

Study guide for Exam 2
Fall, 2009

LECTURES

Sampson's test of social disorganization theory

1. How does Robert Sampson's study of crime in Chicago illustrate the hypothetico-deductive model?
2. Which variables in the theory are independent, dependent, and intervening?
3. How could the same variable be independent, dependent, or intervening, depending on the hypothesis being tested?

Measurement issues in Sampson's study

1. What does it mean to measure a variable? Is this the same as operationalizing a variable? What is an operational definition?
2. How did Sampson operationalize his independent variables?
3. What are the major ways that we measure crime? What are the pros and cons of each?
4. How did Sampson operationalize neighborhood crime rates? Why did he choose these methods?
5. What is a rate? Why did Sampson use crime rates instead of the actual number of crimes?
6. How did he operationalize neighborhood solidarity? (Remember, this was a 2-step process)
7. What is a composite measure? Know how create & score a simple index.
8. Know the Likert method works. Is it an index too?
9. Know the guidelines for writing Likert items.
10. Why did Sampson use several indicators to measure solidarity instead of just one indicator for each variable?
11. What are face validity & content validity? Why are they called subjective validation?
12. What is an inter-item correlation? A correlation matrix? What are they used for?

Measurement quality – Reliability & validity

1. What is reliable measurement? How is reliability different from validity?
3. What is test-retest reliability? How is correlation used to measure it?
4. What is inter-rater/observer reliability?
5. How can observations or standardized measurement be reliable but invalid?
6. What are the reliability issues when coding observations with FACS?
1. What does validity mean?
2. What are face validity & content validity? Why are they called subjective validation?
3. What is criterion-related validity? Predictive & concurrent validity?
4. What are non-reactive (unobtrusive) measures? How can they be used to validate self-report measures?
5. How can question wording influence self-reports?
6. How can item selection in self-report delinquency studies influence research findings?
7. What is construct validity & how do we determine if a measuring instrument has it? (not sure if we'll get to this)

Sampling (I'm not sure exactly what or how much we'll cover in this section)

1. Basic terms: population, sample, sample bias, random sample, element, sampling frame
2. What is a self-selected sample? How can self-selection in a survey lead to an unrepresentative sample even when respondents have been randomly selected?
3. What were the sampling issues in Shere Hite's study? Why do you think the ABC/Washington Post poll found such different results? Be sure you know the difference between the sampling & measurement issues in these two studies.

READINGS

Chambliss & Schutt, Ch. 3 – Conceptualization & Measurement

1. What are concepts and conceptualization?
2. Variables and constants?
3. Understand operationalization –getting from concept to indicators.

4. What are “available data” and how are they used to measure variables?
5. When measuring variables in a survey, what are the pros and cons of open- vs closed-ended questions?
6. What is an index? How is it different from a scale?
7. Though not mentioned in the text, what kind of reliability problem is most likely to occur when coding open-ended survey questions?
8. What is a content analysis? When C&S note that the reliability of coding procedures should be checked, what kind of reliability are they referring to? How is it similar to structured observation?
9. What are unobtrusive (nonreactive) measures and why do we use them?
10. Understand the concept of triangulation.
11. Know the four levels of measurement (basically types of variables). Be able to recognize examples of each.
12. Know all about your old friends, validity & reliability:
 - a. Validity –face validity, content validity, criterion (concurrent & predictive), and the gist of construct validity
 - b. Reliability – test-retest, inter-item (internal consistency), alternate forms, interobserver

C&S, Ch. 5 on Sampling

1. Basic terms: population, sample, element, sampling unit, sampling frame, census vs sample survey
2. Why is it important to evaluate the generalizability of a study?
3. Why is it important to consider the diversity of the population when selecting a sample?
4. What is the difference between probability & nonprobability sampling?
5. What is a random sample? How can non-respondents ruin the best random sampling designs?
6. How accurate are public opinion polls?
7. Know the difference between simple & systematic random sampling. When would you *not* want to use systematic random sampling?
8. What is stratified random sampling, and why is it used?
9. What is disproportionate stratified sampling? Why would you use it? How is weighting used with this method?
10. What is cluster sampling, and why would you use it? Know the terms: cluster, primary & secondary sampling units.
11. What are the main nonprobability methods?

C&S, Ch. 7 on Survey Research

1. What is survey research & why is it used so often?
2. What is an omnibus survey?
3. Know the guidelines for writing survey questions (relevant terms: double negative, double-barreled questions, filter question, skip pattern, context effect, pretest)
4. What is the difference between a questionnaire & an interview schedule?
5. Is it generally better to use an existing measure of a variable or invent your own? Why?
6. Know the pros & cons of each method of administering surveys: mail, group administration, telephone, in-person, and electronic.
7. Which method in #6 gets the best response rate? How can we increase response rates using other methods?
8. What ethical issues are involved in survey research?

Eres #4 – Barker et al. on recycling attitudes & behavior

1. The study was designed to test the validity of self-report questionnaires. Be able to explain how this was done.
2. What kind of measurement strategy did the researchers use to find out if self-report measures are accurate?
3. The authors don’t use these terms, but in effect they devised an operational definition of invalid measurement. Explain.
4. What did they find?
5. In their discussion, the authors briefly mention some problems with the way they measured recycling behavior. One of these is a problem of content validity, although they don’t use that term. Explain.
5. What conclusions do you draw from this study about the validity of self-report data?
6. How could you use the 10 survey items in Table 1 to create an index of support for recycling? (Be able to explain the steps you would follow to give every respondent a score.)
7. How could you test the reliability of this index?

8. Would creating a reliable index improve the validity of self-report data?
9. Any ethical problems with this study? Do you think the deception was justified?

Eres #5 – Neuman on indexes & scales

1. What is the difference between an index and a scale?
2. Why do we use rates?
3. What are Likert scales?
4. Be able to recognize these scales and know why we use them: Bogardus social distance scale, semantic differential, & Guttman scales.