A Sample Proposal for GRAD695 Students

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Author Note

This is where you thank everyone who helped you get to this place in your research. This document attempts to serve as an example of the format for a Proposal and Research Paper, and to talk about much of the content each section requires. This document is created for Harrisburg University of Science and Technology GRAD695 and ANLY699 courses. References are known to be missing. They are in the presentations this document is based on, and will be added in future drafts. This document is meant for internal use of students at Harrisburg University only until all the citations are added.

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This is the beginning of the text for your research report and your proposal. The first section is the Literature Review, but before the Literature Review you will center the title and enter a brief introduction to your paper. This Introduction does NOT get it's own header, instead it should begin immediately below the title of the paper. In the introduction you should tell the reader what you are about to do and why. Note that this is not as all-inclusive as an Abstract. Under no circumstances should you reveal your hypotheses here, the hypotheses should go at the end of the Literature Review. Keep in mind that for a Proposal, the Title Page, Literature Review, and the References should total at least 20 pages. Your final Research Paper will be approximately 60 pages.

Literature Review

Once you have introduced your reader to what your high level intentions are, it is time to begin your Literature Review. The goal of the Literature Review is to establish that you have a thorough command of the literature you are studying. But just relating the contents of a bunch of research papers to your reader isn't sufficient to quality your document as a review. You are obliged to also provide your own assertions about the topic, using the literature as your warrant.

Literature Review Requirements

Moving from Broad to Specific.. Your work should start with a broad sweep of the topic, even providing definitions of key terms and background materials. As you move through the review, your choice of articles and use of logic and assertion should take the reader through a path where the material is increasingly specific, culminating in your hypotheses. At no point should you allude to your hypotheses before the final paragraph(s)

of the Literature Review, but by the time you get to the hypotheses the reader should fully understand why you are proposing the hypotheses you are proposing. The reader may, or may not agree with your hypotheses, but they should understand how you came to that conclusion.

Lists and Headers.. One mistake commonly seen in formatting a Literature Review is the use of numbered or bulleted lists incorrectly. If each bullet has two or more sentences in them you should consider making them paragraphs. Bulleted lists are best suited for single sentence or sentence fragments. Also think back to when you were doing your first round of reading for your review. The use of 2nd and 3rd level headers certainly made skimming the work easier on you.

Putting in Inline citations and References.

Creating an r-references.bib file will be covered in class. Once you have this file, you can create inline citations like (Thain, Tannenbaum, and Livny (2005)) and papaja will automatically format the inline citation and the References section entry.

Methods

In the Methods section, we report how we determined our sample size, all data exclusions (if any), all manipulations, and all measures in the study. Your Methods section will have introductory text just as your Literature Review did. In the Methods section you should discuss your overall research philosophy (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed), and if mixed what was done first and which was primary.

You should also discuss your research type and subtype. For example, it is not enough to indicate that you will do a case study; you should also specify the subtype, such as ethnography. There are 4 required 2nd level headers: Participants, Material, Procedue, and

Analysis (or Data Analysis). For a Proposal, this should be your best guess as to what you will do and should be written in future tense. For your final paper this should be edited to reflect exactly what you did and be in past tense.

Participants

The first thing to realize that is "Participants" refers to the Units of the study, and are not necessarily human participants. This section is all about who or what is being studied, but is not about how the cohort was recruited or data collected.

The Participants section answers the question "Who was in the study? This includes details on exactly how many participants. You should talk about what type of sample was used, being very cautious about the use of the word random. Despite what your training in statistics may have taught you, convenience samples are very common.

In addition, the Participants section should discuss any important characteristics of the sample set. Did you sample both men and women? Was race or ethnicity important? Did you take the top 100 stocks from the stock market? While discussing these things, be sure to include inclusion and exclusion characteristics. What would cause a Unit to be included or excluded?

Procedure

While Participants is about who/what the units are, Procedures discusses how the cohort was recruited or collected. It's important to keep this difference in mind when writing.

For your Proposal, your Methods section, particularly Procedure, Measures, and Analysis discusses what you plan to do. It is meant to show the reviewer or funding agency that you have an idea of how to accomplish your tasks. However, when doing to research you

need to take detailed notes of every step of the process so you can rewrite your Methods section to tell the reader exactly how you accomplished your work. You must include sufficient detail of every step that your work can be repeated by other researchers. Talk about what you did and how you did it.

Your Procedure section tells the reader how the data were collected, clearly showing the order in which things occurred. The procedures section describes how the sample was actually recruited or contacted. Discuss how the sample was recruited, how the sample was identified, and where was the sample recruited? Tell the reader who collected the data. The most challenging task in a procedure section is to get the right level of detail Enough so that the reader has a clear sense of exactly what happened and how it happened, but not so much that it is boring or overwhelming

Measures

Measures are the source of the actual data. These can include interviews, surveys, easurements of physical characteristics such as height and weight.Thie section also discusses the tools you've used, such as hardware, software, and languages or Libraries. The tools you use must be cited as appropriate, including the software. Many of the measures you use will come from prior literature, and must be cited here.

Measures are described because measures are the source of your data, all the results rest on you them. Describing the measures helps the reader judge whether or not the measures are adequate This helps the reader judge whether or not the results are valid. The measures section may be a lengthy and detailed section Measures include the following elements:

*The construct and its variable being measured

*The name of the measure

*A citation for the measure if it is published

*How many items there are

*A sample item

It is very helpful for the reader to include an actual question or item from the measure that is described. This helps the reader see how items are worded. It can be relevant to understand how long items may be, how complicated wording may be, and what types of issues are asked about. It is also helpful to discuss how Items are scored. This should be described so the reader can understand the choices participants had for answering questions, which helps the reader judge if the measure was adequate

Many measures come from prior literature. You must discuss the research or data that supports the reliability and validity of the measures you use. A construct and its corresponding variable being measured.

To repeat from the lectures, a construct is an idea or concept. An example of a construct might be depression, aggression, abuse, agitation. There can be more than one measure for a single construct, and there can be several constructs in one study. As an abstract, a construct cannot be directly measured. For that we use variables. A variable is simply something that is measured, and we use variables to define our constructs. Constructs such as anxiety, risk behaviors, attitudes about marriage, etc., are likely (hopefully) already defined in prior literature, using existing measures. These existing measures typically have formal names and usually abbreviations that come from the literature where they were first published. If it is a published measure it should be cited.

Analysis

We used R (Version 3.6.1; R Core Team, 2019) and the R-package *papaja* (Version 0.1.0.9942; Aust & Barth, 2018) for all our analyses. The analysis section is where you describe all quantitative and qualitative analyses you performed in your work. This section is somewhat free-form, as every analysis is different. The important things to remember is that this section is all about what you did with your data, and not the results you achieved. Your actual results will be in the next section.

The first line is an example of a citation for R, and you'll find a reference for the R language in the References section. You should cite every tool you use, both open source and proprietary. Someone owns the copyright for everything you use, and you must acknowledge it.

References

Aust, F., & Barth, M. (2018). *papaja: Create APA manuscripts with R Markdown*. Retrieved from https://github.com/crsh/papaja

R Core Team. (2019). *R: A language and environment for statistical computing*. Vienna, Austria: R Foundation for Statistical Computing. Retrieved from https://www.R-project.org/

Thain, D., Tannenbaum, T., & Livny, M. (2005). Distributed computing in practice: The condor experience. *Concurrency and Computation: Practice and Experience*, *17*(2-4), 323–356.