

TOPIC: RESEARCH METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

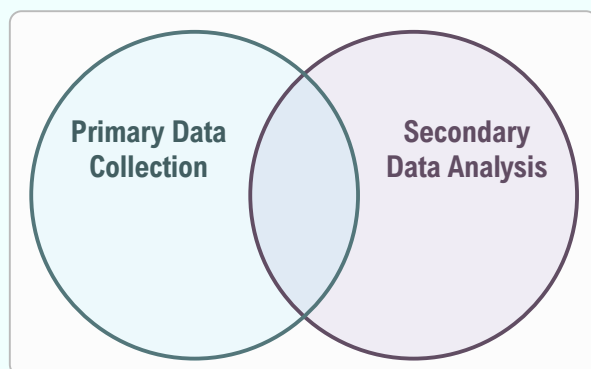
Primary and Secondary Data

◆ Sociologists typically utilize two primary methods of investigation:

	Primary Data Collection	Secondary Data Analysis
Definition	Data collected _____ by a researcher.	Data that comes from _____ sources.
Common Examples	Questionnaires, interviews, field work, experiments.	Census data, national surveys, archival records, previous research studies.
PROS	_____ control over research design and materials.	Can save time and money.
CONS	_____ costly and time consuming.	_____ control over research design and materials.

EXAMPLE

Fill in the Venn Diagram below using statements from the box.



- a) Data comes from existing sources.
- b) Can be useful, but researchers have less control over research design.
- c) Data is collected firsthand by the researcher.
- d) Tends to be more costly and time-consuming.
- e) A common method of sociological investigation.

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Surveys, Questionnaires, and Interviews

- ◆ **Survey:** Research method in which people respond to questions regarding their behaviors, attitudes, and opinions.
- ◆ Can take on open-ended or close-ended formats:
 - ▶ **Open-ended:** Allows subjects to respond in their _____ words (“How are you feeling today?”).
 - ▶ **Close-ended:** Subjects chose from a _____ set of responses (“On a scale of 1-5, how sad are you today?”).

Questionnaires

- ▶ A set of questions designed to gather _____-report data.
- ▶ Usually _____-ended.
- ▶ Data tends to be quantitative.

PROS: Easier/cheaper to administer.

CONS: Responses may lack _____.



Interviews

- ▶ A set of questions that a researcher asks in person.
- ▶ Usually _____-ended.
- ▶ Data tends to be qualitative.

PROS: More nuanced responses.

CONS: More expensive and _____ consuming.



EXAMPLE

Explain one benefit of using questionnaires and one benefit of using interviews.

PRACTICE

Which of the following are true and/or characteristic of interviews?

- I. Tend to be open ended.
- II. Cheaper and easier to administer than questionnaires.
- III. Allow a researcher to obtain more nuanced responses from participants.

a) I & II

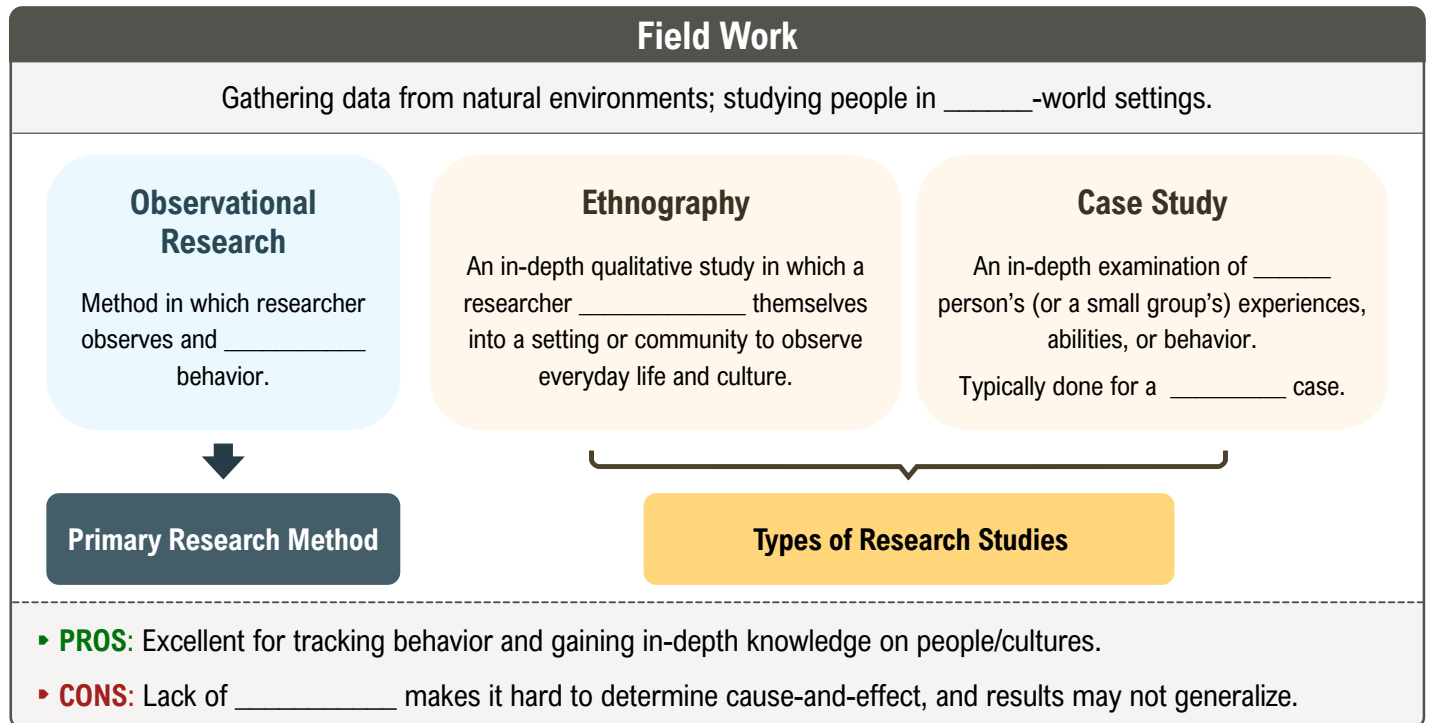
b) I & III

c) II & III

d) I, II, & III

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Field Research



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EXAMPLE

Match each term in the box below to the statement that describes it.

1	Tyrone spends 3 months in his local community center, taking detailed notes on the interactions and behaviors of patrons as they naturally occur.	
2	Yelena conducts an in-depth investigation on a small group of Ukrainian-English bilingual kindergarteners in the U.S. to understand how they learn phonics. Over the course of six months she makes observations, interviews students and teachers, and conducts tests on phonemic awareness.	
3	Shonda's doctoral project combines interviews, observations, and archival records to provide an in-depth look at the culture and significance of a historic neighborhood in Harlem.	

- a) Observational research.
- b) Ethnography.
- c) Case study.

PRACTICE

Omar's goal as a researcher is to examine behavior as unobtrusively as possible, by observing people in real-world settings. It sounds like Omar is most interested in doing...

- a) Case studies.
- b) Experiments.
- c) Field work.
- d) Interviews.

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Experiments

◆ **Experiment:** Method for investigating cause and effect under highly controlled conditions. Involves:

- ① Forming a hypothesis – state which variable is the cause _____ and which is the effect _____.
- ② **Random assignment:** Placing participants into conditions at random to increase equivalency between groups.
 - a. **Experimental Group(s):** Group or condition in which the IV is manipulated or _____.
 - b. **Control Group:** Group or condition in which the IV is _____.
- ③ Measuring the _____ to see what change (if any) took place.

Example

Hypothesis: Listening to classical music _____ while studying will increase test performance _____.

Method: Students will study a new topic in the lab for 1 hour and then take a test

Experimental Group

_____ Music



Control Group



If test scores are significantly higher in the experimental group, the hypothesis was _____.

- ◆ **PROS:** High level of control – one of the research methods that can truly establish _____.
- ◆ **CONS:** Situation can feel artificial – results may not generalize outside of lab.
 - People may _____ their behavior when they know they are being observed (**Hawthorne Effect**).

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EXAMPLE

A sociologist randomly assigns participants to receive either anti-bias training or no training and then evaluates their attitudes and behaviors toward the LGBT+ community. Identify the experimental group, control group, independent variable, and dependent variable in this scenario.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Experimental group

Control group

PRACTICE

What is the *primary* reason that experiments are so valuable in research?

- a) Experiments have such a high level of control that they eliminate bias.
- b) Experiments are by design, the most ethical way to do research.
- c) Experiments reflect real-world conditions in a way that no other study design can.
- d) Experiments allow researchers to demonstrate causality among variables.