

THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Dr Sunita Magre

Associate Professor, Department of Education,
University of Mumbai

ABSTRACT

This theoretical paper aims to understand how to right the research proposal for research degree like PhD or to take project from different funding agencies. What are the steps include in the research proposal, how to present it in a standard format. Which things are required in the research proposal according to the types of research proposal? *Three questions are very important in the research what? Why? And How?* All research proposals must address the following questions: What you plan to accomplish, why you want to do it and how you are going to do it.

INTRODUCTION

When you are applying for a research degree like PhD or you want to take project from different funding agencies. You will vary probably have to write a research proposal as a part of your application file. So first you have to prove you are capable of making a contribution and therefore write a research proposal that meets certain standards.

The goal of a research proposal is to present and justify a research idea you have and to present the practical ways in which you think this research should be conducted.

When you are writing a research proposal keep in mind that it will enter a competition, being read in line with quite a few other research proposals, you have to come up with a document that has an impact upon the readers: write clearly and well structured so that your message gets across easily, ones research is only as a good as one's proposal.

STD. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

Most research studies begins with a written proposal nearly all proposals follow the same format. Infact, the proposal is identical to the first three chapters of the final paper except that its written in future tense .for eg.in the proposal, you might say something like “the researchers will secure the sample from” while in final paper it would be changed to “the researcher secured the sample from”. The most commonly used style for writing research report is called APA and the rules are described in the population manual of the American psychological association.

Avoid the use of first person pronouns refer to yourself or research team in third person instead of saying I will or we will say ,the researcher will or the research team will.

Title page-All text on the title page is centered vertically and horizontally. The title page has no page number and it is not counted in any page numbering.

Page layout-Left margin 1.5”, Right margin 1”, Top and Bottom margin 1”

Page numbering-Page are numbered at the top right. These should be 1”of white space from the top of the page no. to the top of the paper. Numeric page numbering begins with the first page of chapter 1

Spacing and justification-All pages are single sided. Text is doubled-spaced, except for long quotations and the bibliography (which are singled spaced) there is one blank line between a section heading and the text that follows it do not right-justify text. Use ragged right.

Font face and size-Any easily readable font is acceptable (Times New Roman). The font should be 12pointsgenerally same font must be throughout the manuscript except 1) tables and graphs may use a different font and2) chapter titles and section headings may use a different font.

References-APA format should be used to cite references within the paper. If you name the author in your sentence, then follow the authors name with the year in parentheses .For eg.Batras (2005) found that.....

If you do not include the authors name as part of the text, then both the author's name and year are enclosed in parentheses. For eg.one researcher (Batras 2005) found that... ..

A complete bibliography is attached at the end of the paper. It is doubled spaced except single spacing is used for a multiple-line reference. The first line of each reference is intended

Introduction

The main purpose of the introduction is to provide the necessary background or context for your research problem. First you have try to place your research questions the context of either a current or hot area or an older area that remain viable, secondly you need to provide a brief but appropriate historical backdrop. Thirdly provide contemporary context in which your proposed question occupies the central stage. Finally identify “key players” and refer to the most relevant and representative publications.

In short try to point your research questions in broad brushes and at the same time being out its significance.

The primary goal of the introductory paragraphs is to catch the attention of the readers and to get them 'turned on' about the subject. The introduction often contains dramatic and general statements about the need for the study.

Title-It should be concise descriptive and informative. The phrase “an investigation of...could be omitted. Often titles are stated in terms a functional relationship, because such titles clearly indicate the independent and dependent variables. So if possible, think of an informative but catchy title. An effective title not only pricks the readers' interest but predisposes him/her favorably towards the proposal. For eg.

- ⊙ A Study of Vocational Aspiration and Mobility of College Teachers.
- ⊙ A study of Teacher Educators opinion about Research Ethics
- ⊙ School Teachers Attitude Towards ICT

Statement of the Problem-The problem should be stated in a complete and grammatically correct sentence in as few words as possible i. e. precisely and concisely. It should be stated so clearly that anyone, anywhere may read and understand it and read to without help. The statement of the problem is the focal point of your research. It is just one sentence (with several paragraphs of elaboration) explain how the problem is relates to other field or trends by presenting data that demonstrates the scope and depth of the problem.

Rationale of the Study-You have to describe what purpose will be served by the topic of your research. What will be accomplished by conducting this research? What is your personal experience? What are the strength and weakness of your research topic? It justifies the expected relationship between variables under study using a theoretical and conceptual framework.

Significance of the Study-This section creates a perspective for looking at the problem. It points out how your study relates to the larger issues and uses a persuasive rationale to justify the reason for your study. It makes the purpose worth pursuing. The significance of the study answers the following questions. Why is your study important? To whom is it important? What benefits will occurs if your study is done?

Operational Definition of the Terms-Operational definitions of a variable describes how or by what means we are going to measure the variables. It includes the processes or operations to be for measuring the variable. It refers to the observable behaviour or event that a researcher is willing to accept as evidence per test that a variable exists. In short operational definition means that you have formulated for the study. For eg. improvement means score minus post test score.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sometimes the literature is incorporated into the introduction section. But most of the professors prefer separate section. The review includes

1. Background of the problem to be investigated.
2. Relevant theories of the topic.
3. Theoretical perspectives.
4. Research methods, strategies, tools and control variable used in prior studies
5. Findings of prior studies and their implications.
6. Strength and weaknesses of previous studies.

There are different ways to organize your literature review. Make use of subheadings to bring order and coherence to your review.

1. Write present prior researches in a chronological order starting with the oldest study first for understanding the historical perspectives of the topic under study.
2. If there is more than one study in a particular year arrange them alphabetically.
3. Classify the studies into two broad sections. Namely a) researches conducted in India b) researches conducted in Abroad. For identifying the origin of the researches in this fields and how concepts, methodologies and tools were influenced. Also helpful for comparing your research findings with those in the western countries and interpret the differences in the findings of Indians and foreign studies in an appropriate frame of reference and socio-educational contexts.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A success of a research study is built on the foundation of its research questions. Both qualitative and quantitative research can have research questions, research question are generally placed at the end of introduction or after literature review or in a separate section of the study. Research question help us to determine the broad aim of our investigation. Research question classified into 3-major forms. 1.what 2.why 3.how.

What-if the research focuses on what question the aim of the study is to provide a description means the study will adopt descriptive methodology.

Why-there is aimed at identifying either cause or a reason means the researches are explanatory in nature. They are directed towards understanding the relationship between events process and activities.

How-these are concerned with bringing about change with practical interventions programmes and outcomes.

Research Questions-A research study can have one or two major research questions and not more than 5 or 7 minor questions.

Objectives-Based on the preceding discussion, the objectives of the study should be categorically (point-wise) used. Objectives are covered the different aspects of the research, they are clearly phrased and used the action verbs like to measure, to compare, to assess, to investigate etc. for eg.

- ⊙ To compare the study habits of boys and girls.
- ⊙ To measure the extent of job satisfaction of primary teachers.

Hypotheses-Different types of hypotheses used in the researches.

Research hypothesis-it is a formal affirmative statement predicting a single research outcome implying a tentative explanation of the relationship between two or more variables. For eg. there is a positive relationship between school climate and job satisfaction of teacher.

Question form hypothesis-is there a positive relationship between school climate and job satisfaction of teachers.

Directional hypothesis-this hypothesis states a relationship between the variables being studied or a difference between experimental treatments that the researcher expects to emerge. For eg. The academic achievement of girls in science is greater than that of boys it clearly indicates that the girl's academic achievement will be more than the boys. i.e. It indicates the direction in which results are expected.

Non-directional hypothesis-it does not indicate the nature of relationship between two variables. For eg. There is a relationship between school climate and job satisfaction of trs. or There is no a relationship between school climate and job satisfaction of trs.

Null hypothesis- for e.g. there is no significant relationship between school climate and job satisfaction of trs.

Scope, Delimitation and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study describes what you want to do delimitations describe how the study will be narrowed in scope and limitation are provided to identify potential weaknesses of the study.

ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions of the study provide the foundation upon which the entire research rests.

METHODS

The methods section of the proposal should be divided into four sections, given as follows:

1. **Research Methodology**-In this sub-section, categorical statement be made and discussion be undertaken with regard to exact research method followed in the study. This may include historical, philosophical, case study, descriptive, experimental or mixed research methodology. The rationale for selecting the research method is given. For scientific research, an explanation is provided to the nature of experimental design used for the study.

2. **Population and Sample**-In this section, the population should be categorically defined (geographic, demographic, physical, social and other aspects as appropriate) and the sampling method followed to select the sample be noted. The nature of the proposed sample be stated and the rationale for selecting the sample method and the sampling be underlined. It may also be noted in what way a group of sample or even a single case is representative of the population species.

3. **Tools and Techniques**-In this section, the various tools and techniques to be adopted or to be developed for use in the study be noted, in relation to the objectives of the study. Reliability and validity of the tools and techniques, as appropriate, should be mentioned. Aspects to be included in the questionnaire/interview schedule/observation/rating scale, etc.should be mentioned. For scientific research, one may underline the process of experimentation and testing, and methods used to observe and measure the corresponding changes in the treatment and the depending variables. Also, a brief description may be given on a variety of instruments and objects to be used for conducting the research.

4. **Procedure of Data Collection**-This section should focus on the procedure to be followed for administration of tools and techniques to collect data or the process of conducting the experiment or case study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, proposed methodology to be tabulate/collate various data collected for the study should be noted. Statistical and other qualitative techniques to be applied for data analysis should be mentioned; and how will the analysis be interpreted in relation to the stipulated objectives and hypotheses of the study and how conclusions be drawn should be noted. In case of experimentation, the stage of the process and quantitative and qualitative changes/effects and their process of analysis and interpretation should be stipulated.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, it should be mentioned how the results as above will be discussed; how and in what respect implication for theory, policy and practice be drawn; in what way the results support/contradict previous such findings, and what contribution it makes to scientific theories or interpretations.

REFERENCES

This section should note the references quoted in the proposal or which have been consulted to prepare the research proposal. Further, this section should show what referencing style has been followed (and therefore will be followed) in the research proposal/report.

TIME SCHEDULE

The researcher should also prepare a realistic time schedule for completing the study within the time available. Dividing a study into phases and assigning dates for the completion of each phase help the researcher to use his time systematically.

BUDGET

The research proposals which are submitted to government, private or autonomous agencies for financial assistance include a budget proposal estimating the funds required for travel expenses, typing printing ,purchase of equipments ,tools,books,and other materials.

References-

References-

- Bottorff Joan L, School of Nursing, UBC Writing Qualitative Research Proposals
- Catherine Marshall & Gretchen B. Rossman, (2006) **Designing Qualitative Research/3rd edition California:Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks**
- Creswell, John W. (2007) **Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among five approaches/2nd edition, New York: Sage**
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). **The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.** Chicago: Aldine.
- Guba, E. (1990). **The Paradigm Dialog.** Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). **Naturalistic Inquiry.** New York: Sage.
- Magre, Sunita (2011) **Ethics in Research, Shikshakmitra, Shikshakanche Olakpatra, ISSN 2230-8989, vol 1, no. 3, May/June 2011, p.p. 18-21**
- Uwe, Flick (2009) **An Introduction to Qualitative Research/4th Edition. New Delhi: Sage** . . .