

Examine the reasons  
why some  
sociologists choose  
not to use  
experiments when  
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Examine the reasons why some sociologists choose not to use experiments when conducting research. There are two types of experiment methods which are laboratory and field. Laboratory experiments are normally set up by the researcher itself. Field experiments are an experiment carried out in a 'natural' setting; that is, unlike in the case of laboratory experiments, the setting is not created by the researcher. Sociologists tend to use field experiments rather than laboratory experiments as people will behave more naturally in field experiments rather than laboratory experiments, it is also easier to generalise results, greater validity in the results of the experiment and also fewer demand characteristics if the participants are unaware. But sociologists tend to generally avoid using experiments for research this may be because there are many practical, ethical and theoretical issues that apply to these research methods. All sociologists look at the practical, ethical and theoretical issues before they start their research. They tend not to use laboratory experiments as there are many practical issues applied such as the costs and time which are needed for this type of experiment. Other practical issues which can apply to this method is the target population, as if you choose a wrong group of people, it can affect your overall result and affect the validity of the research. Sociologists don't use experimental methods because of the artificial setting that is created from laboratory experiments; this will cause the research done to lack validity. Milgram's study was carried out in an artificial environment where participants took electric shocks for getting an answer wrong, but one of these was an actor who actually faked being electrically shocked. Milgram's study had many ethical issues such as deception as not every participant was not informed about what they were

doing, apart from the actor. There was a risk towards the health of the participant. Other examples are the 'Hawthorne Affect', this means that the participant behave in a certain way because they are being researched, the Chicago study at the Hawthorne electrical work, they found out that participants felt special because they were being watched and changed the way they worked. The theoretical issues with experimental method research are if people who volunteered to be part for the research instead of being picked on. They normally don't cause a change in results as they have the same interests but the results lead not being representative for the whole population. Advantages of experiments are that it can help identifying a cause as the controlled conditions allow this to happen. Also a change of behaviour can easily be noticed. Other advantages are that the data which has been found can be repeated so you will know how accurate your first set of results is. Overall sociologists usually will look to avoid using experiments. Instead they tend to comparative research as when they want to explain a particular issue; one way of doing is that across groups or societies. By comparing the different social variables in the different societies and their affects upon the issue being studied by sociologists. So sociologists will usually avoid experiments because of the practical, ethical and theoretical issues.