Assignment 4 Notes and Instructions

MNG10720

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Assignment 4: Research Project Report

- **Due:** Week 12 – Friday 25th May 2018
- **Length:** 1500 words (+/- 10%)
- **Weighing:** 50%
- **Format:** Report
- **Covers:**
  - Mainly Topics 4-9, but also includes some elements discussed in Topic 2 (ethical considerations and problem statement/objectives)

Late submissions

- Late submission will lose 5% per day
- Assignment extensions need to be applied for via special consideration procedures
- These are now eforms submitted via 'My Enrolment'
- For details on special consideration visit http://scu.edu.au/students/index.php/30

Assignment overview

- You are required to prepare a report that will set out how you will go about answering the research question developed in Assignment 2.
- The report will map out a research design - techniques you will use to convincingly address the research question.
- Your report will **describe and justify** the decisions you have made for your research design, data collection methods, sample selection, ethical considerations and data analysis techniques.
- The proposal report also involves the development of a Qualtrics survey which you need to design and include whether you choose to develop a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method of survey and/or interview questions.

Assignment text

- **Instructions**

  Your **research proposal** should address the following **criteria** (and use these **headings** in your Research Project Report):

- **<u>1. Problem Statement and Research Objectives</u>** – state your **problem statement** and **research objectives** at the start of your research proposal report so your lecturer can refer to these when reviewing your proposal.

Tips for problem statement and research objectives

- Use the **feedback from assignment 2** to improve these
  - A problem statement is a **concise statement** of the purpose of your study – **be specific**
  - **Grammar and expression** heavily scrutinised here
  - To find the sub objectives you need to identify the **steps** required to fulfill your problem statement
  - Use **instruction words** like describe, examine, explore…
  - Should reflect the **scope** of the project – **geographic, temporal, demographic**
  - Make sure that the sub objectives are **relevant** to solve the overall 'problem'

Assignment text

- **<u>2. Research design</u>** – explain and justify the methodological approach you propose to guide your research proposal using relevant literature.

Tips for the research design section

- Provide a **<u>brief</u> discussion** of **research design** at the **3 levels**
  - **Core function** (pure vs applied research)
  - **Information requirements** (exploratory, descriptive, explanatory research etc)
  - **Methodology** (quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research)
- Good papers **<u>do</u>** justify their design choices with appropriate **academic references**

Assignment text

- **<u>3. Data Collection Methods</u>** – explain and justify the methods you propose for data collection and data management using relevant literature.

Tips for the data collection methods section

- You may **compare/contrast** your selected methods with other methods that you did **not** select for your research project (**explain why**) by discussing the **advantages and disadvantages** of the different methods available
- Based on this discussion, **explain and justify** the **particular data collection methods**/techniques that you selected to apply in **your** research project
- Make sure to **support** your explanation/justification with **evidence from the academic literature** using appropriate **academic references** (e.g. research methodology books and/or academic journal articles)
- Remember, if your choose a **mixed methods** approach for A3 and use **Qualtrics** you can use **other methods in addition** to this, if you wish, and it fits with your problem statement/objectives, e.g. observation)

Tips for the data collection methods section

- Methods commonly used for **quantitative research** include:
  - **Surveys** (household, street/intercept, telephone, mail, on-site, web/e-surveys, captive group, organisation)
  - **Structured interviews**
  - **Longitudinal studies**
  - **Observation**
  - **Case studies**
- Methods commonly used for **qualitative research** include:
  - **In-depth interviews**
  - **Participant observation**
  - **Focus groups**
  - **Case studies**
  - **Content Analysis**

Assignment text

- **<u>4. Qualtrics Survey</u>** – design and **include your Qualtrics survey and/or interview format and explain and justify the questions and style of questions** you use with respect to collecting appropriate data to address your objectives.

Tips for the Qualtrics survey section

- Include your **Qualtrics questionnaire** as an **Appendix** in your Assignment 3 (export it into Word from Qualtrics)
- In **this section** in the **body of your assignment**, you need to **explain and justify** **why** you use particular **types of questions** in order to address your problem statement and objectives, such as:
  - **Open-ended vs closed**/pre-coded questions
  - **Poll** questions
  - **Multiple choice** questions
  - **Checklists**
  - **Ranking** questions
  - **Fill in the blanks**
  - **Rating scales**
  - **Filter** questions
- **Justify** your choice with reference to the levels of measurement (i.e. nominal, ordinal, interval and ration)

Assignment text

- **5. Sample Selection** – explain and justify the sample selection process relevant to your research proposal.

Tips for the sample selection section

- In the **<u>sampling section</u>** you must:
  - State whether you are using **probability or non-probability** sampling
  - **Justify** this choice using appropriate **references**
  - You should explain explicitly **why your selected sampling techniques are suitable** for your study
    - Good idea to include a paragraph on the sampling procedures that **could** be applied to your study – noting their **advantages and disadvantages**
    - Then **narrow down to the ones** you have selected and **justify your choice** with a **reference** or two
    - E.g. **Neuman (2006) stated** that stratified sampling was appropriate under such and such circumstances, therefore stratified sampling has been selected for the present study…

Tips for the sample selection section

- **Specifically**, you need to address:
  - What is your **research population**
  - What is your **target population**
  - What is your **sampling procedure** (simple random, stratified, convenience, purposive etc.)
  - **How big** will your **sample** be?
- For your **quantitative sample**, I will expect a **number** based on, for example, Neuman's guidelines (see Power Point slides from Topic 7)
- For your **qualitative sample**, while you can estimate an approximate number, it is sufficient to justify your sample size here referring to the **point of saturation**

Assignment text

- **<u>6. Data Analysis Techniques</u>** – explain and justify how you would propose to analyse and present the data collected.

Tips for the data analysis techniques section

- You should **discuss**:
  - What **forms of analysis** you will apply to your data (**univariate, bivariate** – frequency counts, central tendency, scatterplots etc.)
  - You are advised to explain which variables will be subject of **univariate** analysis and which will be **bivariate**.
  - **How** you will **present your analysed data** (e.g. frequency tables, bar graphs, pie charts etc.)
  - **Justify your choices** – e.g. 'frequency tables are suitable for presenting nominal data' (Smith, 1999, p. 45)
  - Remember to **explain/justify** data analysis of **both your survey and your interviews**

Assignment text

- **<u>7. Ethical Considerations</u>** – explain how you would consider the ethical issues associated with the research proposal.

Tips for the Ethical Considerations Section

- Briefly outline how your project will be **ethically conducted**:
  - How you will obtain **informed consent**
  - The **risks** to participants in your study, and how you will **protect** them from those risks (mostly to do with **privacy**)
  - How the **anonymity** of participants will be maintained
  - How will collected data be **reported and stored**?

Assignment Text

- 8. Provide a reference list (Harvard) for any reference sources you use to justify your final research proposal.
- **Good papers** include a **variety of academic references** to justify decisions made in relation to the research proposal (A3 required 5 references, so I would propose that 5 is the **minimum** for A4 as well – however, HDs and Ds may require more references than this)

Marking Criteria

- Your **Assignment 3** will be marked based on the following **criteria**

Criteria	Marks %
Research **design**	20
Data collection **methods**	20
Qualtrics survey	10
Sample selection	10
Ethical considerations	10
Proposed **data analysis** techniques	10
Presentation and **clarity** of the report	10
Referencing quality and list	10
Total % marks	**100**

Format of Assignment 3

- Cover page
- Title Page
- Problem Statement and Research Objectives
- Research Design
- Data Collection Methods
- Qualtrics Survey explanation
- Sample Selection
- Ethical Considerations
- Data Analysis Techniques
- Reference List
- Appendices
  - Qualtrics Questionnaire

Word limit and assignment sections

- The cover sheet, title page, reference list, and appendices are **not included** in the **1500 word limit**
- The following 7 sections **are included** in the **1500 word limit**: Problem Statement and Research Objectives, Research Design, Data Collection Methods, Qualtrics Survey, Sample Selection, Ethical Considerations, and Data Analysis Techniques
- **Use headings** corresponding with the **required sections** above within your assignment
- It is **up to you** whether you would like to **number** your sections or not (1, 2, 3 etc. – 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc. if you use subsections) but it is a useful tool

Physical presentation

- **Double spaced**
- At least **2.5 cm margins**
- Insert **page numbers**
- Use **3rd person** (instead of writing 'I', refer to yourself as 'the researcher' or similar term)
- More details of in **UIG**

Reference Style: Harvard

- The required reference style for this unit is the **Harvard style**
- Click on the '**Topic 3**' folder and upload the referencing chapter from **Summers and Smith's (2006)** *Communication Skills Handbook*
- It provides you with **examples** and everything you need to know about the Harvard referencing style
- Make sure that your referencing is **consistent**

Final notes

- Focus on the **marking criteria** of the assignment – this is your guide to ensure that you have included all necessary elements into the assignment that you will be marked on
- **Start early** – last minute assignments written the night before the due date seldom obtain a high grade