Thought Paper #3

The purpose of this thought paper is for you to begin your research project. To do so, you will need to identify: a) topic, b) purpose, c) research question, and d) literature review.

Please note that this thought paper assignment is far heftier than the two you’ve done before, so getting started early is critical.

Reading Chapters 2 and 3 are absolutes to do this assignment properly.

Start your paper in the traditional way (tell me the purpose of the paper, why it’s important, and provide a road map to the rest of the paper).

You should begin the paper with the topic you are interested in. And you should note for the reader why this topic is an important one worthy of study. Please note you’ll be sticking with this topic for several future thought papers – and your survey – so ensure it is a topic you are interested in.

Next provide a section that describes the purpose of your research. In the book, there are several purposes offered. You may do more than one. Perhaps you are interested in exploratory research (note when this is the best route and discuss this). Or maybe you want to go the descriptive route. Or the explanatory route. No one here will be going the evaluation route for this class though it’s a worthy purpose of research.

Next, taking into account your topic and purpose, offer a research question. The book goes into detail on how this can be done. One thing to keep in mind, newer researchers frequently offer a statement in lieu of their research question, which is incorrect. Remember, you are posing a question – a research question. Note in your discussion how you evaluated, and refined your research question. Consider the research questions posed by our case studies. They offer a variety of research questions as examples.

Next, I would like to see a discussion about how you considered ethics in terms of the research you want to do. What did you consider? What considerations did you make to ensure your research is going to be as ethical as possible? Please note in your paper if IRB approval would be needed for your work (if this wasn’t for class work. No one has to go through IRB for educational assignments. But if you were doing this for a thesis, would you? Why?).

The next section of your paper should include the beginnings of a literature review. To do this, find three relevant pieces of research that would be included in a complete literature review. In this section, you need to summarize each of those pieces of research. AND then you need to synthesize them into a mini-literature review. Please note, that a series of summarized articles are NOT a literature review. This is just a step you take in order to synthesize the literature. The chapter offers great detail on ways to do this. Please note the #1 problem with most new researcher’s literature reviews is that they don’t synthesize the material. Doing this is a must!

After your literature review section, please include a section that identifies how your proposed research will add to the literature. Are you filling a gap in our understanding? Gathering newer data? Gathering better data? Tell us why your work is important and why we want to read it.

Conclude your paper with a typical concluding section.