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SR 950, Assignment #1

Selected Essential Element: APPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

**Note**: This assignment was described in the syllabus as a Discussion paper. However, there is no way to post it within the “Discussions” tab. I have therefore uploaded it under “Assignments” but it is formatted for a Discussion Board.

DISCUSSION BOARD POST

Since social research is such a HUGE area, I decided to focus on my interest in qualitative research.

As one who is working “in the trenches” of a struggling 100% volunteer-run nonprofit hospital foundation––and also a DSL major––I need practical data that directly and specifically apply to the environment in which I operate.

While I have immense respect for the big-picture overview data patterns and numerical discoveries gained through qualitative research, such quantitative “macro” findings lack the intimacy and immediate applicability of the qualitative “micro” data that are needed in order to affect constructive social change within my organizational environment.

During sociology’s formative years, sociological theorists believed that the social world was the same as the natural world and thus overlooked the subjective side of reality. Heddendorf (2020) argues that sociology needs to instead be placed amongst the “soft” sciences rather than the “hard” sciences such as the natural and physical sciences (p. 7). Heddendorf adds that, “Modern social science has often had trouble accepting this soft or qualitative approach to social reality” (p. 7). Thus, the term *qualitative* represents this softer science, and also resonates with my goals.

While modern social science has been reluctant to accept a soft or qualitative approach to social reality, in the workplace or other smaller setting, the qualitative approach is the more actionable approach because it is immediately applicable.

What might be the reasoning behind modern social scientists’ resistance to embrace soft, qualitative research? Does it reflect the profession’s early struggles to obtain acceptance in the world of the hard sciences? Perhaps.

While my limited knowledge of Christian thought is apparent, through research of the literature I have gained insights that God’s social principles can also be viewed as embodying soft science and therefore a qualitative approach. This gives me confidence that my qualitative research leanings will bear fruit.

Work Cited

Heddendorf, R. & Vos, M. (2010). *Hidden threads: A Christian critique of sociological*

*theory.* New York: University Press of America. **[SEMINAL]**