

Student Learning Module: Investigating Children in Poverty

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Skill

After the completion of this module, the learner should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to create a hypothesis
- Demonstrate an understanding of both the dependent and the independent variable.
- Demonstrate how to create cross-tabulations using both frequencies and percentages
- Examine and use web resources to explore possible policy implications of data findings in this module.

Substance

- Explain how each of the following variables is related to child poverty within the United States: Race, Age, Family Type, Family Size, and Immigrant Status.
- Explain what is meant by the term feminization of poverty.
- Demonstrate an effective use of sociological imagination.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

By now you are familiar with definitions of poverty in this course as well as some of the theoretical explanations for poverty. According to your textbook, over 12 million children in this country live below the poverty line. Both conservatives and liberals in the United States have named various causes ranging from family break down to increasing unemployment. In this module, you will have the opportunity to explore the relationship between race, age, family type, family size, and immigrant status with child poverty in the United States. You will need to use your sociological imagination and sociological tool box in order to complete this module.

For this module, you will be using the following dataset within WebCHIP: CHLDPOV2K. This dataset is a collection of information based on children in the United States in 2000. The ages range from 0 to 17.

You can access WebCHIP through the following link:

<http://ssdan.net/datacounts/webchip>

1. In the left sidebar to choose the collection **acs2010**
2. Next, select the dataset "**ChildPov**"
3. Click "Compute Marginals" to see all the marginals in the dataset

Before we begin, let's take a closer look at the data. Use the Marginals function in WebCHIP and let's examine the data for each variable.

Please complete the following information:

1. **What percentage of children are white?_____**
2. **What percentage of children live in married couple homes?_____**
3. **What percentage of children are ages 0-5?_____**
4. **What percentage of children are Native born?_____**
5. **What percentage of children live in a family with 2 people?_____**
6. **What percentage of children live in poverty?_____**

Investigating Relationship #1 RACE

If you as a researcher used various theories on poverty and you believe that some racial groups might have more children in poverty than other racial groups, what hypothesis would you be examining?

STATE HYPOTHESIS 1: _____
(Remember your rules on how to state a hypothesis).

In the above hypothesis:
What would be your independent variable? _____

Why? _____

What would be your dependent variable? _____

Why? _____

CREATE A PERCENT DOWN CROSS TAB TO EXAMINE YOUR HYPOTHESIS

FILL IN THE FOLLOWING TABLE INDICATING PERCENTS

	NLWhite	Black	Asian	Latino	AmIndian	NLOther	NLMulti
Comfortable							
Middle							
Near Poor							
Poverty							
Column Total							

CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 1:

In examining the above table, explain the relationship that seems to exist between race and child poverty

CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 2:

Overall, do you seem to be on the right track with your hypothesis? Why or Why not?

Investigation Relationship #2 Native or Foreign Born

If you are a researcher who expects that foreign born children may experience more poverty than native born children, what hypothesis are you specifically examining?

STATE HYPOTHESIS

2: _____

(Remember your rules on how to state a hypothesis).

In the above hypothesis:

What would be your independent variable? _____

Why? _____

What would be your dependent variable? _____

Why? _____

Now, try examining the relationship by creating a percent down cross-tabulation. Please place percentage data below.

	Native	Foreign Born	All
Comfortable			
Middle			
Near Poor			
Poverty			
Total			

CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 3 (See table prior):
In examining the above table, explain the relationship that seems to exist between birth status and child poverty.

_____.

CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 4:
Overall, do you seem to be on the right track with your hypothesis? Why or why not?

Investigating Relationship #3 Age of Children

If you as a researcher wanted to investigate whether or not there is a difference in the numbers of younger children who experience poverty versus older children, what would be your specific hypothesis?

STATE HYPOTHESIS

3: _____

(Remember your rules on how to state a hypothesis).

In the above hypothesis:

What would be your independent variable? _____

Why? _____

What would be your dependent variable? _____

Why? _____

CREATE A PERCENT DOWN CROSSTAB OF CHILD'S AGE AND POVERTY STATUS TO EXAMINE YOUR HYPOTHESIS (Be sure to use percentages)

	0 to 5	6 to 17	All
Comfortable			
Middle			
Near Poor			
Poverty			

Total			
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CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 5:

In examining the above table, explain the relationship that seems to exist between birth status and child poverty.

CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 6:

Overall, do you seem to be on the right track with your hypothesis? Why or why not?

Investigating Relationship #4 Family Type
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If you as a researcher used various theories on poverty and believed that children living in single-parent homes experience more poverty than children in homes where both parents are present, what hypothesis would you be examining?

STATE HYPOTHESIS 4: _____
 (Remember your rules on how to state a hypothesis).

In the above hypothesis:

What would be your independent variable? _____

Why? _____

What would be your dependent variable? _____

Why? _____

CREATE A PERCENT ACROSS CROSSTAB OF FAMILY TYPE AND POVERTY TO EXAMINE YOUR HYPOTHESIS

	MrrdCPL	MaleFam	FemIFam
Comfortable			
Middle			
Near Poor			
Poverty			
Total			

CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 7:

What is meant by the term feminization of poverty(See your textbook)?

Is there any evidence for this in the above chart? Explain.

Overall, do you seem to be on the right track with your hypothesis? Why or why not?

Investigating Relationship #5 Number of People in Your Family

Using your sociological imagination and knowledge what do you think the relationship might be between number of people in a family and child poverty? State your hypothesis below with a brief explanation.

STATE HYPOTHESIS

5: _____
(Remember your rules on how to state a hypothesis).

In the above hypothesis:

What would be your independent variable? _____

Why? _____

What would be your dependent variable? _____

Why? _____

CREATE A CROSS TAB OF FAMILY SIZE AND POVERTY TO EXAMINE YOUR HYPOTHESIS

	2	3	4	5	6	All
Comfortabl						

e						
Middle						
Near Poor						
Poverty						
Total						

CRITICAL THINKING MOMENT 8 :

In examining the above table, explain the relationship that seems to exist between family size and child poverty?

Of all the independent variables examined in this exercise, which one seem to explain the most poverty?

Why? _____

SOCIAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS TAKE HOME ASSIGNMENT

Congratulations, you finished your data analysis, now it is time to think about what all this means for our society and for creating better solutions to the social problem of Child Poverty.

Go the following websites:

National Center for Children in Poverty

<http://cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp/>

Children's Defense Fund

www.childrensdefense.org/

Spend some time examining some of the suggested programs and policies suggested by these two organizations to assist children in poverty. Please keep in mind some of the data presented in this exercise. Do any of the programs specifically target issues concerning the feminization of poverty? Do any of the programs focus on younger children?

After examining these websites, take some time to answer the following questions. Please type your answers and attach to this sheet. Be prepared to discuss in class.

Question 1: What are some ideas suggested by the National Center for Children Poverty?

Question 2: What are some ideas suggested by the Children's Defense fund?

Question 3: What do you think is needed? Why?

LEARNER'S POST ASSESSMENT

Take a few moments to reflect upon what you have learned in this module:

1. What factors seem to be related to child poverty?

2. What surprised you most about doing this module? Explain.

3. How comfortable are you with numerical information? Please circle which best describes you.
 - Not Comfortable
 - Somewhat Comfortable
 - Comfortable
 - Very Comfortable
 - Extremely Comfortable