Research Design and Methodology I

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Assignment #3 – Essay

For Core 3, analyze the fictional study "Religiosity and Social Behavior in a Diverse Community." In a 7-10 page essay, thoroughly analyze the research design of the fictional study using the following specific criteria:

1. Introduction - Compose an overview of the sections of this assignment and justify why they are important for research design and methodology in dissertation research.

2. Methodology Distinction (1 page) - Explain how the study incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this mixed-methods approach and its impact on the study's comprehensiveness.

3. Problem Formulation and Purpose (1 page) - Evaluate the clarity and specificity of the problem and purpose statements. Assess how well these statements guide the research and set the stage for the study's objectives.

4. Research Questions (1 page) - Examine the formulation and significance of the research questions. Discuss their appropriateness in guiding the research process and addressing the study's objectives.

5. Research Design Alignment (1 page) - Analyze the alignment of elements within the research design, including the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and chosen methodologies. Discuss how this alignment contributes to the study's coherence.

6. Dissertation Structure (1 page) - Explore the structure and sections of a typical dissertation, using the fictional study as an example. Explain the purpose and significance of each section in the research process and assess how well the study adheres to this structure.

7. Reflection on Personal Dissertation Idea (2-3 pages) - Reflect on what you've learned from analyzing the fictional study's research design. Apply these insights to your dissertation research idea or proposal. Discuss how the principles and elements discussed in this analysis can inform your research design, problem statement, research questions, and overall dissertation structure.

The assignment should be 7-10 pages long. Cite research design experts from your developmental readings and use proper APA formatting.

**Introduction**

The sections of this assignment; Introduction, Methodology Distinction, Problem Formulation and Purpose, Research Questions, Research Design Alignment, Dissertation Structure, and Reflection on Personal Dissertation Idea. These sections provide a guide in conducting research and writing research publications, including preparation for the student’s dissertation. Each of these sections points to key components of the research design and process, which provides the student with working examples of research design and working through the research writing process so the student can start to develop research skills including research writing skills needed in their academic journey and as a social researcher.

**Methodology Distinction**

The study of Religiosity and Social Behavior in a Diverse Community utilizes a mixed-methods approach to examine the relationship between religiosity and community involvement and community care by a survey gathering quantitative data and by gathering qualitative data by way of a focus group. Quantitative research provides a dataset that the researcher can perform statistical analysis and conduct hypothesis testing and allows for inferential statistics, which allows us to generalize our research findings to the larger population. Qualitative research provides narrative-based data for the researcher to gain valuable insight. Qualitative research allows the researcher to take in the physical environment that the participants live within (Scott‐Arthur, et al, 202), which allows for the researcher unique insight into data beyond the narrative collection from participants.

Using mixed methods provides us with additional context to understand the research findings in the context of the quantitative data of informing us of the ‘what’ is taking place and then with the qualitative data we can gain insights into perhaps the ‘why’ or the reason for given attitudes or actions that may be undiscoverable in the quantitative data alone. It brings in a more holistic approach to understanding the social phenomena than would be otherwise using one or the other methodological approaches. The differences in the methods can be the strength of research by thoughtfully combining them in a mixed methods approach as complementary aspects of the research rather than compensating for the weakness of either the quantitative or qualitative data (Knappertsbusch et al. 2023).

**Problem Formulation and Purpose**

The purpose statement for the research entitled, Religiosity and Social Behavior in a Diverse Community: A Mixed-Methods Approach, is as follows.

Researchers in a diverse urban community aim to examine and explore the relationship between religiosity and social behavior among residents. The study seeks to understand how individuals' religious beliefs influence their interactions with others, their attitudes toward social issues, and their involvement in community activities.

This purpose statement provides background information on who (diverse urban community) is being studied and why (understand how individuals' religious beliefs influence their…) it is being studied. The statement provides the main idea of the research of what is being researched and why in a short description (Walshe & Brearley, 2020). Informing the reader of the research problem is important to establish an understanding of the need for the research. The research problem should establish a gap in the current research and thus the need for the current research. To identify the gap in research a person must read the existing literature (journal articles and books) surrounding the topic of interest and develop ideas on where additional research will help bring about a greater understanding of the research topic. The problem statement and purpose statement establish a guide for the researcher for the development of a study plan “…with a clear explanation of the purpose of the study and the significance of the problem to be studied. This explanation should include the reasons why the study is important and how the study fits into the existing body of research” (Plichta & Kelvin 2013, p. 8). In line with the alignment of the statements, the title should provide a summary of the purpose statement.

**Research Questions**

A research question is a focused question that the research intends to address (Walshe & Brearley, 2020). The research questions for this study are as follows.

1. To what extent does religiosity influence individuals' engagement in community service and volunteering?

2. How does religiosity affect attitudes toward social justice issues in the community?

3. How does religiosity affect the level of social cohesion and interaction among community members?

These research questions stem from the problem statement and the literature review. The research question must have an alignment with the problem statement, the purpose statement the background of the problem, and the significance of the problem. Where there is a logical flow from introducing the topic to defining what the research will be about. The research question states the specific issue your research will address, such as the relationship between the independent variable (religiosity) and the dependent variables (community service, social justice attitudes, and social cohesion) in the research. These research questions will ultimately be transformed into hypothesis statements that will be tested utilizing statistical tests.

From the courses and readings this semester, the importance of developing a research question stood out to me. Writing good research questions does take some thought and development, where it is clear and concise questions that address the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. It must have the consistency of alignment with the purpose and problem statement. In addition, the hypothesis is derived from the research question, where the data collected is statistically tested to answer the hypothesis and thus the research question. Writing a good research question will ensure that the hypothesis statement will be written well and will be clear in understanding the research results.

**Research Design Alignment**

The research study of Religiosity and Social Behavior in a Diverse Community: A Mixed-Methods Approach, has alignment with the title, the problem statement, the purpose statement, research questions, and methodology, where **“**Consistency is about the logical alignment of the title, purpose, problem, and research question. This process begins when a researcher identifies the concepts or constructs of interest and focuses on these constructs when reading literature to help formulate the topic, problem, and purpose of the work” (Newman & Covrig, 2013, p. 71). This alignment is important for the logical flow of the presentation of the research so that it informs the reader with a clear understanding of what the research is about and what the research presents as its intention. Having good alignment also helps the researcher stay focused on the intent of the research and helps guide them as they carry out the research. In this research study, the methodology statement is as follows.

This study will employ a mixed-methods approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative phase will use surveys to assess participants' religiosity levels, engagement in community activities, and attitudes toward social justice issues. The qualitative phase will consist of focus group discussions to gain in-depth insights into participants' experiences, beliefs, and perceptions of religiosity and social behavior.

This statement follows the logical alignment of the title “…A Mixed Methods Approach” the purpose statement “…aim to examine and explore the relationship between…” and the research questions “How does religiosity affect…”. The statement informs how the research is collecting the data, through a survey for the quantitative data and what will be collected on the survey, the qualitative data through focus group discussions. It also informs the us why using mixed methods was the method of choice for this research, “…assess participants’ religiosity levels…” and “…to gain in-depth insight…”, this research example provides good example of what research design alignment is and how to incorporate the alignment.

**Dissertation Structure**

OGS seems to greatly support the student’s dissertation development with many resources and courses such as this course of Research Design and Methodology. The doctorial student’s dissertation is a major display of their mastery of discipline and methodology (Guessabi, 2020). The dissertation structure has five sections in addition to other components such as abstract and work cited, the five sections are; Introduction, Review of Literature, Research Design and Methodology, Summary of Results, and Conclusion and Recommendations. Using the research study of Religiosity and Social Behavior in a Diverse Community with the outline of this paper it provides us with an example of working through the Introduction section of the dissertation with subsections; problem statement, background of the problem, setting of the research, research question, thesis statement, hypothesis, and the significance of the research.

There is much to producing a dissertation besides the research, as seen from the OGS Dissertation Quantitative Template. This provides clear guidance on the elements within the dissertation chapters. This resource provides the student with areas to think through as they develop their dissertation topic and dissertation proposal. The dissertation template is also a good resource in developing the thought process and organization skills for developing research study plans for research beyond the dissertation.

**Reflection on Personal Dissertation Idea**

This course has been very helpful to introduce the dissertation process at OGS and has increased my excitement to start to work on my dissertation. I was seeking to narrow down my dissertation topic this semester so I could start preparing and thinking through the elements and structure of the dissertation as well as start developing a dissertation proposal in the future tense (Eleje, 2022). However, I am not so confident that I will have it narrowed down this semester, I believe I will not have my dissertation topic until this coming summer. Taking this course has provided me with many things to think through regarding the dissertation, which I am thankful for. I feel more prepared to think through my interests and concern for a research problem. One of the areas I have an interest in is the geosocial effects on health and health outcomes. Where geographic features impact the health of people living in different geographic places, and those geographies also impact the people living in those areas and thus their connection with their health and with the health system. During this semester I had been reviewing the literature of geohealth to see what research is being done and what research methodologies and statistical analysis are being used to help me think through a possible dissertation research topic.

I am likely going to focus my dissertation on geosocial health but have a few other interests that I want to evaluate. Nevertheless, these two courses Research Design and Methodology I and Statistics for Social Research I, along with the provided resources has equipped me to think through a particular focus for my dissertation research and the development of the purpose statement, problem statement, research questions and research design. I need to process through my area of research idea and turn it into a research problem (Walshe & Brearley, 2020). In working on a research focus area, and developing my statements and research question, I also will need to seek a dissertation committee and a dissertation mentor that will help guide me through this new experience (Garofalo, 2022) of dissertation work. I look forward to starting my work on my dissertation, I have several research interests that I thought may be good dissertation topics, however I need to focus myself on selecting a dissertation topic and allow my other research interest to be future research studies. With the dissertation resources and these research courses, I believe after settling on a dissertation topic the research design and statement formulations will fall into place.

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