Clinical and Applied Sociology

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September 30, 2024

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1. **Create a hypothetical project for applied sociology** (descriptive problem identification/diagnosis) based on a problem within an organization you work for/with or with which you are familiar.

2. Extending this project might **include a “clinical” intervention to lead to social change**. What might the intervention look like, and how would it be implemented?

3. **Evaluate ethical considerations** for the above two scenarios.

4. Propose means by which the project outcomes could be evaluated or measured for effectiveness.

 Last year, I had the opportunity to meet with several mission organizations to discuss BAM training opportunities, as well as mission organizational needs and challenges. I learned they all were experiencing similar challenges (i.e., missionary recruitment, incomplete assignments, and too few long-term missionaries).

This is concerning because missionaries do God’s work sharing Christ with the unreached, as they work to alleviate social issues. Since the early 1900’s, missionary projects have focused on “the abolition of child labor, the reduction of illiteracy, and prison reform” (Scott, 1970, p3). The work is not easy, which makes preparation very important.

Missionaries also face challenges. A literature review noted 19th century missionaries faced access and institutional challenges. Andrilenas, N. (2023) remarked that “from the beginning of (Adele Fielde’s) missionary career, her experience was marked by conflict with the ABMU leadership and fellow missionaries leading to questions of her suitability as a Baptist missionary” (p2).

200 years later the mission field has gained access to many nations and established ministries around the world, yet despite these achievements, today's missionary still faces an array of challenges like modern day conveniences, technology, and not being matched with the right opportunity (i.e., knowing one’s godly design). Since these challenges impact the missionary, one can assume there is dissatisfaction and coupled with work difficulties negatively impact mission organizations.

This paper focuses on the idea that if today’s missionary knew their godly design (vocational and spiritual) they could match that design to opportunities (i.e., jobs, college major, companies, team assignments) resulting in better outcomes and more success on the field.

As such, the proposed hypothetical applied sociology project is to develop a BAM (Business As Mission) Training Program that will equip Christians for the mission, college, and career field. The premise is that knowing one’s godly vocational and spiritual design will replace anxiety with peace; stress with confidence and fear with hope. Ultimately, creating a resource that can change the mission field.

The proposed BAM Training Program is constructed with a dual purpose. First, to address the challenges faced by the mission organizations; and second to prepare Christian missionaries to know their design and how to use it. It is very exciting because the Program can also be adapted to others (i.e., high school & college, retirees and adults seeking a new career).

Training content will be developed using Dr. Neal Johnson’s DIY BAM book published in 2022. It will teach biblical business principles and faith at work concepts in line with the M in BAM standing for Mission. The program also includes a vocation and a spiritual gifts assessment so participants learn their godly design and how to use their results. Lastly, they will draft a career and mission plan to use through their career and into retirement.

The clinical intervention involves a pilot program where a group of missionaries complete the 6-week BAM Training Program. Surveys before, during and after will be used to collect qualitative and quantitative data about the subjects, curriculum, and the program. Information will be tabulated and used to evaluate success and make necessary changes. The Program will include establishing a team within the entity to operate the ministry, Train-The-Trainers and support the team equipping others.

We expect results from the proposed study will “determine gaps and recommend further empirical studies on youth ministry and community development among local churches” Msebi & Beukes, 2024, p8).

Anticipated outcomes for mission sending organizations include yielding better results (i.e., assignment outcomes, completed assignments, long-term missionary recruitment). This concept will require administrators to assign people differently and to learn how to match missionaries to assignments based on individual design.

For the missionary, they may not understand how their vocation or spiritual gifts are relevant to the mission, but knowing will enable them to choose assignments matching their gifts, giving them greater confidence on the mission field. This new knowledge will serve them in their job and church ministry too.

Lastly, for the company/organization/church receiving the missionary will be better served by the person coming on assignment. It’s anticipated that greater progress can be made to alleviate social issues and more people will come to Christ as missionaries.

Beyond missions there are numerous opportunities where this Training Program can be used. BAM is typically used by Christian Entrepreneurs and since entrepreneurship is at an all time high thanks to technology and the spirit of being your own boss, it is a great time for the Christian community to start more Christian businesses.

The DIY BAM book and proposed training program can help Christian Entrepreneurs and business owners learn how to create/build Kingdom companies and to understand BAM. The added value of the Program is teaching all participants about and to utilize vocational and spiritual assessments, which will “bring people (i.e., management, as well as employees) to the next level” (Rovner, 2020, p 99).

Beyond business, the BAM Training Program can be adapted to be shared with churches, schools, and colleges. This modification will focus on career and spiritual gifts development to equip young and transitioning adults, as well as retirees for Kingdom work implemented by “planting” career ministries. The goal is to elevate the church and Christian education within the community.

As I reflected on my time as a Career Strategist, I realized that fewer clients today than in previous years know what God’s vocational plan for their life is. It is significant because stress and anxiety are the predominant causes of mental health issues. Clients and their parents experience significant levels of stress and anxiety during the years leading up to high school graduation. I believe God brought me to OGS to develop and research this area of need.

Another issue that I learned through my discussions with pastors and Christian leaders is the Barna Group’s research finding that Christian students are walking away from their faith between college and career. Known as deconversion, my calculation of Barna’s reports over a decade equates to about 10% loss per year. This should be of great concern in the Christian community, especially since it probably can be correlated to stress and anxiety from not knowing what to do after high school graduation.

Quinlan-Davidson, et al (2024) found that **“**youth not in education, employment, or training … struggle to navigate school to work transitions” (p2). Interestingly, both college bound and those not face being lost, which impacts mental and spiritual health, as well as future productivity.

Collectively, it seems plausible that the decline of mission minded students, fewer long term missionary assignments, and team conflict are in part due to this lost faith, not knowing one’s design, stress & anxiety, and struggling to navigate after high school. The BAM Training Program adapted for use with HS and college age students regardless of whether they are college bound and not can have a significant impact in this area.

The proposed work work, like Arpova’s (2023) “focuses on the positive probability of influencing young people to achieve education in the real chance of getting meaningful, long and dignified work and thus prevent poverty due to unemployment” (p. 74). Laying a better foundation through training and knowing one’s godly design will help us achieve this. Through the nurturing of career and spiritual gifts, “organizations can create an environment that promotes CC (career commitment) and supports individuals in reaching their career goals, ultimately benefiting managers and organizations” (Bhawna & Sharma, 2024, p61).

Since 2015, I have helped people discover their godly design and it’s been amazing to see God work in this space. Hopefully, my explanation of the immediate and bigger issues and the effects on youth painted the picture of need for the proposed program. That said, I hope the numerous opportunities are also evident based on the discussion presented.

I look forward to developing the BAM Training Program for each capacity mentioned here. To partner with organizations, churches, schools to plant ministries and to continue to work with individuals searching for their career path.

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