that is being analyzed may not contain data on all the variables in which a sociologist may be interested, or may contain data on variables that are not measured in ways the sociologist might prefer.
.
Moderate

28. What are some of the ethical standards that sociologists must follow in their research?
When doing research, sociologists must avoid causing harm to their subjects and should protect the privacy and confidentiality of their subjects. Another ethical standard is that the researcher must obtain consent from their participants before they can begin obtaining any data from them.
Moderate

29. What is an “informed consent” form in sociological research?

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An "informed consent" form summarizes the aim of the study and the possible risks of being a subject. Potential research participants should be given this information in a format they understand, to enable them to exercise their right to make an informed decision whether or not to participate in a research study. Before a researcher can begin obtaining data, the subjects of the research must normally sign an informed consent form.
Easy

30. What steps should be taken in order to ensure that sociological research findings are indeed used to address the real sociological issues in our society?
Although sociological research findings may be relevant for many social issues, this certainly does not guarantee that these findings will actually be marshaled to address these issues. For this to happen, elected officials and other policymakers must be open to the implications of research findings, and an informed public must make its desire for addressing these issues known.
Moderate

Fill in the Blanks

1. The _____ refers to the classic steps by which scientific research is conducted, including the formulation of a hypothesis and the gathering and analysis of data.
scientific method; Easy

2. The five sources which provide us with our usual knowledge and understanding of social reality come from personal experience, common sense, the media, expert authorities, and _____.
tradition; Easy

3. The basic steps in the scientific method include formulating a hypothesis, measuring and gathering data to test the hypothesis, analyzing these data, and _____.
drawing appropriate conclusions; Easy

4. The second step in the sociological research process is to _____.
conduct a literature review; Easy

5. In the sociological research process, the goal to determine how the proposed study will add to what is already known about the topic of study is carried out at the _____ stage.
conducting a literature review; Moderate

6. _____ is a statement of the nature of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependant variable.
Hypothesis; Easy

7. A _____ is the focus of sociological research, usually a person, organization, or geographical region.
unit of analysis; Easy

8. A _____ is any feature or factor that may differ among the units of analysis that a researcher is studying.
variable; Easy

9. A(n) _____ variable is a variable that can affect another variable.
independent; Easy

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10. The common units of analysis in sociology are person, organization, and _____.
geographical location; Easy

11. A _____ is a subset of a population.
sample; Easy

12. A _____ is a subset drawn from the larger population in which every unit in the population has the same chance of being included in the subset.
random sample; Easy

13. In a _____ sample, everyone in the population does not have the same chance of being included.
nonrandom; Easy

14. The _____ sample is a type of nonrandom sample that is used because it is relatively quick and inexpensive.
convenience; Easy

15. Convenience samples are sometimes called _____ samples.
captive-audience; Easy

16. A _____ is a specific type of nonrandom sample in which a researcher tries to ensure that the makeup of the sample resembles one or more characteristics of the population as closely as possible.
quota sample; Easy

17. In context to the criteria of causality, the second criterion which needs to be analyzed to determine whether the researchers' analysis supports their hypothesis is termed as _____.
causal order; Moderate

18. The relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable that exists only because the effects of a third variable have not been taken into account is referred to as a _____.
spurious relationship; Moderate

19. In context to the criteria of causality, the fourth and final criterion which needs to be analyzed to determine whether the researchers' analysis supports their hypothesis is called the _____.
best explanation; Moderate

20. The _____ is the percentage of a sample that agrees to be included in a study, usually a survey.
response rate; Easy

21. The major types of sociological research include surveys, _____, observational studies, and the use of existing data.
experiments; Easy

22. If random assignment is used, _____ provide fairly convincing data on cause and effect.
experiments; Moderate

23. Typical experiments consist of an experimental group and a _____ group.
control; Easy

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24. The technique of field research in which the researcher is an active member of the group or setting being observed is called _____.
participant observation; Easy

25. In an experiment, the group that does not experience the experimental condition is known as the _____.
control group; Easy

26. In an experiment, the group that experiences the experimental condition is called the _____.
experimental group; Easy

27. _____ refers to field research in which the researcher merely observes a group or setting.
Nonparticipant observation; Easy

28. _____ refers to the analysis of data from existing records.
Secondary data analysis; Easy

29. According to the text, two of the most important ethical guidelines in sociological and other human subject research are consent and _____.
privacy and confidentiality; Easy

30. Before a researcher can begin obtaining data, the subjects of the research must normally sign a/an _____ form.
informed consent; Easy

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