

Discussion Questions for Third Research Methods Test

(some of these will be selected, worth 40% of test grade,
the heavy weight on discussion questions should help students since almost everyone
has done better on discussion questions than on multiple choice questions)

1. Provide an explanation and definition of validity. Use an example to demonstrate validity and lack of validity. Do the same for reliability. Why are reliability and validity important in social research?
2. Describe the classical experimental design for social research. Be sure to define and describe the importance of random sampling, pretesting and posttesting, and using experimental and control groups. Be sure to mention what is important when selecting subjects.
3. When using an experimental design describe the validity issues that must be considered. In particular describe and provide an example for each of the following: history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, selection bias, experimental mortality, and diffusion of treatments.
4. When developing a survey instrument a variety of guidelines should be adhered to. Please explain each of the following and provide an example for each: appropriate question forms, clear items, avoiding double-barreled questions, competent respondents, item length, negative items, and biased items.
5. Discuss what should be considered when constructing a questionnaire. Be sure to discuss how the questionnaire should be laid out, the ordering of items, questionnaire instructions, and pre-testing.
6. Discuss the strengths and weakness of the varying types of questionnaires, including the self-administered questionnaires, mail questionnaire, and in-person questionnaire. Be sure to give examples of when one type would be used instead of others.
7. What should be considered when preparing to conduct in-person interviewing? Be sure to consider appearance and demeanor, familiarity, question wording, recording responses, and probing.
8. What are the special considerations that should be given when conducting qualitative field research? Be sure to consider the roles of the observer, relations to subjects.
9. Describe the various qualitative field research paradigms. Be sure to consider ethnography, ethnomethodology, grounded theory, case studies, and participatory action research. Provide an example of each. Explain the purpose of each approach and when it is most appropriate to use.
- 10 Describe the steps in conducting qualitative field research. Be sure to discuss how to prepare for the field, do qualitative interviewing, focus groups, and recording observations.