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**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY**

**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Student: **Christopher Walters**

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN**

**Follow these procedures:** If requested by your instructor, please include an assignment cover sheet. This will become the first page of your assignment. In addition, your assignment header should include your last name, first initial, course code, dash, and assignment number. This should be left justified, with the page number right justified. For example:

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**Save a copy of your assignments:** You may need to re-submit an assignment at your instructor’s request. Make sure you save your files in accessible location.

**Academic integrity:** All work submitted in each course must be your own original work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by your instructor. Knowingly submitting another person’s work as your own, without properly citing the source of the work, is considered plagiarism. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course. It may also result in academic dismissal from the University.

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| **BTM7303** | **Dr. Martin Crossland** |
|  |  |
| **Research Methods** | **Potential Research Study** |
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**<Add student comments here>**

**Faculty Use Only**

Hi Christopher. A good effort on this assignment. You’ve reflected on a number of relevant topics and started to express your possible research topic. I’ve made a number of margin comments that are not intended as criticism – please consider them as suggestions for strengthening your topic in order to move it closer to a formal dissertation proposal.

At this stage you should be defining your formal research questions, which are higher-level conceptual levels of inquiry. The questions you have included in this assignment appear to be survey or data-gathering questions that you eventually may be asking of your research participants or finding in available datasets. An analysis of the survey questions or data should then lead you to some indication of how to answer your “bigger-picture” research questions, which should be tightly coupled back to the theory(s) upon which you are basing your study.

Be careful with your research questions and how you may select research participants. One of your research questions seems to revolve around determining what gap, if any, actually exists. You can’t simultaneously investigate whether a gap exists AND try to identify, in advance, people who may be most affected by a phenomenon you haven’t yet confirmed to exist (i.e., particular women).

Please see my other margin comments.

Dr. Marty Crossland 95% August 8, 2016

**What are your tentative problem, purpose, and research questions?**

Although the gender wage gap has closed in recent years, there are still jobs that pay men more than women for the same skills, education, and experience. The tentative problem that I would like to base my research on is the gender pay gap for women and men construction workers in the state of Texas. “Answering the question “Why conduct the research? “With an effective statement of the problem doesn’t just add meaningfulness to that research; it also serves as the first step in addressing that problem (Sternberg, in press)”. (Ellis, T. & Levy, Y. 2008). The purpose of the study would be to determine if there is indeed a gender bias concerning pay and benefits within certain job categories within the construction business in Texas.Some possible research questions could bewhat is the average salary of both men and women in a particular job category and is there a considerable difference in pay if both employees have similar educational backgrounds as well as similar experience and skills.

**What are all of the data-collection strategies that you might use to answer the questions?**

In order to carry out a thorough and successful research study on this topic, there are several possible methods that can be used to obtain and acquire the needed research data. These methods include: *Conducting interviews* – this can be done by the use of a questionnaire where series of questions are asked by an interviewer and directed to an interviewee. These employees would be from a small and random group selected solely for the data collection regarding the research study.Another method of collecting important data would be *Observation and monitoring*.With this method, the researcher observes and monitors the test subjects in their environment and collects data.

During the processes of conducting a field research study, it is important to consider factors that could affect the choice of data collection methods to be used. The viability of any study could be affected by time, money, and or the subject’s willingness to participate. For example, the amount of time given for the research to be completed, the availability of enough money to complete the research study, the willingness of the interviewee to cooperate in answering the questions truthfully and honestly, and the accessibility of the research area/region. These factors can actually determine the method to be used in the collection of data from the sample population or the targeted research group.

 **Who would be the target group that you would want to recruit to participate in your study?**

One very important part of conducting field research is choosing which employees will participate in the study by giving feedback and answering questions from a questionnaire or interview. This method could determine the quality of data that is collected and presented for review and analysis. Doing this can determine whether the conclusion will support the research question or not. I would target those individuals that have experience in pay and benefits within the construction business as well as human resource and pay officials. I would also target those individuals that are greatly affected by the gender pay gap in the most negative way, women.This is because such groups will be determined in knowing the truth on the ground that can only be confirmed by the research and the questions these groups answer directly concerning the data needed to conduct the research.

 In order to gain access to a test group, I would have to co-ordinate a survey or interview session with random employees within several construction companies in Texas. This may be a great task, but using the Internet and mail could make the method viable. Adding an incentive like a gift card or gift certificate may also prove to help with overall participation. This may create an ethical issue with respondents only completing the survey or interview for the gift card or gift certificate. In order for the data collection to be free of coercion or other issues, I would make the surveys anonymous and free of any personally identifiable information.

**What data collection methods might you consider? Would they pose any ethical issues?**

 In the analysis and collection of the needed data from the field, I would use of the interview that is both video/audio recorded for future referencing of the data. Using this method ensures the collection of the data in a controlled environment, free of distractions and keeps the interviewee in the interviewers presence the entire time. This technique provides the advantage that the interviewer asks all the necessary questions and controls the depth in which every question is answered without bias or leading. “In research, bias occurs when “systematic error [is] introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others” (Pannuci, C., & Wilkins, E. 2010).

 I also think that this selected method of data collection would be best for this very controversial subject of gender pay gaps in the construction business in Texas. Some employees may feel that what they say can have a negative affect on their careers or even get them fired for being open and honest about both gender and pay within their fields of work.This is also why a private video and or recorder are important to keep confidential. This will also help the researcher to be able to review the displayed information and listen to the answers if need be for the confirmation of the claims made from the research. When using a video, the participants could also be blurred out to ensure anonymity and the safety of the interviewees.

 There are other collection techniques that can be used and still have less or no ethical issue at all. These include the use of a questionnaire,Internet surveys, and observation and photograph taking. These methods have proven reliable in conducting fieldwork and data collection in many different settings. “The widespread use of the Internet throughout modern society has led to individuals being able to connect with others with the same health condition as them on a global scale.” (Bond, C. 2013).

**References**

Bond, C., Ahmed, O., Hind, M., Thomas, B., & Hewitt-Taylor, J. (2013). The Conceptual and Practical Ethical Dilemmas of Using Health Discussion Board Posts as Research Data.

Ellis, T. & Levy, Y. (2008). Framework of problem-based research: A guide for novice researchers on the development of a research-worthy problem, informing science.

Pannucci, C., & Wilkins, E. (2010). Identifying and avoiding bias in research.