Applied Research Methods (PADM606)

Assignment 5: Research Design Proposal

Since you have completed your literature review and preliminary conceptual framework for the research proposal, you are ready to provide a detailed research design plan and with this to create a complete project proposal. This final assignment on project proposal focuses on thinking through each and every step of research design, from developing hypothesis to creating an appropriate data analysis plan, and presenting them convincingly. Your final task, however, will be to finalize the entire proposal so that it is ready for review by others. Following are the specific tasks I would like you to accomplish by the due date.

1. You have already created the preliminary version of the conceptual framework. This time, I want you to think about it more realistically and verify your preliminary framework with the theoretical assumptions as well as the given applied context. **Finalize the conceptual framework** you have developed with some form of a formal or logic model and appropriate explanations.

2. It is also time to **formulate hypotheses or more refined research questions** that can be answered using the data you are planning on using. Remember, while the convention is to present unsophisticated, null hypotheses, I would recommend using alternative hypotheses as these are consistent with your research interest. If you are using questions, try to avoid vagueness, which might not be answerable at all. Also, **indicate what results you expect from your research with adequate explanations.**

3. **Identify appropriate data source(s) and describe the data you want to use.** Here you should focus on data type, source, how data collected, how recent, population and the sample, etc. (It is equally applicable even if you are planning on using qualitative data; you might have several sources, however). Be explicit if your plan is to collect your own data by designing and administering a survey. If this is the case, however, provide your detailed plan regarding the population, sampling, instruments, administration of the instruments, coding, and data entry. Provide the instrument you have developed as an appendix. This is also a good place to describe the unit of analysis.

4. Next, **list the dependent and independent variables** you are including and mention if you are using indicator variables to measure a broader concept. Briefly describe how the variables are measured. State major concepts, factors, or issues you are using in the analysis, if you are planning a qualitative research.

5. **Layout out your data analysis plan.** I know we do not cover the data analysis part in the course but the assumption is that you have already taken the data analysis course or are ready to explore qualitative analytical techniques needed for your research. Your data analysis plan may change down the road but it’s good to start with something. Think of this part as a rudimentary plan for listing what analysis
techniques such as means, correlation, trend analysis (especially with graphs), ANOVA, or regression you would like to use. Providing structure of tables that you would like to use in the analysis will further demonstrate your preparedness with the project. The best outline for qualitative research would be case study, participatory research, event or content analysis, historical research, or exploratory research, in which you will attempt to test the hypotheses or answer the questions by putting different pieces together. But provide a detailed plan that goes into analyzing the data to implement the design.

6. Provide a brief context
   6.1 contextual discussion of the research especially if there is anything peculiar about the geography or population you are examining. Context matters in many cases particularly if you have some important issues to consider and reservations about the findings, policy applications to draw, and/or your research is qualitative in nature.

7. Do not forget to work on the problem statement and literature review sections you have created so that you can incorporate any newer thoughts, comments, and/or other information you have found in the meantime.

8. Add an introduction or an abstract section to the proposal to make it look more professional. You can summarize your problem, concept, design plan, and activities in this section and mention other points that you deem would improve the presentation.

9. Provide your bibliography or references including all the citations that you have used in the text. Follow a legible format and be consistent with it. If you need, consult with appropriate bibliographic styles, including APA, Chicago, and others.

10. This is going to be your final opportunity to improve the quality of the proposal and remember that 30 percent of the course grade will depend on the final product which includes all the components that you have in the proposal. At this point you are free to arrange the different components of your proposal but be consistent with the presentation. Also remember to use sub-headings throughout so that the reader will be clear on the organization of ideas and activities.

11. I expect your project proposal to be less than 17 pages (if you are working in a group) or less than 13 pages (if you are working individually) with double space and at least 12 point font. This page limit, however, does not include your bibliography or reference section and appendix, if you will, which have no page limit.

12. Good Luck!!!