

Methodological Concepts in Sociology



Reliability

Reliability refers to how consistent a research method is in producing the same results if repeated under similar conditions. High reliability means the method is standardised, replicable, and likely to yield the same findings if another researcher carries out the study in the same way.



Validity

Validity refers to how accurately a research method measures what it claims to measure. High validity means the data gives a true, authentic picture of social reality and reflects the meanings, experiences, and behaviours of the people being studied.



Verstehen

Verstehen refers to the idea that researchers should aim to understand social actions from the viewpoint of the people being studied. This means the researcher gains a deep, empathetic insight into individuals' meanings, motives, and experiences, seeing the world through the participants' own perspective.

Objectivity

Objectivity refers to the idea that sociological research should be free from personal bias, values, or subjective influence from the researcher. This means that findings are based on evidence and systematic methods.



Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the idea that researchers should reflect on how their own identity, values, and presence may influence the research process and findings.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity refers to the way a researcher's personal feelings, values, experiences, or interpretations can influence the research process and findings.



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Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a clear, testable statement or prediction about the relationship between two variables that a researcher aims to investigate. It outlines what the researcher expects to find and guides the direction of the study.

Operationalisation

Operationalisation refers to the process of turning sociological concepts into measurable indicators so they can be studied in research.

It involves deciding exactly how an idea such as social class, achievement, or deprivation will be defined and measured in a practical, observable way.

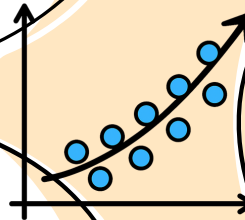
Causation

Causation refers to a direct cause-and-effect relationship, where one variable produces or brings about a change in another.



Correlation

Correlation refers to a relationship or association between two variables, where a change in one is linked to a change in the other, but this does not mean one causes the other.



Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale trial run of a research project, carried out before the main study to test whether the methods, questions, or procedures work as intended.

Its purpose is to identify and fix problems early, helping to improve the clarity, reliability, and overall quality of the final research.



Representativeness

Representativeness refers to how closely a research sample reflects the characteristics of the wider population it is meant to represent.



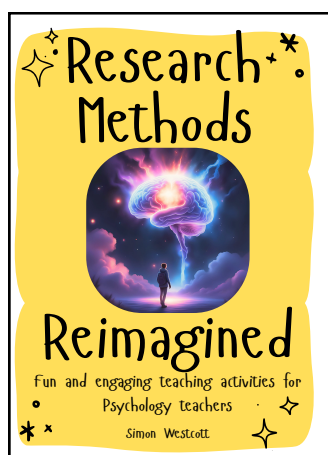
Generalisability

Generalisability refers to how far the findings from a research sample can be applied to the wider population beyond the people actually studied.

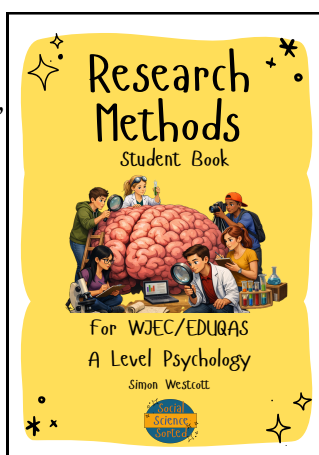


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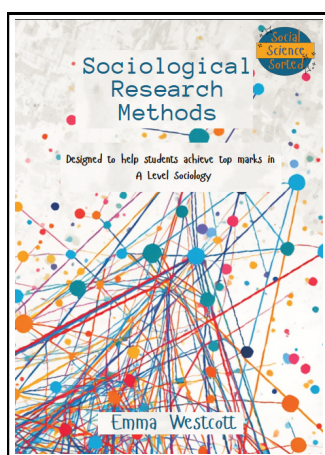


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