
Statement of the Problem

Qualitative Research

Title: Exploring the Experiences of First-Generation College Students in Navigating Higher Education

Introduction: First-generation college students—those whose parents have not earned a college degree—face unique challenges in navigating higher education. Despite various support systems, many of these students struggle with academic, social, and financial obstacles that can impede their success. Understanding their experiences is crucial to developing more effective support mechanisms.

Problem Statement: While the number of first-generation college students continues to grow, there is limited qualitative research that delves deeply into their lived experiences and the specific challenges they encounter. Quantitative data provide an overview of their academic performance and retention rates, but fail to capture the nuanced, personal experiences of these students.

Significance of the Study: This study aims to fill the gap in literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of first-generation college students. By exploring their stories, this research seeks to uncover the personal, social, and institutional factors that affect their academic journeys. Insights gained from this study can inform policies and practices in higher education institutions, ultimately contributing to improved support services and success rates for first-generation students.

Research Questions:

1. What are the personal and academic challenges faced by first-generation college students?

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2. How do first-generation college students perceive and utilize available support services?
 3. What coping strategies do first-generation college students employ to overcome obstacles in their academic journey?

Conclusion: By exploring these questions, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of first-generation college students. The findings can help educators, policymakers, and support staff create more effective interventions that address the unique needs of this population, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.