Assignment 4: Final Research Paper Proposal

ScWk 242 – Session 14 Slides
Methods & Research Design

- Identify and describe the quantitative and the qualitative research designs that you are proposing. Provide a brief rationale for why you chose these research designs to study your topic.

- What are some quantitative designs?

- What are some qualitative designs?
Sample

- Identify and describe the sampling method you are proposing for the quantitative and qualitative portions of the proposed study (i.e., simple random sampling, convenience sampling, etc.)

- Indicate the anticipated sample size for quantitative and qualitative samples

- Describe (in general) the anticipated demographic characteristics of your quantitative and qualitative samples
Study Site

- Identify and describe where your study will take place, including city and state and, if applicable, agency name.
Measures and Instrumentation

For the *quantitative* portion of the proposed study:

- Identify and describe the *operational definition* (e.g. how it is measured) for the independent and the dependent variables.
- Describe the *type of quantitative study instrument* being used, such as a survey, a case record review form, or if the data are supposed to come from administrative data, indicate that here.
- Describe *the reliability of the quantitative study instrument*, if known. If not known, then describe how you would address reliability issues (e.g. how will you know if the instrument is reliable)?
- Describe *the validity of the quantitative study instrument*, if known. If not known, then describe how you would address validity issues (e.g. how will you know if the instrument is valid)?
For the qualitative portion of the proposed study:

- Identify and describe the main domains that are to be explored (e.g., the main topics you are going to ask about).

- Describe the type of qualitative study instrument being proposed, such as a semi-structured interview guide, or a focus group guide.

- Describe how potential issues related to the credibility and trustworthiness of the data will be addressed.
Human Subjects Considerations

- Describe how you will obtain informed consent, ensure participants’ confidentiality or anonymity, protect them from harm, and submit your proposal to an IRB for review and approval.

- Data Collection Procedures

- Describe, step by step, how you will:
  - Recruit potential participants (if applicable)
  - Collect data from participants
  - What will happen when you collect data (survey, interview questions, audio recording, field notes, etc.)
  - If the proposed study includes an intervention, describe the intervention in this section
Proposed Analysis

For the **quantitative** portion:

- Describe the types of **descriptive statistics** that you are proposing to use for each variable of interest, including: demographic variables, the independent variable, the dependent variable and also any important extraneous (i.e. confounding) variables that may influence the possible relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

- Describe the type of **inferential statistics** that you are proposing to use to test your hypothesis.
For the Qualitative Portion:

- Describe your anticipated process for qualitative analysis (i.e. ongoing, cyclical process of reading and re-reading transcripts and field notes).

- Describe the coding process you will use (content, thematic, comparative, narrative), you can combine these approaches.
Study Design Strengths and Limitations

- Describe the potential strengths and limitations of your proposed methods.
- Consider strengths and limitations of each component in the methods section, however describe here only the most important strengths and limitations.
Anticipated Findings and Implications

- Include in a separate section
- Briefly state what you expect your findings to be, and explain the implications of your specific, anticipated results for social work (i.e., its influence on practice, policy, theory, and/or future research).
Minimum of 15 References

- Although a majority of references are cited in the literature review, the introduction and methods section can contain references as well.

- Appendices: This section contains your demographic questions, interview questions if applicable or other items and questions, copies of your instruments, and/or other detailed documentation relevant to your study.
Grading and Evaluation

Evaluation of writing:

- Extensively edit your own paper and/or have others assist you.
- Do not expect your instructor to edit your draft or final paper for you.
- It is your responsibility to read through the paper to identify and fix errors.
- The word program will usually show many of these problems colored in red or green – FIX THEM!
Linking Literature Review to Your Proposal

Make **clear connections** between:

- The information presented in your *literature review*
- Your *research statement* (“This research examines….”)
- Your *hypothesis* (quantitative) and your *research question* (qualitative)

 ✓ Is there a **logical connection** between the information that you present and your research statement?

 ✓ Can the reader **easily see** why your proposed study would be important to the field of social work?
Writing: Technical Issues

- Do not use contractions in professional writing:
  - Don’t should be: do not, etc...

- When starting a sentence with a number, write the number out in words

- Affect vs. Effect:
  -- Affect is a verb or adverb, e.g., “Youth in the foster care system are affected by a number of challenging situations.”
  -- Effect is a noun or object, e.g., “Multiple placement changes can have a number of negative effects on youth in the foster care system.”
Writing: Technical Issues

Paraphrase—do not generally use quotes:

- Paraphrasing means to use your own words to summarize and/or synthesize someone else’s work.
- Only use a quote of a passage of text if it is of some distinction or you are providing the definition of a concept.
- Paraphrasing is a skill that requires you to fully understand the meaning of the text you are citing.
- For more information see: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/1/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/619/1/)
Writing: Technical Issues

Ensure adequate paragraph structure:

- Paragraphs should be at least three sentences (beginning (transition), middle (content) and end (conclusion))
- Paragraphs should focus on one idea and should never be longer than one page double spaced.
Writing Tips

- Lead the reader on a journey (tell a good story) about why the study that you are proposing is important.

- Common feedback:
  - Re-word to improve clarity
  - Use topic-specific sub-section headings
  - Use transition sentences and phrases to link ideas
Writing Tips

- Make sure to back up your statements with references. If you say: “Studies show...” “Research indicates...” There should be at least one reference after that sentence.

- Qualify whenever possible your own interpretations about research evidence as possibilities, rather than facts.
APA In-Text Citations

- Properly cite secondary sources
- No “&” within in-text citations
- When referencing in-text:
  
  Use just the authors last name and date
  (no first names, book title, journal/article titles or presentation titles)


APA In-Text Citations

- Use page numbers for direct quotes only
- Use *et al.*, for in-text citations only after you have already listed out all of the authors—if there are 6 or fewer authors (if more than 6, use *et al.* the first time).
- If there are only two authors, each author is listed *every time*
More APA Rules

When describing a population—put the individual first, rather than the disorder/problem:

- People with mental illness (vs. the mentally ill)
- People with a substance use disorder vs. addicts, alcoholics etc…
- People with Autism vs. Autistics
- People who are undocumented or with unauthorized citizenship status vs. illegal immigrants
- Etc....
Formatting Rules

- Do not use I, me, my, we, etc. - Use the third person, such as the author, this writer, etc.

- Use 12-point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins throughout – change bottom margin to .8 if needed to ensure the margins area all the same size.

- Set orphan and widow controls

- Use ragged right, not right-justified margins
Final Tips

- The due date is the last day of class on May 8
- Papers may be submitted via hardcopy in class, in my mailbox that afternoon, or via e-mail that day
- Your instructor can provide one quick review of a draft submitted at least three days prior to the due date, but only if your grade so far is B or less.
- Be sure to organize your work and stay on track – do not wait until the day before the assignment is due.
- Papers will be corrected within one week. You may give the instructor a self-addressed stamped envelope for mail-back of hard copies. Electronic copies will be returned via e-mail.