

The research proposal

Business



Introduction Friendship refers to an intimate and affective tie between people based on social interactions.

It is apparent that friends are important not only to the youth but also to the elderly. However, the significance of friends has been evidenced in youths when they become a key source of support. Friendship has also been known to provide significant amount of happiness to the lives of many. According to Bauminger & Kasari (2000), many young adults, including those with disabilities, have stated that friendship is an aspect of school life.

Nevertheless, different people have their own experience of friendship.

For instance typically developing children experience friendship different from those with autism. The experience of friendship among autistic individuals is an under-researched area and, in this regard, this research proposal, discusses the experiences of friendship, especially in young adults with autism. Research Question and Objectives The aim of this qualitative study will be to gain a greater understanding of the personal meaning of friendship to young adults. The initial research question will be: How do the participants view and experience their friendships? A further research question will be: How do young adults with autism view and experience friendships? The study will make use of the following research hypothesis in order to achieve its objective: Hypothesis 1: Many young adults prefer ‘ friends with benefits’ to ordinary friends. Hypothesis 2: The perceptions of friendship among the youths depend on gender and age.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive correlation between friendship and social development of young adults with autism. Significance of the Study This

research will be of ultimate importance to psychologists because it analyzes how friendships shape the social ability of young adults. It also offers a framework of dealing with psychological problems in young adults associated with social interactions. Psychologists maintain that people choose friends based on who they are, though it turns out that an individual loves a friend because of the way they support him or her. Medical practitioners, especially those dealing with young adults with autism, will substantially benefit from the study.

The study will also benefit parents, who always want their children to be associated with good people. There are usually conflicts between young adults and parents due to the nature of an individual's friends. This research will attempt to explain how parents can deal with issues related their children's friends. Most importantly, this study will be important to young adults because it can make them develop new perceptions of friendship by providing the experiences of friendship. Brief Literature Review It is imperative that close friendships improve the lives of many people. In fact, these relationships have been consistently perceived as necessary characteristics of the quality of life of an individual.

Therefore, the friendship experience has been recognized as a significant aspect in the satisfaction of lifestyle among people with intellectual disabilities (IDs). In other words, according to Bauminger & Kasari (2000) and Bauminger, Shulman, & Agam (2004), the presence of important social relationships is a necessary element of their social well-being. Bauminger, Solomon, & Rogers's (2010) recognition of friendship as crucial to the social well-being of a person has led to an ever-growing field of study investigating <https://assignbuster.com/the-research-proposal/>

the degree and nature of the friendships of individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, an assessment of the community inclusion efforts across the previous years has indicated that rewarding friendship does not come from mere presence of a community. According to Bauminger et al.

(2008), consistent and alarming evidence in the present literature is the lack of feelings of connectedness and social networks by many young adults with autism. In addition, much of the present researches are driven by the views of the researchers themselves. These researches have given a scanty attention to young adults' experiences of friendship, especially those with autism. Consequently, a primary concern of research on experiences of friendship must focus on gaining the understanding of friendship among young adults. The views of the self and social relationships in young adults with autism have resulted into a hypothetical speculation.

According to Boutot (2007), little research has speculated that children suffering from autism are not able to grasp the meaning of friendship. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), this is because these children and young adults have limited intersubjectivity sharing abilities. In concurrence, Curtina & Clarke (2005) argue that these children do not have the capability of experiencing an emotionally based social relationship like friendship. Therefore, they fail to comprehend the most effective interpersonal significance of friends. Demir & Ozdemir (2010) conducted a qualitative study to compare the adolescents' and preadolescents' perception of a friend to those of their developing age mates.

The research involved asking the participants for the definition of a friend and recording the answer based on three criteria: companionship, intimacy, and effective closeness. The outcome showed that young adults with autism were less likely to include “ effective closeness” and “ companionship” in their definition of friends. On the other hand, about 47 per cent of typically developing children included the three criteria in their definition of friends. Various researchers, such as Demir & Urberg (2004) and Demir, Ozen, Dogan, Bilyk, & Tyrell (2011), have argued that the primary restrictions in interpersonal relatedness among young adults with autism comprise the source of deficiency in the improvement of self-understanding and psychological concepts. The previous qualitative researches by Long (2003) and Morry & Kito (2009) investigated self-examination among children with autism.

In their study, children with autism told about their own abilities in the four areas that included social, cognitive, athletic, and general self-value. However, they showed a lower self-perception than their age mates did on the four dimensions except for cognitive capability. According to Morry & Kito (2009), no child with autism reported about friends or social groups in which he or she belongs. Nevertheless, another qualitative study conducted by Schwartz-Mette & Rose (2009) showed that children with autism do not generate fewer psychological statements in defining themselves, despite presenting restricted knowledge of emotions. These literatures have portrayed young adults to be less expected to view themselves interacting with others or in the context of relationships.

According to Turner & Feddes (2011), people are often motivated to create and maintain intimate associations with others. Why some associations are more pleasant than others is a significant question because satisfying associations are crucial sources of well-being and social support. Based on the interdependence theory, personal perceptions, attributes, affect and cognitions shape the expectations of a relationship. In addition, personal attributes influence how young adults with autism react in various situations, which in turn influence their cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. Watt, Johnson, & Virji-Babul (2010) and Weaver, MacKeigan, & MacDonald (2011) agree that the Relational-interdependent Self-construal (RISC) is a personal attribute significant in experiencing pleasant associations. RISC refers to the level to which an individual incorporates associations or relationship into his or her self-definition.

Some men and women in individualistic societies describe the self in terms of intimate relationship with others. For young adults, relationships are necessary for the definition and expression of the self. Boutot (2007) proposed that RISC could predict the higher levels of an individual's relationship behaviors (RSB) that include trust, openness, and disclosure. The personal behaviors and attributes then foretell the cognitions about fulfillment of friendship functions (FrFu) that is social, instrumental, and emotional needs. The personal behaviors, cognitions and attributes then foretell relationship quality (RQ), which is the experience of satisfaction, loving, liking, and positive feelings.

In other words, RISC predicts RSB that predicts FrFu, that in turn predicts RQ. In general, young adults high in RISC tend to desire intimate and satisfying

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associations. Therefore, they tend to perform more RSB than their counterparts who are low in RISC. However, there is an unclear relationship between autism and RISC. Studies of Boutot (2007) have only assumed that young adults with autism are low in RISC, which explains why they do not desire intimate relationships. Previous literature and research findings have laudably indicated that young adults with autisms mix with others without autism.

However, Long's (2003) research went further to indicate that as much as they mix, young adults with autism and other disabilities are viewed differently. They are also likely to be ostracized, to be bullied, and lack friends. It is common for children to be curious about their fellow young people with disability due to the novelty factor. Nevertheless, the curiosity poses a problem since children with autism might spend time answering questions that are more personal. According to Bauminger & Kasari (2000), even if there is an acceptance of young adults with autism in school-based activities, the acceptance does not essentially evolve into personal friendship outside school. Research Methods Research methodology is a crucial section because it outlines the information required to assess the validity and reliability of the study (Willig, 2008).

As a result, detailing a precise description of the research methodology and its respective rationale are imperative in affirming the validity of this report. The research methods utilized are determined by the context of the study and research questions. The research will use the qualitative methodologies that are concerned with the meaning of something. This implies that they are construed in how individuals experience events or circumstances and <https://assignbuster.com/the-research-proposal/>

how they make sense of the world (Willig, 2008). Qualitative methodologies aim at understanding an experience of a particular condition and the manner in which individuals manage situations. According to Willig (2008), qualitative researchers tend to focus on the quality and experience, and not the identification of the relationship between causes and effects of an event.

Braun & Clarke (2006) define research design as a general plan outlining the steps required in answering the research questions and meeting the objectives of the study. The research design has precise objectives drawn from the research questions and specifies the sources required for data collection. Qualitative research design utilizes the evaluation and analysis of qualitative data with the primary objective of answering the research questions and reaching a conclusion. Because this research will attempt to gain an insight of how young adults experience friendship, qualitative design will be extremely important in ensuring that the objectives of the research are attained (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, qualitative design is relevant in that the study will involve studying the research sample within the naturally occurring settings, which will include home and school.

Participants Techniques for sampling offer a number of methods that allow the researcher to lessen the amount of data needed by the researcher to amass through taking into consideration data obtained only from a subgroup instead of gathering data from all probable cases. The participants in the research will be 20 young adults aged between 18 and 25 years. This age span will enable the researcher to cover a wider area (Crowley, 2010). Ten of the participants will be young adults with autism, while the rest will be adults without autism. With regard to gender, male participants will be half the

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number of total participants. This implies that the issue of gender will be equally spread across the two groups: autistic adults and non-autistic adults.

The recruitment of the non-autistic adults will be done by asking their ages at specific locations, such as schools, and any other social gatherings.

Autistic adults will be sampled using the snowball sampling technique. This is because it might be difficult to reach this type of population due to their inability to socialize with others. Snowball sampling is a specific form of purposive sampling in which the researcher begins by finding an individual to interview, and then continues by requesting them to introduce him or her to another person to be interviewed (Willig, 2008). This will make it easier to reach out to other young adults with autism.

Methodological Theory A thematic analysis will be conducted because it provides a theoretical and flexible mechanism of studying qualitative data. According to Crowley (2010), thematic analysis refers to a technique for identifying, studying and reporting themes or patterns within data. A theme will capture a significant aspect of the qualitative data based on the research question. This study will deploy the description of the data set as an approach to carrying out a thematic analysis. This approach will be useful because the experiences of friendship among autistic adults about friendship are under-researched. In addition, according to Crowley (2010), the views of autistic adults are not known, which implies the approach will still be handy.

Method of data collection The research will use in-depth semi-structured interviews (Crowley, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are carried out with an open framework that allows conversational, focused and two-way

communication. These interviews are useful in giving and receiving information. The major benefit for this technique is that it is less intrusive and promotes two-way communication. The participants will be interviewed on their experiences of friendship. The interviewee can ask the interviewer questions.

Consequently, the interviewees will easily discuss sensitive issues resulting in the collection of accurate data (Crowley, 2010). Procedure The interview will be conducted randomly at a university lab room, shopping malls, and other social gatherings. This is because many young adults are likely to be spotted in these locations (Crowley, 2010). A typical interview will take averagely one hour. The interviews will be recorded into audio files. The debriefing will be a one-off interview and the participants will be requested to provide feedback on the analysis of their data.

Ethical Considerations The ethical recommendations of the British Psychological Society are primary for any psychological research. These guidelines ensure that the study adheres to the ethics of conducting research (Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society, 2009). Some of the ethical considerations that the research will observe include the right of the participants to withdraw, maintenance of participants' confidential information, and change of place names (Ethics Committee of the British Psychological Society, 2009). This will ensure that the participants remain unidentifiable to the public. However, it is infrequent for researches to not to have ethical implications. Analytic Strategy Thematic analysis will be performed based on six stages: familiarization with data, generation of initial

codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and producing a report.

Reflexivity Reflexivity will be a criterion for the analysis of this research (Willig, 2008). There are two forms of reflexivity: epistemological and personal reflexivity. When using personal reflexivity, the researcher reflects upon the manner in which his or her values, beliefs, interests, political commitment, and social identities shape the research. According to Willig (2008) personal reflexivity involves reflecting upon how the research personally transformed the researcher. This research will use personal reflexivity. Conclusion Friendship usually involves close and reciprocal long-term ties between individuals, regardless of age.

This research will be of ultimate importance to psychologists because it analyzes how friendships shape the social ability of young adults. The views of the self and social relationships in young adults with autism have resulted into hypothetical speculation. People are often motivated to create and maintain intimate associations with others. Both social-cognitive and emotional loneliness are significant to the study of friendship experiences of young adults with autism. The research will use the qualitative methodologies that are concerned with the meaning of something.