

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND ITS COMPONENTS

What is research proposal? (1)

- A **research proposal** is a **document written** by a researcher that describes in details the program for a **proposed research**
- It is like an outline of the entire research process that gives a reader a **summary of the information** discussed in the **research/project**
- **Research proposals** are written in **future tense** and have different points of emphasis
- A proposal should **present strict research plan** in order to distribute research **time** according to **tasks importance** and their **time consuming** capacity

What is research proposal? (2)

- A research proposal is a document of usually **three** to **seven** pages that informs others of a **proposed piece** of research **idea/problem**
- A research proposal can be rejected as **unsuitable** or **poorly** designed
- If the proposal is **well-designed**, it can form an **outline** of the research to follow, and ideally, can be mapped onto various parts of the **final research**
- **Research Proposal**
 - Where you express your intentions and plans (Future)
 - The detail plan of study

Components of Research Proposal

- The Research Topic or Title
- Introduction/background of the study
- Statement of the problem & its justification
- Objectives of the study
- Research Question/hypothesis
- Literature Review (**not detail**)
- Scope/delimitation of the Study
- Methodology of the study
- Significance/benefits of the study
- Budget Schedule
- Time Schedule
- List of references used in preparing the proposal

The Research Topic or Title (1)

- Defining the research problem is the **first step** and one of the most **difficult** in **research** undertaking.
- The following are some of the **criteria's** for selecting a research **problem/idea**:
 - Relevance/Significance
 - Avoidance of duplication (should be new)
 - Urgency of data needed (timeliness)
 - Feasibility of study (feasibility of the idea)
 - Applicability of results
 - Interest to the researcher
 - Ethical acceptability

The Research Topic or Title (2)

- After **selecting the research idea/problem** should consider the following in formulating the research ***title or topic***:
 - Create a title that conveys the idea of your **investigation**.
 - The **title** of your research should state your **topic/idea** exactly in the **smallest** possible number of words
 - All words in the title should be chosen with great care, and association with one another must be carefully managed
 - The topic should be **explanatory** of the research problem/ the study
 - The **topic/title** should be clear and understandable
 - A good **title** should
 - Orient your readers to the **idea/topic** you will research
 - Indicate the **type** of study you will conduct

Introduction & background of the study

- The introduction should be as **brief** as possible (a paragraph or two)
- In the introduction, you need to give a **sense** of the **general field of research** of which your area is a part
 - You then need to narrow to the specific area of your concern. This should lead logically to the gap in the research that you intend to fill. When the gap is identified, a research question can then be **raised**. The answer to this question is called the **thesis statement**.

Introduction & Background of the Study

- Brief overview of the general area
- Introduce readers about the topic/problem area
- Provides readers with the background **information** for the research **proposal**
- Its purpose is to establish a **framework** for the research, so that
 - Readers can **understand** how it is related to other **research**

Introduction & Background of the Study

- Be sure to include a hook at the **beginning** of the introduction.
 - This is a statement of something sufficiently interesting to motivate your reader to read the rest of the proposal, it is an important/interesting scientific problem that your study either solves or addresses.
- The introduction should **cite** those who had the idea or ideas first, and
- Should also cite those who have done the most recent and relevant work. You should then go on to explain why more work is necessary (your work, of course.)=what motivates/initiates you?⁹

Introduction & Background of the Study

- Generally, the **introduction** provides necessary background information to your study and provides readers with some sense of your overall research interest.
- A good introduction should:
 - Establish the general territory (real world or research) in which the research is placed.
 - Describe the broad foundations of your study, including some references to existing literature and/or empirically observable situations.
 - In other words, the introduction needs to provide sufficient background for readers to understand where your study is **coming** from.

Introduction & Background of the Study

- Indicate the general **scope** of your study, but do not go into so much detail because the later sections (**purpose/literature review**) become irrelevant.
- Provide an overview of the sections that will appear in your proposal (***optional***).
- What motivates you to **investigate** the study.
- Highlight the statement of the problem.
- Engage the readers.

Statement of the problem

- A problem might be defined as the issue that **exists** in the **literature**, **theory**, or **practice** that leads to a need for the study.
- The prospective researcher should think on what caused the need to do the research (problem identification).
- The question that he/she should ask **him/herself** is:
 - Are there **questions** about this problem to which answers have not been found up to the present?
- The research problem should be stated in such a way that it would lead to **analytical thinking** on the part of the researcher with the aim of possibly concluding solutions to the stated problem.

Statement of the problem

- Effective problem statements **answer** the question “**Why does this research need to be conducted.**”
- Generally, in the statement of the study should:
 - Answer the question: “**What is the gap that needs to be filled?**” and/or “What is the problem that needs to be solved?”
 - State the **problem** clearly early in a paragraph.
 - Limit the **variables** you address **in** stating your **problem** or **question**.
 - Describe the **problem & explain** the **severity** of the **problem** at hand.
 - Describe the **problem & suggest** possible solutions.
 - Explain **opportunities** behind the problem.
 - Justify the reasons **why** you study and selected it.

Statement of the problem

- You may want to consider framing your problem “**statement**” as a question, since you are really **seeking** to answer a **question** (or a **set of questions**) in your study.
- Sources of **research problems** are:
 - Observation.
 - Literature reviews.
 - Professional conferences.
 - Experts.
 - People who has **experience** and **knowledge** in a **certain research** area can be **good source** of research topic.

Objective of the study

- The objectives of a research delineate the ends or aim which the inquirer seeks to bring about as a result of completing the research **undertaken**. Or **Objective/Aim of research** is:
 - A solution to a problem
 - What is to be **achieved** by the study.
- Objectives should be
 - Closely related to the statement of the problem.
 - Simple (not complex),
 - Specific (not vague),
 - Stated in advance (not after the research is done), and
 - Stated using “action verbs” that are specific enough to be measured.

- Objectives are **classified** into **general objectives** and **specific objectives**.
- **General objective**
 - What **exactly** will be studied?
 - General statements **specifying** the desired outcomes of the proposed Research.
 - They are **broad /high level** objectives
- **Specific objectives**
 - list of objectives to achieve the general objective
 - Specific statements **summarizing** the proposed activities and including description of the outcomes and their assessment in **measurable terms**.

- It identifies in greater detail the specific aims of the research **project**, often breaking down what is to be accomplished into **smaller logical** components
- Specific objectives should systematically address the various aspects of the problem as defined under '**Statement of the Problem**' and the key factors that are assumed to influence or cause the problem. They should specify **what you will do in your study, where and for what purpose**

- A clear statement of **Objective/purpose** will:
 - Explain the **goals** and **research objectives** of the study (**what do you hope to find?**).
 - Show the **original contributions** of your study by explaining how your research questions or approach are different from **previous** research (what will you add to the **field of knowledge?**).
 - Provide a more detailed account of the points summarized in the introduction.
 - Include a rationale for the study (why should we study this?).
 - Be clear about what your study will **not** address (this is especially important if you are applying for competitive funding; narrowly focused studies are more likely to win funding).

- Describe the research **questions and/or hypotheses** of the study.
- Include a subsection defining important terms, especially if they will be new to some readers or if you will use them in an unfamiliar way.
- State limitations of the research.
- Provide a rationale for the particular subjects of the study.

- **Research Question/ Hypothesis**

- **Question-** research focus to be answered
- **Hypothesis-** potential answer for the study
 - » A predicted answer to a research question

The Role of Research Questions

1. Organize the research project and give it direction and coherence
2. Delimit the research project – show the boundaries
3. Keep the researcher focused
4. Indicate the data that will be needed
5. Provide a framework for writing up the project

Note that the research question may not be a question as such, but rather a statement of a problem to be investigated.

Review of Literature

- This is where you provide about what others have done in the **area**, and what **you propose to do**.
- The literature review is a **critical** look at the existing research that is significant to the work that you are **carrying out**.
- Obviously, at this point you are not likely to have read everything related to your research questions, but you should still be able to identify the **key texts** with which you will be in conversation as you write your dissertation.
- Literature reviews often include both the theoretical approaches to your topic and research (empirical or analytical) on your topic.

- Writing the **literature review** allows you to understand:
 - *How* other scholars have written about your topic (in addition to *what* they have written).
 - The range of theories scholars use to analyze their primary materials or data
 - How other scholars connect their specific research topics to larger issues, questions, or practices within the field.
 - The best methodologies and research techniques for your particular topic.

- The literature review has four major functions or rhetorical goals that you should keep in mind as you write:
 - It situates the current study within a wider disciplinary conversation.
 - It illustrates the uniqueness, importance of and need for your particular project by explaining how your research questions and approach are different from those of other scholars.
 - It justifies methodological choices.
 - It demonstrates your familiarity with the topic and appropriate approaches to studying it.

- Effective literature reviews should:
 - Flesh out the Introduction's brief description of the background of your study.
 - Critically assess important research trends or areas of interest relevant to your study.
 - Identify potential gaps in knowledge.
 - Establish a need for current and/or future research projects.

Scope/delimitation of the Study

- Defining the research focus/concern
 - Set the set of activities that will be done in achieving the research objectives.
- Limiting the research boundary: Activities
 - Physical & Logical boundaries

Research Methodology

- Defining the ways/procedures to be followed in conducting the study.
- This section includes a description of the general means through which the goals of the study will be achieved: methods, materials, procedures, tasks, etc.
- The methods or procedures section is really **the heart of the** research proposal.
 - You must decide exactly how you are going to achieve your stated objectives: *i.e., what new data you need in order* to shed light on the problem you have selected and how you are going to collect and process this data.

- The activities should be described with as much detail as possible, and the continuity between them should be apparent. Indicate the methodological steps you will take to answer every question, to test every hypothesis illustrated in the Questions/Hypotheses section or address the objectives you set.
- Generally, in the **research methodology** the following points should be included/considered:
 - Research Area
 - Research type
 - Data collection tools to be used
 - Sample design/ methods
 - Determine the sampling size
 - Description of study participants
 - Data collection procedure/tools
 - Data analysis and interpret tools & techniques

Significance of the Research

- What are importance of the study/ Why is this work important?
- The importance of the research outcome(s)
- Potential beneficiaries at different levels
 - Individual level
 - Organizational level
 - National level
- Plainly state the practical and/or theoretical importance of the problem and/or objectives of your study, given current knowledge and practices.
- Explain the usefulness or benefits of the study, if possible (and especially for funding agencies), to both the outside world and the research community.

Budget schedule

- Resources needed to conduct the research
- Money required for each activity

Timeline schedule/Plan of Work

- A schedule, **chart** or graph that **summarizes** the different components of a research proposal and how they will be **implemented** in a **coherent** way within a specific_time-span. It may include:
 - The tasks to be performed;
 - When and where the tasks will be performed;
 - Including the **beginning** and **end** of each activity.
 - Who will perform the tasks and the time each person will spend on them;
 - The plan specifies how each project **activity** is to be measured in terms of **completion**, the time line for its completion

List of references

- This must be provided in the usual scholarly fashion.
- It helps to convince your reader that your proposal is worth **pursuing** if you can identify literature in the field and demonstrate that you understand it.
- It makes a very strong impact if you can identify where there is a research gap in the literature that your proposal hopes to fill.
- This is your contribution to the scholarly conversation.

Writing a Research Proposal and Research Report

- **Research Proposal:** Where you express your intentions and plans (Future)
 - It should be Written in future tenses
- **Research Report:** Where you present what you have done (past)
 - It should be Written in **past tenses**.

Relationship between the Proposal and final Report

Research Proposal	Research Report
1.1 Introduction/background of the study	1.1 Introduction/background of the study
1.2 Statement of the problem	1.2 Statement of the problem
1.3 Objective	1.3 Objective
1.4 Research question/hypothesis	1.4 Research question/hypothesis
1.5 Scope of the study	1.5 Scope of the study
1.6 Related literature review (not in detail)	1.6 Significance/Application of the study
1.7 Methodology	1.7 Limitation of the study
1.8 Significance/Application of the study	2. Related Literature review (in detail)
1.9 Budget schedule	3. Methodology
1.10 Time schedule	4. Data Analysis
List of references	5. Conclusions and Implications
	References
	Appendices

THANK YOU!!