

Research in Action (RIA)

Portfolio of Competencies

Reflective Essay

In the module subject of research in action (RIA), I had mixed feelings about the details of the module. Our module lecturer and supervisor, Zoe, briefly explained what the module was about and the assignment. At the start, I thought I would feel a little lost on what we should do. Regardless of those feelings I had felt, I still feel motivated to work on whatever opportunities I was given to create and conduct a research project. According to Zoe, we were required to assign into three groups with 5 students in two groups and four students in one group. She also explained that we are required to create either a quantitative or qualitative study centred around student wellbeing. Besides the research study, we also had to conduct a SLS. This is to identify the research gaps that already exist in the methodology. Afterwards, from the findings of SLS, we were required to fill out the proposal and ethics forms. Therefore, the process throughout our journey from this module showcased many things.

In the first week of RIA class, my group, consisting of five students from my course, was assessed group work assignment. Before we could do any of the assignment tasks, we had to decide on an assignment title. Each of us brainstormed to think of a unique title that was not redundant. Atlas, the topic we decided to settle on was my and Aniessa's topic, which was called "The Impact of Social Marginalisation of Cultural Celebration on Foreign Muslim Students' Wellbeing". From my perspective, I was thoroughly excited that our topic was chosen as I believed it was certainly unique. However, challenges arose as we began the task of SLS. As we worked on the SLS, I began to grasp the understanding that systematic review is a thorough and structured process of analysing research on a specific topic. It involves several steps such as carefully searching for relevant studies, evaluating their quality, and combining their findings to answer a research question. Furthermore, this type of review follows specific criteria to ensure a comprehensive and unbiased approach (Sataloff et al, 2021). Consequently, based on our SLS findings, we hardly found research articles surrounding our topic.

As a result of this, my group and I decided to consult matters to Zoe, and she suggested basing our research on student well-being across different cultures. As a result, the idea Zoe gave became our final title for the research which is now titled “Cross-Cultural Insights: An In-Depth Exploration of Student Well-being through Interview-Based Perspectives of Undergraduate Students.”

After we completed our search, we used the SLS findings to propose research questions for our study before we began to design them. For us to do so, this would mean that we had to complete the proposal form for the principal investigators (PIs) alongside the ethics form for the university research ethics committee. When I got to know that the proposal and ethics form had to go through the PIs and the research ethics committee, it got me worried and intrigued at the same time. It was my first time experiencing our research going through the process of getting approval and it made my learning experience more interactive and fun. Despite the stimulating thrill I was going through, I still had to keep in mind that my group and my teamwork had to work hard.

As we were filling out the proposal form, it was noted that everyone from my team contributed to the first page. Aniessa and I both paired up and worked on the methodology section together, where I worked on the ‘participants’ and ‘materials’ sections with Aniessa’s assistance. It is not a learning experience if we do not get feedback on our work to which our parts had to corrections to do. At first, I was not happy with how I had to rework my areas, however, it is something I learned in RIA that I would not improve if there was no constructive criticism of my work.

Moving forward, it was almost traditional that my groupmates and I did collective work on some sections of the ethics form and divided parts among ourselves. I decided to work on section F, which was discussed with my group, and section I. Since this module involves

showcasing your competencies, it almost felt like we were indirectly fighting for parts to get more competencies, in my opinion. However, it was evident that each one of us had our fair share of competencies.

Once we received the news of our proposal and ethics form getting approved. I was especially thrilled to know that we were able to continue with our next step of the study, which is interviewing participants. Besides the challenges we faced while filling up the forms, I managed to gain skills which I am confident using in further future. Therefore, we started working on forms for the interview, for instance, an information sheet, debrief sheet, informed consent form, and interview schedule. I had chosen to work on the informed consent form throughout the process of working on the interview. We thought that we were almost complete and ready to interview participants, but we were unable to step forward and faced issues. I had to revise my informed consent form once again, and I felt disappointed with myself for not proofreading my work again. One of our groupmates did not submit his work which was the information sheet and it is also essential for participants to read to understand the study. According to Hudson et al (2023), the value of participants' information sheets provides clear details on the process of the study, data protection, the risks and benefits of the research, and lastly how participants are welcomed to get support if they experience any distress during or after the research study.

Due to the step back, we were unable to conduct any interview sessions on time. Although it was not marked, it was still an opportunity for us to experience. Therefore, experiencing the process of creating and conducting a research study gave me an enormous learning experience. With the help of Zoe and my group, I was able to learn that comprehension, communication, teamwork, problem-solving and basic research skills were the most crucial segments when conducting a study. As I learned more in RIA, it gave me a wide

perspective on what important group work is, as it contributes to gaining knowledge and stimulating learning hence it enhances a person's academic performance (Chiriac, 2014).

Additionally, I am pleased to announce that my group and I had a supportive and friendly environment which I believe enhances our performance to put out the best results. Although we faced minor issues, we managed to highlight the fact that we are learning, and more prospects are yet to be taken by us. Moreover, the work I have done in RIA is beneficial for me as it was done practically in the class. I believe that any students who are looking forward to improving their abilities or gaining skills, such as working in a team, managing time, and grasping knowledge in the research field of psychology.

Competency One:

Completion of the Applied proposal form

The main research questions for the study “Cross-Cultural Insights Wellbeing through Interview-Based Perspectives of Undergraduate students” are to define student well-being?” and to determine “Do students from different cultures share the same or different perspectives on student wellbeing?” One hypothesis for this study is that different cultures perceive and define wellbeing differently, that, another hypothesis for this study would be that certain cultures share similar perspectives on student wellbeing but others differ dramatically on the perspectives on student wellbeing.

I worked on the methodology alongside my group member, Aniessa.

We divided our parts and work on two sections for each.

Methodological Details (500 words)

Please summarise the key methodological approach: (you can include copies of proposed study materials as appendices following:

I was tasked to do ‘Participants’.

I discussed with the rest of my team to identify the criteria of the target participants of our research.

be, how will you access and recruit them, and how many are needed?
clearly define key elements of your design (IVs, DVs, Qual approach, expl.
analyse your main data?
scales, experimental tools or other materials required for your study?
study – define briefly what will happen to a participant in your study from the

Participants:

Undergraduate students ranging from ages 18 until 25, as they are the main target of the study and most common ages for university students. Moreover, recruitment will be accessible since research members are surrounded by the target participants. The participants will be recruited for the Experimental Management System (EMS). As the research requires point of views of student wellbeing from various cultures, the participant recruitment requires no specific inclusion or exclusion criteria. Moreover, participants from all genders, race, religions, and cultures are welcome to be a part of study subjects. Overall, the research requires six to eight participants to be interviewees in which all research members will interview.

Design:

A one-to-one, physical qualitative interview will be conducted as the primary data collection method. The semi structured interview session that makes up the experiment consists of questions that are divided in to 3 sections on the subject of the research. The first section is the demographic part which includes 5 questions to identify our participants’ background characteristics. The second section is to answer the research’s first research question that includes 6 questions while the last section is to answer the second research question which consists of another 6 questions. After the data is collected from the interview, the transcripts will be organised. The data will be created into codes and then be put into Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The IPA is chosen in this study as they provide detailed explanations of each experience from participants, unlike thematic analysis which are usually based on larger groups.

Materials:

The research interview will require an audio recording which can be transcribed. Interview psychology labs will be used for face-to-face interviews and the Microsoft Teams will be used for online interviews. Lastly, interview questions will be used for this interview. The interview questions consist of:

I assisted Aniessa on the second half of the design.

It was later corrected by Zoe that the explanation of what IPA was needed for this part.

I also did my part on Materials. As usual, my group and I discussed what we needed in this qualitative interview-based study with Zoe.

My groupmate, Aniessa, assisted me on this part of the methodology.

The questions provided in the materials were done as collective work. Each member contributed to each question.

I added them here and later added them to the interview schedule by my teammates, Shania, Aniessa, and Marvin.

General Questions

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Where do you study?
4. What gender do you identify as?
5. What is your ethnic background?

Research Question 1

1. What is your general understanding of student wellbeing?
2. How does your culture's definition of student wellbeing differ or coincide from other cultures?
3. Does your culture put any emphasis on student wellbeing?
4. Does your culture play a role in your wellbeing as a student?
5. What factors in your culture influence your perspectives on student wellbeing?
6. What are some unique practices or habits in your culture that enhance your wellbeing as a student?

Research Question 2

1. Have you ever encountered a common ground with friends/students from other cultures when it comes to maintaining your wellbeing?
2. What differences on student wellbeing perspectives have you encountered with other friends/students from cultures that have no relation to yours?
3. Do you think that your culture possesses traits and aspects that particularly enhance student wellbeing compared to other cultures?
4. Does your culture negatively impact or neglect your wellbeing as a student?
5. What aspects of other cultures would you like your culture to embrace and adopt to enhance the perspectives on student wellbeing?
6. Has the stigma or opinions from your culture towards wellbeing prevent you from getting the assistance needed to enhance your wellbeing?

Procedure:

If participants are willing to take part in our study, they will have a one-on-one, physical interview with our researcher. To begin, they will be given a short briefing and a consent form to help them understand the interview procedure and their rights to withdraw at any point of the study. Following the briefing, participants have the option to withdraw from the study. At the beginning of the interview, participants will be asked a few questions about their background which concludes the demographic section of the interview. Then, they will be asked a few questions about the topic of our research, and the participants will be given opportunity to respond to all of the questions spontaneously. The researchers may request more explanations for any of the questions that participants are required to answer. Throughout the interview, there will be an audio recorder in order to obtain answers and analyze them accurately. The study will end once all questions have been answered, and participants will be debriefed.

Key Ethical considerations (150 words)

In this section you are required to briefly outline any specific ethical considerations for your project. All projects will be expected to adhere to the BPS code of human research ethics, and you will need to submit a full ethics form which will document your specific processes for informed consent, debriefing, and data protection. Here you need to briefly note additional or specific key ethical considerations for your particular project e.g. potential for distress or discomfort, any deception, research with vulnerable

Competency Two:

Completion of the Ethics Approval Form

	Disclosure and Barring Service
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before contact with such participants.
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval is subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.

Between my group and I, I was tasked to work on Section I.

I wrote in detail what exactly we would do before, during, and after the interview session. This is to ensure that the study will be ethical and that the participants will have full knowledge and information about the research.

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants?
	After the study, a fully detailed debrief will be provided to the participants. They will also be given a debrief form to ensure them the main purpose and aims of the study. Participants are given the option to withdraw themselves from the research project before they leave. After this point their data will be transcribed and anonymised with any identifiable information removed. Moreover, researchers' student emails and research supervisor contact details will be included in the debrief form if the participants wish to contact them for any inquiries or concerns. Therefore, the debrief form will be explained verbally and on paper if they wish to read and investigate further. They will also be asked if they have any further inquiries before presenting them with the debrief form. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	Participants will be given a consent form before the research study both digital and hardcopy. Moreover, participants will have to carefully read through the consent form which will consist of information that is crucial to the study. Then, the consent form will also state the data confidentiality of research participants. Participants will also be notified, from the consent form, of what the researchers are willing to expect from them. However, they will still be reassured that they are not expected to answer the interview question/s if it causes them discomfort. Furthermore, if the topic of the research study causes them distress, they will have every right and option to not sign up for the study. Lastly, they will give time to give their consent to be a part of the research project. Verbal consent will also be obtained after the recording starts. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how the anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Following the ethical guidelines, placed out by the UWTS Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice policy and the British Psychological Society (BPS) code of ethics, the participants of the study will remain anonymous throughout the entire study. This would mean their names, race, gender, age, and crucial information. In the study, they will be referred to as 'Participant 1', 'Participant 2', and so forth. In addition, participants' names will be redacted from the transcript to guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of participants. This will ensure the anonymity of participants and their data will be stored separately, so it prevents them from being traceable. Overall, only the student researchers and principal investigator will have access to the participants' details.

The confidentiality was followed by the ethical guidelines of the UWTS Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice policy and the BPS code of ethics.

It is noted that I discussed this section with my groupmates and Zoe to fully understand the importance of this section and write them in detail.

Competency Three:

Completion of the Data Collection Forms

In the data collection form, I decided to work on the study consent form as I had already gotten the knowledge from the ethics consideration form.

Study Consent Form

I understand that I will be taking part in this research study by a second-year student for the purpose of their undergraduate research. I understand that taking part in this research project will require me to answer questions provided by the interviewer/student. I understand that I am taking part in the interview.

I was advised by Zoe to add that the interview will be audio recorded so the study remains ethical for the participants.

Moreover, I understand that participating in this study will require 30 minutes of my time. I understand that the entire interview session will be audio recorded for research purposes.

I understand that my data, such as my name, will be censored and stored anonymously. My data will also not be traced back. Therefore, my data will be kept confidential, following. I further understand that I have permission to withdraw from the study at any given point of time without facing any penalty. I understand that the information data taken from me will be stored according to the UWTSD Research Data Management (RDM) and my data will only be used for the research's intended purposes.

I, _____, hereby **consent** to participate in this research study conducted by the student researchers in the School of Psychology, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea under the supervision of Zoe Cooke.

Date

Signature

My previous version of the consent form consisted of tick boxes to consent; however, Zoe advised me to add the signature, date, and name instead.

References

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