**Revision, Methodology, Justification**

**Ebony Hill Chapman**

**RES- 831**

**Grand Canyon University**

**Professor Michelle Sandoval**

**January 1, 2025**

**Revision, Methodology, Justification**

**Refined Dissertation Topic and Reflection**

Given the feedback from my instructor and my cogitation of the problem space, my dissertation topic has changed noticeably. In the beginning, I was more general, and my topic was about educational inequities, focusing on factors like SES, school environment, and community protection. However, the feedback received was that the study should be more focused and examine one aspect of this problem: how teachers view these factors in relation to students’ achievement. This refinement provides the opportunity to explore more specifically how educators' views play a part in analyzing the multifaceted nature of educational inequalities and possibilities for addressing them. This shift is not only more realistic given the constraints of a dissertation, but it also aims at filling a research gap. Although there is a lot of literature on how SES and school climate affect academic achievement, the authors did not find many studies that focused on what teachers think about these factors. Appreciating this point of view is crucial in the conception of coping measures and educational strategies to address the primary causes of differences in academic accomplishment (Walker et al., 2021).

In light of this, my potential dissertation topic now focuses on the following question: How do elementary school teachers perceive the role of socioeconomic status, school environment, and community characteristics in children's academic performance? Therefore, I intend to adopt the topic, **Exploring Elementary Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Socioeconomic Status, School Environment, and Community Characteristics in Children's Academic Performance**, for my dissertation.

**Problem Statement**

It is not known how elementary teachers perceive the role of socioeconomic status, school environment, and community characteristics in children’s academic performance and how these perceptions can be mitigated through interventions.

**Potential Methodology**

In this study, I have adopted the qualitative research method since I felt that this is the most appropriate approach to establish the perception and experiences of teachers on the impact of these environmental factors on academic achievement. It will allow me to collect detailed and rich insights using interviews and focus groups. These methods are suitable for comprehending the richness of teachers’ views on SES, school climate, and community safety and the ways these factors affect the relations between teachers and students and the teaching process (Perkins et al., 2022).

**Justification for Chosen Methodology**

A qualitative approach is suitable for several reasons. First, the research question focuses on the teachers' perceptions and experiences, which are intangible and cannot be quantified commonly. As such, a qualitative approach is best suited to obtaining such detailed viewpoints. Recent literature highlights that it is important to know how teachers view and approach environmental factors to design interventions. Perkins et al. (2022) established that teacher-student relationships and school climate influenced student performance, but how teachers view these factors has not been well studied. A qualitative research design, therefore, holds the best approach to fill this gap. It provides an opportunity to understand the teachers' meanings and experiences, especially regarding the environmental factors that define success in learning (Walker et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research methods like interviews and focus groups applicable in the qualitative methodology are more flexible and can be easily changed to suit my research question. These methods will allow me to examine how teachers’ personal and professional experiences influence their expectations and beliefs about the environment and their part in student achievement. The qualitative approach is also consistent with the current trends in educational research, which pay much attention to the role of teachers’ perceptions and practices in teaching and learning (Walker et al., 2021).

**Justification for Not Choosing a Quantitative Methodology**

Using a quantitative approach for this research may be more appropriate in establishing the correlation between environmental factors and academic performance, but this is not the focus of my research. A quantitative approach could measure variables corresponding to SES, school climate, and community safety and analyze statistical relations among them to academic performance. However, this would not offer the depth of analysis needed to better understand the social processes and dynamics of the teachers.

Furthermore, quantitative research is helpful in hypothesis testing or in analyzing variables more systematically. While it might be useful in identifying trends and relationships, it fails to capture the essence of a person or an event. While Tahir et al. (2021) estimated the effects of SES on academic achievement, they have not examined how teachers view and act on these factors in their classrooms. Besides, Munir et al. (2023) revealed that the application of only quantitative method may not be sufficient to identify the REAL experience of learners dealing with educational inequalities. Although their study provides a valuable analysis of the correlation between SES and academic achievement, the authors fail to explore the effects of these variables on the subjects. This lack of knowledge also strengthens my study's need to use a qualitative approach.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, my revised dissertation topic is to establish elementary school teachers' perceptions of the environment in relation to children’s academic performance. This topic has been further defined and narrowed down due to the suggestions made by my instructors to make the topic more specific and easier to investigate. The above choice of the qualitative research approach is appropriate for studying teachers’ perceptions and feelings and the effects of the environment on academic achievement. This approach will help better understand the problems and prospects of SES, school climate, and community safety and define the most efficient strategies for reducing education inequalities.

**References**

Munir, J., Faiza, M., Jamal, B., Daud, S., & Iqbal, K. (2023). The following are the findings of the study: Effect of Socio-economic Status on Academic Achievement. Journal of Social Sciences Review, 3(2), 695-705.

Perkins, L., Robinson, T. A., & Lee, C. M. (2022). Teacher-student relationships and student academic success: The moderating role of school climate. Learning and Individual Differences, 94, 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2021.101110>

Tahir, T., Ishfaq, U., Begum, S., & Sharjeel, M. (2021). Socio-economic status of parents as a factor influencing the academic performance of the student. Elementary Education Online, 20(5), 2063-2070. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.05.177>

Walker, P. R., Johnson, J. K., & Smith, D. L. (2021). The relationship between socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A review of the literature. Journal of Educational Psychology, 113(4), 450-463. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000459>