**Hermeneutics applied to research on the core causes and solutions to homelessness.**

Hermeneutics and Communication

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1. Write a 5-page paper about the need for hermeneutics, or how to intelligently read

the scholarly subject literature and published social research about the topic of your

research interest. Explain why learning how to read scholarly literature is needed to

learn how to do scholarly writing about your research interest. Cite sources from the

seminal course resources and find at least two articles about a topic of your interest.

The student should direct developmental readings from Assignment #2 on the issue of

hermeneutics and a subject of their research interest for this assignment.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of ten scholarly research sources (NOTE: Use at least

five books provided in course resources and the remaining scholarly

peer-reviewed journal articles).

**Hermeneutics applied to research on the core causes and solutions to homelessness.**

Hermeneutics is relevant and essential in social research, specifically concerning issues of homelessness, including the dimensions, causalities, consequences, and solutions of homelessness. Hermeneutics is the science and methodology of interpretation; which is applied to social research and the solving of social problems. Hermeneutics “is a defining trait of our humanity and is foundational to every field of human knowledge.” (Zimmermann, 2015). The principles of hermeneutics include comprehension, reflective awareness, and interpretation. Reading techniques for scholarly subject research vary in innovative elements; however, models suggest that efficiencies are gained by narrowing the field of the sources of information to a manageable group of potentially useful platforms including “specialized texts” (Castillo-Martinez, 2021), journals and papers which have credibility and meet the criteria of relevance to the area of study and the research subject question. Hermeneutic social research requires developing skills and learning techniques in reading scholarly papers.

Hermeneutics in reading scholarly literature is an art which is learned and developed, and promotes intelligent reading of scholarly literature and published research on issues of homelessness, including the dimensions, causalities, consequences, and solutions of homelessness. It involves interrogatives and interpretation. In the process of reading, some of the questions that should be asked include: What is does writing say?; What does the writing mean?; How can the reader paraphrase the information to express the author’s thoughts and promote clarity?; How can my understanding be supported?; and, How may the information learned be used or applied?. Answers to the questions while reading will provide a bridge from reading to learning and understanding. Research reading may include the search and review of external informational data resources, and examining and analyzing research findings from other scholars or internal sources, to provide feedback. “This idea of multiple readings of the same text is a strength of hermeneutics…” (Wadhwani, 2023). Reading in scholarly research requires competency, may have multiple objectives, and correspondingly require application of different techniques and degrees of focus, to achieve the required level of assimilation that supports the expansion of knowledge as required in the social research on homelessness. Writing is the companion to reading in research.

The American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual provides guidelines for scholarly writing, including citations recognizing the work of others. Hermeneutic social research writings should present concepts clearly, concisely and accurately, and give recognition to the works of other through proper citation. The scholarly research paper should have proper formatting, in accordance with APA guidelines. The social research paper should include: a Title page correctly formatted with the title, author’s name and other pertinent information; An Introduction in which the research purpose or problem is discussed; Method which describes the procedures used, participants, the methodologies - qualitative, qualitative or mixed-methods methodologies; Discussion detailing the results, findings, implications, conclusions and recommendations. Research papers often go through processes of review by various stake-holders. Peer-reviewed scientific journals is an accepted platform for publishing scholarly papers, including social research papers or reports.

The principles of hermeneutics used in research on the social issue of homelessness, involve interpretation, which is a critical component in reading. Per Zimmermann (2015), interpretation “…takes place unconsciously at times.” Through research, scholars are able to build knowledge and discover truths that pave the way for solutions to the social issue of homelessness. “In reading, the reflective mind monitors how it is reading while it is reading. The foundation for this ability is knowledge of how the mind functions when reading well.” (Elder, 2003).

Sire (1988) stated in his book titled *Reading for Comprehension*, that “It is always possible that a person with a different perspective will see what is actually there but we have missed.” and that “a recognition of our own proneness to error should be part of every Christian’s world view”. The pre-understandings impact the interpretation of research information. Reflective awareness of the biases allows the scholar to communicate their preconceptions, creates opportunities to unlearn, relearn, broaden their knowledge, and expand their horizon of understanding. According to Hovey (2022) quoting from Gadamer (1989):

Hermeneutic inquiry means uncovering that which could be missed because the new and different understanding cannot be captured through methodological certainty. Philosophical hermeneutics advocates that subjectivity is not a block to greater objectivity but rather an opening to it. In the sense of having a distinct but negotiated point of view, subjectivity can be regarded as enabling a new and different understanding to emerge.

Although the interpretation of information is inherently subjective, research data, analysis, conclusions, and solutions that emerge are subjected to ongoing scrutiny for consistency, resilience, and the rigors of testing.

Research into the core causes and solutions for homeless uses various methodologies, including quantitative and qualitative analyses, which have made hermeneutics very relevant. Hermeneutics in social research involves a methodological approach that focuses on the interpretive nature of comprehending social realities. Max Weber argued that social researchers should seek to understand the subjective meanings and motives behind human actions, rather than just observing them as external phenomena (Weber, 1949). Hermeneutics in research, provides a methodology which helps to avoid presupposed definitions of homelessness, allowing the researcher to seek what homelessness means and why it occurs, from those who have experienced it.

The hermeneutic interpretive and qualitative approach methods for social research on homelessness including the dimensions, causalities, consequences, and solutions of homelessness, allow the incorporation of important personal, cultural and historical, and other factors which paint a more expansive picture, promote understanding and increase knowledge. In this approach, the viewpoints of homeless individuals are captured through narrative inquiries, surveys and documented observations. The researcher is able to identify patterns in the homeless population, interact with and view the social dynamics, practices and challenges faced by homeless individuals. The researcher would embark in hermeneutic analysis involving interpreting the qualitative information through reading and re-reading, seeking connections, looking for social parallels, and correlations in making valid conclusions.

Creswell (2014) notes the researcher in drawing conclusions should be reflexive about the results, and the issues tackled in the research topic. In a research study performed, it was concluded that mentally ill homeless individuals required early interventions to reduce the stigma of homelessness and improve stability, quality of life, provide mental ill recovery, and community outreach (Mejia-Lancheros, 2021). Elbogen’s research conclusions suggested that “individuals experiencing homelessness who have severe mental illness may benefit from assistance increasing financial literacy, improving money management, and achieving financial well-being” (Elbogen et al., 2021).

The hermeneutic approach to homeless research draws on empathy and reflexive spaces. The researcher listens, maintains openness to the perspective of the homeless, and keeps a “scientific distance” from the subject in interpretations and writings. The reflexive space allows the researcher to acknowledge that their understanding may be biased by their own experiences and preconceptions, which may affect the interpretations and understanding of the researcher; however, that knowledge allows the researcher to have greater clarity, acceptance of other truths, and to unlearn and learn truths. The researcher should also try to understand the worldview of the homeless individuals, how they view their struggles, and the things that hold value to them. Pyrczak (2019), in the Journal article on Evaluating Research in Academic Journals, stated that “Researchers should reflect on their methodological decisions and share these reflections on research with the readers. This shows that careful thinking underlies their work”.

Hermeneutics allow researchers to discover and reveal the complexities of homelessness, the experiences, causes, and remedies and solutions. Homelessness is a major social issue in many countries, and mental illness in homeless persons contribute to their high rates of mortality and morbidity (Gutwinski, 2021). During the last decade homelessness has increased significantly within the United States, with high visibility of mental illness, which has sparked intense and ongoing debate (Susser, 2021). The complexity and multifaceted nature of the social issue of homelessness makes it difficult to resolve. The hermeneutic approach is both essential and relevant in the research of the social issue of homelessness, and facilitates the acquisition of valuable insights about the dimensions, causalities, consequences, which, in the future may lead to comprehensive solutions to homelessness.

**References**

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