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Reflection

This semester in Sociology Social Research and Program Evaluation, I have learned how to conduct research and make surveys properly. I have learned that the best practice for survey research questions is to be clear, avoid double-barreled questions, and make sure respondents are compliant to answer and willing to answer the survey questions. When writing a research question, questions should also be relevant and avoid biased items and terms. Research questions should be well-written questions that are uncluttered, have a consistent format, and are not open-ended.

This semester my class took time to look at the correlation between family involvement and activities we sent home with children. My class put together surveys that we then sent home with the children and asked their guardians to complete our survey after completion of the activity. We then took the surveys we received back and analyzed them and completed more research to observe our findings. Survey questions are strong on reliability and weak on validity. When you give surveys to others, it is important to monitor the return rate you get from the surveys.

Before completing this course, I was able to find research and make surveys on my own, but I now have way more experience and strategies that I have learned that I can use in the future. In the past, my academic research hadn't all been peer-reviewed or correctly cited. Through this course, I was able to learn how to properly find journal articles, peer-reviewed articles, and books that helped me find my research. Evaluating and selecting sources for academic research can be hard since there are many different sources. I decided what resources to use and not use based on aspects I learned in this course. When looking for

academic sources it is important to look at what articles discuss your topic when it was published, what type of methodology was used, and the major findings.

A challenge I ran into this semester when observing my research was logging everything into Rstudio, which has all of the research data. This online computer coding website tracked all of the survey data we received and was able to give us our final research. We were able to see the mean and response rate through Rstudio which is something I didn't know previously. We also created tables and graphs of all of our data and research to log it and give a visual. Another challenge I ran into was finding peer-reviewed articles that related to my topic of family involvement. I was able to use the university library database to find these sources and correctly cite them.

My attitudes and perceptions on finding and completing research have drastically changed throughout my time in this course. I now feel very comfortable finding research on my own and knowing where to find it. When looking for research and sources, I now make sure to acknowledge where my information is coming from, when and where it was done, and observe the methodology used.

I think the meaning of thinking like a researcher is to be very critical and precise when looking for and finding information. Researchers do not rush and are very critical of what information they use and look at. The research I have done this semester has taught me to be precise and engage in the full research done by others. To think like a researcher you need to be open-minded and think broadly about different topics and ideas. I have also gone in-depth and done lots of research and not just looked at one article, but many different ones. It's also important to look at different perspectives of authors and where they received their information to make sure it is credible. This course has taught me how to think like a researcher and use research in my life.