

American University of Beirut
Faculty of Health Sciences
Research Project
XXXX 345
Course Outline

Course Description

During this course, students are required to carry out a research project within his/her area of concentration or interest, as an individual or as part of a group (a maximum of 3 students can form a group) . The research could focus on one or more of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies (of a combination of methods – multi method research) introduced in Research Design, Principles of Epidemiology, Basics of Biostatistics, and Qualitative Health Research. The course gives the student a chance to apply background knowledge and master research skills in an area of interest.

General Objectives

In this course, students develop and implement a research project.

Specific learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- ✓ Choose an appropriate research methodology for the research question of interest
- ✓ Develop data collection tools, and collect the data needed for the study
- ✓ Analyze the data collected
- ✓ Apply ethical principles to the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of findings.
- ✓ Write a rigorous research report (see guidelines on next page)

Guidelines for Writing a Research Project Report Using Qualitative Methods

September 2009

A challenge of transforming personal interests to a larger audience and making an impact that would make them want to feel or do something about it (Ulin et al, 2005)¹.

NOTE: students wanting to carry out a qualitative research project must have completed HBED 334.

The research report is a written report that answers your research question. It covers what you did, why, how and what you found. *[Insert literature where necessary throughout the report]*

Main components of the Research Report:

I. **A title page** that includes title of project, names of students and advisors.

II. **Abstract:** A structured abstract of no more than 300 words which includes: Background, objective, methods, results, and conclusions

III. **Introduction:**

The introduction presents the reader with a brief overview of the research issue in question, as well as the purpose of the research using terms such as (to investigate, explore...).

IV. **Background**

- √ Present a synthesis of the relevant theoretical and methodological literature which is related to your research question, with an emphasis on the gap/s that the current research project will address [use appropriate references].
- √ Describe the community/ country/ context/ population issues as appropriate to the research question.

V. **Research Methodology (what, how, who):**

You may describe the following elements separately with sub-headings or with no sub-headings if the parts are relatively short because the headings may interrupt the flow:

Briefly describe the research methodology you chose to investigate your research question and why you chose it [insert relevant refs.]..

Discuss:

- √ The Method/s you used: such as observations, in-depth interviews and/or focus group; in what sequence you used them; what language did you use to collect your data; a description of the interview schedule or the use of a checklist in the case of observations; the interaction of data collection with data analysis [concurrent/simultaneous].
- √ Sampling issues: a description of who the research participants were, decisions about how you chose them, how you accessed them and the number of participants or observations.

¹ Ulin, P. et al (2005) Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A field guide for applied research. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.

- √ The Role of researcher[s]: who they were and how they divided the research activities amongst them in the duration of the research project.

VI. Ethics²

Discuss the ethical considerations that the researcher[s] observed during the research process, the fieldwork as well as the analysis and write up, such as issues of seeking consent, equity in the choice of participants, gender issues, justice, and reflexivity, as well as any challenges to ethics that the researcher/s faced and how they dealt with them as well as how they observed ethics in the write up. Report if proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB).³ Whenever relevant describe the content of the Informed consent.

VII. Research Findings

Discuss:

- √ The approach you used to analyze your data and how you did that [thematic analysis or other approaches] as well as how you managed the data.
- √ Your Research Findings: These are the emerging themes and patterns, described, interpreted, linked where appropriate to the literature/context/larger picture and supported by non identifying verbatim quotes and cases where necessary to bring out participants' voices and views.
- √ Rigor [the strength of your research findings: adequacy, dependability and transferability of findings throughout the Findings section...]
- √ Possible limitations/ problems/lessons

VIII. Conclusions

Summarize the main findings, implications for further research, policy, and practice.

IX. Reference List

X. Appendices

Style of the report

- √ Length: 10-20 typewritten pages including references
- √ Double Spaced, Times New Romans 12, 1.5 inch line spacing, and 1 inch margins
- √ References: APA style

² For more information on ethical issues refer to the Belmont Report
<http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/belmont.html>

³ See IRB submission or exemption form on <http://www.aub.edu.lb/ogc/Pages/forms.aspx>

Tips for writing up the report of qualitative research findings

- maintain balance and accuracy
- ensure no harm to the participants
- give voice equitably to participants
- use quotes to illustrate main findings
- describe context
- describe the 'research trail'
- describe your role and relationship with participants
- focus without losing sight
- link to context
- support with quotes
- link to literature