

How to Write A Research Project Proposal

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Define Research Proposal

A research proposal is a document written by a researcher that provides a detailed description of the proposed program. It is like an outline of the entire research process that gives a reader a summary of the information discussed in a project. Preparation of research proposal is needed

because it facilitates the smooth sailing of the various research operations, thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money. In fact, the research proposal is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. As such the proposal includes an outline of what the researcher will do from writing the hypothesis and its operational implications to the final analysis of data.

So, A research proposal is an overall plan, scheme, structure and strategy designed to obtain answers to the research questions or problems that constitute your research project. A research proposal should outline the various tasks you plan to undertake to fulfil your research objectives, test hypotheses (if any) or obtain answers to your research questions. It should also state your reasons for undertaking the study. Broadly, a research proposal's main function is to detail the operational plan for obtaining answers to your research questions.

More explicitly, the research proposal concentrates on the following issues-

- ✓ What is the study about?
- ✓ Why is the study being made?
- ✓ Where will the study be carried out?
- ✓ What type of data is required?
- ✓ Where can be the required data found?
- ✓ What periods of time will the study include?
- ✓ What will be the sample design?
- ✓ What techniques of data collection will be used?
- ✓ How will the data be analyzed?
- ✓ In what style will the report be prepared?

These questions will be answered in different ways and receive different emphases depending on the nature of the proposed project and on the agency to which the proposal is being submitted. Most agencies provide detailed instructions or guidelines concerning the

preparation of proposals (and, in some cases, forms on which proposals are to be typed); obviously, such guidelines should be studied carefully before you begin writing the draft. Most proposals are between ten and fifteen pages in length. The proposal should be no longer than 1500 words (not including references).

Need for Write Research Proposals

The research proposal is a summary of the plan you are contemplating for carrying out in the form of a dissertation - by making you put it down into a standard format and requiring you to discuss it with your supervisor, it is intended that this will -

- ✓ Help you to order your thoughts;
- ✓ Present your preparatory material in a logical way;
- ✓ Highlight the way in which each section interrelates with the others;
- ✓ Assist you in defining the boundaries of your study and the concepts to be included.

The more you sort out your ideas at this stage, the more effectively you will use your time.

Techniques of Preparing Research Proposal

A good place to begin preparing a research proposal is to ask yourself a series of questions -

- ✓ What do I want to study, and why?
- ✓ How is it significant within the subject areas covered in my desire?
- ✓ What problems will it help solve?
- ✓ How does it build upon [and hopefully go beyond] research already conducted on my topic?
- ✓ What exactly should I plan to do, and can I get it done in the time available?

In the end, your research proposal should document your knowledge of the topic and highlight

enthusiasm for conducting the study. Approach it with the intention of leaving your readers feeling like – ‘Wow, that’s an exciting idea and I can’t wait to see how it turns out’. The following steps may be followed in designing a research proposal.

1. Title of the Research:

After identifying a research problem, a suitable title of the research should be given. The research title should be -

- ✓ specific, direct, concise, meaningful and easily understandable;

- ✓ not more than one or two lines;
- ✓ must accurately represent the objective and indicate the purpose of the study.

2.Statement of the Problem:

To conduct a research, the researcher first chooses the general area of his/her interest from among the wide array of general areas that exist in his/her parent discipline. However, with only the general area in hand researcher (she/he) does not know what specific information researcher (she/he) needs to collect since he/she does not have any specific question to answer. This is why researcher (she/he) needs to formulate a specific problem from within the chosen general area to make the whole exercise a worthwhile scientific inquiry. The specific issues that need to be covered under the statement of the problem are mentioned as follows-

- ✓ Background information of the issue with literature review.
- ✓ Indication of the unexplored character of the issue or knowledge gap or research question.
- ✓ Reasons for undertaking the study.

3.Formulation of Hypothesis:

Hypothesis is an assumption regarding the value or relationship of variables that needs to be tested. It provides the basis for investigation and ensures the proper direction in which the study should proceed. It helps one to arrive at appropriate conclusions, suggestions and observations. Hypothesis should be clear, precise and specific.

4.Objectives of Research:

Objectives of research should be formulated clearly and simply which can be understood easily. It must be formulated on the basis of problem and hypothesis (if any) indicating what specific problem to be investigated. The number of objectives depends on the nature of research. But it should not be too many.

5.Literature Review:

A review of existing literature on the proposed research should be done by the researcher to find out the past research done on the subject. It will help identify what was done in the past and the knowledge gap on a particular subject. To help frame your proposal's literature review, here are the five C's of writing a literature review –

- i. Cite: keep the primary focus on the literature pertinent to your research problem.
- ii. Compare the various arguments, theories, methodologies, and findings expressed in the literature: what do the authors agree on? Who applies similar approaches to analyzing the research problem?
- iii. Contrast the various arguments, themes, methodologies, approaches and controversies expressed in the literature: what are the major areas of disagreement, controversy, or debate?
- iv. Critique the literature: Which arguments are more persuasive, and why? Which approaches, findings, methodologies seem most reliable, valid, or appropriate, and why? Pay attention to the verbs you use to describe what an author says/does [e.g., asserts, demonstrates, etc.].
- v. Connect the literature to your own area of research and investigation: how does your own work draw upon, depart from, or synthesize what has been said in the literature?

6. Justification:

In this section the researcher needs to justify the importance of the study. This section covers the following issues-

- ✓ Relevance and importance of the study.
- ✓ Practical application of the study output.
- ✓ How the new knowledge gained through the study will contribute to the solution of practical problems?
- ✓ How the study findings will be useful in policy formulation?

7. Scope of the Study:

Under this section the researcher needs to identify the indicators, variables and key questions based on research objectives. For clear understanding these issues can be presented in a matrix form. Moreover, study locations and limitations with reasons need to be mentioned in this section.

8. Research Methods:

Methods of a research depend on the hypothesis/hypotheses and objectives of the research project. Generally, the following issues are covered under research methods.

- ✓ Where the study will be conducted and how the study location has been selected?
- ✓ What population will be covered?

- ✓ Will it be a complete enumeration or sample survey or a case study?
- ✓ If it is a sample survey, what will be the sample size and how it has been determined?
- ✓ What sampling technique will be followed to select sample units or sample respondents?
- ✓ What will be the sources of information?
- ✓ What methods and tools will be used in collecting information?
- ✓ How the quality of data will be ensured?
- ✓ How data will be processed?
- ✓ How data will be analyzed and what statistical tools will be used?

9.Implementation of the Study:

- ✓ Name of institution or the person owning the study;
- ✓ Name of researcher(s);
- ✓ Technical assistance and guidance needed.

10.Financial Budget:

Financial budget will include money that will be needed to conduct and complete the study. Total amount of money should be broken up into different heads and sub-heads.

11. Work Plan:

This section needs to include the time needed to complete the study and breakup of the entire time period. Break-up of the time period for different steps are mentioned as follows-

- ✓ Preparation of the proposal;
- ✓ Preparation of the questionnaire/checklist;
- ✓ Data collection;
- ✓ Tabulation;
- ✓ Preparation of draft report;
- ✓ Review of draft report;
- ✓ Finalization of the report based on reviewers' comments.

The work Plan can be prepared through a Gantt chart.

12. Conclusion:

The conclusion reiterates the importance or significance of your proposal and provides a brief recap of the entire study. This section should be only one or two paragraphs long, emphasizing why your research study is unique, why it advances knowledge, and why the research problem is worth investigating. Someone reading this section should come away with an understanding of-

- ✓ Why the study was done;
- ✓ The specific purpose of the study and the research questions it attempted to answer;
- ✓ The research design and methods used;
- ✓ The potential implications emerging from your proposed study of the research problem; and
- ✓ A sense of how your study fits within the broader scholarship about the research problem.

13. Citations:

As with any scholarly research paper, you must cite the sources you used in composing your proposal. In a standard research proposal, this section can take two forms, so consult with your professor about which one is preferred.

- ❖ **References** - lists only the literature that you actually used or cited in your proposal.
- ❖ **Bibliography** - lists everything you used or cited in your proposal with additional citations of any key sources relevant to understanding the research problem.

In either case, this section should testify to the fact that you did enough preparatory work to make sure the project will complement and not duplicate the efforts of other researchers. Start a new page and use the heading 'References' or 'Bibliography' at the top of the page. Cited works should always use a standard format that follows the writing style advised by the discipline of your course [i.e., education=APA; history=Chicago, etc]. This section normally does not count towards the total length of your proposal.