Research Proposal

My research proposal topic is on child abuse. My hypothesis is do abused children go on to become abusive parents. I am interested in child abused, because after getting my degree in Sociology, I want to go into social work. With being a social worker, I will come across children that are taken away from their parents, because their parent either neglected them, or physical, emotionally, or sexually abused their children. I will also come across children that lost their parents by death or put in prison, and there is nobody else to take care of them. But for this research project, I want to look at the children that come in because they are physically, sexually or emotionally abused. There has been a lot of research done on child abuse.

There has been a lot of research done on what causes child abuse. Is child abuse biologically inherited or social constructed? Dario Maestripieri researched child abuse in rhesus monkeys. He found that “nine of 16 females who were abused by their mothers in their first month of life, regardless of whether they were reared by their biological mother or by foster mothers, exhibited abusive parenting with their first born offspring” (Maestripieri pg 9726). Maestripieri showed that child abuse is more social constructed, because he had abusive mother children be paired with non abusive mother and the child was not abusive to offspring. Also had a non abusive mother child paired with an abusive mother and the child did abuse their first offspring. Some researchers have look to see if dissociation is the cause for abused children to become abusive parents.

Dissociation is when a person cannot understand how someone else feel, for an example a person is beaten a lot has a high pain threshold and does not understand if someone else get hit and it hurts, because they get hit so much that they do not feel the pain anymore. Narang and Contreras did a study on college age females asking them questions about child abuse history and also had a questionnaire about dissociation. They also had a physical child abuse potential questionnaire. In model one; they looked at physical abuse history and potential of physical abuse. In model two they looked at dissociation and physical abuse history correlation.

“Physical abuse history predicted 13% of physical abuse potential in model 1 and 8% in model

2. Thus, Physical abuse potential variance explained by physical abuse history was reduced

by 5% after controlling for dissociation” (Narang pg660).

The researchers have found that dissociation could play a part in whether or not an abuse child would become abusive to their own.

Researchers have also looked in to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to see if it is linked to child abuse. In Pears and Capaldi research study looked at social economic status, post traumatic stress, early childbirth in women, and different parental psychological disorders. They gave different questionnaires asking question about different types of abuse and how often it happened, and they also had different assessment and scales for depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, etc. They looked at youth which was G2 and parents as G1. They found that “more consistent discipline and higher depression and PTSD scores were associated with less abuse of G2 by G1” (Pears pg.1451).

The research project hypothesis is do abused children become abusive parents. To carry out this research project by conducting interviews and questionnaires that have both open ending and closed ending questions. Also with looking at do abused children become abusive parents, I will have to understand why parents abused their children. Also, I have to look at is where the other parent is when the child is getting abused by the other parent, does the parent who abuses do drugs and alcohol, does the parent have a history of abuse as a child, and has their parent lost their job. This research project will have one hundred and fifty randomly selected participants and will also be voluntary. The sample will be conducted with adults that ages range from eighteen to thirty that had been abused by their parents when they were younger. To find the participants in the study, I will submit the research project in the classifieds in the newspaper and online in several big cities in the United States to get a large sample size. Before the research project begins each participant will be filled on the aspects of the research project and will have to sign a consent form and know everything they tell me is confidential.

The participants will be given questionnaires to fill out. On the questionnaire there will be opened questions. Some of the open question will be how old are you, at what age do you remember when your parent abused you, who abused you when you were a child, when did that abuse end, where are you from, and what did your parents do for a living? Also there will be an open ended question were you the only one in the family abused, if not who else was abused your parent that was not abusing you or a sibling? There will also be a lot of closed ended questions that are multiple choices. Some questions that are closed end will be yes or no did your parent abused you after they drank alcoholic beverages, yes or no have you been sent to the hospital after your parent beat you up, were you abused after your parent was laid off from a job? Also there will be a question that participant can check all of the above asking them, did you receive broken bones/fractures, burns, welts, cuts, scars, and bruises as a result of your beating by your parent. There will also be questions pertaining to whether they were sexually abused. For example yes or no did your parent sexually abuse you, yes or no you were fondled by a parent, yes or no were you force to have intercourse, also yes or no were you forced to have oral sex? There will also be a question about how often they got beaten and one about how often they were sexually abuse with choices of daily, weekly, monthly, other.

I will also interview the participants. In the interview, we will talk about their childhood. I will ask someone of the questions pertaining to the questionnaire like how were they abused whether physical or sexually. We will also discuss about when their abuse started and ended. Also, I will ask them questions in the interview pertaining to the parent that abused them by asking them, if they knew if their parent was abused as a child. Also ask them if they spent a day or a couple of days with their grandparents (on the side of the parent that abused them) and if they did something wrong did they beat them or did they discipline them in a non abusive way. I will ask them about who ended the child abuse did you move out, did you tell someone about the abuse and they called the police, did you stand up for yourself and they quit? Then we will talk about whether they talk to a therapist or consoler about being abused. We will also discuss if they went through child services, because their parent got arrested and put in jail for abusing them and they had nobody to stay with or if they did have someone to stay with if their parents were arrested for child abuse and who did they lived with.

Then in fifteen to twenty years later, I want to go back and re-interview the adults in my first study and their children. I want to ask the adults from my first study about their parenting styles. Ask them question about whether or not they abused their children like they do when they were younger. I want to see who went to therapy about child abuse and see how many of them abused their children compared to those in the study who did not. I will also ask their children if they were abused, and I will use the same questionnaire that their parents filled out but in a different order and also interview them with the same questions. Also before interviewing the children and having them fill out a questionnaire, they will also be informed of the research project and that everything they tell me will be confidential and they will have to sign a consent form.

Since most of my questions are closed end or yes or no questions the best way to show my result is by using qualitative data by using tables. I can also see if there are correlations between races and gender, and going to therapy or not, how often abuse occurs, which type of abuse occurred most often, what injuries was mostly seen in child abuse cases. We can do a correlation between the two different generations. We can see how many of the children abused went on to abuse their children. With the data that I collected, I can find the average age by using age in an interval-ratio measurement and also in the data like going to therapy or not, which gender are you I can use interval-ratio data. With the question about parents occupation, I will use nominal measurement because it not a number.

There will be a few ethical issues with this research project. One rule of ethic is that a researcher should not cause harm to the participant in the study. With asking questions about the participants past could cause emotional pain. This research project might cause emotional harm to the participant, so before starting the research starts each person will be filled on what the research project is and that some of the question could be painful to talk about. They will also have to sign a consent form before they can start the project. Another issue is that the participant is afraid that if they do end up beating their child that I would tell the police and they would get in trouble. Also they could be afraid that I tell the police that their parent beat them and their parent get arrested, and their parent find out and want to beat them up for it. So, I have to clearly state that everything they tell me is confidential since I will be able to identify the participant, before the research project. Also after my research study there will be a debriefing process where they can talk to a consoler because talking about the past can bring up some emotions that are painful to the participant.

There are some issues with my research project. One issue is that the person lies in the interview and on the questionnaire, because they know what I am looking for. They could also lie on the survey by saying that they were not abused that much or they only had a few broken bones when they actually had much more. The adults in the first study will know that I am going to ask their children about whether they abused them, but the adult can force them to say everything is fine and my parent does not beat me even though they did. There will also be a problem find people for the research project, because they are afraid of their parents might find out and hurt them for explaining what their parent does to them. Another reason it will hard to find participants for the research study because they do not want me to talk to their children if they do end up beating them, and then I call the police and tell them that they beat their children.

The strengths in my research experiment is that I using both a questionnaire and interviewing my participants in the study. With studying the first group of adults and seeing if their parents had a history of child abuse, I can see that there might be child abused that get passed down from generation to generation. Also by interviewing the children or the adults that are abused, I can see if abused children keep going on to abused their own children. With asking different questions, I can see the correlation on who goes on to be abusive parent by gender and race and other factors who went through therapy and who did not and how many of them went on to abuse their children or who did not abused their children. Also strength is having at least a one hundred and fifty people in the participation study, because a large population will have a lower rate of error in my findings and variance, and is more easily believed then a small population size.

Some weakness in my study is trying to get people to participate in the study, because they are afraid to talk about being abused. They can also be afraid that I going to call authorities about their parents abuse them or on them if they end up abusing their own children. When asking for participant, I will suggest that this is by volunteer only and there will be confidentiality in the study. Also with the study there is going to be issues with lying, because the participants are going to either hide the fact about what their parents really did or tell me some made up story that they think I want to hear. Also, when I go and interview their children about whether their parent abuses them, the participant can threaten their kid with abuse if they tell me their abused. Also with the kids there will be confidentiality form with them so they do not get scared about their parent finding out what they told me. Also while talking to the children; I will make sure their parent is not in the same room while they are interview and taking the questionnaire. There will also be a consent form that the child will also have to fill out because there are ethical issues of causing harm to the child emotional and there also a case that they parent might abuse them for talking to me. Also there could be issues with my research project, because there are many reasons that a person abuses their children that I could have left out. Some reason that child abuse occurs is by mental disorders, socially constructed, history of abuse, abuses alcohol and drugs, etc.

In conclusion, my research project hypothesis is does abused children become abusive parents. The participants in the study will be voluntarily and random selected. In my research project, I will use questionnaire and interviewing. I will also fifteen to twenty years later, be interviewing their children with the same questions that I ask the adults in the first part of the research project. I will ask questions that are open ended about age, when the abuse started and ended, what was your parent’s occupation, and which parent abused you. They will also be ask if they are the only one in the family gets abused and is there anyone present while they get abuse. There will also be a question that they can select all that apply to them like for example what type of injuries did you receive from being abused broken bones/fractures, burns, cuts, bruises, scars and welts. There will be closed ended question about how often they were abused, whether or not they were sexually abused and how they were sexually abused. They will also be asked if they went to therapy or they saw a consoler.

The participants will also go through an interview that will be asked some questions that are on the questionnaire and they will also be asked about their childhood. There will also be question about their parent that abuse, like do you know if your abusive parent was abused when he was younger. If you went to your grandparent on the side of your abusive parent do they abuse you if you do something wrong at their house will your visiting or stay for a couple of days. There will be questions about how the abused stopped and if they have gone to talk to someone about it.

After conducting the research, using the questionnaire I can use interval ratios to find the mean age of the respondent. I can also use tables and correlations to show relationships about which races are more likely to go on abusing their children after being abused as a child. I can also see the relationship between men and women who goes on abuses their children after a history of abuse. I can also look at whether therapy helps on decreasing child abuse. Looking at the questionnaire, I can also see who is more likely to abuse a child.

There will also be some ethical issues and other issues with the research project. The ethical issue is that the research project could cause emotional pain, that can be fixed by explaining the research project to the participants and having them sign a consent form. Also the participants will be afraid that I would talk to the authorities about their parents or them if they do end up abuse their children. I will also be interviewing the children of the adults that I talk to fifteen to twenty years after the first interviewing. The children will also be asked if they want to volunteer for the project and they will also be informed of the project and have to sign consent forms. The adults and their children that participate in this study will go through a debriefing and be able to talk to a therapist or consoler, because this project could cause emotional harm. There is also an issue that the parent might abuse their child for telling me what they really do to the child.

There is also an issue that the people could lie to me during the interviewing processes and questionnaire. They can tell me stories they think, I want to here and there also an issue that they will not report everything that happens to me. They could also lie to me because there are afraid, I am going to tell the authorities but I have to reassure them that everything on the questionnaire and everything they tell me will be confidential.