

Answer Key for In-Text Questions Chapter 2

Title: Chapter 2 Questions for Review

Question/Prompt: 1. What is the definition of social research methods?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Social research methods is the use of a wide range of methods and approaches to learn about the social world following a plan or research design.

Question/Prompt: 2. What are the five main goals of social research methods?

Correct Answer Example(s):

The use of research methods in sociological inquiry has five main goals: enumeration and description, prediction, explanation, debunking, and social justice.

Question/Prompt: 3. What are the benefits of interviews over surveys?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Interviews allow participants to provide opinions in their own words, unlike surveys. Interviews are an ideal data collection method in projects that seek to understand a social group, garner information about people's opinions and attitudes, and uncover meaning and relevance.

Question/Prompt: 4. Which theoretical approach(es) take the background, status, and role of the researcher into account as part of their methodology?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Conflict theory considers the background, status, and role of the researcher as part of its methodology. Researchers do not take their role for granted, but rather critically reflect and question their own role in the research process.

Question/Prompt: 5. What is the difference between participant observation and PAR?

Correct Answer Example(s):

In participant observation, the researcher observes an individual, a group, or a community, in order to understand and become familiar with their customs and practices. In contrast, in participatory action research (PAR), the participants become collaborators in the research. For example, participants help write research questions that are meaningful to their community and also provide input into what data will be collected and how.

Question/Prompt: 6. What are the downsides of secondary data analysis?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Some disadvantages of secondary data analysis include:

- It takes time to become familiar with the dataset;
- The dataset is pre-established;
- No additional data can be added; and
- It is difficult to establish the quality of data.

Question/Prompt: 7. What kind(s) of studies require approval of a research ethics board (REB)?

Correct Answer Example(s):

All studies undertaken at institutions of higher education, including those that are part of a class exercise, need to be reviewed by an REB.

Title: Chapter 2 Questions for Critical Thought

Question/Prompt: 1. What are the differences and similarities in how scholars collect and analyze data in qualitative and quantitative approaches?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Your answer should include or relate to the following points:

- Differences:
 - Quantitative approaches rely on numerical values, graphs, mathematical models, and statistics. This type of research is deductive: it looks at the relationship between two or more variables and tests a particular hypothesis about that relationship.
 - Qualitative approaches rely on interviews, images, videos, and narratives. This type of research is inductive: it aims to develop new theory from gathered data.
- Similarities:

- Both approaches use literature reviews to provide an overview of relevant past research and give context to the proposed research.
- Both approaches should form research questions that are clear, specific, and feasible.
- Scholars of both approaches need to consider their own biases and examine key criteria of research excellence, including reliability, validity, social significance, ethical considerations, and the potential contributions to knowledge.
- Both approaches need to consider how to operationalize key variables.
- Both approaches need to carefully justify the decisions made around what data collection method is used, what population is investigated, and how the data is analyzed, keeping ethics into account throughout the process.

Question/Prompt: 2. What are the merits of mixed methods approaches? Would you advise one of your peers to conduct a mixed methods study? What considerations should they take into account before embarking on a mixed methods study?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Mixed methods research combines the strengths of different data collection and analysis approaches to obtain a more complete picture of a social phenomenon. It allows for data triangulation and helps researchers to determine validity in their studies. However, mixed methods research is time-consuming and challenging because it draws on different methods and potentially different populations or social groups as well.

Mixed methods research should be used when either quantitative or qualitative work alone cannot fully provide insights into a research problem. I would advise my peer to consider mixed methods research when there is one of the following needs:

- A more diverse understanding of a single phenomenon;
- To confirm quantitative findings with qualitative data;
- To better contextualize quantitative instruments and measures; or
- To combine small scale and trend data.

Question/Prompt: 3. What steps can be taken to increase response rates in online surveys? Do you think online surveys can collect accurate and trustworthy data?

Correct Answer Example(s):

Some ways to increase response rates in online surveys include:

- Ensuring the online platform has an intuitive and accessible user interface;
- Sending reminder notifications by email;
- Explaining the individual and societal benefits of the research;
- Providing a progress bar to show how long the survey will take to complete;
- Providing a financial or material incentive; and
- Anonymizing participant responses.

Online surveys can collect accurate and trustworthy data. They have wide versatility and reach and can overcome poor and slow response rates to mailed questionnaires. Moreover, the data accuracy is increased as the responses are directly recorded digitally and there is no need for data entry, which is prone to human error. Online surveys can also reach more diverse populations, potentially a global population if disseminated via social media.

However, online surveys are also susceptible to problems related to data accuracy that are important to consider. For example, participants may complete the survey several times if there is a financial or material incentive. Moreover, participants who are not interested in the survey topic may give inaccurate or incomplete responses. Finally, participants may also give inaccurate responses out of a desire for approval or acceptance.

Question/Prompt: 4. What are the 4 Rs of Indigenous research methods that researchers need to take into consideration when designing sociological research with Indigenous Peoples? How can researchers incorporate Indigenous research methodologies into their sociological research?

Correct Answer Example(s):

The 4 Rs of Indigenous research methods to consider when designing sociological research with Indigenous Peoples are respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. Researchers can incorporate Indigenous research methodologies to more accurately and ethically represent Indigenous cultures. For example, using traditional storytelling as a research method “links Indigenous worldviews, shaping the approach of the research; the theoretical and conceptual frameworks; and the epistemology, methodology, and ethics” (Datta, 2018). More broadly, Indigenous methodologies are important political and decolonizing tools that serve as counter-narratives to the Canadian state’s notion of reconciliation.

Question/Prompt: 5. How have ethical standards changed in a digital society, where massive amounts of data about users are available online?

Correct Answer Example(s):

In our digital society, massive amounts of data are being generated every day by billions of internet and mobile device users. This makes it difficult to follow traditional ethical standards when conducting research. For example, it may be difficult for obtain informed consent and provide debriefing after completion of the study. This data revolution has made it clear that sociologists need to rethink how they engage with human participants on social media sites and other online platforms.