
PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN RESEARCH: CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

Observation is a crucial element in criminal research, but individuals often tend to make inaccurate and biased observations due to lack of knowledge. To minimize these errors, individuals should engage in meticulous observations guided by systematic procedures and maintain a journal or documentation. Maxfield and Babbies suggest employing a blend of intricate and fundamental strategies to prevent errors associated with selective and erroneous observations. Cross-domain research and ethical requirements in statistics contribute to the advancement of criminological theories in social sciences. Ethical statisticians have been instrumental in establishing the basis for criminological theories, which have since transitioned from positivism to classicism. However, present criminological theories primarily examine individual criminals rather than society as a whole. Improper analysis and implementation of research variables pose challenges to the dependability and credibility of findings. In criminology studies, research is considered trustworthy and valid when its results have been replicated on numerous occasions, consistently yielding the same outcomes. The implementation of study variables ensures the selection of a sample that accurately represents the entire population and uses a suitable unit of analysis. Operationalizing study variables ensures the selection of a sample that appropriately represents the entire population and utilizes a suitable unit of analysis. By eliminating potential components that could introduce bias into the findings, the research eliminates extraneous variables and employs measurement methods that are mutually consistent, minimizing error resulting from user-induced factors. Operationalizing variables enhances internal reliability and consistency of the research, as well as the establishment of a precise timeline for conducting the research.

Inconsistent and Biassed Observations

Observation is widely recognised as the fundamental element in the investigative methodology within the subject of criminal research. Lacking the necessary knowledge, which is usually required in most cases, might make it challenging to understand the variables that caused events to happen and their subsequent outcomes. This arises from the presence of specific concepts that are crucial to understand. Prior to offering an explanation, it is imperative to fully understand the situation being discussed. However, individuals often tend to casually observe the development of life's events, leading to their perception of things seeming both inaccurate and biased.

To minimise the probability of making such errors, individuals must engage in meticulous observations guided by systematic procedures. It is vital for individuals to be mindful of the events occurring in their lives and maintain a journal or another kind of documentation to record the information they acquire. Maxfield and Babbies suggest that individuals should employ a blend of intricate and fundamental strategies to prevent errors associated with selective and erroneous observations, as outlined in their paper "Preventing Errors Related to Selective and Erroneous Observations."

In other words, individuals must employ tactics that are simultaneously intricate and fundamental. Conversely, the act of making generalisations about events might result in the gathering of biased observations. For example, when an individual possesses a comprehensive comprehension of a specific pattern's frequent prevalence, they are more inclined to presume that future instances would adhere to the trend and may disregard those that deviate from it. This is due to their complete cognizance of the pattern. This arises from the individual's acquisition of a comprehensive comprehension of the typical manifestation of the pattern.¹ Maxfield and Babbies suggest that the error resulting from biased observation can be reduced by conducting the study multiple times with a substantial number of participants to ensure consistent results.

Cross-Domain Research and Ethical Requirements in Statistics

How does conducting research specifically contribute to the advancement of criminological theories in the field of social sciences? Following the groundbreaking contributions of Guerry

¹ Hartley, R. (2010). *Snapshots of research: Readings in criminology and criminal justice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

and Quetelet in the application of positivist principles to criminology, the progression of criminological theories has undergone multiple stages in subsequent years. The ethical statisticians examined the changes in the levels of accepted illegal conduct throughout a certain timeframe. The conclusions derived from the research conclusions and the hypotheses are consistent with each other. The publicly accessible information indicated a clear correlation between increased crime rates and social activities, thereby giving rise to the emergence of the theory of social behaviour in the discipline of criminology.

According to Heidt, these academics focused on societal factors rather than physiological ones in their efforts to address the growing criminal problems. This is due to their belief that social elements exerted a greater impact than physiological ones. The moral statisticians were responsible for establishing the basis for the development of criminological theories, which have since transitioned from positivism to classicism due to their achievements. The origins of these advancements can be attributed to the efforts of ethical analysts, who were the trailblazers in this domain. The official statistics presented in the study conducted by early positivist researchers serve as the main source of inspiration for most modern theories in the area of criminology. Conversely, present criminological theories are based on research that largely examines individual criminals rather than society as a whole.

This contradicts the emphasis that orthodox criminology has consistently focused on different facets of society. Following the publication of Darwin's groundbreaking findings in 1859 and 1871, the emergence of the evolutionary theory prompted academics to shift their focus from the social aspects of criminality to the physiological traits associated with criminal activity. As a result, the evolutionary hypothesis was developed. The objective of this endeavour was to get a more profound comprehension of the correlation that exists across the two entities.² Lombroso's theory of individual characteristics focused on the notion that there existed a substantial distinction between criminals and non-criminals, predicated on their physical attributes.

The concept was initially created in the year 1876. While the study's findings are no longer applicable, the use of positivist methodology in the study still greatly influences the advancement of ideas in criminology. Hence, contemporary criminological theories can be attributed to previous investigations and ongoing research on criminal behaviour and offences.

² Heidt, J. (2011). *The evolution of criminological theories*. Burnaby, Canada: Simon Fraser University Library Press.

These studies investigate the shared sociocultural, physical, and biological traits seen in individuals who engage in criminal behaviour.

Improper Analysis and Implementation of Research Variables

The procedure of implementing research variables in criminological research poses obstacles to the dependability and credibility of the findings. What impact does this technique have on the accuracy and veracity of the investigation? In the realm of criminology studies, research is deemed trustworthy and valid when its results have been replicated on numerous occasions, consistently yielding same outcomes. This remains valid irrespective of the overall frequency of study repetitions. The implementation of the variables under investigation facilitated the provision of evidence in support of these conclusions.

Operationalizing study variables ensures the selection of a sample that appropriately represents the entire population and utilises a suitable unit of analysis. The study conducted by Hartley in 2010 found that each variable in the study has a well-defined practical definition that remains consistent throughout various degrees of conduct, traits, altitude, and cognition. This is evidenced by the notion that the terminologies are coherent. By applying research variables, the research eliminates any prospective component that could introduce bias into the findings. Instead, it implements the study methods and design that are best suitable for the particular conditions. This guarantees that the research would be conducted with utmost precision and reliability.

Prior to operationalizing the study variables, it is necessary to start with a theoretical outline, which should then be enhanced by connecting it to multiple practical definitions and concrete indicators. The operationalization of the conceptual description can only occur after this step. Thus, implementing the research variables is a means to guarantee both the intrinsic legitimacy and dependability of the study. This is achieved by eliminating extraneous study variables and employing measurement methods that are mutually consistent, hence minimising the error resulting from user-induced factors. Operationalizing the variables enhances both the internal reliability and consistency of the research. Furthermore, it facilitates the establishment of a precise timeline for conducting the research, thereby augmenting the reliability and legitimacy of the study.³ Operationalizing variables facilitates the identification of the best

³ Maxfield, M. & Babbies, E. (2014). *Research methods for criminal justice and criminology*. Belmont, CA: Cengage Learning.

suitable timeframe for conducting the research.

Conclusion

Observation plays a vital role in crime studies; however, researchers frequently make erroneous or prejudiced views as a result of their limited understanding. In order to reduce errors, it is necessary to use careful observations and systematic methods. The utilisation of ethical statistical methods and the integration of cross-domain research play a significant role in the progress of criminological ideas. Nevertheless, existing theories predominantly concentrate on individual offenders. Inadequate examination and execution of study factors can undermine the dependability and trustworthiness of findings. By operationalizing variables, one can verify that a sample effectively represents the full population and employs consistent measuring techniques, hence improving intrinsic consistency and coherence.