

SAMPLE PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Working Title: Worker Perceptions in Assumed Low-Risk Environments

Introduce the over-arching topic.

The justification statement should include **2 to 3 paragraphs** that convey the relevance of the over-arching topic in which the proposed research study is grounded.

Justification Statement

The purpose of this project is to examine the personal perceptions and safety concerns of workers in assumed low-risk organizations. While high-risk organizations and professions, such as policing (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006), have been identified and studied in previous research, there is a lack of knowledge about the personal points-of-view of workers in assumed low-risk organizations regarding safety issues. The broad topic of workplace violence has received attention, including from the government, but assumed low-risk environments are not the focus of that attention. Instead, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), while acknowledging that workplace violence occurs in all industries, is currently focusing on workplace violence issues regarding those in healthcare and social assistance jobs (Association of Safety Engineers, 2017).

As society faces increased threats regarding workplace violence, the types of organizations that are now at risk are changing. Years ago, people would not believe that children could be attacked while in the safety of their school (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). “Just a few decades ago, the very notion that children would be murdered in their schools by other children was unthinkable” (Ruffini, 2006, p. 159). The results of this project may provide insight into workers’ perceptions of safety in currently assumed low-risk environments such as libraries and coffee shops, which are other environments that are typically considered safe by the general public. With the changes regarding what organizations are at-risk, understanding workers’ perceptions of safety is beneficial to leaders in organizations because safety concerns have the potential to impact both the professional and personal needs of employees.

Explain the research focus and its relationship to the discipline or field of study that supports the need to conduct the proposed study.

Describe the issue, situation, problem, or opportunity that supports the need to implement the study.

According to Jain, Saeed, Arnaout, and Kortum (2012) major areas of concern in the workplace include stress, violence, and bullying.

“At the organizational level, work stress can lead to a deteriorated work climate, and can have an impact on product and service quality as well as the image of the organization” (Jain et al., 2012, p. 326). The exposure to stress in the workplace could lead to negative effects in an individuals’ mental and physical health, as well as organizations’ overall productivity and effectiveness.

The data collected through this project have the potential to be used to raise awareness of worker concerns in assumed low-risk environments, and to provide information for organizations to use in an effort to create or improve prevention plans and trainings regarding workplace violence. In so doing, assumed low-risk environments could potentially avoid becoming higher risk, as happened previously with schools (Chappell & Di Martino, 2006). Furthermore, the project results may provide organizations with information that potentially can be used to address the mental health needs of employees in assumed low-risk environments.

Explain how the outcome of your study will benefit practitioners and scholars.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study project is to examine employees’ personal perceptions regarding potential workplace violence occurring in organizations where an overall expectation of safety is generally present. Data will be collected through an online survey, followed by personal phone interviews with participants who are interested in providing further information. Specifically, the project will focus on 125 employees of the Pueblo City-County Library District, located in Pueblo, Colorado. The libraries are located throughout different areas of the city and county, and represent a variety of demographics, allowing the results of the project to potentially be generalized

The purpose statement should be **1 paragraph** that describes the focus, approach, scope, and intended outcomes. It must align with the justification statement.

to similar assumed low-risk organizations throughout the United States. In regard to specific intended outcomes, the data collected from this project may provide the Pueblo City-County Library District with information that could potentially assist them in more effectively recognizing, understanding, and addressing their employees' mental health needs and concerns regarding safety in their assumed low-risk work environments. This insight into worker safety perceptions may potentially assist the Pueblo City-County Library District in creating or improving workplace violence prevention and preparedness trainings. **The results of this project may also be beneficial to other assumed low-risk organizations, by potentially heightening the awareness for the possibility of workplace violence in organizations where this is not typically considered. This awareness may lead to better workplace violence prevention and incident readiness through the creation or improvement of policies, procedures, and trainings in these types of organizations.**

Explain how the intended outcomes of the project could be used to advance knowledge, understanding, or practice in the field of study.

The importance of the project section should include **1 to 2 paragraphs**.

Importance of the Project

Describe how your approach is unique.

This project represents a unique approach to the broad topic of workplace violence by focusing on a demographic previously underrepresented in research: workers in assumed low-risk environments. Understanding the viewpoints of workers in these environments is important, as workplace violence continues to be an issue throughout the country. **The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) stated that the number of fatal work injuries in 2015, the most recent statistics available, is 4,836. Of these 4,836 fatalities, 417 were workplace homicides. "Workplace homicides rose by 2% to 417 cases in 2015, with shootings increasing by 15%, the first increase since 2012" (Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Summary, para. 8).** While researchers continue to examine workplace violence, **information in the specific areas of assumed low-risk organizations and the mental**

[Cite sources](#) to reinforce the importance of the study.

health needs of employees in regard to potential versus actual incidents of workplace violence is lacking or outdated.

For example, the most current workplace violence survey conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics was conducted in 2005. The 36-question survey was completed by employees in a variety of industries and included only one question which

could be related to the mental health and well-being of employees; furthermore, the survey was completed by representatives of the organizations rather than the employees themselves (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). Howard (2011) referred to the research gap in

this area, stating that there is a need for organizations to consider employee perspectives while creating policies on workplace

violence. This project will address these gaps by discovering the personal perceptions and safety concerns of employees in assumed low-risk environments, which will add to the existing theoretical knowledge regarding workplace violence.

The results of this project are important to practitioners and organizations because they may provide insight into workers' perspectives and mental health needs regarding safety in assumed low-risk environments, where safety concerns regarding workplace violence may not otherwise be considered. The project allows participants to share their perspectives anonymously.

Geoffrion et al. (2015) explained that "No matter how much an organization is perceived as trying to counter violence, the majority of workers still fear the stigma generated by complaining about workplace violence" (p. 210). Therefore, anonymity provides a way for

employees to share their concerns about workplace violence without fearing any type of retribution. This is important, because if

employees are not comfortable, they may not report concerns. Underreporting, according to Arnetz et al. (2015) may be detrimental to efforts intended to prevent violence. The collected data can potentially be used by organizations in

assumed low-risk environments to create or improve policies, procedures, and trainings. Overall, the project has

Identify any gaps to be addressed by the project.

Identify how results may contribute to theory or practice.

Describe the implications of the study to scholars and practitioners.

the potential to heighten awareness for the need to better prepare for possible incidents of workplace violence in any environment. The project is also important to researchers and scholars, as the collected data will potentially provide a foundation for further research on the topic of workers in assumed low-risk environments, a previously underrepresented demographic.

Proposed Project Approach

This project will focus on the perceptions and safety concerns of workers in assumed low-risk environments. The project will be conducted in three parts. Part one will be completed prior to data collection, and will include the writing of an Introduction to explain the project, a Literature Review to synthesize relevant research, and a Project Plan/Methodology that will include an outline of how the project will be conducted.

The proposed project approach should include **2 to 3 paragraphs** that describe the approach for the project, including how the project will be conceptualized, organized,

Part two of the project will focus on data collection. The personal responses of approximately 125 public library workers throughout Pueblo, Colorado will be solicited through an anonymous online survey. Because this project is utilizing a qualitative method, a field test will be conducted for face validation, prior to the distribution of the survey to participants. The field test will be conducted with workers who are not connected to the project. Furthermore, the Pueblo City-County Library District Executive Director will also review the survey questions for face validation, prior to the survey being conducted. Participants who would like to share additional information beyond the survey will be given the option to speak with the researcher in a personal follow-up phone interview. This will be a semi-structured interview (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013), which will allow the researcher to ask additional questions to gain clarification or further information from participants' answers. Data analysis will also be conducted during this part of the project.

Discuss any proposed data collection methodologies and instrumentation, as well as the study population, as appropriate.

Describe how the project outcomes will be achieved.

Part three of the project will be a final write-up of the project results and researcher recommendations that are based upon the findings of the collected data, overall project research, and the accumulated learning from the researcher's academic program. The results and recommendations developed through the project can be used by organizations to improve or create policies, procedures, and trainings regarding workplace violence, and to address the mental health needs associated with employees' safety concerns. The results can also be used by scholars and practitioners as foundational data regarding workers in assumed low-risk environments.

Over-arching Study Question(s)/Statement of Project Intent

The following four over-arching questions will be addressed through this project.

Present the over-arching study question(s) or statement of project intent to be addressed. This section should be consistent with the proposed purpose and approach. If hypotheses will be tested, also include the specific quantitative research questions and hypotheses.

1. What are the personal perceptions of public library workers in the Pueblo City-County Library District regarding workplace violence potentially occurring in their places of employment?
2. What specific safety concerns do public library workers in the Pueblo City-County Library District have regarding workplace violence potentially occurring in their places of employment?
3. How do public library workers in the Pueblo City-County Library District feel their safety concerns affect them physically, emotionally / mentally, and professionally?
4. What kinds of trainings or other measures would public library workers in the Pueblo City-County Library District like the library management to implement in order to address their safety concerns?

Add a [references list](#) formatted in APA style. Include a minimum of 10 sources.

References

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- Arnetz, J. E., Hamblin, L., Ager, J., Luborsky, M., Upfal, M. J., Russell, J., & Essenmacher, L. (2015). Underreporting of workplace violence: Comparison of self-report and actual documentation of hospital incidents. *Workplace Health & Safety*, 63(5), 200-210.
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- Howard, J. L. (2011). Employee perceptions of perpetrators and acts of workplace violence in colleges and universities. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 41(5), 1034-1058.
- Jain, A., Saeed, K., Arnaout, S., & Kortum, E. (2012). The psychosocial environment at work: An assessment of the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 18(4), 325-331.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). *Practical research: Planning and design* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Ruffini, J. A. (2006). *When terror comes to Main Street: A citizen's guide to terror awareness, preparedness and prevention*. Denver, CO: Archangel Group.