# Research Methods of Social Science Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide


**Everything you need from our exam experts!**

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

**Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.**

**This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.**

**Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.**

**The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:**

- **Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,**
- **Improve accuracy and speed,**
- **Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and**
- **Approach the exam with greater confidence.**

**We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.**

**Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.**

**Let's begin.**

# How to Use This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here’s how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:**

### 1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

**Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.**

### 2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

**Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 – 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.**

### 3. Learn from the Explanations

**After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.**

### 4. Track Your Progress

**Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.**

### 5. Simulate the Real Exam

**Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.**

### 6. Repeat and Review

**Don’t just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.**

**There’s no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!**

# Questions

**1. Example of Cross-Tab.**

**A. Comparing social media use by class year.**

**B. Calculating overall sample mean.**

**C. Running a t-test.**

**D. Computing a regression coefficient.**

**2. What term describes the systematic process of collecting and analyzing evidence to reduce uncertainty and support informed decision-making?**

**A. Research Methods**

**B. Applied Research**

**C. Basic Research**

**D. Empirical Evidence**

**3. What is qualitative research?**

**A. Research that analyzes numerical patterns in data.**

**B. Research that explores personal experiences, meanings, and perspectives.**

**C. Research that uses experiments to cause effects.**

**D. Research that uses statistics to test hypotheses.**

**4. Which statement is not a function of a research question?**

**A. Describing a phenomenon.**

**B. Predicting the outcome of a relationship.**

**C. Exploring topics.**

**D. Framing an open-ended inquiry.**

**5. Big Data is best described as which?**

**A. Extremely large and complex datasets used for advanced analysis**

**B. Small, simple datasets**

**C. Data only from social media**

**D. Data that is always numerical**

**6. GPA is best described as which type of variable?**

**A. Numeric variable.**

**B. Categorical variable.**

**C. Operationalization.**

**D. Population.**

**7. What is exploratory research used for?**

**A. To confirm known facts.**

**B. To clarify problems or generate insights when little is known.**

**C. To measure numerical variables.**

**D. To determine cause-and-effect.**

**8. Why are samples used in research?**

**A. They always perfectly represent population.**

**B. Studying the entire population is impractical due to time and cost.**

**C. They require no resources.**

**D. They produce exact truths.**

**9. Quantitative research primarily relies on which type of data?**

**A. Numerical data.**

**B. Narrative data from interviews.**

**C. Observational field notes.**

**D. Qualitative themes from focus groups.**

**10. Which term denotes research conducted to maintain neutrality by avoiding personal influence?**

**A. Systematic Research**

**B. Objective Research**

**C. Management Decision Problem**

**D. Marketing Research Problem**

# Answers

**1. A**
**2. A**
**3. B**
**4. B**
**5. A**
**6. A**
**7. B**
**8. B**
**9. A**
**10. B**

# Explanations

## 1. Example of Cross-Tab.

**A. Comparing social media use by class year.**

**B. Calculating overall sample mean.**

**C. Running a t-test.**

**D. Computing a regression coefficient.**

**Cross-tabulation examines the relationship between two categorical variables by showing how the distribution of one variable differs across the categories of the other. Here, class year is a categorical variable (for example, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) and social media use can be categorized (such as high, medium, low). A cross-tab would lay out counts or percentages of students in each class year within each use category, making it easy to see whether social media use patterns vary by class year. This direct comparison of distributions across two categorical variables is exactly what cross-tabulation is designed to do. The other options don't fit as cross-tabs. Calculating an overall sample mean summarizes a single number for the whole dataset, not how two categories relate. A t-test compares the means of a continuous outcome across two groups, which is about mean differences rather than joint distributions of two categorical variables. A regression coefficient estimates the relationship between variables, often with a continuous outcome or via dummy coding, but it isn't the contingency-table style comparison that cross-tabs provide.**

## 2. What term describes the systematic process of collecting and analyzing evidence to reduce uncertainty and support informed decision-making?

**A. Research Methods**

**B. Applied Research**

**C. Basic Research**

**D. Empirical Evidence**

**The thing being tested is the structured way researchers gather and examine information to reduce uncertainty and guide decisions. This describes research methods—the organized set of practices, designs, and procedures used to plan studies, collect data, analyze results, and interpret findings so conclusions are reliable and decisions well informed. Applied research and basic research are both types of inquiry, not the process itself; applied focuses on solving real-world problems, basic aims to build knowledge, and empirical evidence refers to the data gathered rather than the overall method used to obtain and interpret that data. So the term that best fits the idea of a systematic process for collecting and analyzing evidence to inform decisions is research methods.**

## 3. What is qualitative research?

**A. Research that analyzes numerical patterns in data.**

**B. Research that explores personal experiences, meanings, and perspectives.**

**C. Research that uses experiments to cause effects.**

**D. Research that uses statistics to test hypotheses.**

**Qualitative research aims to understand how people experience, interpret, and give meaning to social phenomena. It seeks depth, context, and nuance by focusing on narratives, feelings, and perspectives rather than numbers. Methods like in-depth interviews, participant observation, and analysis of texts help uncover how individuals construct their world and why they think or feel a certain way. The goal is to capture rich, detailed insights about human experience and the meanings people attach to it. In contrast, options that discuss analyzing numerical patterns, conducting experiments, or using statistics to test hypotheses reflect quantitative research, which emphasizes measurement, variables, and generalizable results from numerical data. For example, a qualitative study might explore how students describe their experiences with remote learning, revealing themes like isolation or adaptability that numbers alone might not capture.**

## 4. Which statement is not a function of a research question?

**A. Describing a phenomenon.**

**B. Predicting the outcome of a relationship.**

**C. Exploring topics.**

**D. Framing an open-ended inquiry.**

**Research questions guide inquiry by describing a phenomenon, exploring topics, or framing an open-ended direction for study. They are crafted to be answerable with data and to set the path for how you collect and analyze information. Describing a phenomenon fits because you want to understand what is happening and under what conditions. Exploring topics fits because you're using the question to probe less understood areas and generate new insights. Framing an open-ended inquiry fits because the question invites investigation without forcing a specific outcome. Predicting the outcome of a relationship, however, is about forecasting or testing a particular expectation, which belongs to hypotheses and predictive claims rather than the function of a research question itself. The question guides inquiry; predictions typically come from hypotheses built to test theories.**

## 5. Big Data is best described as which?

**A. Extremely large and complex datasets used for advanced analysis**

**B. Small, simple datasets**

**C. Data only from social media**

**D. Data that is always numerical**

**Big Data refers to datasets that are so large and complex that traditional data processing tools struggle to handle them. It's defined by the combination of very high volume, a wide variety of data types (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), and rapid data generation, which together require specialized storage, processing, and analytical approaches. This is why the description that emphasizes extremely large and complex datasets used for advanced analysis best captures what Big Data means. Datasets can come from many sources beyond social media, and they aren't limited to numerical data—text, images, audio, and video can all be part of Big Data and analyzed with advanced methods.**

## 6. GPA is best described as which type of variable?

**A. Numeric variable.**

**B. Categorical variable.**

**C. Operationalization.**

**D. Population.**

**GPA is a numeric variable because it is a numerical score that represents average grades on a measurable scale. It takes quantitative values like 3.2 or 3.75, and these numbers allow arithmetic and statistical analysis (you can add, average, or run regressions). This distinguishes it from categorical variables, which group individuals into fixed categories without meaningful numeric distance between them. It isn't an operationalization—that term refers to how a concept is defined and measured in a study, not the type of variable itself. And it isn't a population, which refers to the entire group being studied, not a measurement.**

## 7. What is exploratory research used for?

**A. To confirm known facts.**

**B. To clarify problems or generate insights when little is known.**

**C. To measure numerical variables.**

**D. To determine cause-and-effect.**

**Exploratory research is used to gain a broad, initial understanding of a problem when little is known. It helps you clarify what the issue actually is, uncover potential factors or patterns, and generate hypotheses or ideas for further study. This kind of research is flexible and often qualitative, using methods like interviews, open-ended surveys, observations, and literature reviews to discover insights rather than test a specific theory. That makes it the best fit when you need to make sense of an unclear situation or generate directions for more rigorous, later research. This isn't about confirming known facts, which is the realm of confirmatory or descriptive research. It isn't primarily about measuring numerical variables in a systematic way, which would be descriptive or quantitative research. It also isn't about establishing cause-and-effect, which requires causal or experimental designs. Exploratory research sits at the front end, helping you clarify problems and generate the ideas that subsequent studies can build on.**

## 8. Why are samples used in research?

**A. They always perfectly represent population.**

**B. Studying the entire population is impractical due to time and cost.**

**C. They require no resources.**

**D. They produce exact truths.**

**Sampling is used because studying the entire population is usually impractical due to time and cost. In most real-world settings, trying to collect data from every member would take too long, be prohibitively expensive, and pose logistical challenges. A well-chosen sample lets researchers gather information efficiently and still make informed inferences about the larger group, though a bit of uncertainty—sampling error—remains. This is why the goal is to obtain a representative sample and to use methods that quantify how confident we are in the estimates. The idea that samples always perfectly represent the population isn't true, since some differences between the sample and the population are inevitable. It's also incorrect to say that samples require no resources; they require time, money, and planning—just usually less than a full census. And they don't produce exact truths; findings are estimates with associated uncertainty, expressed through confidence intervals or margins of error.**

## 9. Quantitative research primarily relies on which type of data?

**A. Numerical data.**

**B. Narrative data from interviews.**

**C. Observational field notes.**

**D. Qualitative themes from focus groups.**

**Quantitative research relies on data that are numbers you can count or measure precisely. This numeric data lets researchers quantify variables, compare groups, and test hypotheses using statistical methods. For example, test scores, ages, incomes, or counts of events provide evidence that can be averaged, correlated, or used in regression analyses. Narrative data from interviews, observational field notes, and qualitative themes from focus groups are typically non-numeric and analyzed for meaning, patterns, and context rather than statistical relationships. They belong to qualitative (or mixed-methods) approaches, not the primary data type used in quantitative analysis.**

## 10. Which term denotes research conducted to maintain neutrality by avoiding personal influence?

**A. Systematic Research**

**B. Objective Research**

**C. Management Decision Problem**

**D. Marketing Research Problem**

**The main concept being tested is keeping research neutral by avoiding the researcher's personal influence. Objective research achieves this through standardized methods, clear measurement, and procedures that others can replicate, which helps ensure findings reflect the data rather than the investigator's preferences. It emphasizes empirical evidence and tends to rely on predefined plans and transparent analysis to prevent selective reporting or biased interpretation. This makes it the best fit for portraying neutrality, since it explicitly aims to minimize subjective influence—examples include using blinding or preregistered analysis to curb bias and ensure results are verifiable. Systematic research focuses on a careful, orderly approach to inquiry, which is important, but it does not inherently signal neutrality as directly as objective research does. The remaining terms describe the business context or the problem being studied rather than the degree to which personal influence is avoided. So, objective research best denotes research conducted to maintain neutrality by avoiding personal influence.**

# Next Steps

**Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.**

**As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.**

**If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.**

**Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:**

**https://researchmethodssocscience.examzify.com**

**We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!**