

Element of Sociology with Methodology

SOC 201



**University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre
Open and Distance Learning Course Series Development**

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Vice-Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfilment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.



Prof. Abel Idowu Olayinka
Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

As part of its vision of providing education for “Liberty and Development” for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

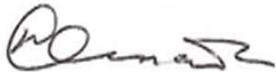
Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.

The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre’s provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.



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Table of Contents

Study Session 1	Introduction to Sociology	9
	Introduction.....	10
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1.....	10
1.1	The Concept of Sociology.....	10
1.2	Brief History of the Emergence of Sociology.....	11
1.3	Sociology as Science.....	13
1.4	Norms of the scientific/sociological community	15
1.5	What Sociologists Do.....	17
	Summary	17
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 1	18
	Introduction.....	19
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2.....	19
2.1.1	Norms.....	21
2.1.2	Status.....	22
2.1.3	Roles	23
2.1.4	Values	25
2.2	Socialization.....	26
2.2.1	Social Mobility.....	29
2.3	Belief.....	30
2.3.1	Kinship.....	31
	Summary	31
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 2	32
Study Session 3	Relationship between Theory and Research in Sociology	33
	Introduction.....	33
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3.....	33
3.1	Research and its Importance in Sociological Studies.....	33
3.1.1	First Scenario	34
3.1.2	The Second Scenario.....	35
	Summary	37
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 3	37
Study Session 4	38
	Introduction.....	38
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4.....	38
4.1	Introduction to Sociological Perspectives	38
4.1.1	Functionalism.....	38
4.2	Scholars and their Central Idea	40
4.3	Conflict theory and the Contributions of Karl Marx.....	41
4.4	Social Action Theory and the views of Max Weber	42
4.5	Symbolic Interactionism	43
	Summary	45
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 4	45

Study Session 5	How Sociologists do Research	46
	Introduction	46
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5	46
5.1	Conceptualization of Research	46
5.2	Proposal writing	49
5.3	Fieldwork	50
5.4	Analysis	51
5.5	Write-up/Data Presentation	52
5.6	Areas for Further Research	52
	Summary	53
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 5	53
Study Session 6	Quantitative Research	55
	Introduction	55
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6	55
6.1	Quantitative Research	55
6.2	Choosing a research setting	56
6.3	Research design	57
6.4	Sampling procedure	57
6.4.1	Probability Sampling	58
6.4.2	The Non-Probability Technique	60
6.5	Questionnaires	64
	Summary	65
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 6	66
Study Session 7	: Quantitative Research	67
	Introduction	67
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7	67
7.1	Introduction to Qualitative Research	67
7.1.1	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	67
7.1.2	FGD Guide	74
7.1.3	In-depth Interview (IDI)	75
7.1.4	Key Informant Interview (KII)	78
	Summary	81
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 7	81
Study Session 8	Ethical Issues in Sociological Studies	83
	Introduction	83
	Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8	83
8.1	Ethical Issues in Research	83
8.2	Voluntary and Informed Consent	85
	Summary	87
	Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 8	88
	Notes on SAQs for SOC 201	89
	Reference	97

Course Description: This course introduces students to basic concepts in Sociology to enable them make sense of the issues that interact to produce social relationships in everyday life. It also examines the methods through which effective sociological inquiries are undertaken for understanding both micro and macro phenomena in the society.

Aim: At the end of the course, students will be able to freely discuss the basic elements in sociology and how these shape understanding of everyday life. In addition, the student will begin to appreciate the rigor in sociological studies and analysis that blend theory and research towards a holistic understanding of social phenomena. It will also provide an opportunity for acquaintance with concepts that are either misused or misapplied or completely new to the student.

Study Session 1 Introduction to Sociology

Introduction

Sociology is the scientific study of society. The concept is derived from a combination of two words *Socio* which means society and *logy* which is study. It focuses on the entire society which is created and recreated by individuals.

Therefore, it tries to understand human relationships and the factors that shape interactions in different groups. These interactions constitute everyday life which manifests in familial, political, economic, religious and educational among other spheres of action.

This study session will focus on the Concept of Sociology, a brief history of the emergence of Sociology, and Sociology as science, norms of the scientific/sociological community, what sociologists do.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 1.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in **bold** (SAQ 1.1)
- 1.2 Explain the Concept of Sociology (SAQ 1.2)
- 1.3 Describe the History of the Emergence of Sociology (SAQ 1.3)
- 1.4 Analyze Sociology as Science (SAQ 1.4)
- 1.5 Explain what Sociologists Do (SAQ 1.5)

1.1 The Concept of Sociology

By being a scientific discipline, Sociology uses the methodology of inquiry such as experimentation, fieldwork and observation in examining phenomena in human communities. Beyond understanding human activities in the society, the discipline also professes problem solving as the surest way of ensuring order and cohesion.

The quest for integration arises due to the fact that individuals have different perceptions, orientations, motives and endowments and thus needed a discipline such as Sociology that embeds in integrative-ness.

In Text Question

Scientific discipline, Sociology uses the methodology of inquiry which include the follow except ----- in examining phenomena in human communities.

- (a) Experimentation
- (b) Fieldwork
- (c) Observation

(d) Character.

In Text Answer

The answer is (d) Character

1.2 Brief History of the Emergence of Sociology

The main aim of narrating the history of the conception, birth-pangs and the eventual birth of Sociology is for the student to appreciate the whole idea of the discipline especially as it relates to events and the power of humans to reshape their destinies. Before the emergence of Sociology as an academic discipline, the French society was very powerful to the extent that whatever took place in France had a way of impacting other societies.

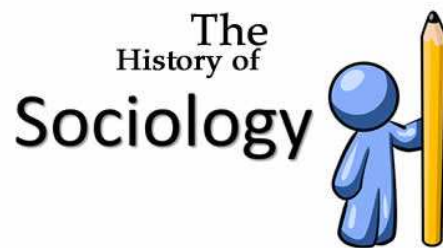


Figure 1.1: Sociology

Despite this, the majority of the French languished in poverty, misery, injustice and other forms of inadequacies due to the irresponsibility of the King and the ruling class (Labinjoh 2002). Pushed to the wall, the poor formed an army of protester to challenge pervasive suffering in the midst of plenty.

Hence, the French revolution of 1789 was adjudged the most anticipated the most involving and the most sustained in history. (Labinjoh 2002). Indeed, the King and Queen hitherto conceived as small-gods were publicly disgraced and killed to usher in a new era in the governance of France; other members of the ruling class also shared similar fate to the amazement of the people who felt a deep sense of fulfillment.

However, notwithstanding these massive executions and distortions, the revolution was a failure particularly with reference to the purpose for which it was undertaken. Clearly, those inadequacies including corruption, inequity, poverty, injustice among others were still very evident after the revolution, a situation that was not only deeply disappointing but also emotionally paralyzing (Labinjoh 2002).

Consequently, good minds kept agitating by raising the most important question of what must then be done. For these fertile heads, not doing anything would amount to social suicide and haphazardness in a society that had been further torn apart by unquantifiable emotional, infrastructural and social destructions that characterized the upheavals.

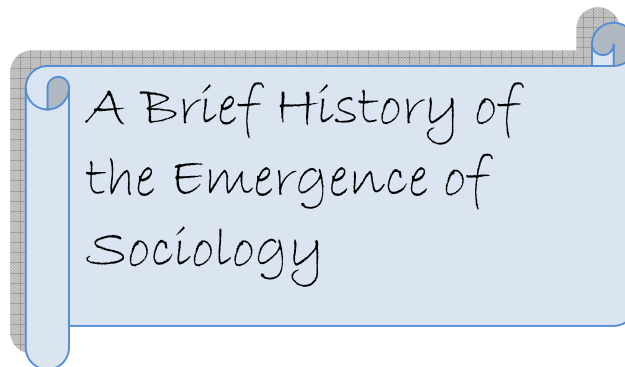


Figure 1.2: Sociology

To be sure, the effects of the failure of the revolution was massive and long lasting that Auguste Comte who was born about ten years after the restiveness (1798-1857) grew up to experience the fractals of the French society (Labinjoh 2009).

He would stop at nothing to contribute in recreating the immediate society and the world at large. Inevitably, he proposed the Science of Social Engineering that was to be later renamed Sociology. His purpose was to develop a discipline that would facilitate reintegration, re-coherence and a new order. He did.

The discipline and indeed practitioners owe a lot of gratitude to him for his thoughtfulness and insight. We note that perhaps if the revolution did not take place, it would not have failed; if it did not fail, agitations and intellectual reactions that accounted for the emergence of Sociology would not have taken place.

We are aware that some scholars would have also argued that the industrial revolution could have accounted for colossal change sufficient to provoke intellectual reaction as the French revolution did.

The main lessons to draw from this account are: That human is capable of recreating situations to suite their purpose and have potentials to act towards achievement of goals; that the audacity of boldness in turning challenges or inadequacies to advantage is essential; and that an individual can make a whole lot of difference in a globalized world.

In Text Question

From the brief history of the emergence of Sociology which country was the focal point in brief history of Sociology?

In Text Answer

France was the focal point of discussion.

1.3 Sociology as Science

Often people get entangled in a controversy about whether Sociology is a science. These controversies are unnecessary to the extent that for a discipline to be ascribed the status of science it must fully embrace unquestionable scientific procedures and tenets both in outlook and content. But what is science we may ask? Several definitions of science exist, in most cases with minor semantic differences.

However there is a consensus that it is best described as the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence (Science Council of UK 2009).

Does Sociology exhibit these virtues? We answer this question by trying to understand how the concept of science was introduced into the sociological lexicon. Again, the role of Auguste Comte in this status identity is instructive.



Figure 1.3: The concepts of Sociology

We would even argue that by not stopping at creating the discipline but also designing the method of inquiry among practitioners he deserved to be accorded the Founding Father of Sociology.

Although some debates have been generated by this title especially among several African scholar who would rather have Ibn Khaldun of Tunisia occupy that chair considering that he lived and did some Sociology much earlier (1332-1403) than Comte, the truths remains that he never bequeathed to practitioners a method of investigation as the latter did.

Comte noted that understanding and knowledge of events in society passed through three stages namely theological, metaphysical and positivistic. Prior to emergence of Sociology, individuals in society first depended on Priests and the Religious for interpretation and understanding of events and circumstances of everyday life; whatever that understanding meant.

During the period, the priests interpreted human existence and activities (or in-activities) purely on the basis of the supernatural (Ritzer 2008). The implication of such wholesome trust in these priests is that interpretations could also be based on their mental, emotional and psychological dispositions, interests and biases. This contradiction wherein the Religious was later conceived as fallible humans was sufficient to undermine the Theological Stage.

The search for truth continued with the emergence of the Metaphysical era. That time, the most important personalities were Philosophers that emphasized the role of knowledge based on abstractions and interpretation of signs and seasons.

Among these Pre-Socratic philosophers included Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Their activities depended mainly on rationalism, intuition, introspection and conjecture (guesses and assumptions) irrespective of the complexity of human societies (Sarantakos 1998). Again, just like the earlier stage the human factor played a key role in discrediting the metaphysical stage.



Figure 1.4: knowledge Acquisition in Sociology

The scientific period (also known as the positivistic era) being the third stage of human development and knowledge acquisition is characterized by empiricism which emphasizes the role experience against the focus on knowledge (Gay 1981; Bryman 2001).

That means that only things that are observable and discoverable count in the scientific circles rather than how much we think people know, notwithstanding perceived level of erudition and competences. By encouraging the community of sociologists to adopt empiricism as its *modus operandi*, Comte left his footprints on the sand of times.

In Text Question

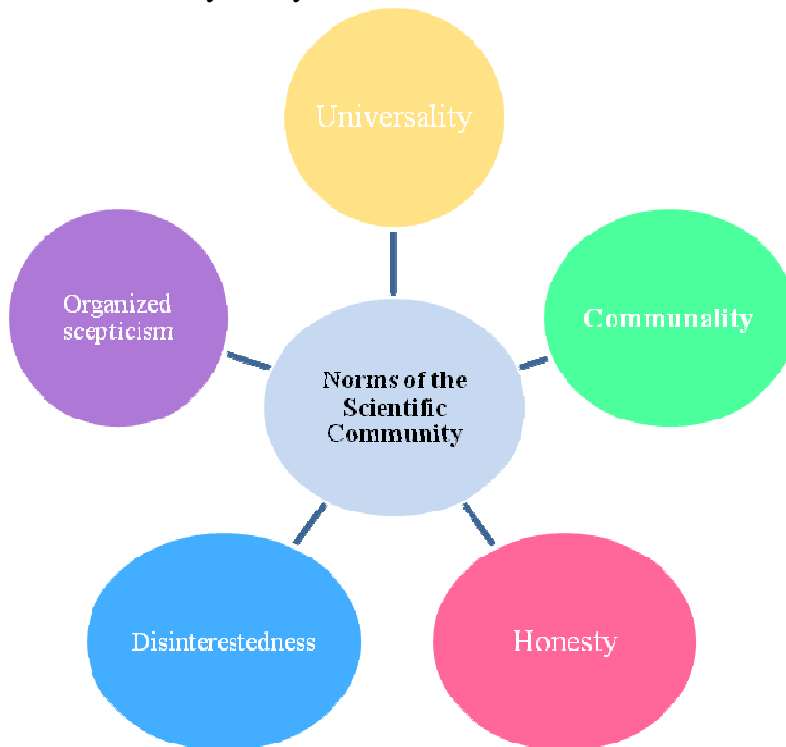
In study session 1.3 Comte noted that understanding and knowledge of events in society passed through three stages, what are the stages?

In Text Answer

The three stages are: theological, metaphysical and positivistic.

1.4 Norms of the scientific/sociological community

Achieving scientific virtues that abhor conjecture, intuition and introspection requires focus on the procedure designed for social scientists aiming to achieve validity and reliability in the course of research. Isiugo-Abanihe (2000) described these as the Norms of the Scientific Community. They include:



Figures 1.5: Norms of the Scientific Community

The Universality

Universality of research implies that given the same conditions, the data collecting researcher will generate similar results irrespective of the location of study. As a corollary, a trained researcher is not limited by space but should have the ability to adjust effectively to different contexts without compromising the quality of information to be collected.

Disinterestedness

To be disinterested in what becomes of the data collected for analysis is to be steadfast and unbiased. In that case, the data collector neither manipulates the data to be/or already collected nor the persons from whom these data are to be elicited.

S/he is not interested in who becomes the respondent or participant and whether or not data affect 'Significant Others' negatively. Rather, a sustained interest in ensuring validity and reliability of data must be a constant concern among fieldworkers notwithstanding misgivings, personal convictions and bias.



Figure 1.6: The states of begin disinterested

The temptation among researchers to shout ‘eureka’ or ‘I have discovered’ is great, especially due to the recognition and respect accorded ground-breaking discovery in the scientific circles. However, researchers are expected to withhold approval until a claim to discovery has been thoroughly scrutinized and accepted as valid.

Organized Scepticism

Before such scrutiny, practitioners of science should be skeptical or ambivalent in responding to the claim simply by a gentle response ‘Really?’ In the latter sense, the scrutinizer is supposedly open to the possibility of either confirming the claim or discrediting it without apologies.

Communality

The norm on communalism suggests that a scientific discovery is a public good to be communicated to members of the community through various means including publications, conferences, symposia, workshops among others. The idea is to discourage seclusion, insulation, mischief and falsity. Moreover, without experience-sharing among researchers, the tendency to unwittingly re-invent the-wheel will be high with almost no further contributions to knowledge. It is also inviolable to be honest in the course of scientific enterprise.

Honesty

Honesty is required from the point of conceptualization, instrument-design, data collection, analysis and report writing.

In Text Question

Study session 1.4 discusses the norms of the sociological community, from what you have studied mention the norms.

In Text Answer

The norms of the sociological community are: Universality, Honesty, Communalism, Organized skepticism and Disinterestedness.

1.5 What Sociologists Do

It is common to find newly admitted students of Sociology asking what the future holds for them upon graduation with a Sociology degree. This question is necessary especially in Nigeria and other countries where Sociology is first introduced to these students for the first time.

However, as time progresses and with adequate exposure to sociological outlook, imagination and methodologies the student soon discovers that s/he will have more space to operate than most other people in different specializations.

In fact, this spatial limitlessness has raised agitations against the sociological discipline that hitherto was conceived as students' second choice particularly in Nigeria. This new awareness is perhaps due to the increasing complexity and apparent unpredictability of the country – therefore it is thought that a body of knowledge that mitigates social disorder must be respected.

Whatever the reason, relationships define societies and Sociology is at the centre of human interactions in its several manifestations. Hence, there is work for the sociologist wherever humans exist in large or small groups. It is for this reason that we have Sociology of virtually everything – medicine, law, religion, education, industry among others.

In Text Question

From what you have studied so far in study session 1.5 where do you think a sociologist works?

In Text Answer

There is work for the sociologist wherever humans exist in large or small groups.

Summary

In Study Session 1, you have learnt that:

1. Sociology is the scientific study of society. The concept is derived from a combination of two words *Socio* which means society and *logy* which is study.
2. Science is best described as the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence
3. Universality of research implies that given the same conditions, the data collecting researcher will generate similar results irrespective of the location of study.

4. Honesty is required from the point of conceptualization, instrument-design, data collection, analysis and report writing.
5. There is work for the sociologist wherever humans exist in large or small groups. It is for this reason that we have Sociology of virtually everything – medicine, law, religion, education, industry among others.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 1

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 1.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.1)

Define Sociology.

SAQ 1.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.2)

What makes a discipline scientific?

SAQ 1.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.3)

Is Sociology a science?

SAQ 1.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.4)

What lessons can be drawn from the history of the emergence of Sociology?

SAQ 1.5 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.5)

Briefly state the norms of the scientific community

SAQ 1.6 (Tests Learning Outcomes 1.6)

Name five places that you can find sociologists

Study Session 2 : Basic Sociological Concepts

Examples of sociological concepts

- ◆ Society
- ◆ Culture
- ◆ Social structure
- ◆ Social institution
- ◆ Primary group
- ◆ Formal organization
- ◆ Deviance
- ◆ Social control
- ◆ Social class
- ◆ Socioeconomic status
- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Inequality
- ◆ Prejudice
- ◆ Minority group
- ◆ Social distance
- ◆ Liberalism
- ◆ Value of children
- ◆ Marital satisfaction
- ◆ Religiosity
- ◆ Social movement

Introduction

A society is a large social grouping that shares the same geographical territory, shares a common culture and social structure, and is expected to abide by the same laws. Two primary components of a society are its culture and its social structure.

Society is the most widely used concept in Sociology. As the name itself suggest Sociology is the Science of Society. The term society is used very loosely by common men. But in Sociology it has very significant meaning.

This study session will focus on the culture and its attributes, basic concepts that relate to culture such as norms, roles, status and values, socialization and its importance in society, kinship and belief among others.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

2.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in **bold** (SAQ 2.1)

2.2 Explain Culture and its Attributes (SAQ 2.2)

2.3 Define and differentiate the basic concepts that relate to Culture such as Norms, Roles, Status and Values (SAQ 2.3)

2.4 Discuss Socialization and its importance in Society (SAQ 2.4)

2.5 Explain Kinship and belief among others (SAQ 2.5)

2.1 Culture

Simply stated culture is the totality of a people's way of life. Perhaps E.B. Tylor's definition of 1871 is one of the most profound. For him culture is that complex whole that includes knowledge, norms, values, beliefs, practices and other capabilities and habits acquired by individuals as members of society.



Figure 2.1: Yoruba Culture

Source: <http://oyinboafrikanabeni.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/aso-oke-nigerian-wedding-dress.jpg>

This definition suggests that culture is relative to societies and therefore unique to peoples people-specific to the extent that we talk about Edo, Tiv, Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa cultures, among others in Nigeria.

Thus, notwithstanding with an individual's age or status, s/he is expected to conform to community expectations as a member of the group. Herskovit (1955) defined culture as man-made part of the environment to indicate that it is not biologically inherited but designed and recreated by individuals in a given context.

Box 2.1: As Oke (2009)

Culture finds expression in both social and physical traits that ultimately impact the perception, goals and actions of a group.

In summary, the culture of a society includes everything in the lives of its members learnt through direct or indirect contacts with other people. It includes the customary ways of behaving in everyday life including those related to religious beliefs, moral standards, the way in which family life is organized, language and artistic impression among others (Okere 1995).

Box 2.2: Two Aspects Of Culture Are Easily Identifiable – Material And Non-Material Cultures.

Material culture refers to the physical elements which include artifacts, food, houses, dresses, tools, technology among others; what is also referred to as tangible things. In other words, those things that can be felt, touched, seen and smelt.

Non-Material Cultures are those traits that are non-physical including beliefs, values, and norms among other are classified as non-material culture – intangible things such as ideas formulated by humans to guide relationships (Jegede 2012; Macionis & Plummer 2005).

We need to state that these two aspects are complementary and exist in all known human societies. Cultures are unique to peoples and although there may be some similarities between two or more cultures, there are usually notable differences.

Thus, culture is relative to places and times, the later suggesting dynamism (Olutayo & Akanle 2012). What may be accepted in a culture at a point in time could be discarded in the same society later on as events unfold to make it obsolete and unnecessary.

In Text Question

Define culture in your own words from what you have studied so far in study session 2.1?

In Text Answer

Culture is the totality of a people’s way of life which that includes knowledge, norms, values, beliefs, practices and other capabilities and habits acquired by individuals as members of society.

2.1.1 Norms

Obedience to cultural prescriptions is necessary for order to exist in society. However, given that individuals have different motives, orientations, and expectations ensuring compliance to common cultural traits would be difficult without rules and restraints. Norms are guidelines that people in community are expected to follow in their relations with one another.

They represent shared rules that specify appropriate and inappropriate behaviour

Box 2.3 (Okere 1995)

Kind of direction that defines what members ought, to, should, must, cannot and should not do in varying situations.

Depending on the group that exists, there are formal and informal norms. While the former applies to within a defined and organized group, the latter applies to casual groups such as play groups, spontaneous gatherings etc.

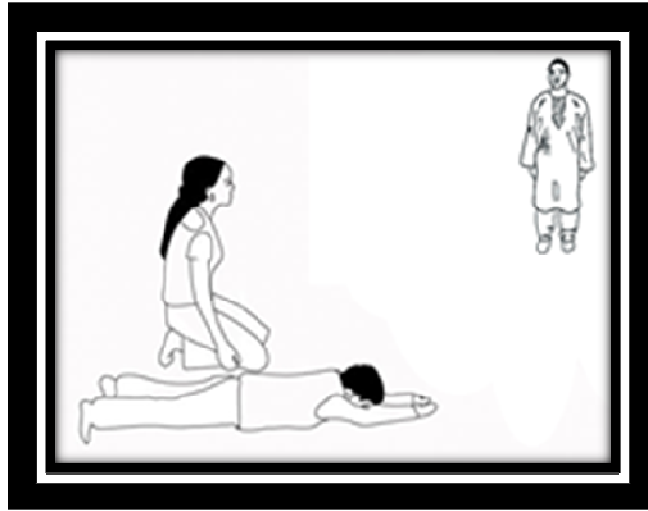


Figure 2.2: The norm in the Yoruba culture: guys prostrate and girls kneel to greet the elderly

Three basic types of norms exist in many societies – folkways, mores and laws.

Folkways are social habits developed within the group as ordinary usages and conventions of everyday life. They simply mean rules that govern customary ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.

For instance, although people in most cultures are expected to sleep on bed, an individual who sleeps on the floor is not considered immoral nor is one who decides to chew gums early in the morning.

Mores on the other hand are norms of great moral significance necessary for the maintenance of a decent and orderly society. Violations evoke strong social disapproval as seen in situations of theft, rape, murder, and drug abuse.

Laws are norms that are formally defined and enforced by appropriate persons. Most times, laws formalize folkways and codify mores that already exist (Okere 1995).

In Text Question

Study session 2.1.1 focuses on norms and the types we have, what are the three basic types of norms exist in many societies?

In Text Answer

Three basic types of norms exist in many societies – folkways, mores and laws.

2.1.2 Status

In simple terms, status means a position within a society or group (Hughes & Kroehler (2008). Through statuses therefore individuals are located in various social structures – friend, mother, school teacher, priest, Imam, father, researcher and footballer. Statuses are either achieved or ascribed.

The statuses we secure by individual efforts and merit such as becoming a professor, university student, world class tennis player, and a musician among others are achieved. However, those we have little or no control over such one's race, ethnicity, gender, family background and others are ascribed.

2.1.3 Roles

Each status in society is related to culturally defined rights and duties that distinguish it from other statuses. These rights and duties ascribed to specific statuses are known as roles which persons in these positions are expected to perform – that is the expected behaviour associated with status (Hughes & Kroehler (2008; Nwokocha 2012).

We now examine three major concepts – role set, role conflict and role strain.

Role Set – a single status may have multiple roles attached to it. This combination of roles is described as role set. For instance, the status of professor may entail one role as teacher, one role as researcher, one role as mentor, another as community service provider, one role as head of department and yet another as hall master.

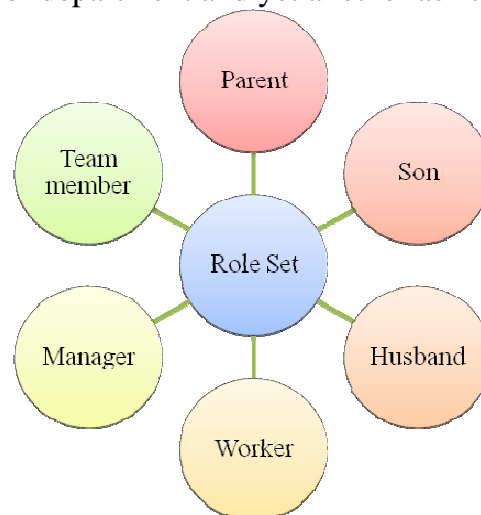


Figure 2.3: A role set of a married man

We are to note that a role does not exist in a vacuum or isolation but rather is an integration of activities that mesh with the activities of other people. For example, there cannot be a teacher without students, coach without trainees, and mentor without mentee. That is to say that every role has at least one reciprocal role attached to it.

This reciprocity brings to fore the essential ingredient of interdependence and relationships that are the centre of sociological studies and analysis.

Students are meant to understand that networking arising from reciprocal roles makes societies more coherent through exchange of ideas and resources.

Social life would be impossible where a particular role is performed by an individual for the person's needs only. Is such a situation possible? Clearly, the answer is NO.

Role conflict – our experience is that individuals are people of many parts at the same time. Involvement in interlocking roles, simultaneously, may generate conflicting expectations particularly when we occupy two or more statuses. A volleyball coach whose daughter is a member of the team may experience role conflict when deciding whether to make his own daughter or another more skillful player the starting centre-back.

Let us observe that this conflict arose because he was together a father and the coach. Would this same conflict have arisen if he were just one of these? The answer again is no. Other players whose fathers are not involved in coaching them would not experience similar conflict, just like coaches who are not biological fathers of the players.

A law court judge may experience similar conflict when adjudicating in cases involving close relatives. But what could be done to handle role conflict?

To deal with this issue of likelihood of bias that touches on ethical principles, the individual is expected to relinquish one of these roles particularly the one that will have lesser effect on the player. If you are asked to choose between being a father and coach, which of the roles do you think will be more valuable to almost everybody? Off course being a father; so coaching can be forgone.

The choices are more difficult in the second example, being a husband and court judge. Do you think that s/he should lose her/his job as a judge in order to retain the role of being a husband, father, mother, wife and uncle?

Again, the answer is no considering that unemployment is not easy to deal with. Therefore, the judge would be expected to refer the case to another court due to conflict of interest – by that action the conflict is resolved to the extent that the individual would continue in his/her role as husband/wife and a court judge.

In Text Question

----- are guidelines that people in community are expected to follow in their relations with one another?

- (a) Culture
- (b) Norms
- (c) Values
- (d) Character

In Text Answer

The answer is (b) Norms

Role strain – this is said to occur when an individual finds the expectations of a single role incompatible and therefore have difficulty performing the role. For instance, a manager in an organization is expected to be a commanding parent figure and at the same time a reassuring big aunty or uncles.

In Text Question

From study session in 2.1.3 the three major concepts under roles were discussed, which of them is said to occur when an individual finds the expectations of a single role incompatible and therefore have difficulty performing the role?

In Text Answer

Role strain this is said to occur when an individual finds the expectations of a single role incompatible and therefore have difficulty performing the role.

2.1.4 Values

Values are those things or ideas shared by a people about what is good, right and desirable (Robertson 1977). By implication therefore, they recognize some others as bad, wrong and undesirable. Communities construct their cultures from the outcome of a consensus about what they value; and because perceptions, goals and environments are different values and cultures are different.

Some of the known values among Nigerian are respect for elders, human life among others. However, such respect may be expressed in different forms among different groups in the country.

For instance, among the Yoruba, older people are greeted by males bowing down while females genuflect; among the Igbo, males shake older people with two hands, while females turn their backs for patting.

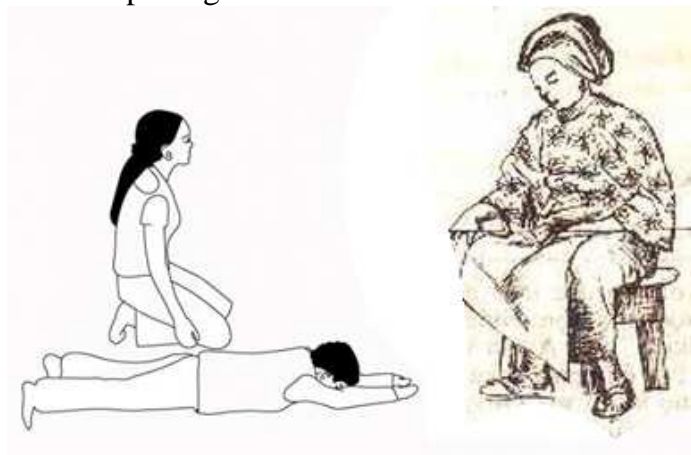


Figure 2.4: Respect

We want students to understand that values can also be expressed at family level, which means that from commonly shared community values individual families could adapt some elements for their specific purposes. For instance, assuming a community perceives attainment of formal education as necessary for enhancement of potentials, a family could have a benchmark of a postgraduate degree as the threshold of availability of its members for paid jobs.

In other words, unless you attain higher degree, a family member would not be encouraged to seek employment; that level of education may not matter to another family within that community that may be quite comfortable with a diploma or first degree. Taking it further, individuals may have personal values, which in this case may mean graduating top of the class in all examinations.

In Text Question

In your own words define value from what you have studied in study session 2.1.4.

In Text Answer

Values are those things or ideas shared by a people about what is good, right and desirable.

2.2 Socialization

Socialization is the lifelong process of learning cultural norms, attitudes, values, beliefs, practices, skills and other traits that distinguish members of a group from others (Henslin 2007). This is essential for individuals to function appropriately in groups. Let us pause for a minute and imagine a society where individuals are allowed to grow without any form of socialization.



Figure 2.5: Socialization

First, let us state that such a society does not exist; without socialization, society would be characterized by chaos of significant magnitude because it would translate to every behavior being right or wrong depending on who is defining the behavior. Hence,

socialization supposes that norms and values exist and that orientating people in these would minimize deviant behavior including crime.

Communicating norms and values may take place in several forms including verbal expression of what is expected and how things should be done, imitation of role models, reading about a group, role plays and sometimes by chance.

While some parents will prefer drumming important lessons into the ears of their children, others may prefer orientation by example convinced that young ones are observant to pick-up such traits. Yet others for some reason may be more comfortable with making literature available to these young ones.

In reality however, most adults use a combination of these media to transmit some cultural traits to young members of the community. It is important for students to know that is not only meant for children or young people but necessary for every member of the community that assumes a new position.

That is why a student that gains admission into the university is given orientation on the dos and don'ts of an institution that would award a degree not only on the basis of academic performance but also character.

When one becomes the Student Union president for example or a lecturer, not matter the person's level of intelligence and hard work, some form of socialization is essential to enhance the person's capabilities and habits to perform the duties of that office effectively.

Grandmothers/fathers learn to cope with that status from the experiences of their peers, so are newscasters, bricklayers and carpenters among others.

It is therefore necessary to summarize the importance of socialization to include:

- (a) That through it cultures are sustained by its transmission from one generation to another,
- (b) It promotes social order given its emphasis on predictability of behaviour, and
- (c) Through it individuals adjust to changes that take place in society.

Socialization takes place through some agents such as Family, School, Peer Group, Mass Media, Work Place, Religious Group among others. Let us now examine four of these agents in some detail.

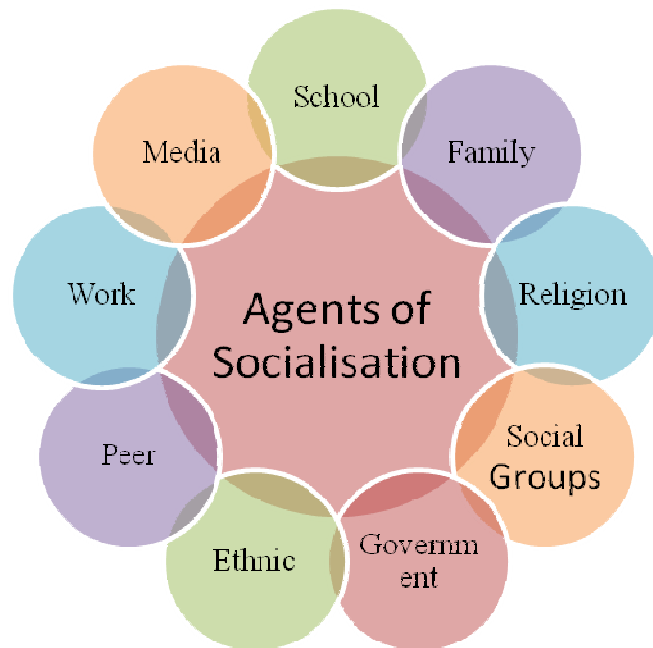


Figure 2.6: Agents of socialization

Family – is conceived as the first agent of socialization considering that the individual makes his/her initial contact with this agent through parents. From infancy to childhood, adolescence and adulthood the family plays a central role in ensuring that family members are orientated as prescribed by culture. We need to note that family does not comprise only parents but includes siblings and in some instances the extended kin group.

Therefore, more-experienced members of the family should assume the responsibility of undertaking socialization. More- experienced is underscored here to suggest that orientation of family members must not necessarily be done by older members; there could be situations where a younger family member, due to some privileges including travels, education among others may have more experience.

Therefore a situation rather than age should be the defining factor in the direction and pattern of socialization.

School: Experience shows that individuals beyond their families have contacts with the schools they attend beginning from primary level. This agent has become increasingly important in view of engagement of more Nigerian parents in paid jobs; most bankers in Lagos State hardly interact with their wards except on weekends which themselves are characterized by meetings and ceremonies.

As a result, more contacts are made with the teachers, counselors and school administrators than with parents. Although the school is meant to transmit curriculum based knowledge, in reality acting as locus parentis the agent socializes students in other everyday life issues.



Figure 2.7: School

Source: http://pixabay.com/p-163585/?no_redirect

Peer Group: Peers are one's mate and are found everywhere, school, workplace, Mosque, Church, Playground and countless other places. Where the family and school leave-off, peers assume the responsibility of socialization and most times transmit the negative values. For this reason, families and schools are expected to undertake this responsibility with strength so as to create little or no space for peers to operate.

This does not in any way suggest that peer groups are not necessary in socialization but that the influence of the family in particular should be quite strong to the extent that negative peer information will be suppressed by family members; and instead of being changed by peers they rather become changers of their friends in appropriate values.

Religious Groups: Most Nigerians are Christians, Muslims or Traditional Worshipers. The Demographic and Health Survey however indicates that over 95 percent of Nigerians belong to the first two religions mentioned above (NPC 2009).

Ordinarily, Christian and Muslim doctrines are based in the teachings of the bible and Koran respectively and religious leaders socialize adherents on what is expected of them in leading good religious lives. In reality, these agents interact to produce a complete personality.

In Text Question

Study session 2.2 talks about the agents of socialization, mention the agents of socialization in your environment.

In Text Answer

Agents of socialization include: Family, School, peer group and Religious Groups.

2.2.1 Social Mobility

In simple terms, it means the movement of individual or group within a class system. The mobility is described as **vertical** when the movement goes up or down the ladder. However, when the movement is across positions of almost equal status it is referred to as **horizontal** mobility. Movement of people is determined mainly by the type of society in question.

SOCIAL MOBILITY



Figure 2.8: Social Mobility

For instance, in open societies, the extent to which an individual can move along the ladder is limitless unlike the situation in closed-societies where movements are pre-determined irrespective of the efforts that individuals put into activities. The Indian caste system is a classic example of a closed-system, while Nigeria is an open society where a man that had no shoes early in life due to poverty could become the president of the country.

2.3 Belief

Belief relates to mode of worship and the relationship between the supernatural and human beings particularly in powers of the former to assist or harm humans (Oke 2009). Every religion teaches its adherents to perceive and relate with God and human beings in some way in order to give meaning to their experiences.

Although Sociology as a science does not emphasize things that are not observable and discoverable, the discipline does not however, deny the power of religion in shaping the feelings, emotions and actions of individuals. Therefore, whether what people believe is right or wrong, the fact remains that beliefs are facts of human existence and in some way define attitudes and behaviour.



Figure 2.9: Belief

Source: <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2e/Halebid3.JPG>

2.3.1 Kinship

Kinship relates to people closely connected by blood or marriage or adoption. By this definition, every individual belongs to one kin group or the other however emphasis towards kinship groupings vary among peoples and cultures.

For instance, whereas some groups only recognize very close blood relations (nuclear family), others extend their recognition to individuals that have distant links with them through descent (extended family) on both maternal and paternal sides. We define three kinship concepts for the purposes of clarification

Consanguinity – simply means relationship by blood which includes father, mother, children, cousins, nephews, uncles and aunts

Affinity – explains relationships based on marriage and adoption

Filiation – relates to line of descent, or lineage. In some cases, a group of kin-people trace their descent to common ancestors to the extent that family trees are linked to that single ancestry.

- What do understand by the term kinship after studying session 2.3.1?
- Kinship relates to people closely connected by blood or marriage or adoption, every individual belongs to one kin group or the other however emphasis towards kinship groupings vary among peoples and cultures

Summary

In Study Session 2, you have learnt that:

1. Simply stated culture is the totality of a people's way of life, the definition suggests that culture is relative to societies and therefore unique to peoples people-specific to the extent that we talk about Edo, Tiv, Igbo etc.
2. Norms are guidelines that people in community are expected to follow in their relations with one another. Three basic types of norms exist in many societies – folkways, mores and laws.
3. Status means a position within a society or group; Statuses are either achieved or
4. The rights and duties ascribed to specific statuses are known as roles which persons in these positions are expected to perform – that is the expected behaviour associated with status.
5. Values are those things or ideas shared by a people about what is good, right and desirable. Some of the known values among Nigerian are respect for elders, human life among others.
6. Socialization is the lifelong process of learning cultural norms, attitudes, values, beliefs, practices, skills and other traits that distinguish members of a group from others.
7. Socialization supposes that norms and values exist and that orientating people in these would minimize deviant behaviour including crime.

8. In simple terms, it means the movement of individual or group within a class system. We have both vertical and horizontal mobility.
9. Belief relates to mode of worship and the relationship between the supernatural and human beings particularly in powers of the former to assist or harm humans,
10. Kinship relates to people closely connected by blood or marriage or adoption. By this definition, every individual belongs to one kin group or the other however emphasis towards kinship groupings vary among peoples and cultures.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 2

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 2.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.1)

Define culture and explain the two aspect of culture.

SAQ 2.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.2)

Differentiate between the basic concepts that relate to culture such as norms, roles, status and values.

SAQ 2.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.3)

Discuss socialization and its importance in society.

SAQ 2.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 2.4)

Explain kinship and belief among others.

Study Session 3 Relationship between Theory and Research in Sociology

Introduction

The relationship between theory and research in Sociology cannot be overemphasized mainly because each of these contains ingredients necessary for comprehensive analysis of the social system. A sociological analysis based on just one aspect will produce an incomplete view of reality especially in a world that has become more complex.

Theory can be defined as statements or principles that explain facts or phenomena; these facts do not just evolve out of nothing but result from human activities particularly research. At this juncture, the student should also understand what we mean by research.

This study session will focus on Research and its Importance in Sociological Studies, Hypothesis and Theory, Hypotheses Evolve into Theories, Relationship between Theory and Research.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 3.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in **bold** (SAQ 3.1)
- 3.2 Explain Research and its Importance in Sociological Studies (SAQ 3.2)
- 3.3 Differentiate between Hypothesis and Theory (SAQ 3.3)
- 3.4 Describe how Hypotheses Evolve into Theories (SAQ 3.4)
- 3.5 Differentiate between The Relationship between Theory and Research by citing examples (SAQ 3.5)

3.1 Research and its Importance in Sociological Studies

Research is defined as the whole gamut of activities that lead to organized observation and discovery of the unknown beginning with identification of a problem, collection of data, analysis and discussion of events and phenomena in society.

Box 3.1 As O'Donnell (2012:1) stated:

Research is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to new and creative outcomes.

It therefore means that every research activity should be geared towards generating new insights about some phenomena; a search for the truth. Outside this main goal, the prospective researcher would have lost his/her bearing; as a corollary, research endeavours are not embedded in haphazardness or jamboree which does not have a stated end or aim.

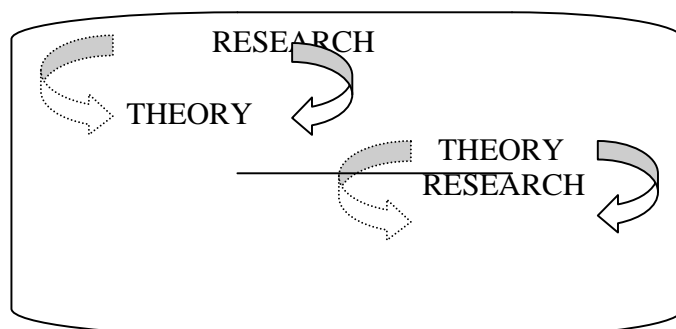


Figure 3.1: The Relationship between Theory & Research

The relationship between the two is demonstrated in Figure 3.1; we explain this further by an example.

In Text Question

Study session 3.1 defines research in so many ways; now try to explain research in your own words.

In Text Answer

Research is defined as the whole gamut of activities that lead to organized observation and discovery of the unknown beginning with identification of a problem, collection of data, analysis and discussion of events and phenomena in society.

3.1.1 First Scenario

A research may set out for a study on adolescent sexuality and premarital sexual debut among secondary school student in Ibadan, Nigeria. The data may reveal interesting results which could enable the researcher make statements on the phenomenon.

She/he may want to replicate the study in other parts of Nigeria to find out whether the patterns, predisposing factors and characteristics of the actors will show differences or not. If the results are largely similar, the researcher may attempt making concrete sentences of generalization within the context of Nigeria.

The quest to globalize knowledge may drive him/her to extend the study to other countries with varying characteristics or recommend that a similar study be carried out by other scientists in other locations.

If the findings remain consistent with what were found in these different locations, then the researcher may be compelled to derive hypotheses from these reliable results – a hypothesis is a tentative statement of facts that could become a theory after prolonged scrutiny by the scientific community. Thus, for such statement to become theory, it must have universal validity and reliability to the extent that it would not stand the risk of invalidation by subsequent data within a short period of time. We underscore the time period and would want you to realize that theories may not be valid indefinitely due to changes taking place in society.



Figure 3.2: Research

For instance, the population theory by Rev. Thomas Malthus that population was growing at an alarming rate while food production was exceedingly slow is no longer valid in most industrialized societies where fertility levels have since dropped below replacement rates.

Yet, it was one of the most celebrated theories of the 18th century. But let us realize that Malthus undertook a study of societies of the world before coming out with the theory, again to buttress the relationship we are tracing.

In Text Question

What do you understand a hypothesis to be in your own words since it has being differentiated from theory in study session 3.1.1?

In Text Answer

Hypothesis can be defined as a tentative statement of facts that could become a theory after prolonged scrutiny by the scientific community.

3.1.2 The Second Scenario

This is meant to demonstrate how a theory could give impetus to a research activity. We begin by stating that there are countless number of sociological theories outside the conventional grand theories of conflict, functionalist, symbolic interactionism, and social action among others. Each sub-discipline of Sociology has a long list.

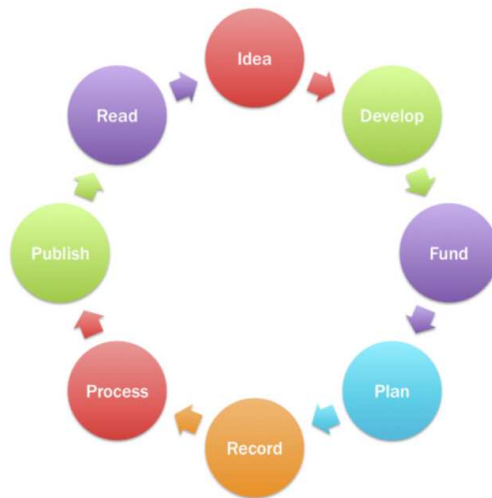


Figure 3.3: Research

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c9/Research_cycle.png

For instance, Edwin Sutherland's theory of Differential Association postulates that interaction of the individual with criminal groups is the source of criminal behavior; he argued that systematic criminal behavior is acquired through the same process as systematic lawful behavior (Opara 1998).

A research may be contemplated on the basis of assumptions of this theory as a way of validating or disproving the positions it holds. In summary, we should consider the complementary relationship between theory and research as essential particularly as it ensures checks and balances.

In Text Question

What was Edwin Sutherland's argument in study session 3.1.3?

In Text Answer

He argued that systematic criminal behavior is acquired through the same process as systematic lawful behavior.

Summary

In Study Session 3, you have learnt that:

1. The relationship between theory and research in Sociology cannot be overemphasized mainly because each of these contains ingredients necessary for comprehensive analysis of the social system.
2. A sociological analysis based on just one aspect will produce an incomplete view of reality especially in a world that has become more complex.
3. Theory can be defined as statements or principles that explain facts or phenomena; these facts do not just evolve out of nothing but result from human activities particularly research.
4. Research is defined as the whole gamut of activities that lead to organized observation and discovery of the unknown beginning with identification of a problem, collection of data, analysis and discussion of events and phenomena in society.
5. Research is the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understanding

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 3

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study

Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 3.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 3.1)

Explain research and its importance in sociological studies.

SAQ 3.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 3.2)

Define both hypothesis and theory and differentiate between them.

SAQ 3.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 3.3)

Explain the relationship between theory and research and citing examples.

Study Session 4: Introduction to Sociological Perspectives

Introduction

Sociology differs from other social sciences in the way it examines all aspects of the social world, from relationships between individuals, to groups, organizations, and large institutions like the family, religion, the economy, nation states, education, science, sports, the arts, and all other aspects of social life.

This study session will focus on the Functionalist Theory, Some of its Scholars and the Central Idea, Conflict Theory and the Contributions of Karl Marx, Social Action Theory and the views of Max Weber, Symbolic Interactionism is used in Human Communication and Relationships.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 4

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 4.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in **bold** (SAQ 4.1)
- 4.2 Discuss the Functionalist Theory, Some of its Scholars and the Central Idea (SAQ 4.2)
- 4.3 Explain Conflict Theory and the Contributions of Karl Marx (SAQ 4.3)
- 4.4 Analyze the Social Action Theory and the views of Max Weber (SAQ 4.4)
- 4.5 Describe how Symbolic Interactionism is used in Human Communication and Relationships (SAQ 4.5)

4.1 Introduction to Sociological Perspectives

We have demonstrated the relationship between theory and research in sociological analysis; in this section we will examine a few of the general theories of Sociology that cut across all . Throughout this discourse, theories and perspectives would be used interchangeably. We briefly discuss four sociological perspectives – functionalist, conflict, social action and symbolic interactionist theories – not in any order.

4.1.1 Functionalism

This theory is discussed first in most sociological analysis due to its immediate relevance to helping a fractured society re-experience social order. Evolving as an intellectual reaction to the failure of the French Revolution Sociology needed to postulate, at once, a perspective that aligns with coherence and integration; it is not therefore surprising that functionalism featured early in sociological knowledge.

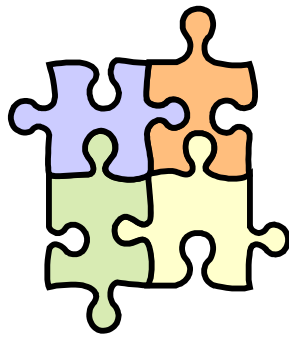


Figure 4.1: Functionality

The central idea of this perspective is that society is a whole unit that is made up of interrelated parts that perform varied functions but work cooperatively in ensuring that the whole is maintained. To further illustrate this point, Herbert Spencer (Ritzer 2008) equated the society to a living organism with organs or parts or sub-units that work harmoniously. Thus, when each of the organs fulfills its own functions, the organism works well and remains normal and healthy.

However, when any of these parts malfunctions, it is not only that part that suffers but the entire organism just like when an individual experiences severe tooth ache that affects feeding; virtually every part of the body feels it. We can give countless examples of the interrelationships among parts. Most times this analogy is drawn using the social system characterized by institutions such as Family (Fa), Education (Ed), Religion (Re), Economy (Ec) and politics (Po):

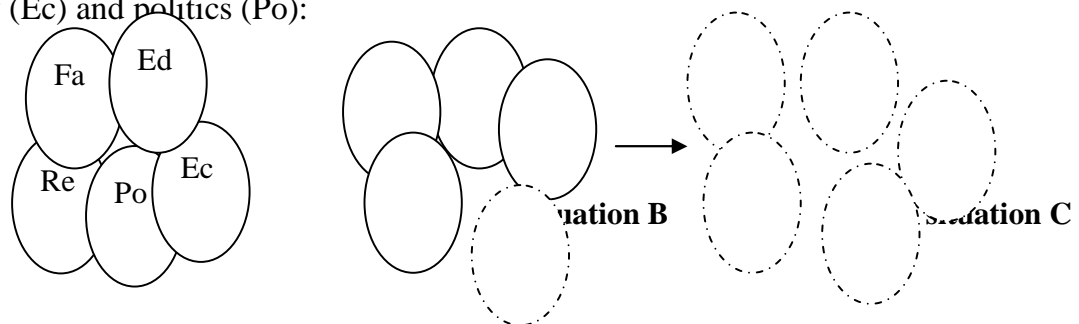


Figure 4.2: Functionalism

Ideally, **Situation A** above represents interconnectedness among parts and a functioning society. **Situation B** shows that one of the units malfunctions as indicated by the broken lines.

This malfunctioning is also known as Dysfunction (a concept first used by R.K. Merton) which refers to an element of society that may disrupt (in this case has disrupted) the social system leading to reduction in stability (Ritzer 2008). It could be any of the parts. We should note that if the dysfunctionality is not quickly rectified, it could lead to total breakdown of the entire society as represented by Situation C.

Let us note that Herbert Spencer is a key figure in the development of this perspective (Ritzer 2008), scholars like Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore also contributed immensely to the functionalist perspective.

In Text Question

In figure directly above, situation C is referred to total dysfunction because of breakdown of the entire society, explain how situation B led to situation C?

In Text Answer

Situation B shows that one of the units malfunctions as indicated by the broken lines. It could be any of the parts, if the dysfunctionality is not quickly rectified, it could lead to total breakdown of the entire society as represented by Situation C

4.2 Scholars and their Central Idea

We examine briefly each of these scholars.

T. Parsons was popular for his AGIL model which he described as functional imperatives necessary for all systems. For him ADAPTATION requires that individuals adapt to the environment they find themselves and in turn adapt that environment to their needs.

It is embedded in the principle that people must adjust to whatever circumstances that confront them and make best use of what is available.

GOAL ATTAINMENT implies that primary goals must not only be defined but also achieved for the system to run. By INTEGRATION Parsons suggested that the system must regulate the interrelationship of its component parts and must not be allowed to function without some form of restriction or regulation. The LATENCY talks about system maintenance through renewal of motivations among individuals and cultural patterns (Ritzer 2008; Henslin 2007)

R.K. Merton: contributed to this perspective particularly through his idea of functions and dysfunctions. In addition, Merton talked about functions being either Manifest or Latent. By manifest functions he meant those open, stated and intended consequences of an action. For example, the manifest functions of a revolution maybe to overthrow tyrants and tyranny while the latent function may be creation of employment or stemming the tide of emigration.

Box 1.1 K. Davis and W. Moore:

These structural functionalists regarded social stratification as universal and necessary arguing that stratification system is a structure and not a system of positions.

In summary, scholars of functionalist orientation see society as a system that must be made to work irrespective of the challenges or inadequacies that may exist. Therefore, individuals must be ready to continually adjust to keep the system running.

In Text Question

Which scholar was popular for his AGIL model which he described as functional imperatives necessary for all systems? Mention the names of the other scholars.

In Text Answer

T. Parsons was popular for his AGIL model which he described as functional imperatives necessary for all systems and the other scholars include K. Davis and W. Moore, R.K. Merton.

4.3 Conflict theory and the Contributions of Karl Marx

We begin discussion on the conflict perspective by letting you know that several scholars embraced this theory as a response to what appeared like falsity that the functionalist theory generated in explaining relationships in society.

For some others, to express the error in conceiving social order as inherently inevitable among individuals and groups. Whatever, the motivation, scholars in this tradition has been able to provide us with alternative analytical model away from the simplistic functionalist orientation?

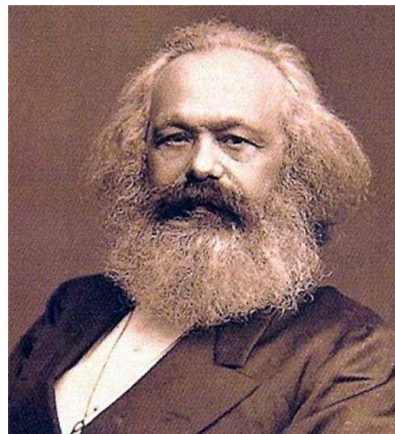


Figure 4.3: karl marx

Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fc/Karl_Marx.jpg

It is important to note that conflict perspective is opposed to the notion that consensus and order should be emphasized and maintained at all cost even if translates to enduring the pain of exploitation and poverty. Conflict scholars argue that the emphasis placed on norms, values and common morality as binding forces by functionalists is deceptive and that coercion is the unseen element that compels the oppressed to submission.

The conflict perspective is based on the notion that society consists of different interests that clash over time to produce some level of instability (Haralambos & Holborn 2004). We now examine briefly the views of Karl Marx.

Karl Marx: Was one of the major proponents of the conflict perspective. He sees the history of human society as a process of tension and conflict. For him, social change is usually not attained through a smooth process but rather proceeds from contradictions.

He argued that alienation is very high in capitalist societies driven by the desire to maximize profit; hence workers become objects of exploitation by the capitalists. For him, the bourgeoisie strive to ensure that the proletariat remains unaware of their exploitation through what he described as false-consciousness.

For these reasons, Marx called on workers of all nations to unite and fight the common enemy which is the ruling class in order to enthrone a classless society. His central argument was that the capitalist ideology provided the facilitating environmental conditions under which exploitation was perpetrated and sustained.

He maintained that apart from the primitive tribal society others such as slavery, feudal and capitalism were marked by rugged individualism particularly the capitalist society which is notorious for surplus values that accrue to the bourgeoisie. Notwithstanding the insight that Marx projected in understanding of human societies, he was criticized mainly for basing his analysis only on economic determinism.

4.4 Social Action Theory and the views of Max Weber

We begin this section by stating that we will examine this perspective through the views of Max Weber who was one of the most prominent contributors to the perspective. In his theorizing he made efforts at differentiating between action and reactive behaviour; the latter usually automatic and involving no thought processes (Henslin 2007; Ritzer 2008). Weber was indeed not interested in such spontaneous and haphazard behaviour which occurs as a response to a stimulus. He rather focused on action that occurs through thought processes leading to calculated response.



Figure 4.4: Max Weber

Source: [http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-3LuSYa4iPSQ/UXzIxzdrJKI/AAAAAAAAAKA/jDgIvFXQAww/s1600/Max_Weber.jpg)

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At this juncture, we would like you to understand that in Weber's analysis, action occurs when individuals attach subjective meanings to their actions and therefore see these actions as necessary. He was quick to point out that analyzing action based on mental processes may lead to perception of sociological analysis as psychological.

Notwithstanding this caution his work was said have hardly contributed to microsociology. However, the discipline has benefitted immensely from his analysis of Ideal Types of Action. Let us now briefly examine these types and what determines each:

Means-ends rationality: This is determined by the expectations of actors and of other individuals in a given context. These expectations become the conditions and/or indicators for measuring attainment of an actor's rationally calculated ends. This suggests that individuals supposedly act on the basis of some calculation that will lead to benefits

Value rationality: this type of action is determined by conscious belief in its ethical, religious, aesthetic and political value notwithstanding the prospects of succeeding (Ritzer 2008).

Affectual action: is more of psychological and of less importance for Weber. It is determined by an actor's emotional state at a given point.

Traditional action: is dependent on an actor's customary values. Weber concluded that any given action normally involved the combination of these four types (Ritzer 2008).

In Text Question

What is Weber's analysis about under study session 4.4?

In Text Answer

Weber's analysis, action occurs when individuals attach subjective meanings to their actions and therefore see these actions as necessary.

4.5 Symbolic Interactionism

Let us begin by saying that in 1937, Blumer coined the concept of symbolic interactionism but Herbert Mead was credited as having contributed most to the perspective (Ritzer 2008). The central idea of this perspective is the use of symbols for interaction. This means that symbols are relative and may convey different meanings to different people.

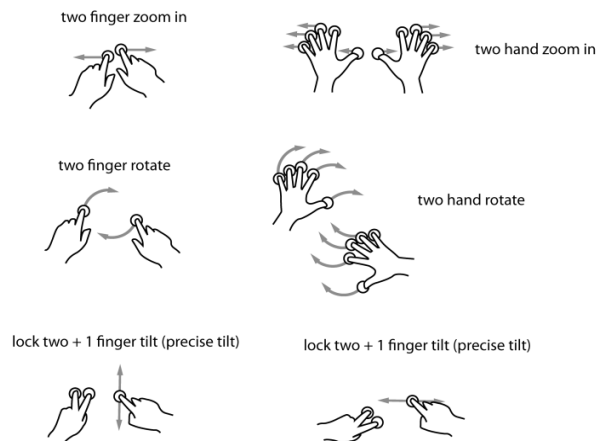


Figure 4.5: Different hand gestures

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Gestures which entail movement of the whole or part of an organism serve as stimuli that the other organism for which these gestures are made is expected to understand. If a young Yoruba girl genuflects when an elder is in sight, it is expected that the latter will understand it as much as the former and respond appropriately - the meaning would have been fully understood by the two individuals.

If the same girl acts similarly for a visiting Canadian stranger, the latter may respond by pitying the girl who he may perceive as having bad knees and trying to adjust. While it should be noted that languages are significant symbols but that not all vocalizations are symbols.

In Text Question

What do you understand by gesture from what you have studied in study session 4.5 as it relates to symbolic interactionism?

In Text Answer

Gestures which entail movement of the whole or part of an organism serve as stimuli that the other organism for which these gestures are made is expected to understand.

Summary

In Study Session 4, you have learnt that:

1. The central idea of this perspective is that society is a whole unit that is made up of interrelated parts that perform varied functions but work cooperatively in ensuring that the whole is maintained.
2. T. Parsons was popular for his AGIL model which he described as functional imperatives necessary for all systems. For him ADAPTATION requires that individuals adapt to the environment they find themselves and in turn adapt that environment to their needs.
3. R.K. Merton contributed to this perspective particularly through his idea of functions and dysfunctions, Merton talked about functions being either Manifest or Latent.
4. K. Davis and W. Moore contributed these structural functionalists regarding social stratification as universal and necessary arguing that stratification system is a structure and not a system of positions.
5. Conflict perspective is opposed to the notion that consensus and order should be emphasized and maintained at all cost even if translates to enduring the pain of exploitation and poverty.
6. Conflict scholars argue that the emphasis placed on norms, values and common morality as binding forces by functionalists is deceptive and that coercion is the unseen element that compels the oppressed to submission.
7. Karl Marx was one of the major proponents of the conflict perspective. He sees the history of human society as a process of tension and conflict.
8. Gesture entail movement of the whole or part of an organism serve as stimuli that the other organism for which these gestures are made is expected to understand

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 4.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 4.1)

Discuss the functionalist theory, some of its scholars and the central idea

SAQ 4.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 4.2)

Explain Conflict theory and the contributions of Karl Marx

SAQ 4.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 4.3)

Discuss the Social Action theory and the views of Max Weber

SAQ 4.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 4.4)

Describe how symbolic interactionism is used in human communication and relationships.

Study Session 5

How Sociologists do Research



Introduction

This study session will focus on the Process of Conceptualization of Sociological Research, Importance of Proposal Writing and its Component, Fieldwork is carried out, Quantitative and Qualitative Data, Data Presentation, Future Research.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 5.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in **bold** (SAQ 5.1)
- 5.2 Discuss the process of conceptualization of Sociological Research (SAQ 5.2)
- 5.3 Explain the importance of Proposal Writing and its Component (SAQ 5.3)
- 5.4 Describe fully how Fieldwork is carried out (SAQ 5.4)
- 5.5 Describe ways of analyzing both Quantitative and Qualitative Data (SQ 5.5)
- 5.6 Explain what is expected in Data Presentation (SAQ 5.6)
- 5.7 Describe how you can identify areas for Future Research (SAQ 5.7)

5.1 Conceptualization of Research

It is important to begin this section by noting that sociologists are researchers committed to understanding the social environment. Research is not a haphazard venture but rather a carefully conceptualized activity. Before we delve into the process of conceptualization, let us take note of the fact that doing research in Sociology is targeted at investigating problems.

To state it differently, if problems do not exist, the sociologist will likely not y in research – problems are therefore at the centre of sociological research.

You must realize that problems are relative to individuals, times and place, which simply means that what may be defined as a problem by an individual may be seen by another as something attractive.

Let us give an example. Somebody may be discouraged from residing in Ibadan for fear of the consequences of civil unrests resulting from frequent clashes between factions of the Nigeria Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW).

For this individual, restiveness and resultant chaos is problematic. However, some other person may find opportunity in the situation and may be attracted to the city of Ibadan as a result of such crises probably by engaging in looting or selling dangerous weapons that could be used to wreck havoc by the warring groups.

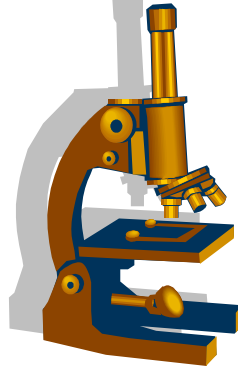


Figure 4.1: Research

Therefore, the assessment of the Ibadan situation would be interpreted differently by these two individuals. Clearly, between the two personalities, sociological research would most likely be contemplated by the person that saw the consequences and not the opportunities. I would like you to know that three elements are essential in the conceptualization of research: researcher's experiences, theories and literature.

Experience: personal negative experiences of the researcher can form the basis upon which a study is conceptualized. Sometimes, the experiences of family members, friends, neighbours and significant others could become the motivation for embarking on research. For instance, an individual who had been forcefully evicted from an apartment is likely to perceive forced eviction as a problem that requires investigation.

That personal experience or that of another person will bring to bear the reality of the eviction phenomenon; sufficiently worried about that event, the prospective researcher may want to examine the issues and that way make recommendations that will discourage recurrence of the problem.

The lesson that the student should derive from experiential conceptions of research is that issues for study are not to be suggested to the researcher by another individual given that experiences, perception of what constitutes problems and motives are not the same

Theories: sociological theories are numerous and are sources of research conceptualization. Apart from the general theories of Sociology, most others are sub-

disciplinary specific – medical, demography, development, criminology, industrial Sociology among others.

If we use industrial Sociology as an example, one may be interested in examining the extent to which a particular theory applies to a Nigerian workplace. Among motivation theories the researcher may decide to investigate Theory X and Theory Y and their relationship with workers' productivity.

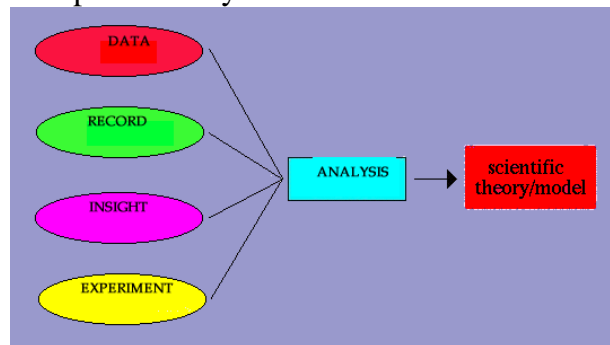


Figure 5.2: Scientific Theory

The Theory X postulates that when managers are tough, strict and punitive, workers tend to obey rules and regulations and engage in higher productivity. Theory Y on the other hand, suggests that when managers are liberal, act as mentors and hardly punish subordinates, the latter tend to have higher motivation to work and therefore produce maximally.

On the basis of these claims, a researcher may decide to undertake a study in a typical work setting to validate or invalidate these positions in a given context.

Literature: a researcher may also rely on findings from literature and what scholars have already done to conceptualize research. The purpose in this case is usually to identify gaps which the prospective research will aim at bridging thereby enabling the researcher contribute to knowledge.

Literature review also features when conceptualization derives from either experience or theory – what experience would mainly do is to enable us identify a problem (or variable to be explained or the dependent variable) but literature will in addition inform the researcher about the likely independent variable that will explain the dependent variable.

For instance, if armed robbery is identified as the dependent variable, literature review will then help the researcher relate it to some variable such as unemployment for example or any other variable. As such, literature review is very important when conceptualizing research. Without a review, the researcher may presume that what s/he sets out to do is novel and new and may want to undertake an exploratory approach without knowing that a catalogue of studies has already been conducted on the issue.

The import of this description is for the student to realize that research is a carefully planned activity that should not thrive in haphazardness or careless pronouncement on what may be of interest to the researcher which does not derive from the rigor of conceptualization following any of the three elements discussed above.

In Text Question

There are the three elements essential in the conceptualization of research which of them identifies gaps which the prospective research will aim at bridging thereby enabling the researcher contribute to knowledge.

In Text Answer

Literature review.

5.2 Proposal writing

Most times supervisors want their students/supervisees to write a proposal on a topic. Writing research proposals is important for three main reasons:

BOX 4.1: Importance of Writing Research Proposals

- To ascertain whether the prospective researcher is proposing to undertake a study that is feasible,
- To find out the extent to which the proposer is competent to carry out the study, and
- To examine whether the topic aligns with the methodology and theoretical orientation.

Writing a proposal is usually preceded by conceptualization of a working topic for a planned project. It is meant to convey preliminary insight into what the researcher intends to do in a large scale later on. At this stage, a careful supervisor is able to determine the feasibility of a proposed topic and the appropriateness of the setting or context chosen for the exercise. It is also an opportunity to present options ranging from theories to methodology including data collection and analysis. We itemize some components of a typical research proposal:

BOX4.2: Some Components of a Typical Research Proposal

- Chapter one: Introduction, Problem Statement, Research Questions, Objectives, Significance & Clarification of concepts/Operationalization.
- Chapter two: Literature Review and Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
- Chapter three: (Methodology): Study area, Design, Study population, Sample size determination, Sampling procedure, Description of research instruments, Method of data collection, Analysis procedure & Ethical issues
- Expected Outcome
- References - with emphasis on UI referencing style

It is expected that these items be explained briefly by discussing the central idea and their justification. Approval and/or adjustment to good proposals pave the way for the project proper.

In Text Question

What do you think are the reasons for writing a proposal in research?

In Text Answer

Writing a proposal is usually preceded by conceptualization of a working topic for a planned project. It is meant to convey preliminary insight into what the researcher intends to do in a large scale later on. It is also an opportunity to present options ranging from theories to methodology including data collection and analysis.

5.3 Fieldwork

Fieldwork is one of the distinguishing qualities of sociological studies. For the sociologist, field exists wherever we have information that could aid understanding of human society no matter how restricted the space may be. Therefore, the sociological field is limitless but defined at each point by the focus of a study.

It is necessary to state that the scope and nature of the fieldwork to be undertaken should be dependent on the focus of the research and the type of instruments to be employed.

For instance, a study that employs the use of questionnaires to be administered on 900 respondents would likely last longer than another that generates data through seven IDIs. The questionnaire distribution may last several days or weeks while the interview can take be completed in two-three days.



Figure 5.3: Fieldwork

Due to the complexity of phenomena, a combination of qualitative and quantitative data is used for comprehensive analysis of social issues. Let us note that depending on the scope of the study, the researcher alone can collect the data (sole data collection); large studies will necessitate engagement of few or several Research Assistants (RAs) to collect data.

The latter situation applies mainly to cross-sectional surveys requiring simultaneous collection of data across different locations.

5.4 Analysis

Data collection will not make meaning without analyzing it. Depending on the level at which these data are analyzed, analysis enables the researcher tell the story.

For quantitative data, analytical packages such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Epi-info among others are employed to present data at Univariate (frequencies and percentages), Bivariate (cross-tabulations and Chi-square) and Multivariate (regression) levels. Analysis shows us patterns, trends, relationships, associations among others and thus enables the researcher to make concrete statements about the phenomenon under investigation.



Figure 5.4: Analysis

You should bear in mind that the level of analysis that one wants to attain in a particular study would depend on the type of data generated which itself is a function of the structure and content of the questionnaire.

In other words, at the point of designing the questionnaire the researcher is expected to envisage the type of analysis to be undertaken in order to achieve maximum result.

Qualitative data are also analyzed using different approaches such as Manual Content Analysis (MCA), Ethnographic Summaries, and NVIVO among others.

In Text Question

The tools used in quantitative and qualitative data analysis have being differentiated in study session 5.4, try differentiating them which the kind of tools they used.

In Text Answer

Qualitative data are analyzed using different approaches such as Manual Content Analysis (MCA), Ethnographic Summaries, and NVIVO etc while quantitative data uses analytical packages such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Epi-info among others.

5.5 Write-up/Data Presentation

Again data analysis will not tell much of the story except to the researcher. Writing up the research is commonly referred to as data presentation, presumably to the community of sociologists expected to access the study through conferences, journal articles, symposia, workshops, books and seminars among other avenues.

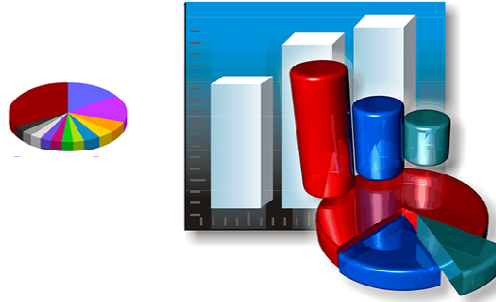


Figure 5.5: Data Presentation

Therefore, the presenter must take pain and efforts to ensure that what is presented makes sense both for immediate discourse and policy formulation.

Data presentation offers the researcher the opportunity to juxtapose data collected from the field with some views from literature, the theory adopted and personal views in arriving at a position on an issue. The combination of these four elements (data, literature, theory and researcher's view) necessitates robust discussion.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

Often time, the researcher discovers that s/he was not able to cover all aspects of a phenomenon in terms of physical space, issues or subjects and time/period due to challenges ranging from finance, personnel and time.

This may be considered as limitation(s) of the study. The implication of such limitation is that obvious gaps exist that would need addressing; identifying and stating these indicate truthfulness, insight and humility of the researcher (for it is difficult for some people to say that the study could not do it all).

However, in some cases when the gaps are not reported, it may mean poor research vision (ignorance) rather than pride. The main advantage of reporting gaps is that it enables other researchers build on the achievements of the earlier study.

In Text Question

The researcher discovers that s/he was not able to cover all aspects of a phenomenon in terms of physical space, issues or subjects and time/period due to challenges ranging from which type of challenges?

In Text Answer

The challenges range from finance, personnel and time.

Summary

In Study Session 5, you have learnt that:

1. Research is not a haphazard venture but rather a carefully conceptualized activity.
2. Fieldwork is one of the distinguishing qualities of sociological studies. For the sociologist, field exists wherever we have information that could aid understanding of human society no matter how restricted the space may be.
3. Data collection will not make meaning without analyzing it. Depending on the level at which these data are analyzed, analysis enables the researcher tell the story.
4. Writing up the research is commonly referred to as data presentation, presumably to the community of sociologists expected to access the study through conferences, journal articles, symposia etc.
5. Sociological theories are numerous and are sources of research conceptualization. Apart from the general theories of Sociology, most others are sub-disciplinary specific – medical, demography, development, criminology, industrial Sociology among others.
6. Literature review relies on findings from literature and what scholars have already done to conceptualize research. The purpose in this case is usually to identify gaps which the prospective research will aim at bridging thereby enabling the researcher contribute to knowledge.
7. Writing a proposal is usually preceded by conceptualization of a working topic for a planned project. It is meant to convey preliminary insight into what the researcher intends to do in a large scale later on.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 5

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 5.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.1)

Discuss the process of conceptualization of sociological research.

SAQ 5.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.2)

Explain the importance of proposal writing and its components.

SAQ 5.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.3)

Explain how fieldwork is carried out.

SAQ 5.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 5.4)

Clearly state what is expected in data presentation

Study Session 6 Quantitative Research



Introduction

Quantitative research is one of the methods through which primary data are collected. Primary data are those collected from the person(s) or things being studied directly by the researcher or his/her assistants. Secondary data on the other hand involve collecting data that already exist in form of reports, literature, documents among others. It should be noted that quantitative research is mainly undertaken using questionnaires.

This study session will focus on the Research Setting, Research Design, and Concepts such as Population, Sampling, Sample Size and Sampling Frame among others, Questionnaire Data, Probability and Non-Probability Sampling Techniques.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 6.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in **bold** (SAQ 6.1)
- 6.2 Describe how best to choose a Research Setting (SAQ 6.2)
- 6.3 Describe Research Design (SAQ 6.3)
- 6.4 Explain the Concepts such as Population, Sampling, Sample Size and Sampling Frame among others (SAQ 6.4)
- 6.5 Explain the Probability and Non-Probability Sampling Techniques in details (SAQ 6.5)

6.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is one of the methods through which primary data are collected. It should be noted that quantitative research is mainly undertaken using questionnaires. It is most suitable for studies that involve several respondents which may require

understanding the percent and attitude of community members about certain phenomena which would not be fully captured by a few research subjects.

It is important to emphasize that use of questionnaires as a data collection tool in situations where few respondents are involved is wrong and would culminate in bad set of data and meaningless results. Clearly, other data collection approaches such as In-depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews among others would be more appropriate in such circumstances.



Figure 6.1: Quantitative Research

When a researcher had decided to employ the quantitative technique – a decision that should be determined by the nature of study, s/he is meant to be guided in the field by a set of activities that will enable him/her achieve validity and reliability of data.

In Text Question

From your study far you that there two main sources of data, which of these sources of data is used in quantitative research, which tool is used to collect the data and why is that particular tool used?

In Text Answer

Quantitative research uses primary data collection; it is mainly undertaken using questionnaires. It is most suitable for studies that involve several respondents which may require understanding the percent and attitude of community members about certain phenomena which would not be fully captured by a few research subjects.

6.2 Choosing a research setting

Questionnaires are not to be administered in a vacuum. No matter how adequately designed, the essence of the instrument is mainly appreciated when it is administered in locations that are appropriate to the title of a research. For instance, it would amount to waste of resources for a researcher intending to understand the ecological, biological and social effects of gas flaring on Niger Delta residents to administer questionnaires on Abuja or Ibadan inhabitants.

Therefore, choosing a study area is critical to undertaking effective quantitative research. To be sure, such choice must be driven by certain characteristics that will make the

setting uniquely qualified as the destination of choice. In that case, the researcher is expected to convey such idiosyncrasies to his/her audience.

6.3 Research design

This simply implies the work plan or the framework for carrying out fieldwork. Although several research designs exist the researcher is expected, having appraised the research context, to choose the most suitable for the purpose.

Wrong choice negatively affects the quality and quantity of data, the results and the entire outcome, simply because the foundation was faulty. Conversely, adequate choice of research design makes predictability feasible and the process smooth.

6.4 Sampling procedure

Researchers are usually limited by time, finance and personnel and therefore not able to include every element in a population as respondents. The process of selecting some individuals from the population (N) to form the sample (n) is referred to as **sampling**. The individuals or elements chosen are referred to as **sample**, which is the sub-set of the **population**.

When appropriately selected the sample become a microcosm or adequate representation of the population. The purpose of explaining this important component of research is for the student to again understand that their actions must be guided by the phenomenon to be investigated and the context in which research is to take place.

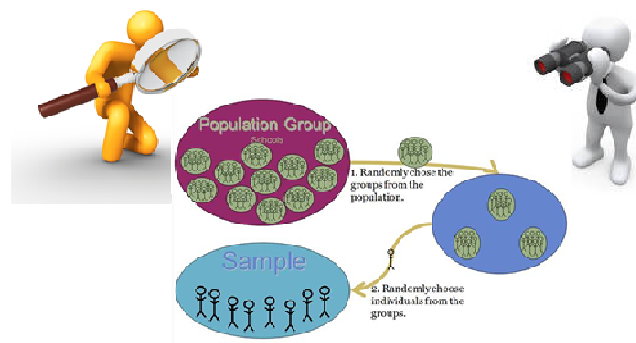


Figure 6.2: Sampling

The two main sampling methods are probability and non-probability sampling techniques, each of them having sub-units. We want to make it clear from the beginning that it would be erroneous to assume that any of these methods or sub-components is better than the other(s). Situations rather define or enable the researcher determine which to employ.

This ability to make appropriate decisions regarding data collection techniques distinguishes social scientists and sociologists in particular from other fieldworkers that

emphasize less rigor in arriving at such crucial decision that affect the quality of data that researcher collects. We now examine the two main sampling techniques

6.4.1 Probability Sampling

This method is best described as the technique whereby selection of respondents for a study is mainly driven by the process. As such, the researcher ideally does not have enormous power to influence selection of the sample. Thus, the selection activity is largely guided by fairness, equity and non-biasness. The four probability methods are briefly discussed:

Simple random sampling – you should know that simple random and systematic sampling techniques can only be adopted using a sampling frame which is the list of all the elements in a population to be studied. In some cases, especially formal groups, these lists are available and the researcher finds it easy to work with. School registers, staff list among others can become sampling frames.

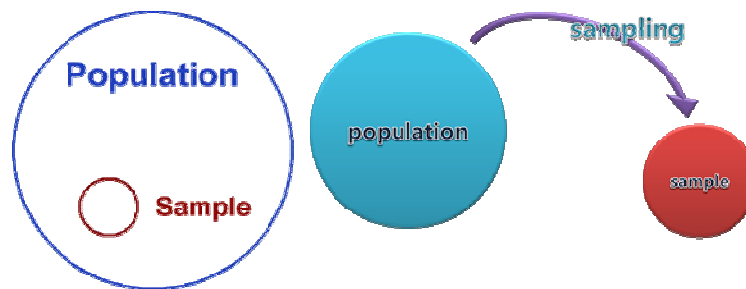


Figure 6.3: Sampling

In other instances, where the list does not exist common among informal organizations; what should the researcher do? Two options are open to the researcher – opt for another method which does not require such list or s/he could undertake the listing by him/herself.

Assuming the population of a study is 20,000 and the proposed sample size is 800, using a simple random method the researcher could use a series of approaches including balloting in form of writing numbers 1- 20,000 in pieces of papers, folding them, shuffling in a bowl and picking out any 800 from the pool. Going back to the list, those selected would be identified to form the sample.

The most important point that students should note about this technique is that what distinguishes it from others is that every element in the population would have equal chances of being selected into the sample.

Systematic Sampling – as the name suggests, this method emphasizes predictability and some form of order. Again as noted earlier sampling frame is a prerequisite for using this approach. Instead of listing 1- 20,000, it is rather 1 – 10 (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10) and any of

the numbers picked through balloting would be used as the selection interval. For instance assuming that 3 was picked it then means that 3, 13, 23, 33, 43, 53, 63, 73, 83, 93, 103 in that order would be selected to generate the sample of 800.

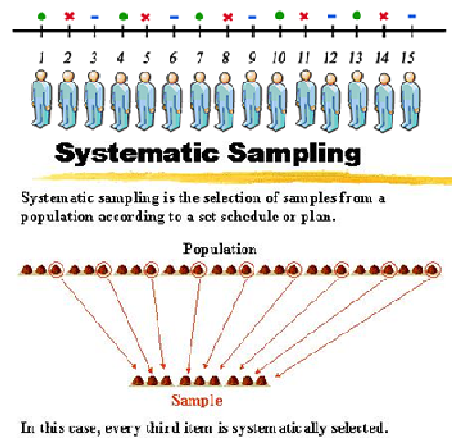


Figure 6.4: Systematic Sampling

It may also be that the 3s available would not make up the sample size; in that case a second round of balloting would become necessary but this time with only nine numbers and excluding the one already used.

Through this repeat process, it is most likely that the target number would be reached and the procedure terminates at that. The temptation of overshooting the sample size should not arise simply because the repeat procedure is undertaken; if that happens, it amounts to procedural recklessness which is not acceptable in sociological studies.

Cluster Sampling – in employing this method and the stratified technique researchers most times would need to further adopt methods such as simple and/or systematic approaches. The reason is simple; the sampling process is not over until the prospective respondents receive the questionnaire schedule.

For the most part cluster sampling is used in ensuring that spatial areas are delineated for inclusiveness.

We must also bear in mind at this point that the method is employed for studies that involve a large area. For instance, a study that focuses on Ibadan composed of 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and classified as the largest in West Africa would necessitate the adoption of cluster technique. If this is not so, the tendency may be that just an LGA or two might be used for the study; emergent results would not be a true reflection of Ibadan.

However, to ensure that every part of Ibadan is represented in the sample, the researcher may designate these LGAs as clusters. Even when only some parts of the area are to be

studied, clustering will help the researcher identify demarcations that will enable him/her take appropriate decisions regarding what next step to take.

Another example is a researcher clustering Nigeria into 6 geo-political zones for a nationwide study, with each zone represented in the sample either on the basis of proportion of population or equal numbers depending on the justification.

Again, a study on university of Ibadan undergraduates may require the researcher to cluster these students by faculties. Notice that at this point, the respondents would not have received the research tool or even know that such activity is taking place. That was why some other method(s) must be used in reaching the subjects.

Stratified sampling – what motivates the researcher to decide on this method in that the research group should be hierarchically organized? Again, formal groups are good examples of where stratified sampling can be undertaken. The aim is to have individuals in each stratum represented in the sample.

For instance a study on university of Ibadan lecturers should best be undertaken by stratifying these lecturers by ranks starting from professor, senior lecturer, lecturer and assistant lecturer with a view to eliciting all shades of opinions.

Students are to note that without identifying these strata and drawing part of the sample from each, one or two levels may be unduly overrepresented and would not truly reflect the views of university of Ibadan lecturers. With that stage over, the researcher could then adopt another approach such as simple random or systematic techniques to complete the process of questionnaire distribution.

Similarly, a study on undergraduate students of Sociology Department at the University of Lagos would necessitate that these students be stratified by their academic levels to avoid bias for one level over others and to ensure representativeness. The lesson to draw from these examples is that without clear hierarchical demarcations, it would be unnecessary to employ the stratified method of sampling.

6.4.2 The Non-Probability Technique

This is almost the opposite of the probability method. In using this method, the researcher can exhibit enormous power in deciding who the respondents should be. S/he is not as constrained as when employing the probability technique. Consequently, the researcher can undertake sample selection purely on bias and emotions particularly if s/he is not committed to ethical principles.

We are to note that though this approach seems to have some demerits over the other method, there are phenomena and contexts that leave the researcher no other option. We discuss briefly the specific methods:

Purposive/judgmental – in adopting this method, the researcher is at liberty to select respondents for a study based on personal judgment of the situation and the prospective research subject. However, this freedom of choice is checked by the fact that the purpose of such selection must be clearly stated to enable other researcher assess its appropriateness.

For instance, a research that aims at investigating the factors influencing university administration in Southwestern Nigeria may necessitate the purposive selection of university administrators in the area as constituents of the sample.

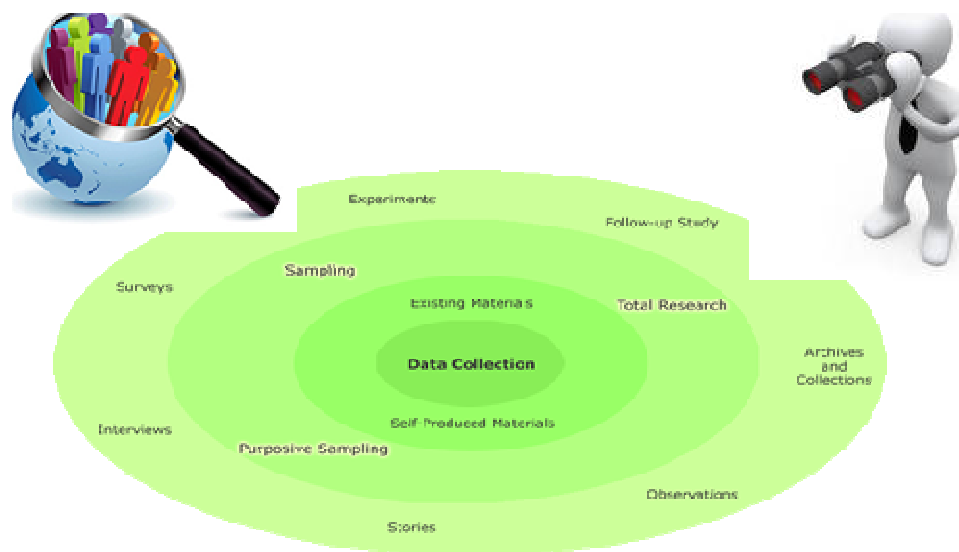


Figure 6.5: Purposive Sampling

The purpose of this selection would be acceptable to the community of sociologists given that these administrators would have more knowledge of the phenomenon than virtually all other groups. The same reason applies to a study that intends to examine the causes of incessant unrest among students in Nigeria’s North Central States.

Beyond the fact that the choice of the area of study is almost automatic, the researcher would also be expected to select students as respondents and not Imams or Pastors or Physicians among others who may not have adequate knowledge of what drives these students’ actions. Although these religious leaders and professionals may have some information on the subject matter; that would largely be based on rumors or hearsay which undermines the whole idea of empiricism.

Convenience/accidental – naturally human beings would strive to maximize comfort and minimize pain or stress. Convenience sampling is the procedure whereby the researcher generates data with minimal stress.

Let us demonstrate how this is mainly carried out by trying to give one or two examples. Consider a study among University of Ilorin students and which the researcher just gets to the campus gate or auditorium and starts distributing questionnaires to every student on sight.

You can agree that the fieldworker may generate enormous amount of data within a short period of time. Again, the researcher may get to a General Studies class and distribute say about 950 questionnaires and retrieve these in 15 minutes while these students are waiting for their lecturer. The distribution may also be among a crowd of soccer spectators waiting for the commencement of a football match.

If you examine the above scenario carefully, you will notice that the process is largely convenient as a large quantity of questionnaires, in the above example 950 would almost certainly be collected in 15 minutes if each of the students was to submit his/her questionnaire schedule back to the researcher.

The same number of questionnaires would take about one month for another researcher who chooses to undertake a simple random or systematic technique. In which case, each of the respondents would be filling the questionnaire in separate 15 minutes.

Therefore, if we multiply 950 by 15, we will be arriving at 14,250 minutes. However, as noted before the choice of the convenience method must not be driven by perceived ease but the nature of data and the context.

Quota Sampling – sometimes percentages or proportions are assigned to groups within a population for the purposes of data collection. This method is usually employed when groups or sub-units are not relatively equal in terms of strength and endowment and would therefore translate to marginalization if merit should be emphasized in selecting respondents. In order to accommodate all segments of the population, quotas are assigned to each part.

Snowball technique – in countries with severe winter, icy snows cover the entire surface of the earth during the season. At that time, sports such as skiing and snowballing are easy to engage in. Imagine you are going up high on a mountain with a ball and dropping it to roll down uninhibited.

The picture you will see is that of a ball that keeps increasing as it rolls down though now covered with snows; the more it rolls the more snows it gathers. This is also a principle used in collecting data for sociological analysis.



Figure 6.6: Snowball Sampling

When do you think this sampling method should be employed? The most appropriate time to adopt this method is in investigating phenomena among hard to reach groups. For instance, conducting research among prostitutes, drug addicts, homosexuals, cultists among others would ordinarily necessitate the use of this technique.

Thus, identification of one person will lead to clues on how and where to locate the next person and through this approach the number will keep increasing. It is a method that is used more for criminological studies even though other sub-fields of Sociology such as demography and medical Sociology also employ it.

It is important to note that the choice of any of these methods should be based on the type of data that the researcher intends to generate as well as the research focus and coverage. Therefore, it will be erroneous to assume that any of these is better than another or others, since choice of a method to use should largely be dependent on the context.

Indeed, depending on the complexity of the phenomenon being investigated, a triangulation of methods could be adopted. This mixture could be at the level of inter or intra method.

Sample Size: A sample is a sub-set of a population. Ideally, it should be the microcosm (representation of the population) of the universe or population. The sample size is therefore the number of individuals/persons drawn from the population. Sample size should not be determined haphazardly but calculated on the basis of the size of the total population.

In Text Question

How can you differentiate between probability and non-probability sampling techniques?

In Text Answer

Probability sampling technique is best described as the technique whereby selection of respondents for a study is mainly driven by the process. As such, the researcher ideally does not have enormous power to influence selection of the sample. Thus, the selection activity is largely guided by fairness, equity and non-biasness while a non-probability sampling technique is almost the opposite of the probability method.

In using this method, the researcher can exhibit enormous power in deciding who the respondents should be. S/he is not as constrained as when employing the probability technique.

6.5 Questionnaires

Designing Questionnaires: This should be a well thought-out activity. Three major issues are to be considered in designing a good questionnaire – layout, content and format. A questionnaire schedule that is lacking in any of these is defective and would most likely not enable the researcher generate robust and quality for meaningful analysis.



Figure 6.7: Questionnaire

Administering Questionnaires: This may be undertaken personally by the researcher or delegated to Research Assistants: who are supposed to be trained adequately to understand the issues relevant to the research activity.

Sometimes, the respondents are allowed the liberty to fill these questionnaires especially if they are sufficiently literate to do so. In other cases, the fieldworker reads and interprets the content to the illiterate respondent. In administering questionnaires, the researcher is expected to observe the ethical issues guiding social science research.

Procedure for Analyzing Quantitative Data: analysis is preceded by data entry which could be done with different packages including Epi-info, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) among others.

Usually, analysis proceeds from the simple to the complex. For instance, univariate analysis which involves frequencies and percentages is the most basic of analysis. The bivariate could be in form of Chi-square and T-test, while the highest level of analysis deals with the multivariate such as the logistic regression.

In Text Question

Study session 6.5 deals with questionnaires; designing questionnaires, administering questionnaires, procedure for analyzing quantitative data: In designing a questionnaire what are those schedules that must not be lacking and would most likely enable the researcher generate robust and quality for meaningful analysis.

In Text Answer

Three major issues are to be considered in designing a good questionnaire are layout, content and format. A questionnaire schedule that is lacking in any of these is defective and would most likely not enable the researcher generate robust and quality for meaningful analysis.

Summary

In Study Session 6, you have learnt that:

1. Quantitative research is one of the methods through which primary data are collected. Primary data are those collected from the person(s) or things being studied directly by the researcher or his/her assistants. It should be noted that quantitative research is mainly undertaken using questionnaires.
2. Secondary data on the other hand involve collecting data that already exist in form of reports, literature, documents among others.
3. It is important to emphasize that use of questionnaires as a data collection tool in situations where few respondents are involved is wrong and would culminate in bad set of data and meaningless results.
4. This simply implies the work plan or the framework for carrying out fieldwork. Although several research designs exist the researcher is expected, having appraised the research context, to choose the most suitable for the purpose.
5. Research design simply implies the work plan or the framework for carrying out fieldwork. Although several research designs exist the researcher is expected, having appraised the research context, to choose the most suitable for the purpose.
6. The process of selecting some individuals from the population (N) to form the sample (n) is referred to as sampling. The individuals or elements chosen are referred to as sample, which is the sub-set of the population.
7. Probability Sampling is method is best described as the technique whereby selection of respondents for a study is mainly driven by the process.
8. The Non-Probability Technique is almost the opposite of the probability method. In using this method, the researcher can exhibit enormous power in deciding who the respondents should be. S/he is not as constrained as when employing the probability technique.

9. Simple random and systematic sampling techniques can only be adopted using a sampling frame which is the list of all the elements in a population to be studied.
10. Convenience sampling is the procedure whereby the researcher generates data with minimal stress.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 6

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 6.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.1)

Discuss how best to choose a research setting.

SAQ 6.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.2)

According to this study, how will you define Research design?

SAQ 6.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.3)

Explain the following

- Population
- Sampling
- Sample Size

SAQ 6.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 6.4)

Outline the process of designing, administering and analyzing questionnaire.

Study Session 7 : Quantitative Research

Introduction

In Sociology, quantitative research refers to the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical or numerical data or computational techniques. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena.

The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships.

This study session will focus on the focus group discussion (FGD) and how FGD sessions are best organized, how in-depth interviews (IDIs).

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

7.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in **bold** (SAQ 7.1)

7.2 Explain Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and how FGD sessions are best organized (SAQ 7.2)

7.3 Describe how In-depth Interviews (IDIs) are conducted (SAQ 7.3)

7.1 Introduction to Qualitative Research

To the uninitiated, qualitative research implies more quality than the quantitative method. This assumption is not in a way correct; the concepts are rather used to differentiate the two data collection approaches. Thus, the question of which is better does not arise. Some of the qualitative research tools are:

7.1.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

This method of data collection is employed when the researcher intends to generate data from a group of carefully selected people usually referred to as participants or discussants; they are not respondents and should not be so designated. Let us examine the elements of FGD:



Figure 7.1: Focus Group Discussion

Number of participants: The number of persons to take part in an FGD session is 6-12 discussants. If the number is as few as 2 or 3, the purpose of generating varied view on an issue would be defeated; in some circumstances, the researcher could manage doing FGD with 5 participants only. On the other hand, numbers above twelve will make the group unmanageable in terms of time and rowdiness.

In Text Question

After going through study session 7.1.1 when do you think FGD should be used?

In Text Answer

The FGD data collection is employed when the researcher intends to generate data from a group of carefully selected people usually referred to as participants or discussants; they are not respondents and should not be so designated.

Length of time: it is prescribed that about 1 hour should be used in conducting an FGD. We need to underscore 'about', which means that it may not be exactly an hour. Thus, a little less or a little more than that is acceptable. It is essential to be guided by this time limit to forestall endlessness during these sessions.

Tape recording: since a group of people will engage in the discussions, it may be difficult to be able hand write proceedings. Therefore the use of tape recorders is recommended to enable the facilitator concentrate on moderation of the session. Although use of tape recorders is the standard practice, the moderator would need to seek the permission of the discussants before s/he proceeds to use the equipment. Agitations may arise about the use of tape recorders among discussants.



Figure 7.2: Tape Recorder

The facilitator should let the participants know that there would not be any harm in using the tape recorder since names of discussants are not to be mentioned when contributions are made. It is important to point out that sometimes tape recorders for some technical reasons fail; this is usually psychologically devastating. It is therefore safer to have back-ups in order to forestall such a mishap of unquantifiable magnitude.

Seating arrangement: usually, FGD participants seat in a semi-circular arrangement. The purpose of this setting is for each discussant to be able to see the face of others considering that it is not conventional to discuss looking at somebody's back. In communication studies, eye contacts facilitate easy follow of information.

Homogeneity of participants: the concept of homogeneity relates to sameness of participants. The similarity may not necessarily be in terms of height, size, and eye color and so on unless these are the phenomena examined. Homogeneity in FGD session composition should be dependent on what is being investigated; it could be profession, age, sex, educational qualification, occupation, place of residence among others.

For instance, if a study is based on market women and information should derive from their experiences, the uniting factor that would define their homogeneity is being a market woman. Hence, market men, nurses and farmers would not be expected to be in the group, just like a banker would not be expected to belong to a group made up of Engineers; examples are endless.

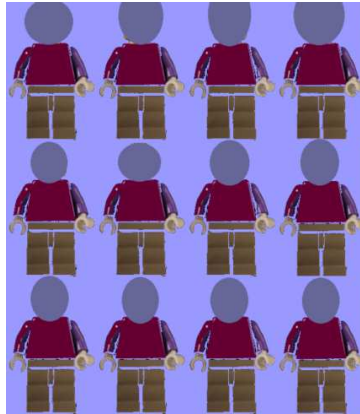


Figure 7.3: Homogeneity

The major advantage of ensuring such similarities is that every participant is fairly relatively knowledgeable about the phenomenon of focus. Think of a situation where a medical issue is to be discussed and physicians and lawyers are lumped in a group.

The physicians can say anything and maintain it since the lawyers would not be able to understand the issues. But if the group were homogenous, then misinformation by a member or two is quickly pointed out and countered by others who are as informed.

Moreover, people of dissimilar characteristics may find it difficult to speak out in the midst of others. For instance, adolescents would find it extremely difficult to discuss sexuality with adults and joining them in a group with these elders will undermine an FGD session; all of them have to be adolescents of the same sex to ensure good discussion session.

Introduction: This entails a brief pleasantry meant to familiarize the participants with the subject matter that the study intends to examine and the expectations of the researcher. It is at this point that the consent of these discussants is solicited.

Ice-breaking: Often researchers undertake fieldwork among people they are not familiar with. The usual immediate consequence is that discussants may be skeptical about the motive of the research and would likely freeze-up or be cold towards the researcher in a bid to fully understand the purpose of the FGD.

In order to avoid prolonged coldness the researcher will do well to introduce a discussion that will interest the discussants but quite unconnected with the main research issue. For instance, if the group is made up of young people especially boys who in his/her estimation would be interested in English Premier League (EPL), it would not be out of place to begin discussion around that.



Figure 7.4: Ice Breaking

If that sufficiently catches their attention, which is likely, then the researcher is on the verge of having a robust FGD session underway. This strategy makes the prospective participants relax to engage the issues.

Facilitator/moderator: The success or failure of an FGD session depends largely on the skills and competences of the facilitator. S/he is expected to seat at the edge/end of the semi-circle together with the participants to indicate closeness to the group. We shall take more on the issue of closeness when we discuss ‘distance’ later on. The moderator must not have favorites but must be able to carry everybody along. Our experience of group membership is that individuals have different characteristics such as being extroverts, introverts and eccentric.



Figure 7.5: Moderator

The moderator is expected to balance these characters in the course of an FGD session. For instance, one or two extroverts in the group may exhibit exceedingly domineering attitude by attempting to respond to all issues, yet introverts may want to withdraw from the discussions.

If that happens, the essence of convening the group of 6-12 individuals would have been defeated since probably only two people provided the insights. Therefore, the moderator would do well by politely tempering the extroverts while at the same time encouraging the shy person(s) to speak-up. That way a balance is achieved.

Note taker/taking: the first question that comes to mind when students hear that a note taker is an important person for the success of an FGD session is whether the tape-recorder would not be able to capture every discussion. More than that, what the note taker who is not expected to make any verbal contributions to the discourse does is to note those things that the tape-recorder would not capture.

Those include gestures, signs, symbols and body languages that are not verbal. For instance, a participant who may want to make some revelation could be shut-up by mere wiping of a finger in the air or shaking of the head by fellow discussant(s) to indicate the 'please do not continue' message.



Figure 7.6: Note Taking

I want you to know that the sign may be the only or main information that would be most beneficial to the research and not getting to the root would mean a quantum of information lost. Such situation should necessitate a follow-up with the participant that wanted to make the statement for further engagement. Please note that the note-taker seats directly opposite the facilitator but away from the semi-circle; the reason for this positioning is to enable both the moderator and note-taker have eye-contacts as and when necessary.

Distance is not necessary: creating a distance between the facilitator and participants undermines the credibility of an FGD session. Distance does not necessarily relate to physical space but manifests in different forms including language, dressing among others. Remember the discussion on homogeneity; that should apply to some degree to the moderator.

It is recommended that the facilitator should speak the language of the participants during a session – if a group of illiterate farmers constitute a group, it would be anti-communicational to conduct the session in Queen's English. If that happens, the researcher will likely end the process not generating data for his/her analysis.



Figure 7.7: Distance is not necessary

The complaint may be that the facilitator is not proficient in the people's vernacular. Should that be the case, the facilitator is encouraged to train somebody that can speak the language to facilitate the session – s/he would still be the researcher. Let us note that when FGDs are conducted in languages other than English, translation into English will be required before analysis takes place.

It is advised that a competent translator be engaged to ensure that mistranslations do not occur. This point needs to be underscored because poorly translated scripts could reconfigure the whole idea of the study and must be guarded against.

The other aspect that relates to dressing is also very important. It will be awkward to dress in jeans while conducting FGD among bankers known for formal dressing. The same thing would not be said when the discussion is to be facilitated among Engineers most of whom are very comfortable in jeans.

The point being made is that the facilitator should not look different from the discussants; dissimilarity will impede flow of information arising from a feeling of alienation among participants.

In Text Question

In study session 7.1.1 different elements of FGD were listed and explained, which of the elements is used in order to avoid prolonged coldness the researcher, then mention the remain elements.

In Text Answer

Ice breaker is used in order to avoid prolonged coldness the researcher will do well to introduce a discussion that will interest the discussants but quite unconnected with the main research issue.

The other elements include: note taker, Distance is not necessary, introduction, ice breaker, Homogeneity of participants, moderator, and length of time, seat arrangement, and tape recording.

7.1.2 FGD Guide

This contains pieces of information used by the moderator as a reminder for the issues set out for discussion. Without making use of this tool, the tendency is high that some important items may be forgotten process. Moreover, it helps the moderator organize the discussion systematically. The guide contains both lead and probe questions.

Lead and Probe Questions: Every study must have specific objectives which guide data collection. Questions and enquiries are meant to elicit responses that enable understanding of these objectives. Broad questions on specific objectives are known as **Lead Questions**, while the ones that aim at latently persuading participants to engage issues that needed to are known as **Probe Questions**.

For example if a lead question on governance of the state reads thus; *‘To what extent has Oyo state government provided social amenities to the citizenry?’*

Assuming this is the lead question, the researcher would have in mind various type of amenities including roads, schools, health facilities, water and electricity among others. Therefore, s/he will expect the discussants to talk about these; if they do not mention a facility like schools and/or roads, they should then be probed on these.



Figure 7.8: Probe Question

Probing is a kind of reminding the participants about what they would have failed to mention with a view to having a comprehensive discussion on the issues. We need to note that probe questions are not meant to be long but should consist of few words. Using the instance above, the probe would read like this: What of schools? or How about roads? This probe will usually spark-off another round of discussions.

Recap: some FGD sessions are simple, less rowdy and consensus is easily achieved. By contrast, others are complex, very noisy and characterized by dissension. With the latter, the essence of having a recap cannot be overstated. Recapping will entail that the facilitator goes through the major issues seeking to know whether a consensus could be struck. For instance, if a hitherto dissenting voice(s) keeps quite in the course of the recap which reads thus ‘we all agreed that ...’ it could be taken as shift in position by former opposition. However, we should not assume that consensus must be reached on all issues.

Closing/appreciation: After the recap, the facilitator should then bring the session to a close by appreciating the participants earnestly, for without them the session would not

hold. But the question is, should they be given gratifications such as money, gifts and other things.

Ethically speaking gratification is not allowed, however the researcher who had brought people from distant places to participate in an FGD should be able to give them a token to pay for transport back home; they could also given light refreshments. At the time of doing these, the session would have been completely over to the extent that the participants would not in any way have been influenced by these appreciations.



Figure 7.9: Appreciation

Leaving these discussants like orphans simply because you are in custody of the data may be harmful in the long-run. Remember that you may need them again; and even if the person would not need their help in due course, other researchers will.

So closing that door is not sensible. The advantages of these methods over others include that views are generated from a variety of persons and ensuring checks and balances related to authenticity of positions or claims – falsehood is easy to detect.

In Text Question

A part of study session 7.1.2 discusses the different types of ways of asking question, in your words differentiate between lead and probe questions.

In Text Answer

Broad questions on specific objectives are known as **Lead Questions**, while the ones that aim at latently persuading participants to engage issues that needed to are known as **Probe Questions**.

7.1.3 In-depth Interview (IDI)

Quite unlike the FGD, IDI involves only two actors – the researcher and the respondent. The criterion for selecting the latter is his/her vast knowledge of the phenomenon to be investigated.

Indeed, the interviewee must be sufficiently knowledgeable about the issues to be able to supply in-depth information that is not common. As we noted in the section on FGD, the

interviewer must be guided by the objectives of the study; it is not a jamboree. Let us examine a few issues on conduct of IDI:



Figure 7.10: In-depth Interview

Duration: Like the FGD in-depth interview lasts for about one hour. This time frame would appear short for a respondent that is knowledgeable on the issues for discussion. On the other hand, it would seem very lengthy for a less knowledgeable interviewee who may be exhausted in too short a time.

Interview setting: It is expected that IDI takes place in a serene environment that is devoid of distractions. Conducting IDI in a bus-stop or stadium during a football match is not ideal, just like conducting it in a sitting room with several young children around that may need the attention of parents intermittently.

Interview Guide: The researcher also needs a guide to enable him/her organize the interview session effectively. We are to note that questions that start with phrases such as ‘do you think...’ or ‘is it true that...’ will lead to answer like ‘yes I do’, ‘no I don’t’ or ‘yes’, ‘no’ respectively.

These answers are abrupt due to the nature of the questions; the needed depth would be, to say the least, grossly lacking. The researcher must dig deep in in-depth interviews using open-ended questions that enable the interviewee discuss issues extensively.

Digging deep: The way to dig deep is to approach the process from the elaborate to the narrow, what has been described as the funnel strategy. One important mechanism that will enable the researcher actually dig deep is attentive listening. The difference between interviewers that listen carefully and those that do not is that, the former are able to generate more and more questions, whereas the latter are lost agonizing on the next issues to rise.



Figure 7.11: Digging Deep

Ideally, the researcher that knows the first question to ask looking at a particular objective may not know the next and subsequent questions until the interviewee responds. In other words, other questions will emerge from the responses made by the respondent. Most times, we hear the researcher tell the respondent ‘you said ...’ (from an earlier statement) and the interview continues. One can only say that by listening attentively.

This process of ‘you said...’ can go on and on until the researcher is satisfied that there are no further issues to discuss on the objective before leaving it for another. By then, the depth would have been established. What this scenario suggests is that a researcher that goes into an interview session with just four questions in the interview guide may end up asking forty or more questions through extensive interrogation of the issues.

Language: There is no specific language for conducting IDIs. Therefore, whatever language that the interviewee is proficient in should be respected. Just like we discussed in the section on FGD, vernacular is acceptable provided the researcher fully understands such local dialect. If not, the researcher should engage an assistant to conduct the interview on his/her behalf.

For instance, no Nigerian researcher can claim to understand the over 350 languages spoken in Nigeria, yet effective fieldwork can be conducted in these locations by proxy. We are to note, however, that when engaging an assistant, a short training exercise should be undertaken so that nothing is lost by delegating it to another person.

In Text Question

Study session 7.1.3 talks about two actors in IDI and how the respondent is selected, explain who the actors and how the respondent is selected.

In Text Answer

IDI involves only two actors – the researcher and the respondent. The criterion for selecting the latter is his/her vast knowledge of the phenomenon to be investigated.

7.1.4 Key Informant Interview (KII)

Often times, researchers claim that there is no major difference between in-depth interviews and key informant interviews; this assumption is not very correct. For instance, whereas the criterion for selection of an IDI respondent is knowledge of the issues, a KII respondent is selected based on access to key information. A key informant may not necessarily have adequate knowledge about a particular issue under examination.



Figure 7.12: Key Informant Interview

Let us illustrate this difference by giving an example. A researcher that sets out to carry out a study among student prostitutes may not know where to begin in locating the actors for data collection.

Key informants in this case would be people that will give the fieldworker clues about where best to locate the prostitutes on campus, the most appropriate time to look for them among other things that can give direction. Porters, pimps and student executives could become informants as the case may be. That information are key; without such clues, it would be difficult to identify the targets since prostitution is not written on the fore-head.

By contrast IDI respondents would be persons that know and understand the nitty-gritty of prostitution ranging from initiation processes, language of the sub-group, mechanisms for wooing prospective members and individual motives for becoming a member of the sub-culture.

These important details may be alien to the key informant. Consequently, most KII sessions do not last for up to one hour and would require that other methods such as IDI, FGD, case-study and so be carried out with the cases identified through KII.

Case Study: Is one of the commonly misused concepts in social science research. Often when a choice of research setting or location is made it is thought to be appropriate to use the term even when the procedure does not suggest that. To case-study supposes that a detailed inquiry/examination/investigation of a group, organization or thing to be studied must be done. In that case, a comprehensive investigation that may require periodic

appraisal of the context is essential with the view to relating the phenomenon to events in different times in history.



Figure 7.13: Case Study

Another approach to case study is comparing two groups of similar characteristics, for instance in the banking industry. In that case, the best rated and the worst rated banks would be selected as cases for comparative analysis.

Again, it will involve in-depth investigation of the two banks on several aspects of engagement such as date of establishment, capital base, management team, fringe benefits, remunerations, customer care, healthcare packages, appointment and promotion, maternity care benefits, pension scheme among other policies over time. Analyzing these and other issues will reveal the factors that contributed to the status of each of the banks.

Observation: Two known types are used for sociological and anthropological research – participant and non-participant observations. However, while the former is common to anthropology, the latter employed by sociologists and other social scientists.

Non-participant observation is like taking a snapshot of events which does not necessarily have to take place over a long period of time. In this case, the observer would not need to be acculturated into the group's way of life to elicit the data s/he needs.

It is advisable to undertake such observation with a checklist of things to observe since it is not possible to take note of every aspect of a people's culture within a short time that the exercise will last. Without a checklist, the observer may eventually discover that s/he did not access all necessary information to enable her/him undertake a comprehensive analysis of a given situation.

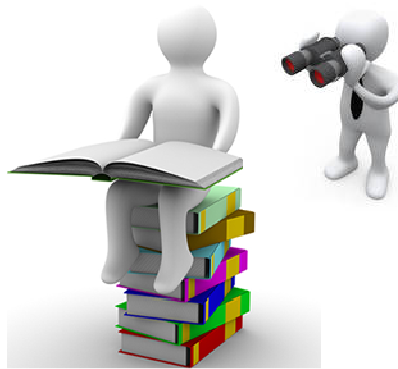


Figure 7.13: Observation

By contrast, participant observation takes much longer time to complete. In some instances, the observer spends up to ten years and above carrying out the study. Within the period, the researcher is expected to be fully acculturated into the group or sub-group being studied in terms of language, costume, food, beliefs, traditions to the extent that s/he would no longer be perceived as an outside.

We need to note that the main advantage of this tool over the participant observation is that data generated are concrete and largely valid. However, the observer may be carried away by the ways of life of the group studied and may stick with it and not turning back to his/her original culture; several examples abound.

In Text Question

What is the difference you have learnt between IDI and key informant interview (KII) after going through this study session?

In Text Question

The criterion for selection of an IDI respondent is knowledge of the issue, a KII respondent is selected based on access to key information. A key informant may not necessarily have adequate knowledge about a particular issue under examination.

Secondary sources of data: secondary data are those that already exist in form of reports, documents, literature and statistics found in libraries, museums, archives among other places. They are strictly speaking not collected directly from study subjects but are usually information that already exists. While some studies rely on secondary data only, others complement them with primary data. The combination of methods also described as triangulation is common among sociologists.

In Text Question

In your own words explain secondary sources of data that you have learnt in study session 7.1.4.

In Text Answer

Secondary data are those that already exist in form of reports, documents, literature and statistics found in libraries, museums, archives among other places.

Summary

In Study Session 7, you have learnt that:

1. This method of data collection is employed when the researcher intends to generate data from a group of carefully selected people usually referred to as participants or discussants is referred to as Focus Group Discussion (FGD).
2. The elements of FGD include: No of participants, Tape recording, Length of time, Sitting arrangement, Homogeneity of participants, Distance is not necessary, Note taking, ice breaking, Introductions and facilitators.
3. FGD Guide contains pieces of information used by the moderator as a reminder for the issues set out for discussion; it helps the moderator organize the discussion systematically. The guide contains both lead and probe questions.
4. Broad questions on specific objectives are known as **Lead Questions**, while the ones that aim at latently persuading participants to engage issues that needed to are known as **Probe Questions**.
5. In-depth Interview IDI involves only two actors – the researcher and the respondent.
6. Few issues on conduct of IDI are: Duration, Interview setting, Interview guide, Language, digging dip.
7. Key Informant Interview KII respondent is selected based on access to key information. A key informant may not necessarily have adequate knowledge about a particular issue under examination.
8. Secondary data are those that already exist in form of reports, documents, literature and statistics found in libraries, museums, archives among other places.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 7

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 7.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.1)

Explain focus group discussion (FGD) and how FGD sessions are best organized.

7.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.2)

Explain how in-depth interviews (IDIs) are conducted

SAQ 7.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.3)

What a case study is and common misconceptions about it

SAQ 7.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 7.4)

Describe the difference between participant and non-participant observations and why is more inclined to sociological studies and why?

Study Session 8 Ethical Issues in Sociological Studies

Introduction

Ethics are self-regulatory guidelines for making decisions and defining professions. By establishing ethical codes, Sociological Studies maintain the integrity of the Sociology, define the expected conduct of members, and protect the welfare of subjects and clients. Moreover, ethical codes give Sociological Studies direction when confronting ethical dilemmas or confusing situations.

This study session will focus on the Ethical Issues in Research and Voluntary and Informed Consent.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

- 8.1 Define and use correctly the key word printed in bold (SAQ 8.1)
- 8.2 Identify Ethical Issues in Research (SAQ 8.2)
- 8.3 Explain what is meant by Voluntary and Informed Consent (SAQ 8.3)

8.1 Ethical Issues in Research

The issues discussed under ethics touch on morality and values that should necessarily be emphasized by the researcher in the course of data collection and presentation. Fieldworkers are constantly reminded that research subjects do them a favor by accepting to participate in a study; they should therefore be treated with some measure of respect.



Figure 8.1: Ethical Issues in Research

Some of the ethical principles include:

Confidentiality/anonymity: Researchers are meant to ensure that the information given by the respondents/participants is not divulged to other persons or groups. The principle of anonymity requires that no information should be traced to research subjects for various reasons such as security, stigmatization etc.

Therefore, all data emanating from these respondents are meant to be used, only, for the purposes of research.

You should realize that since the responsibility of giving information lies with the respondent, s/he is also on the other hand under some obligation to ensure anonymity of the respondent. The standard practice therefore is to safeguard the identity of the subject; for this reason most researchers are usually uninterested in having these respondents include their names or any information that could be traced to them.



Figure 8.2: Confidentiality

There could be situations where an ignorant respondent perceiving no danger related to a study freely supplies his/her information details. The sociological community would not accept that as a justification for divulging such data given that the subjects would not have had sociological training to understand the implications of their acts.

It is recommended that in situations where the research feels compelled to write names as a way of making a point, **Pseudonyms** are recommended in place of the real names.

In Text Question

How can you ensure confidentiality in situations where the researcher feels compelled to write names as a way of making a point?

In Text Answer

Where the research feels compelled to write names as a way of making a point, **Pseudonyms** are recommended in place of the real names.

8.2 Voluntary and Informed Consent

The first thing you must bear in mind is that the respondents are central to the success of any research for without them the process stuck. With that in mind, they should be accorded treated with dignity during data collection. Showing the respondents respect begins with letting them understand what the research is about and how it is intended to be undertaken. With such knowledge, their consent to accept participation can then be sought.

Voluntary Consent is said to be given when the respondent willingly accepts to participate in a study without any form of coercion, blackmail or intimidation. But you should also note that voluntary consent may not necessarily be informed.

For instance, a prospective respondent who has some positive knowledge of a researcher and therefore holds him/her in high esteem may consent to participating in a study proposed by the researcher without bothering to seek preliminary clarifications on major issues about the research such as the purpose, likely benefits and consequences. Such translates to a clear case of voluntary but not informed consent.



Figure 8.3: Voluntary Consent

The main lesson to draw from the above is that notwithstanding the level of familiarity between the researcher and respondents, it is procedurally wrong to forge ahead only on the basis of voluntariness.

You should note that the onus/responsibility lies with the researcher to ensure that the right research protocols are observed at all times. Therefore, you must have at the back of their minds the fact that when respondents' consent is both informed and voluntary, they would most likely give responses that reflect their genuine views on a particular issue.

In Text Question

What is the difference between voluntary and informed consent based on study session 8.2 you just studied?

In Text Answer

Voluntary Consent is said to be given when the respondent willingly accepts to participate in a study without any form of coercion, blackmail or intimidation while informed consent includes voluntary consent and having complete information about what the research is about.

No harm on subjects: Such harm could be mental, emotional, psychological and physical among others. Hence, researchers and their activities must not constitute nightmares to respondents. Thus, the fieldworker must be careful to leave the respondent at the end of the study probably much happier than s/he was prior to study.

You are meant to understand, for instance, that no matter how essential it would be to collect data from respondents in a restive environment, such must not be done at a time when the situation is chaotic to the extent of endangering the lives of both the respondent and the researcher.

For safety reasons, data collection in such a circumstance should be rescheduled for more appropriate future date, or at worst be cancelled outright instead of sustaining injuries that could lead to death or disabilities.



Figure 8.5: Emotional Harm

Emotional and psychological harm to the respondents may include things like using the study as an avenue to blame the respondents for a previous wrong doing whether intentionally or by mistake. For instance, if a research focuses on childhood mortality, which itself is embedded in trauma for parents, the study should open-up old wounds by trying to implicate the parents, environment or the medical system in the course of the study.

This is irrespective of whether such judgments/conclusions are right or wrong. Rather, the researcher is expected to collect as much information as possible and thereafter analyze and identify the causes far away from the respondents.

For this reason, Ethical Committees were formed to review proposals and instruments designed by researchers prior to data collection with a view to ensuring that such harms are not suffered by the respondents especially for studies involving human subjects.

Beneficence: The assumption underlying this principle is that studies are to be beneficial to the respondents. At first the researcher may be tempted to agitate having been socialized to know that monetary payment to respondents is unethical and a source of bias in sociological research.

You should note the state of agitation is understandable; however, beneficence in our usage here is more than monetary payment but primarily the likely non-monetary benefits that the respondent and/or his/her group would enjoy as a result of participation in the study.

For instance, well-conceived studies lead to generation of results and insights which are expected to inform recommendations that could in turn be the basis of interventions. That way, positive change could be introduced among the people on whom a study was undertaken.

In Text Question

Study session 8.2 has a section on beneficence, what do you understand by beneficence?

In Text Answer

Beneficence in our usage here is more than monetary payment but primarily the likely non-monetary benefits that the respondent and/or his/her group would enjoy as a result of participation in the study.

Summary

In Study Session 8, you have learnt that:

1. Researchers are meant to ensure that the information given by the respondents/participants is not divulged to other persons or groups.
2. The principle of anonymity requires that no information should be traced to research subjects for various reasons such as security, stigmatization etc.
3. Voluntary consent is said to be given when the respondent willingly accepts to participate in a study without any form of coercion, blackmail or intimidation.
4. You should note that the onus/responsibility lies with the researcher to ensure that the right research protocols are observed at all times.
5. Researchers and their activities must not constitute nightmares to respondents.
6. For safety reasons, data collection in such a circumstance should be rescheduled for more appropriate future date, or at worst be cancelled outright instead of sustaining injuries that could lead to death or disabilities.
7. Emotional and psychological harm to the respondents may include things like using the study as an avenue to blame the respondents for a previous wrong doing whether intentionally or by mistake.
8. The assumption underlying this principle of **Beneficence** is that studies are to be beneficial to the respondents.

Self-Assessment Question (SAQs) for Study Session 8

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 8.1 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.1)

Describe how anonymity is ensured.

SAQ 8.2 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.2)

State what is meant by voluntary and informed consent

SAQ 8.3 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.3)

Explain what no harm to subjects mean

SAQ 8.4 (Tests Learning Outcomes 8.4)

Discuss what the principle of beneficence suggests.

SAQ 8.4

The assumption underlying this principle of beneficence is that studies are to be beneficial to the respondents. Beneficence in our usage here is more than monetary payment but primarily the likely non-monetary benefits that the respondent and/or his/her group would enjoy as a result of participation in the study.

Notes on SAQs for SOC 201

STUDY SESSION 1

SAQ 1.1

Sociology is the scientific study of society. The concept is derived from a combination of two words *Socio* which means society and *logy* which is study. It focuses on the entire society which is created and recreated by individuals.

SAQ 1.2

For a discipline to be ascribed the status of science it must fully embrace unquestionable scientific procedures and tenets both in outlook and content and science can be best described as the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world following a systematic methodology based on evidence.

SAQ 1.3

Yes, because it deals with human development and knowledge acquisition is characterized by empiricism which emphasizes the role experience against the focus on knowledge.

SAQ 1.4

The main lessons to draw from this account of history of the emergence of Sociology are: That human is capable of recreating situations to suite their purpose and have potentials to act towards achievement of goals; that the audacity of boldness in turning challenges or inadequacies to advantage is essential; and that an individual can make a whole lot of difference in a globalized world.

SAQ 1.5

The norms of the sociological community are:

Universality - To be disinterested in what becomes of the data collected for analysis is to be steadfast and unbiased

Honesty – Universality of research implies that given the same conditions, the data collecting researcher will generate similar results irrespective of the location of study.

Communality - The norm on communalism suggests that a scientific discovery is a public good to be communicated to members of the community through various means including publications, conferences, symposia, and workshops among others.

Organized skepticism - Before such scrutiny, practitioners of science should be skeptical or ambivalent in responding to the claim simply by a gentle response ‘Really?’

Disinterestedness-Honesty is required from the point of conceptualization, instrument-design, data collection, analysis and report writing.

SAQ 1.6

Sociologist can be found in the hospitals, law firms, religious centers, educational centers etc.

STUDY SESSION 2

SAQ 2.1

Culture is the totality of a people's way of life that includes knowledge, norms, values, beliefs, practices and other capabilities and habits acquired by individuals as members of society.

The two aspects of culture are:

Material culture refers to the physical elements which include artifacts, food, houses, dresses, tools, technology among others; what is also referred to as tangible things. In other words, those things that can be felt touched, seen and smelt.

Non-Material Cultures are those traits that are non-physical including beliefs, values, and norms among other are classified as non-material culture – intangible things such as ideas formulated by humans to guide relationships.

SAQ 2.2

Norms are guidelines that people in community are expected to follow in their relations with one another. They represent shared rules that specify appropriate and inappropriate behavior kind of direction that defines what members might, ought, should, must, cannot and should not do in varying situations while **status** means a position within a society or group.

Through statuses therefore individuals are located in various social structures – friend, mother, school teacher, priest, Imam, father, researcher and footballer etc while the rights and duties ascribed to specific statuses are known as **roles** which persons in these positions are expected to perform – that is the expected behavior associated with status.

Values are those things or ideas shared by a people about what is good, right and desirable. Some of the known values among Nigerian are respect for elders, human life among others.

SAQ 2.3

Socialization is the lifelong process of learning cultural norms, attitudes, values, beliefs, practices, skills and other traits that distinguish members of a group from others. Communicating norms and values may take place in several forms including verbal expression of what is expected and how things should be done, imitation of role models, reading about a group, role plays and sometimes by chance.

The importance of socialization to include: (a) that through it cultures are sustained by its transmission from one generation to another, (b) it promotes social order given its emphasis on predictability of behavior, and (c) through it individuals adjust to changes that take place in society. Socialization takes place through some agents such as Family, School, Peer Group, Mass Media, Work Place, Religious Group among others. Let us now examine four of these agents in some detail.

SAQ 2.4

Kinship relates to people closely connected by blood or marriage or adoption, every individual belongs to one kin group or the other however emphasis towards kinship groupings vary among peoples and cultures.

Some basic concepts in kinship are:

Consanguinity – simply means relationship by blood which includes father, mother, children, cousins, nephews, uncles and aunts

Affinity – explains relationships based on marriage and adoption

Filiation – relates to line of descent, or lineage. In some cases, a group of kin-people trace their descent to common ancestors to the extent that family trees are linked to that single ancestry.

STUDY SESSION 3

SAQ 3.1

Research is defined as the whole gamut of activities that lead to organized observation and discovery of the unknown beginning with identification of a problem, collection of data, analysis and discussion of events and phenomena in society.

SAQ 3.2

A **hypothesis** is a tentative statement of facts that could become a theory after prolonged scrutiny by the scientific community. Thus, for such statement to become **theory**, it must have universal validity and reliability to the extent that it would not stand the risk of invalidation by subsequent data within a short period of time.

SAQ 3.3

The complementary relationship between theory and research are essential particularly as it ensures checks and balances.

STUDY SESSION 4

SAQ 4.1

The central idea of this perspective of functionalist theory is that society is a whole unit that is made up of interrelated parts that perform varied functions but work cooperatively in ensuring that the whole is maintained.

We examine briefly each of these scholars:

T. Parsons: was popular for his AGIL model which he described as functional imperatives necessary for all systems. For him ADAPTATION requires that individuals adapt to the environment they find themselves and in turn adapt that environment to their needs.

R.K. Merton: contributed to this perspective particularly through his idea of functions and dysfunctions. In addition, Merton talked about functions being either Manifest or Latent.

K. Davis and W. Moore: these structural functionalists regarded social stratification as universal and necessary arguing that stratification system is a structure and not a system of positions.

SAQ 4.2

Conflict perspective is opposed to the notion that consensus and order should be emphasized and maintained at all cost even if translates to enduring the pain of exploitation and poverty. Conflict scholars argue that the emphasis placed on norms, values and common morality as binding forces by functionalists is deceptive and that coercion is the unseen element that compels the oppressed to submission.

Karl Marx: Was one of the major proponents of the conflict perspective. He sees the history of human society as a process of tension and conflict. For him, social change is usually not attained through a smooth process but rather proceeds from contradictions. He argued that alienation is very high in capitalist societies driven by the desire to maximize profit; hence workers become objects of exploitation by the capitalists.

SAQ 4.3

Weber's analysis states that action occurs when individuals attach subjective meanings to their actions and therefore see these actions as necessary. He was quick to point out that analyzing action based on mental processes may lead to perception of sociological analysis as psychological. Notwithstanding this caution his work was said have hardly contributed to microSociology.

SAQ 4.4

The central idea of this perspective of symbolic interactionism is the use of symbols for interaction. This means that symbols are relative and may convey different meanings to different people. Gestures which entail movement of the whole or part of an organism serve as stimuli that the other organism for which these gestures are made is expected to understand. If a young Yoruba girl genuflects when an elder is in sight, it is expected that the latter will understand it as much as the former and respond appropriately - the meaning would have been fully understood by the two individuals.

STUDY SESSION 5

SAQ 5.1

Experience: personal negative experiences of the researcher can form the basis upon which a study is conceptualized. Sometimes, the experiences of family members, friends, neighbours and significant others could become the motivation for embarking on research.

Theories: sociological theories are numerous and are sources of research conceptualization. Apart from the general theories of Sociology, most others are sub-disciplinary specific – medical, demography, development, criminology, industrial Sociology among others.

Literature: a researcher may also rely on findings from literature and what scholars have already done to conceptualize research. The purpose in this case is usually to identify gaps which the prospective research will aim at bridging thereby enabling the researcher contribute to knowledge.

SAQ 5.2

Importance of Writing Research Proposals

- To ascertain whether the prospective researcher is proposing to undertake a study that is feasible,
- To find out the extent to which the proposer is competent to carry out the study, and
- To examine whether the topic aligns with the methodology and theoretical orientation.

Some Components of a Typical Research Proposal

- Chapter one: Introduction, Problem Statement, Research Questions, Objectives, Significance & Clarification of concepts/Operationalization.
- Chapter two: Literature Review and Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
- Chapter three: (Methodology): Study area, Design, Study population, Sample size determination, Sampling procedure, Description of research instruments, Method of data collection, Analysis procedure & Ethical issues
- Expected Outcome
- References - with emphasis on UI referencing style

SAQ 5.2

Fieldwork is one of the distinguishing qualities of sociological studies. For the sociologist, field exists wherever we have information that could aid understanding of

human society no matter how restricted the space may be. Therefore, the sociological field is limitless but defined at each point by the focus of a study. It is necessary to state that the scope and nature of the fieldwork to be undertaken should be dependent on the focus of the research and the type of instruments to be employed.

Due to the complexity of phenomena, a combination of qualitative and quantitative data is used for comprehensive analysis of social issues. Let us note that depending on the scope of the study, the researcher alone can collect the data (sole data collection); large studies will necessitate engagement of few or several Research Assistants (RAs) to collect data. The latter situation applies mainly to cross-sectional surveys requiring simultaneous collection of data across different locations.

SAQ 5.3

It is expected that what is presented makes sense both for immediate discourse and policy formulation. Data presentation offers the researcher the opportunity to juxtapose data collected from the field with some views from literature, the theory adopted and personal views in arriving at a position on an issue.

STUDY SESSION 6

SAQ 6.1

Questionnaires are not to be administered in a vacuum. No matter how adequately designed, the essence of the instrument is mainly appreciated when it is administered in locations that are appropriate to the title of a research. For instance, it would amount to waste of resources for a researcher intending to understand the ecological, biological and social effects of gas flaring on Niger Delta residents to administer questionnaires on Abuja or Ibadan inhabitants.

SAQ 6.2

Research design - This simply implies the work plan or the framework for carrying out fieldwork. Although several research designs exist the researcher is expected, having appraised the research context, to choose the most suitable for the purpose.

SAQ 6.3

The process of selecting some individuals from the population (N) to form the sample (n) is referred to as **sampling**. The individuals or elements chosen are referred to as **sample**, which is the sub-set of the **population**.

SAQ 6.4

Designing Questionnaires: This should be a well thought-out activity. Three major issues are to be considered in designing a good questionnaire – layout, content and format.

Administering questionnaires: This may be undertaken personally by the researcher or delegated to Research Assistants who are supposed to be trained adequately to understand the issues relevant to the research activity.

Procedure for analyzing quantitative data: analysis is preceded by data entry which could be done with different packages including Epi-info, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) among others.

STUDY SESSION 7

SAQ 7.1

This method of data collection is employed when the researcher intends to generate data from a group of carefully selected people usually referred to as participants or discussants is referred to as Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

SAQ 7.2

IDI involves only two actors – the researcher and the respondent. The criterion for selecting the latter is his/her vast knowledge of the phenomenon to be investigated. Indeed, the interviewee must be sufficiently knowledgeable about the issues to be able to supply in-depth information that is not common. As we noted in the section on FGD, the interviewer must be guided by the objectives of the study; it is not a jamboree.

SAQ 7.3

Case Study Is a commonly misused concepts in social science research. Often when a choice of research setting or location is made it is thought to be appropriate to use the term even when the procedure does not suggest that. Case-study supposes that a detailed inquiry/examination/investigation of a group, organization or thing to be studied must be done. In that case, a comprehensive investigation that may require periodic appraisal of the context is essential with the view to relating the phenomenon to events in different times in history.

SAQ 7.4

A participant observation is common to anthropology and non-participant observation is employed by sociologists and other social scientists. Non-participant observation is like taking a snapshot of events which does not necessarily have to take place over a long period of time. In this case, the observer would not need to be acculturated into the group's way of life to elicit the data s/he needs.

It is advisable to undertake such observation with a checklist of things to observe since it is not possible to take note of every aspect of a people's culture within a short time that the exercise will last. Without a checklist, the observer may eventually discover that s/he did not access all necessary information to enable her/him undertake a comprehensive analysis of a given situation.

STUDY SESSION 8

SAQ 8.1

The principle of anonymity requires that no information should be traced to research subjects for various reasons such as security, stigmatization etc. The standard practice therefore is to safeguard the identity of the subject; for this reason most researchers are usually uninterested in having these respondents include their names or any information that could be traced to them. It is recommended that in situations where the research feels compelled to write names as a way of making a point, **Pseudonyms** are recommended in place of the real names.

SAQ 8.2

Voluntary Consent is said to be given when the respondent willingly accepts to participate in a study without any form of coercion, blackmail or intimidation while participating in a study proposed by the researcher without bothering to seek preliminary clarifications on major issues about the research such as the purpose, likely benefits and consequences is considered as not informed consent.

SAQ 8.3

No harm on subject means researchers and their activities must not constitute nightmares to respondents, emotional and psychological harm to the respondents may include things like using the study as an avenue to blame the respondents for a previous wrong doing whether intentionally or by mistake.

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