SOCIAL RESEARCH

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Outline of Presentation

- Definition of social research
- Scientific orientation of social research
- Stages of social research
- Types and uses of social research
- Ethics of social research
- What is social reality? (a preview to the next presentation)
What is Social Research?

Social Research involves a systematic effort to gather, analyze, and interpret information that describes how social characteristics, behaviors, and interactions among people and organizations affect each other.
What is Social Research?

Social science research uses increasingly standardized techniques of gathering and interpreting data. Unlike ordinary observations—our “common sense” knowledge of the world—the adequacy of both the *techniques* of gathering the data and the *interpretations* made concerning the data are constantly under question (Rubin, 1983: 6).
Common Pitfalls in Ordinary Inquiry

- Inaccurate Observations
- Overgeneralization
- Selective Observation
- Illogical Reasoning

(Source: Babbie, 2001: 20-21)
SCIENCE...as a way of thought and investigation, is best conceived of as existing...in the invisible world of the mind. Science has to do with the way questions are formulated and answered; science is a set of rules and forms of inquiry created by people who want reliable answers (Hoover, 1976: 6).
3 Elements of Scientific Orientation

- Standardization of Method
- Comparability of Results
- Logic of Disconfirmation
The Stages of Social Research

Theory and Definition

Techniques

Inference and Interpretation

Conceptualization

Design

Sampling

Operationalization

Instrumentation

Data Gathering

Data Analysis

Interpretation and Communication
Types/Uses of Social Research

Academic or “Pure” Social Research
- to find answers to theoretical questions within their respective fields.

Applied Social Research
- to use data so that decisions can be made for the betterment of society.
The Range of the Social Scientist’s Contributions to Policy Makers

- The Sociological Perspective
- Supportive Services: Fact-finding, Social accounting, Planning
- Social Problem Analysis
- Social Impact Assessment
- Evaluation Research

The Social Researcher
Types of Applied Social Researchers

- Policy Analyst
- Evaluation Researcher
- Social Monitor
- Data Analyst
Ethics of Social Research

Cook (1976) has summarized an ethical code that can be used:

1. Do involve people in research without their knowledge or consent.
2. Do not coerce people to participate.
3. Do not withhold from the participant the true nature of the research.
4. Do not actively lie to the participant about the nature of the research.
5. Do not lead the research participant to commit acts which diminish his or her self-respect.
Ethics of Social Research

6. Do not violate the right to self-determination.
7. Do not expose the participants to physical or mental stress.
8. Do not invade the privacy of the research participant.
9. Do not withhold benefits from participants in control groups.
10. Do not fail to treat the research participants fairly and to show them consideration and respect.
What’s Really “Real”? 
THANK YOU AND
GOOD MORNING!