

Clemson University

TigerPrints

Teacher Scholars Civic Engagement & Voting
Rights

TigerPrints

7-2024

ASSIGNMENT - What's Up with Democracy: A Qualitative Research Exploration

Chris Garris

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/teacher_scholars

Recommended Citation

Garris, Chris, "ASSIGNMENT - What's Up with Democracy: A Qualitative Research Exploration" (2024).
Teacher Scholars Civic Engagement & Voting Rights. 89.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/teacher_scholars/89

This Garris - Introductory Psychology (Civic Engagement Emphasis) is brought to you for free and open access by the TigerPrints at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in Teacher Scholars Civic Engagement & Voting Rights by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.

ASSIGNMENT

What's Up with Democracy: A Qualitative Research Exploration

DESCRIPTION

This assignment was designed for use in an Introductory Psychology course. In this assignment, students will explore a topic related to democracy using qualitative research. As a class, students will develop a research question, design a qualitative assessment, collect data, share results, and reflect upon psychological research through the experience.

KEYWORDS

assignment, flexible, discussion, introductory course, psychology, research methodology, qualitative research, democratic values

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Compare the benefits of qualitative and quantitative research.
2. Design a qualitative research study.
3. Communicate research findings.
4. Describe common concerns in the community regarding democracy and democratic values.
5. Examine differences across social groups on democracy-related variables.

Procedure

1. Before implementing this assignment, students should cover research methodology, introducing both quantitative and qualitative research. If this content isn't adequately covered in your textbook, consider supplementing it with content from OER textbooks, such as <https://kpu.pressbooks.pub/psychmethods4e/chapter/qualitative-research/> (Jhangiani and Leighton. 2019). Also, the instructions direct a [discussion of a specific study](#) (Pasek et al. 2022), so consider assigning this as a reading. There is also an easy-to-read [university press release](#) that addresses the important methods and findings (Ankori-Karlinsky et al. 2022).
2. During class, open a discussion about democracy. Ask students to share what democracy means to them and how they see democracy changing in the nation.
3. Ask students to answer the following four questions using a 0 (not at all important) to 100 (extremely important), as published in Pasek et al. (2022).
 - a. **How important are the following to you:**
 1. Elections are conducted, ballots counted, and winners determined without pervasive fraud or manipulation.
 2. All adult citizens enjoy the same legal and political rights.
 3. Government agencies are not used to monitor, attack, or punish political opponents.
 4. Law enforcement investigations of public officials or their associates are free from political influence or interference.
4. Open a discussion about these questions and the results of Pasek et al. (2022). Reintroduce the concept of quantitative research and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of measuring variables related to democracy using this approach. Reintroduce the concept of qualitative research and discuss how this approach had additional value in exploring democratic variables.
5. Ask students to get into groups of 2–3. Students should brainstorm any questions that they have about how democracy is viewed in their community. For example, they could focus on what democracy means to people in the community or how people in the community feel that democracy could be more effective. Have students share some of their questions with the class. Write these questions on the board.
6. As a class, select a question to explore. In the spirit of democracy, you could take a vote! Once a topic is selected, remind the class that the goal of this assignment is to qualitatively explore this question. Back in groups of 2–3, students should draft 3 open-ended items that address the chosen research question. Groups should share one or more of their items with the class. Write these on the board. Edit items as a group while discussing psychometric concerns. Select 3 questions for the qualitative assessment.
7. Once questions are finalized, direct students to use these questions to collect data from five participants.

7. Students should report the transcribed responses as an assignment.

INSTRUCTIONS

In class, we covered qualitative and quantitative research and then brainstormed questions we had about perceptions of democracy in our community. As a group, we decided to study _____ using a qualitative approach. We designed three questions to ask participants. They are _____. Each student was tasked to collect data from five participants, i.e., to ask these three questions to five participants and record the responses. In this submission, you will provide the data that you collected and reflect upon the experience.

QUESTIONS

- A. Who were your participants? How were these participants selected?
 - B. Report your data. Present the responses provided by your participants for the three qualitative items designed by the class. Break this down by Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.
 - C. What conclusions do you think you can draw about our chosen research question based upon the data that you've collected?
 - D. Now that you've conducted some qualitative research, what do you think about this research to exploring psychological variables? What are some strengths and weaknesses that you observed?
8. In class, facilitate a group discussion about the process. It is likely the case that students will report different conclusions based upon their participants' responses. Explore these differences, particularly how participants from different backgrounds may have different views and feelings about democracy.