

## **MSW Comprehensive Exam Research Study Guide**

### **Research content covered on exam:**

Research in the human services

Steps in conducting research

Theory and research

Two logical systems: deductive approach versus inductive approach

Quantitative research methods

Qualitative research methods

The ethics and politics of social work research

Problem formulation

Literature review

Developing hypotheses

Independent variables and dependent variables

Operationalization of concepts

Measurement:

Levels of measurement: nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio  
measures

Validity and types of validity: face validity, criterion-related validity,  
and construct validity

Reliability and types of reliability: interrater reliability, test-retest  
reliability, and internal consistency reliability

## Research Designs

Samples and populations

Sampling frame

Sampling errors and biased samples

Sampling methods: Probability sampling: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and multistage cluster sampling

Nonprobability sampling: availability sampling, snowball sampling, quota sampling, and purposive sampling.

Experimental designs: Criteria for inferring causality

Internal validity and threats to internal validity: History, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, selection bias

True experimental designs and quasi-experimental designs

External validity and threats to external validity

Survey designs: self-administered questionnaires, interview surveys, and telephone surveys

## Data analysis:

SPSS data files

Descriptive statistics

Inferential statistics

Significance level

Type I error and type II error

Univariate analysis: central tendency (mean, median, mode) and dispersion (range, variance, standard deviation)

Z scores and percentiles

Bivariate analysis: correlation, independent t-test, paired t-test, ANOVA, and chi-square

Multivariate analysis: multiple regression

Single subject designs (SSD)/program evaluation

Types of SSD: AB, ABA, ABAB, multiple-baseline designs, and multiple-component designs

Theoretical significance

Statistical significance

Practical significance

### **Highly Recommended Readings**

Bloom, M., Fischer, J., & Orme, J.G. (2006). *Evaluating practice: guidelines for the accountable professional*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Levin, J., & Fox, J. (2006). *Elementary statistics in social research*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Monette, D.R., Sullivan, T.J., & DeJong, C.R. (2005). *Applied social research: A tools for the human services*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Royse, D., Thyer, B.A., Padgett, D.K., & Logan, T.K. (2006). *Program evaluation: An introduction*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2005). *Research methods for social work*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole—Thomson Learning.

Weinbach, R.W., Grinnell, R.M., & Yoder, S.M. (2003). *Statistics for social workers*. Boston: Allyn an Bacon.

## **Additional Readings**

Brown, K.W., Cozby, P.C., Kee, D.W., & Worden, P.E. (1999). *Research methods in human development*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

George, D., & Mallery, P. (1999). *SPSS for windows: Step by step*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Healey, J.F. (1999). *Statistics: A tool for social research*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Mertler, C.A., & Vannatta, R.A. (2001). *Advanced and multivariate statistical methods: Practical application and interpretation*. Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

SPSS for Windows. (Release 14.0.1). (2005). [Computer software]. Chicago, IL: SPSS, Inc.

Sweet, S.A. (1999). *Data analysis with SPSS*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.