Program Evaluation: Analysis of Study Design

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Analysis of Study Design

**Identification of Research Design: Explanation of Whether the Research Design is Experimental or Quasi-Experimental**

The research design that was employed in the study is quasi-experimental design.A quasi-experimental design seeks to determine the relationship between two or more variables, without manipulating them. In the above case, there was no manipulation of variables. The main reason for the evaluation was to investigate the effect of Pennsylvania Governor’s School for International Studies (PGSIS) program on students’ perception of their knowledge regarding core issues. In the above study, there was no manipulation of variables (Moore &Tananis, 2009). Moreover, there was no random assignment of the study participants in terms of comparison groups. Instead, the study participants were clearly defined, selected, and described in terms of their demographic characteristics. For instance, they were 100 high school junior students from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds such as African America, Whites, Latinos, as well as Asian Americans (Moore &Tananis, 2009). The study participants were also defined in terms of gender (male and female). The proportion of male and female participants was almost equal. This suggests that the participants were not randomly selected.

Another characteristic of quasi-experimental design is that no control experiment is utilized. This means that no separate control or comparison group is selected for the sake of proving causation. As suggested in the above scholarly article, a total of 100 participants were selected and there were no separate groups of people to draw comparison with the group that was under investigation. Furthermore, in a quasi-experimental design, statistical analysis is utilized to examine the relationship between variables. As indicated in the above article, statistics was gathered and analyzed in three consecutive years (Moore &Tananis, 2009). The outcome of the analysis was then used to infer whether there existed a relationship between the variables.

Comparison between Experimental and Quasi-experimental Design

The characteristics of the design that was employed suggest that it was quasi-experimental, not experimental. There are various differences between experimental and quasi-experimental design. In experimental design, the researcher controls or manipulates one or more of the independent variables that have been hypothesized in order to arrive at a possible change in the dependent variable (Campbell & Stanley, 2015). In quasi-experimental design, however, there is no control or manipulation of the independent variables. As indicated in the above research, no steps were taken to remove the impact of any extraneous variables that may have an impact on the dependent variable (students’ perceptions on the knowledge regarding core issues).Moreover, there were no measures taken to assure the researchers that the only differences between the groups that are associated with the independent variables (Campbell & Stanley, 2015).

In experimental design, there is random assignment of the study participant to comparison groups. In quasi-experimental designs, on the other hand, there is no random assignment of the study participants (Campbell & Stanley, 2015).  As exemplified in the above research, the study participants were not randomly selected. Instead, the list of participants were predetermined and assigned into groups that were clearly defined in terms of their demographic characteristics(Campbell & Stanley, 2015).

**Analysis of Data Collection Efforts**

Quantitative

Questionnaires were used for quantitative data gathering. Different types of questionnaires were used by the study for different purposes. For instance, incoming questionnaires were applied for the purpose of gathering demographic data and pre-assessing the crease of competencies as developed by PGIS (Moore &Tananis, 2009). In addition, exiting questionnaires were employed by the researchers to offer students with the chance to rank each course within the program with the use of a Likert scale. Questionnaires are commonly utilized or gathering information on group processes. As indicated in the above article, questionnaires can be used as effective tools to evaluate relationship-oriented processes (Ekinci, 2015).

Qualitative

Focus group technique was utilized for gathering qualitative information. A focus group study can be defined as a carefully planned series of discussions that are meant to collect perceptions on a defined area of interest using a permissive and non-threatening style and context (Rose, Spinks &Canhoto, 2014).  The study participants are subdivided into groups of six to eight people using a skilled facilitator. The facilitator is tasked with leading the groups using free and open discussions. Such discussions are aimed at collecting the feelings, perceptions, and views of the participants on a certain research issue. For instance, focus groups were used by the researchers as platforms to give students the opportunity to voice their views and provide feedback during their discussions with the school leadership and the entire faculty (Moore &Tananis, 2009). A formalized focus group procedure that involved alls students was incorporated into the process in order to offer a comprehensive understanding of the data gathered through surveys. It also provided the opportunity to students to express their views from the entire experience.

**Methodological Recommendations**

Having examined the research methods that have been employed in the article, I would recommend the use of qualitative and quantitative data in program evaluation. This is because detailed evaluation studies utilize qualitative and quantitative methodologies to assess program effectiveness. The use of both methods offers a distinct chance to examine problems from multiple dimensions by walking around it and evaluating it in different angles. This has the advantage of offering a more comprehensive insight into the problem.

References

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