Theory/Methods Exam – Feb. 2014 - KEVIN

Theory/Methods Integration

The empirical outcomes for deterrence theory and labeling theory would appear to produce support for each theory. First, explain why this is so. Then, construct a research design that would sufficiently allow us to assess the relative empirical merit of one theory versus the other. In your response, please adhere to each section below and number your response to correspond to the various subsections

A. Research Question
   1. State the hypothesis or hypotheses of your research question
   2. List the conceptual definitions of the key variables and identify your independent and dependent variables
   3. Provide operational definitions of the key variables

B. Sampling Design
   1. Identify the population, sample, sampling frame, and sampling technique

C. Data Collection Technique(s)
   1. Describe how you will gather your data
   2. Describe the instrument(s) that you will employ

D. Human Subjects Protections
   1. Identify any issues related to the use of human subjects/respondents

E. Measurement Issues
   1. Describe the reliability and validity of the measures and how you will assess the veracity of your measures.

F. Analysis
   1. Describe the appropriate statistical tests that you will employ to analyze your data

Individual Theories

Gottfredson and Hirschi’s population heterogeneity approach to studying offenders and offending continues to be somewhat at odds with the state dependence approach. One facet of disagreement between these two approaches emerges when discussing the role of 1) unemployment, 2) religious participation, and marital status in crime. Your task is to:

1) Briefly expound upon each theoretical approach
2) Using each approach, explain how each theoretical orientation would account for the association between the risk/protective factors of unemployment, religious participation, marital status and crime
3) Tell us what the empirical literature demonstrates regarding the association between the three risk/protective factors and crime and which theory seems more supported by this literature.
**Individual Theories**

Gottfredson and Hirschi’s concept of low self-control and their assertion that this concept is inferred with time-stable individual characteristics continues to come under fire by critics. Explain Gottfredson and Hirschi’s notion of the stability of low self-control. Then, describe how critics have viewed this conceptual idea in terms of its stability. Finally, narrate the empirical literature and tell us what empirical tests of the stability of low self-control reveal.

**Research Methods**

One of the interesting debates in the college drinking and academic retention literature concerns the association between drinking and retention in school. Specifically, some have contended that high risk drinking in college increases the odds of dropping out of school (college). Your task is to set up a research design to assess this potential causal risk factor association. In so doing, you need to be mindful of time order, spuriousness, and potential moderating factors. In so doing, you must:

1. State the research problem.
2. Construct a research design that will appropriately be able to address the causal direction of this association.
3. Tell us how you will gather your data.
4. Tell us what kind of variables you will employ and how you will operationalize your variables.
5. Tell us what kind of control variables and moderating factors you will employ and why they are important to your study.

**Structural Theories**

The impact of the macro level effect of schools and schooling on delinquency rates has not received much attention in the field. Describe and discuss the various aggregate level factors that might be included in any study of the impact of schools and schooling on delinquency rates. Then, discuss the methodological problems that might accompany the sorting out of these factors from confounding individual level factors and other macro level factors on delinquency rates.