Unit 4: Proposal Writing

What is a research proposal?

- A research proposal is a document proposing a research project, generally in the sciences or academia, and generally constitutes a request for sponsorship of that research. Proposals are evaluated on the cost and potential impact of the proposed research, and on the soundness of the proposed plan for carrying it out. Wikipedia
- A research proposal is intended to convince others that you have a
 worthwhile research project/idea, have the competence and work-plan
 to complete it, good grasp of the relevant literature and the major
 issues, and your methodology is sound.
- proposals must address the following questions:
- What you plan to accomplish ?
- Why you want to do it ?
- How you are going to do it ?

Need of a Research Proposal

- Applying for a position at a research institute or company
- Convincing a research supervisor or university that your research can satisfy the requirements of a degree program
- Showing the importance of your research to organizations that may financially sponsor your endeavors
- Demonstrating your knowledge of an academic field and your ability to conduct a study
- Clarifying your research objectives and key concepts
- Stating that your research topic benefits community /wider society
- Predicting any challenges that may arise during your research process
- Refining the focus of your project for readers so they can better understand your theories and methodologies

Components of a Research Proposal

- Title page:
- Title
- Should be a reflection of the contents of the document.
- Descriptive, catchy
- No abbreviations
- Should contain not more than 15 to 20 words.
- Author's name 1st, middle followed by last name
- Reader's name- professor/instructor/department/college/university
- The date of submission at the bottom
- No page number on the title page

• Declaration:

- Should include both the candidate's and the supervisor's declaration and duly signed.
- 1. This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University
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- Signature Date
- 2. This proposal has been submitted for examination with my/our approval as University Supervisors

1.

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- Signature Date

2.

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- Signature Date

- Table of contents:
- Headings and subheadings with their corresponding page numbers.
- The rubric should be in title case and single spaced. This begins on a new page. It should assist the reader to know quickly and clearly, how the proposal is organized.
- The chapter titles should be in caps and bold.
- The subheadings should follow each chapter title and should be in title case.
- PAGE
- Declaration..... ii
- CHAPTER 1...... 1
 - Introduction.....
 - Background Information...... 1
- Statement of the problem ______2

- Table of contents should be followed by:
- List of figures, tables- Should be labeled as per the chapters in which they are found e.g. the first figure in chapter one should be labeled as Figure 1.1
- List of Tables (if any)
- List of Figures (if any)
- List of Appendices
- Abbreviation and Acronyms (if any)
- Definition of terms (if any)

Abstract: A brief statement on background of the problem, objectives, methodology (Eg. study site, design, population, sample size, instruments/tool, data collection, data processing and analysis (statistical package to be used, statistical test and level of significance), significance of the study, expected output.

- Abstracts are usually around 250-300 words.
- Use it as a roadmap and ensure that, if the abstract is the only thing someone reads, they'll get a good fly-by of what will be discussed in the piece.
- Note: Paginate using roman numbers

FORMAT OF MAIN BODY

- Chapter One:-INTRODUCTION should start on a separate page.
- CHAPTER ONE
- INTRODUCTION
- This chapter should include the following;
- **1.1. Background Information:** –Should show understanding and origin of the problem.
- Gives specific gaps that are considered to be the root of the problem. This should be maximum one and half pages
- Talk about the global perspective followed by the local scenario.

1.2. Statement of the problem:-

- Must indicate exactly what the problem is.
- Indicate why and how it is a problem. Give information to support this e.g. by use of statistics
- This should be derived from background information to illustrate connectivity.
- Length- Maximum 2 paragraphs.

1.3. Justification of the study

 Should illustrate why the researcher is conducting the research and whom it shall benefit

1.4. Objectives:-

1.4.1. General Objective

One general objective which should be in link with the title.

1.4.2. Specific objectives-

- have to be in link with the variables the candidates hypothesize to influence the phenomenon being investigated.
- Should be related to the general objective.
- Should be "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)

1.5. Research Questions:-

- They should be in line with the specific objectives and equal in number.
- Have to be numbered (1, 2, 3...) and should be questions and not statements.
- Note: Paragraphing should be consistent.
- A paragraph should have a minimum of five sentences.
- **1.6. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework** (where applicable).
- Some studies especially laboratory oriented may not fit into Conceptual/Theoretical frames).
- Where applicable it gives conceptualized view of the study problem.
- If a certain theory fits into the study, it should be discussed.
- 1.7. Limitation and delimitation: A limitation refers to a potential weakness or flaw in the study where as delimitations are the boundaries that the researcher sets to narrow the scope of the study.

CHAPTER-TWO

- LITERATURE REVIEW
- The student should demonstrate evidence of understanding of current research on the subject under investigation and show clear gaps in knowledge that will be discussed.
- Relevant themes to the study and derived review should be consistent with the requirements of the title
- Review the empirical and theoretical literature relevant to the problem being investigated showing clearly the linkage of literature review to the research questions.
- Indicate what has been done by other researchers including the methodologies used and identify gaps.
- Cite 3-5 references per key section in the text.
- Consistency is important in citation.

CHAPTER-THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- This Chapter highlights methodological details appropriate to the study
- This section include highlighting the research model, methodologies, intended population or sample to be studied, data collection techniques, and <u>data analysis procedures</u>.
- This chapter should include:

3.1. Study Site

State where the study will be done (location) and why it was chosen

3.2. Study design-

State and justify the chosen design

3.3. Study Variables

Explain the independent and dependent variables

3.4. Study Population –

- Clearly identify and describe the study population.
- Describing specifically who will be part of the study. (Occasionally "target population" may be mentioned)
 - Inclusion
 - Exclusion Criteria

3.5. Sample Size Determination

Describe how the sample size will be calculated

3.6. Sampling techniques-

Provide description of the technique

3.7. Data collections tools (if any)

 Explain the tool that will be used in the study and how they will be constructed

3.8. Pre-Testing of data collection tools (if any) -

- Describe how data will be collected and how pretesting centers will be selected.
- In it following issues will be discussed:
 - Validity-Explain how validity of the instruments will be established
 - Reliability-Show and explain how reliability of the instruments will be established

3.9. Data Collection

Explain how field or laboratory data collection will be done

3.10. Data Management and analysis

• Explain the methods that will be applied in analyzing the data after field or laboratory work

3.11. Ethical Considerations

 protect the rights of participants, enhance research validity, and maintain scientific integrity

• Timeline:

- Provide an outline of the estimated timeline for the study.
- Break it down into its various stages (including data collection, data analysis, and report writing).
- The goal is to establish a reasonable breakdown of steps to follow and to show to the advisers that your project is practicable and feasible.

• Budget:

- Estimate the costs associated with the research project and include evidence for your estimations.
- Typical costs include staffing costs, equipment, travel, and data collection tools.

- Expected Outcomes and Implications:
- A discussion of the predicted findings or results of the research, as well as the potential contributions to the existing knowledge, theory, or practice in the field.
- This section should also address the potential <u>impact</u> of the research on relevant stakeholders and any broader implications for policy or practice.

REFERENCES

- References listed alphabetically in the reference list.
- For citation within the text the format of author and year of publication (Harvard of APA format are recommended)

APPENDICES

- Instruments (e.g. questionnaire, Interview Schedule, Consent form, Copy of Ethical Approval letter etc)
- Should be numbered sequentially as they appear in the text (Appendix 1, Appendix 2,......)