

Chapter 2

Social Research:

- Examines human behavior
- Is guided by rules and procedures
- Involves the objective of gathering data

Importance of Sociology

- Tradition: “We have always done it that way”
 - Tradition includes customs, rituals, and procedures
- Authority: an important source said so
 - Authority includes experts, parents, government, and religion
- Scientific Method: careful data collection and measurement, appropriate generalizations
 - Scientific Method includes carefully controlled studies

Sociological Research

- Creates new knowledge
- Exposes myths
- Explains why people behave the way they do
- Affects social policies
- Sharpens critical thinking skills

Probability Sample- each person or thing has an equal chance of being selected because the selection process is random

Nonprobability sample- for which there is little or no attempt to get a representative cross section of the population

Concept- an abstract data, mental image or general notion that represents some aspect of our social life

Variable Concept- a characteristic that can change in value or magnitude under different conditions

Scientific Method—Application

What are some variable that reflect each of the categories?

- Attitudes
 - Religion, gender, abortion, opinion on political candidates, and financial situation
- Behaviors
 - Church attendance, cheating in school
- Traits
 - Age, education

In research study, scientists:

- Ask a question
 - Such as: How does divorce affect children?
- Test a hypothesis

Hypothesis- statement of a relationship between two or more variables that will be tested in a study

Independent Variable-determines or has an effect

Dependent Variable- the outcome

The more time you study, the more you know.
Independent Dependent

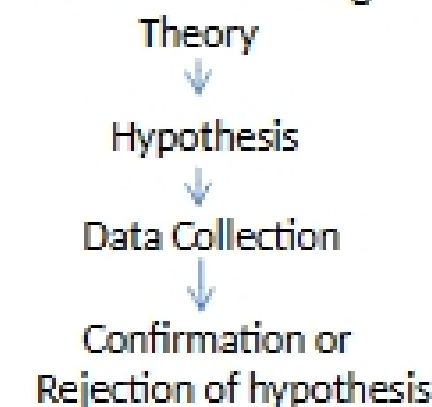
Curfews reduce vandalism rates.
Dependent Independent

Violence rates are higher among cohabiting couples than among married couples.
Dependent Independent

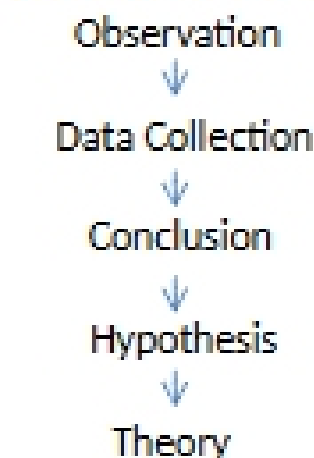
Research results should have:

- **Reliability**- consistency
- **Validity**- accuracy

Deductive Reasoning



Inductive Reasoning



Scientific Method

- 1) Choose a topic
- 2) Summarize the related research
- 3) Formulate a hypothesis or ask a research question

The Research Process

- 4) Describe the data collection methods
- 5) Collect the data
- 6) Present the findings
- 7) Analyze and explain the results

Qualitative Research- nonnumeric description

- A researcher works in a meat-packing plant and describes his experiences

Quantitative Research- numerical analysis of people's responses or specific characteristics, studying a wide range of attitudes, behaviors, and traits

Sociologists usually talk about correlation—the relationship between variables causation

Surveys- systematically collect data from respondents using questionnaires, face to face, or telephone interviews or a combination of these methods

Content Analysis

- Systematically examining some form of communication
- Analyzing speeches, songs, diaries, and emails
- Advantages: inexpensive, less time consuming, correct coding errors easily, unobtrusive, permits, and comparisons over time
- Disadvantages: labor intensive, subjective coding, and possibly class bias

Experiment Research

- Carefully controlled artificial situation
- Experimental group exposed to the independent variable
- Control group not exposed
- Advantages: can test cause-effect
- Disadvantages: artificial, high attrition

Evaluation Research

- Assesses effectiveness of a social program
- Uses any of the data collection techniques
- Advantages: examines actual efforts to deal with problems; can be valuable to program directors
- Disadvantages: not popular when it finds that existing programs are not effective

Basic Ethical Considerations

- Do not harm
- Get the subject informed consent
- Protect subjects' confidentially