

Sociology Research Project

Year Y11 into 12

Introduction to Research

The purpose of sociology is to answer questions about social life and the social world. For example,

- why do middle-class children generally achieve better exam results than working-class children?
- What causes divorce?
- How far do the media influence people's behaviour?

To answer questions like these, sociologists develop **theories**. A theory is a general explanation of how or why social life follows the pattern it does.

A good theory is one that explains these patterns. That is, it explains all the available evidence that can be found about the topic being investigated. If a theory does not explain the **evidence** that researchers have gathered then the theory needs to be replaced with another theory that can be validated with accurate evidence.

Sociologists therefore try to ensure that their theories are based on **sound evidence**. To do otherwise would risk being **discredited** by other sociologists.



Progress in Sociology depends on communication between researchers. It is therefore essential to describe the results of research as **accurately** and as effectively as possible. To get research published in eminent peer-reviewed journals sociologists have to write reports in a conventional manner. This means that reports are written in such a way that replication would be possible, allowing others to repeat the research to check results.

The basic requirements of a report are to communicate:

- ✓ What was done
- ✓ What was found
- ✓ What it means



Domestic Division of Labour

Read through the article and consider the following:

- To what extent has a wife's role changed in our society?
- Are women expected to stay at home?
- Is the male still head of the house and central to the whole family?
- To what extent does a female manage cooking, housework and childcare tasks these days?
- Are men more involved in domestic chores and childcare?
- To what extent are females now regarded as the breadwinners in a household and how many men are stay-at-home parents?

Domestic roles within the home have evolved dramatically over the years.

Speak to your parents and grandparents about how domestic chores (including childcare) was shared by their parents/grandparents.

Housekeeping Monthly 13 May 1955



Advertising Archives

Housekeeping Monthly 13 May 1955

The good wife's guide

- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favourite dish) is a part of the warm welcome needed.
- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.
- Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.
- Gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper etc and then run a dustcloth over the tables.
- Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. You husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.
- Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair and, if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part. Minimise all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet.
- Be happy to see him.
- Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.
- Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first – remember his topics of conversation are more important than yours.
- Make the evening his. Never complain if he comes home late or goes out to dinner, or other places of entertainment without you. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his very real need to be at home and relax.
- Your goal: Try to make sure your home is a place of peace, order and tranquillity where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.
- Don't greet him with complaints and problems.
- Don't complain if he's late home for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.
- Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or have him lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him.
- Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soothing and pleasant voice.
- Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.
- A good wife always knows her place.

Background to Your Task



Sociologists have studied how domestic labour has evolved throughout the years. Research has investigated the **impact of paid work** on the female's role within the home. Today, many wives work either full-time or part time, so does this mean that domestic chores are becoming more **equally divided** between both partners, or does it simply mean that women now have to carry a '**duel burden**' of paid work as well as domestic work?

Sociologists have put together two theories to explain the impact of paid work on the domestic division of labour.

Find out what is meant by the following two explanations:

March of Progress View	Feminist View



Your Task

You are required to conduct a piece of research that investigates which of these theories (March of Progress/Feminist) is more valid. You need to design and create some form of measure to assess how domestic chores are split within the home. For example; you might measure the following between men and women:




- ❖ The number of hours in a week chores are carried out.
- ❖ The number of times each chore is completed.

Due to lockdown restrictions, the safest way to carry out this task will most likely be in the form of i) a questionnaire that could be created using online websites such as SurveyMonkey or ii) an interview with family members or friends on platforms such as Zoom/Facetime etc.

Questionnaires

- If you're considering a questionnaire; do you want the questionnaire to be easily quantified, in which case you will use **closed questions?** i.e YES/NO – **quantitative data**
- Or would you rather get more context and more richness from your participants' responses, in which case you might use **open questions?** – **qualitative data**
- Perhaps you might want to use a mixture?
- Your questionnaires will need to be worded clearly, without any confusion or second guessing as to what the question may mean.

Please help us with our research into domestic chores



Please tick – Are you male or female?	Male	Female
Age		

1) Do you feel you do more housework than your partner?	YES	NO	SHARED
2) Do you cut the lawn?	YES	NO	SHARED
3) Do you do the laundry?	YES	NO	SHARED
4) Do you feel your housework is shared equally?			

Interviews

- Do you want to use a **structured interview** – where every participant gets the same set questions? This is easy to quantify (qualitative data).
- Or do you want to use an **unstructured interview** – where there is no fixed set of questions and it's a much more informal conversation between you and each participant? This allows for much more detailed responses (qualitative data).
- Or do you want to use a semi-structured interview – a mixture of both? There will be some pre-set questions but also some unplanned questions.



Writing up your research

You will have to write up your project. This can either be presented on an A1 poster/card display if you want to get creative or written up on a word document.

Academic poster: Pushing numeracy in Research Methods
A Harrison

Abstract
Proffers (2007) suggests teachers should be projecting a positive attitude about mathematics and about students' ability to "do" mathematics. The teacher constantly builds students' sense of efficacy and assists in the students a belief that not only is the goal of "doing mathematics" attainable, but also they are personally capable of reaching that goal. Mathematics is not presented as something magical or mysterious. Proffers (2007) also suggests the students will become capable of solving challenging problems. Students should be investigating meaningful real-world problems whenever possible. Mathematics is not a stagnant field of textbook problems; rather, it is a dynamic way of constructing meaning about the world around us, generating new knowledge and understanding about the real world every day.

Introduction
I emphasised the use of numeracy predominantly in the Research Methods unit due to specification changes as required by new government guidelines to push numeracy across the curriculum. Students are expected to analyse and present data, calculate percentages, decimals, fractions and the sign test.

Methods
Students were given numeracy tasks predominantly in research methods based lessons. However, students were made aware that research methods based questions could feature on any aspect of the 6 units delivered at AS. Where possible, students were given numeracy tasks to help them improve their numeracy skills and apply these skills to psychological research. The tasks were given to all 4 AS groups in blocks A, B, C and D and results were compared with last years old spec research methods results.

Results (data analysis)
As a result of implementing the 'push your thinking' tasks, more students were more willing to challenge themselves at the beginning of the lesson and it helped the students to write more extensive answers as they were able to see clear differences between a basic answer, and a more extensive/challenging answer which could be applied within an exam situation.

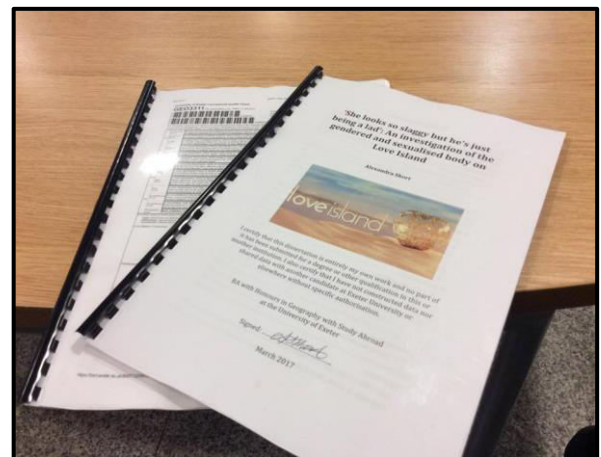
Year 10 Target Score	Year 10 Score	On Target	Not On Target
A*	10	1	1
A	9	1	1
B	8	1	1
C	7	1	1
D	6	1	1
E	5	1	1
F	4	1	1
G	3	1	1
H	2	1	1
I	1	1	1
Below 1	0	1	1
Below 0	0	1	1
Below -1	0	1	1
Below -2	0	1	1
Below -3	0	1	1
Below -4	0	1	1
Below -5	0	1	1
Below -6	0	1	1
Below -7	0	1	1
Below -8	0	1	1
Below -9	0	1	1
Below -10	0	1	1

Results (descriptive data)
The results show that the students underperformed in this new AS exams in comparison to last years exam results. Interesting variables that might explain why the grades have dropped could be due to the new specification and understanding the new mark schemes, lack of examination specimen papers and inconsistency in examiner marking. Results are comparable with other centres.

Discussion
The numeracy tasks took no time at all to create and were a great way of engaging the students whilst building on their numeracy knowledge. It was quite interesting to discover that many students believed maths ended at GCSE, and how many students over the space of a summer forgot how to draw a graph or calculate a mean, median or mode. As the numeracy tasks related to psychological research, it made numeracy much more meaningful to the students. I found that, with increased confidence, most, if not all students had improved their basic numeracy skills, having gained a better understanding of how numeracy can extend beyond a mathematical curriculum.

Conclusion and tips to take away
Continue to push numeracy in psychology lessons to help students build on their mathematical knowledge, and to end the 'silence' that numeracy skills do not extend beyond GCSE maths.

References
Proffers, A. (2007). "What Does Good Math Instruction Look Like?" *Principal* 7(1), pp. 51 - 54.



Success criteria:

- ✓ Your report must follow the above format and will be written in an academic writing style.
- ✓ Design and create a tool that can be used to measure domestic chores.
- ✓ Your questionnaire/interview must have at least **20 questions**.
- ✓ You must include at least **15-20 participants**.
- ✓ You must design and create a consent form to issue to all of your participants.
- ✓ Consider ethical implications of your research and how you will ensure your study is ethically sound. E.g. a consent form, confidentiality, right to withdraw, debrief
- ✓ Perform some analysis on your data.



What skills will I develop from this task?

- ✓ An understanding of research methods and ways research can be carried out.
- ✓ The ability to work independently.
- ✓ Experience with extended writing and report writing.
- ✓ Preparation for university where you will be required to write a dissertation.



There is no single best way to set out a report/poster presentation, but the general format should include the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Title of your research | 7) Procedure/method |
| 2) Table of contents | 8) Findings/results |
| 3) Abstract | 9) Discussion |
| 4) Introduction | 10) Conclusion |
| 5) Aims | 11) Appendices |
| 6) Hypotheses | |

1) Title

- This should be a clear, relevant and informative statement about what the research is about.

2) Table of contents

- This can be optional, but best included
- You should include page numbers.

3) Abstract

- A summary of the research and provides a brief overview for the reader.
- Start with a one/two sentence summary, providing the aim and rationale for the study.
- Describe participants and setting: who, when, where, how many, what groups?
- Describe the method: what design, what experimental treatment, what questionnaires, surveys or tests used.
- Describe the major findings or simply one sentence summing up the outcome.
- The final sentence(s) outline the studies 'contribution to knowledge' within the literature. What does it all mean? Mention implications of your findings if appropriate
- **Note the abstract is written up at the END of the research process but features at the BEGINNING of your report.**



4) Introduction/Bibliography

- Provide a general theoretical background, controversies and previous research investigations of the chosen topic are covered.
- Describe what research has been carried out previously and by whom? What were the trends?
- Discuss the findings of research in relation to the two theories (March of Progress/Feminist) – i.e. does the previous research support a ‘March of Progress View’ of domestic labour or does it support a ‘Feminist view’.
- Provide an overall conclusion about whether the research tends to favour March of Progress or Feminist views, or whether the previous research is contradictory.



5) Aims

- The overall aim(s) are stated clearly, precisely and concisely.
- For example, *to investigate how domestic chores are shared by gender.*



6) Hypotheses

- **A hypothesis is a statement that predicts what will happen.**
- You need to include an **experimental hypothesis (H1)** and a **null hypothesis (H0)**. **You will not know which of these predictions is correct until the end of the research.**
 - **H1** - An experimental hypothesis predicts **A DIFFERENCE will** occur – i.e. you predict there will be a difference in how domestic chores are divided between males and females.
 - **H0** - A null hypothesis predicts **NO DIFFERENCE will** occur – i.e. there will be no difference in how domestic chores are divided – they are fairly equal.



7) Procedure/method

- An outline of what was done.
- All methodological details are reported so the study can be replicated. This section splits into several sub-sections:

❖ **Design**

Includes:

- Choice of method, e.g. questionnaire or an interview
- Identification of variables, e.g. Independent Variable (what you're comparing, e.g. males and females) and the Dependent Variable (what you're measuring)
- Other controls – e.g. standardisation – giving participants the same questionnaire, the same set of instructions etc.
- Ethical considerations – consent forms, clear instructions, giving all participants a right to leave, a debrief, assure them of confidentiality.



❖ **Participants**



Includes sampling details such as:

- Who is your target population?
- Who is your actual sample? How many participants? How many are male/female? Where are they all from?
- Sampling method – how were they recruited? e.g. opportunity sampling or volunteers.
- Naivety of participants as to the purpose of the study and whether any declined to take part or subsequently dropped out.

❖ **Apparatus/materials**

- Description of any technical equipment involved and how it was used. E.g. online survey websites, Zoom,
- Only materials directly relevant to the investigation are included. Any mark sheets, questionnaires go in the appendices.

8) Findings/results

- What do your overall results suggest?
- Are there any particular trends amongst men and women? E.g. are women more likely to work and do domestic chores or is it men, or both?
- Can you relate your findings back to the two theories (March of Progress and Feminist views) – which one do your results support?

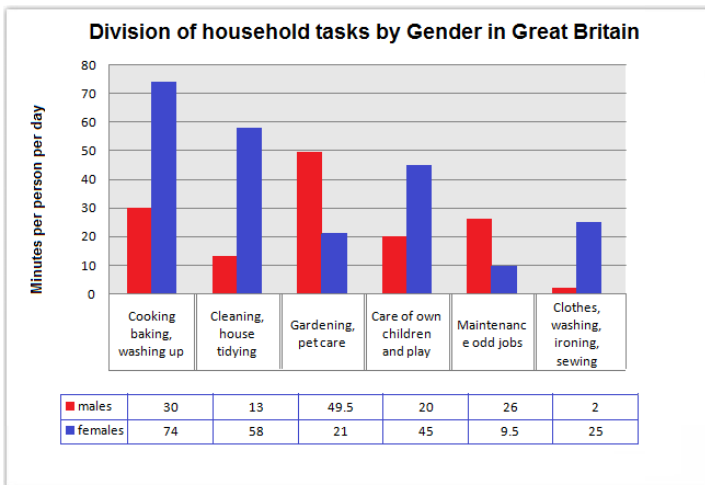


**PYT – could you perhaps try and display your results in a table or a graph?
(OPTIONAL)**



For example:

You might want to present your data in the form of a graph or table, or maybe both.



Household tasks undertaken by men and women in heterosexual couples in 2012, British Social Attitudes Survey (2013)

Individual usually undertaking the task	2012
Cares for sick family members	
Always/usually the man	5
Both Equally	38
Always/usually the woman	36
Does the laundry	
Always/usually the man	6
Both Equally	20
Always/usually the woman	70
Does the household cleaning	
Always/usually the man	8
Both Equally	29
Always/usually the woman	56
Prepares the meals	
Always/usually the man	16
Both Equally	27
Always/usually the woman	55
Makes small repairs around the house	
Always/usually the man	75
Both Equally	10
Always/usually the woman	7



9) Discussion

- Can you relate your results back to your hypotheses? Was your H1 or your H0 prediction correct?
- Can you evaluate the research you have carried out; i.e. were there any problems that arose during your study? e.g. perhaps some participants didn't understand some questions, perhaps the sample of participants were problematic or biased.
- Can you discuss what you would have done differently and possibly offer ways of rectifying these issues if you were to replicate your research in future.



10) Conclusion

- A concise paragraph is presented that summarises key conclusions drawn from the study.

11) Appendices

- Any copies of questionnaires/interview questions that you gave to participants must go in this section.
- A copy of the full instructions given to participants.
- Raw data, and calculations from your results.
- A copy of your consent form and debrief given to participants.



Useful Websites & Help

WEBSITES

- <https://www.tutor2u.net/sociology>
- <https://thesociologyguy.com/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheTEACHERSOCIOLOGY/videos>
- <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/>



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