

Key Elements of the Research Proposal

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<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Research, proposal, elements, researcher, investigation</p> <p>DOI: https://doi.org/10.3126/jnmr.v5i1.61388</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ABSTRACT</p> <p><i>This article gives deep insight into the elements of a research proposal. This article provides a comprehensive overview of the main elements that must be comprised in a well-shaped research proposal. It has tried to examine the key elements of the research proposal. The major objective of this study is to indicate what the researcher proposes to explore, which is important enough to deserve the enquiry and the suitable method to make an original contribution. It helps develop a general idea about the academic research proposal. Furthermore, it provides and allows readers to assess the research proposal's basic premises quickly. It helps the readers deliver an overview of the information about the contents of the research proposal. It should summarize all the basic parts of information and explanation like title, abstract, statement of the problem, objective, review of literature, hypothesis or research questions, research methodology, research plan, timeline, budget, and limitation of the study, reference and appendix.</i></p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

The research proposal comes before any research project in any academic or professional setting (Al-Riyami, 2008). The researcher must prepare a proposal for qualitative and quantitative research projects to create an equivalent structure. However, the suggested methods and procedures for carrying out the research job are where they diverge most. The term "research" is often used to refer to an endeavor to acquire knowledge. Research is a systematic, scientific search for pertinent data regarding a particular research subject. Research is a tool used in scientific inquiry to find the truth. Research is a kind of artistic, scientific inquiry.

The Advance Learner's Dictionary of Current English defines research as "a careful investigation or inquiry, especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge." Research is a moment of inaction during which the mind advances to critical analysis and thorough comprehension of the subject.

A research proposal is a written document outlining the key components of a study that will be carried out in the future, together with the plan that will allow the investigation to be carried out logically and effectively (Busha & Harter, 1980).

A research proposal aims to explain and justify the suggested study to a reader who is not an authority on the researcher (Maxwell, 1996). It explains the steps a researcher will take, their reasons, how they will be carried out, and the outcomes they hope to achieve. It seeks to illustrate the value of the suggested research. It is a means of communication with the people for whom the study will be conducted. The researcher cannot research that subject if the proposal is turned down. Thus, it is also a means of obtaining authorization to conduct further research. The research may face competition if proposals are demanded for single research. In this case, the proposal should be competitive to be selected. An unclear, weak, fuzzy proposal might result in drawn-out, painful, and frequently fruitless research projects. A concise, well-considered proposal serves as the foundation for the actual investigation. The proposals also help the reviewers to estimate the size of a research task.

In crafting a research proposal, it is imperative to exercise caution and attentiveness. Notably, the requisites for a research proposal may vary across different institutions and within a university, exhibiting distinctions between disciplines. However, the guidelines presented below are designed to fulfil numerous requirements and can be considered a foundational framework for developing a research proposal.

A research proposal is a comprehensive plan, scheme, organization, and approach created to find solutions to problems or research questions. The steps intended to accomplish research goals and hypotheses or find the answers to research questions should all be included in the research proposal. In general, the primary purpose of a research proposal is to outline the operational strategy for addressing research objectives. Doing this guarantees and reassures the reader about the legitimacy of the approach for precisely and impartially acquiring responses to research questions (Kumar, 2006).

2. ESSENCE OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Formulating and clarifying a research topic is integral to the research activity. Selection of an appropriate topic is not, however, an easy task. Some topics are not researchable for several reasons. The research topics should be appropriately assessed and rated for their selection. Proposals that are not well-written and well-justified are often turned down. It should also be remembered that a proposal is not a place to display the knowledge of the literature on the proposed topic. This may irritate the evaluators. A research proposal varies based on the project and the deadline for submission. They were written as a research proposal for an academic degree, such as a PhD, M. Phil, or Masters. Each of these degrees has a particular focus and topic for research proposals. The proposal's size is unimportant. Writing a proposal should be thoughtful and intelligent.

The research proposal is a way of thinking clearly about the destination of the study. Without a proposal, a researcher might very easily get lost. A research proposal is a valuable document for the researcher, supervisor, and the broader research community students; it is helpful in that it outlines the researcher's thinking about what would be investigated, the logical development of the investigation, and the methods

used to investigate the topic. Enhanced planning contributes to the organization of the research undertaking. The development of the proposal facilitates a clearer understanding of the literature, primary considerations, potential drawbacks, the chosen perspective for approaching the research, and the method for gathering information from available sources.

A proposal serves as a gauge for a supervisor to assess whether adequate thought has been given to the subject and if sufficient preparation for the research has been undertaken. It also demonstrates the ability to articulate views effectively in written form. The proposal establishes the foundation for an agreement between the supervisor and the researcher, clearly stating the study's objectives and methodology. This framework provides a course of action to be followed for the successful completion of the thesis.

Funders can evaluate from the proposal whether careful attention has been given to the subject and whether sponsorship is realistic and worthwhile. Additionally, the proposal signals to the scholarly community the direction of the research and its relevance to ongoing discussions in literature.

A research proposal offers an opportunity to showcase expertise, preparedness, and consideration of relevant topics. Therefore, investing time and effort in crafting a robust research proposal is valuable. A well-developed proposal aids in defining and formulating the research question, ensuring the study remains manageable within specified time frames, organizing the work's development, and preventing time wastage during literature searches and data collection phases.

3. IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

It is crucial to draft a research proposal before undertaking any actual investigation. The research proposal serves to finalize a study plan following presentation and discussion before a research committee or board. Additionally, submitting the grant application to the relevant agency is necessary. Once formulated, the research proposal functions as a blueprint for the execution of the investigation. A well-thought-out idea cannot be the outcome of any significant investigation. When drafting a research proposal, an investigator aims to demonstrate that the issue under investigation is sufficiently important, that the chosen action plan is appropriate and workable, and that the findings will probably be productive and innovative. To put it briefly, a research proposal aims to persuade the reader or viewers on a particular issue.

4. METHOD

Literary analysis is the basis of the study. This study is non-technical and consists primarily of descriptive and analytical features and essential components of a research proposal. Secondary sources, including books, papers, and research proposal writing-related information, were also consulted to create this article. The data gathered from websites has been examined as needed. Therefore, a systematic analysis of the variables has been conducted in the study using the library approach.

5. DISCUSSIONS

Understanding the fundamental components of the paper is the initial step towards gaining acceptance for the proposal. Creating an extensive research proposal requires careful planning, meticulous attention to detail, and academic writing abilities.

6. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

There are no hard and fast rules dictating the structure or contents of a research proposal. It primarily depends on the nature of a project or format permitted by a particular university or funding agency. The following is a model for a research proposal structure (Panta, 2009):

- Executive Summary
- Background Information
- Literature Review and Theoretical Framework
- Objective, Research Questions, Hypotheses
- Significance and Relevance of the study
- Research Methods and Procedures
- Research Strategy
- Research Design
- Population and Sampling
- Methods of Data Collection – Instruments
- Method of Data Analysis
- Expected Results
- Research Plan
- Time Frame
- Budget and Resources
- Project Management
- Equipment and Instruments
- Qualification of Research
- References
- Appendixes

The components that make up a general research proposal are those listed above. Not all of these module contents might be necessary for every research. Therefore, necessary content can be selected from the list depending on needs. A professional researcher's study proposal may contain different information than an academic researcher's. The proposal should have enough details to persuade the readers that it has a worthwhile research concept and that the authors are well-versed in the pertinent literature and the primary concerns. The fundamental elements of all proposals are quite similar. The following key elements of the research proposal could be mentioned as follow:

1. Title

The research project the candidate proposes to conduct should be succinctly described in the research proposal's title. The idea that the research study is a research proposal should be apparent in the title. The title's primary goal is to convey the core idea of the suggested study. It typically includes every important keyword that might be utilized to find the research that has to be proposed. The proposed study's contents ought to be reflected in the title. Consequently, it must be accurate and thorough and capture the spirit of the entire study.

2. Executive summary

The research proposal is concisely summarized in the executive summary. It should ideally be no more than 300 words. However, the institute where the proposal is filed usually sets word count restrictions. It was observed that the abstract did not contain any citations, indicating that it was merely a brief synopsis of the research proposal. It should include the main research question, the rationale behind selecting the subject, any accepted hypotheses, and the study design. The synopsis needs to function autonomously inside the remainder of the proposal. Nothing covered in the remainder of the proposal should need to be cited.

3. Introduction

The researcher can better grasp the main research study's background from the introduction section of the research proposal. A framework for the topic will be developed to help the prospect connect the proposed study topic to previous studies in the same field. The introduction ought to elucidate the rationale behind the need for research on the selected issue and the potential impact of the study on the subject matter that motivated the proposal writer. The proposal's introduction must be written in a narrative and scientific style to illustrate the issues that prompted the proposed study's inception. Here, one must take extra care to use only supporting citations. For readers to understand how the research is related to other studies, a research proposal may occasionally be rejected if an excessive number of citations that are not directly related to the topic are used. This is because the reviewers may become disoriented and unable to locate credible references. The researcher should pique the reader's curiosity about the subject and establish in the introduction the general framework for the issue that motivates the study.

4. Statement of the problems

The problem statement serves as the research's central focus. Both the broad analytical technique and the study's environment are identified in the problem statement. Readers must understand the problem at hand when reading a proposal.

A problem statement must be given in the context of the scenario it describes, with a brief explanation of the predicament and a description of the conceptual or theoretical framework that fixes it. This is crucial in almost every proposal and needs serious thought. In any quantitative research, it is necessary. Describe the issue in a way that a generally sophisticated but comparatively ignorant person with limited knowledge of the field of study can understand. The problem statement is typically included in the introduction of conference proposals; however, academic proposals for theses or dissertations should include a distinct section.

5. Objective of the study

The specific objective of the study should be stated clearly. The reader cannot understand the goal if it is unclear to the respondent. Give a succinct definition and boundaries for the study area. In a subsequent stage, the researcher will go over this in more detail and predict the questions to be asked, the hypothesis to be tested, and the importance of the study.

6. Review of literature

The literature review demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of existing research related to the chosen topic. It helps to identify the research gap and justifies the need for the proposed study. The literature review gives the background and context for the study problem. It should clarify why the study is necessary, demonstrate the author's expertise, and highlight significant recent advances in methodology and content.

The review should critically analyze and synthesize previous studies, highlight key findings, and establish the foundation for the research question. The researcher should be judicious in choosing prototypes. The literature selected should be applicable and relevant.

7. Hypothesis or research questions

A hypothesis is a provisional solution to the issue the researcher is trying to solve. A plan that may be tested to ascertain its viability is called a hypothesis. In qualitative inquiry, research questions and hypotheses are most frequently employed. They are typically employed in quantitative investigation and have relevance to theoretical study. The reader has a right to an explanation of a hypothesis when the writer states it. Hypotheses must be based on the theoretical framework, just as conclusions must be based on the data.

A hypothesis is a declarative statement of the relationships between two or more variables, whereas a research question asks about a link between two or more variables. Various factors, including the study's purpose, design and methodology, and target audience, influence the choice of questions versus hypotheses.

Hypothesis and research questions are testable propositions deduced and directly derived from theory. Make a clear and careful distinction between the dependent and independent variables. We frequently discuss null and alternative hypotheses in the context of statistical analysis. Normally, H_a represents the alternative hypothesis and the null hypothesis by H_o .

8. Research methodology

The study proposal's methodological part serves as its essential core. The activities must be explained in as much detail as feasible, with the relationships between them being discernible. The researcher must specify the methodological procedures that will be taken to address each issue or test each depicted hypothesis. Methodology in research should have included things like the population under study, sample size and procedures, type and sources of data, data processing, data analysis, and data interpretation, among other things.

A research design is the setup of data collection and analysis parameters to balance procedural economy with relevance to the study goal. The research design, which serves as the guide for data collection, measurement, and analysis, is the conceptual framework the research is carried out inside. As a result, the design comprises a schedule outlining the researcher's steps, from waiting for the hypothesis and any operational ramifications to conducting the final data analysis.

It is necessary to clearly explain the study's sample size, sampling procedures, and demographics. The source of the data and the tools employed for data collection must be precisely defined. Clarification is needed regarding the types of questionnaires or measuring devices intended for use, along with exploring their reliability and legitimacy. The research methodology should be outlined, detailing the activities involved and the duration of the process. The research methodology must incorporate statistical techniques such as data analysis and hypothesis testing.

9. Research plan

A research proposal's study plan section describes the suggested strategy or schedule for investigating the suggested research topic. The section on the research plan details the method used by the person completing the work. A timeline for the many tasks involved in the proposed research process should be included in the plan, along with an approximate duration for the research. This would include scheduling of time for the following:

- Conducting the literature review to find the expected duration of the research.
- Obtaining hold of consumables and features necessary for the conduct of the proposed research.

- Conducting the proposed research study and investigation.
- Analyzing the data.
- Comparing the current data with an expected hypothesis and analyzing the final result deviations.
- Writing the final description of the proposed plan.

10. Limitation of the study

Limitations encompass flaws, circumstances, or external factors constraining methods and conclusions, extending beyond the researcher's control. It is crucial to acknowledge any constraints that could impact the results. Factors to consider include analysis, the self-reporting process, employed instruments, the sample, and time constraints. Additionally, researchers address concerns about internal validity that may be challenging to minimize or eliminate. This is the space where the aspects not undertaken by the researcher are expounded upon.

A common limitation of qualitative research is the frequent inability to generalize findings to a larger group, especially in cases of broadly defined populations. No study is exempt from limitations, and when time and funds are constrained, the collected data may be questionable, thereby casting doubt on the overall research quality. Recognizing and identifying the primary limitations of the study is imperative.

11. Timeline and budget

A proposal must specifically prepare and submit a time frame detailing all research activities in a bar chart and the sequence of their occurrence. A sequence of the highlights with a description of what will be produced at each serves as a monitoring guide. A research proposal should include a detailed timeline—this timeline frameworks the various stages of the research process, from data collection to analysis and dissemination.

A detailed indication of the funds needed to undertake the research. There are many categories of costs. The proposal should provide a budget estimation. This estimation accounts for research-related expenses such as data collection, books and equipment purchases, travel, and publication costs.

12. References

Creating a comprehensive list of books, journals, papers, and other materials cited in the study proposal will generate a list of references. The author's last name is commonly utilized to organize this list alphabetically. Reviewing the guidelines is essential to ascertain if a particular formatting style has been specified, as there are multiple reference styles. Examining the references section of the research articles on the reading list or consulting with the guide can provide additional insights into this matter. The American Psychological Association's (APA) criteria must be followed by researchers when producing references and bibliographies. Naturally, the University of Chicago manual style and Modern Language Association (MLA) requirements can apply to the research committee. Here, the following information is needed to credit the reference appropriately: the name of the author(s) (beginning with last name), the year the work was published, the book's title, edition, and publication location; in the case of books, the publisher(s) name.

13. Appendixes

A section providing additional information at the end of the research proposal is referred to as an appendix. Its inclusion is crucial for every research proposal. The appendixes illustrate the thorough consideration of the research strategy, allowing the reader to gain insights into the intricacies without requiring them to navigate the entire proposal. An appendix's function is to present materials pertinent to the main text but whose inclusion would impede rather than improve the argument's or the writing's flow. Results of the

literature search, data collection forms, pilot study material, questionnaires for interviews, interview protocols, official letters of permission to conduct research, survey instruments, and descriptive declarations to participants' documents can be added in appendices.

7. CONCLUSION

The research proposal is a planning document that describes a research problem and specifies the subjects and methods of study. Writing a thesis is a difficult task that requires preparation. Without adequate preparation, there is a good chance that tasks will not get done, writing will not be as focused, and data collecting will encounter serious issues. While a clear proposal would help save lost time, it is essential to note that having one will not ensure that these risks will not arise. A research proposal presents knowledge that a researcher desires to plan. It is a written statement outlining the researcher's goals, the steps necessary to achieve them, and the interpretation process. It serves as the study investigation's blueprint or plan. It is a paper that outlines the problem, the hypothesis, the research objectives, and the methodology that will be used. Stated differently, it serves as support for the suggested research. Rather than just summarizing the research, it should explain the reasoning behind the planned study and do it in a style that is also understandable to non-specialists. The proposal review committee bases its approval on its assessment that the research approach is reasonable and likely to provide the expected outcomes.

It is anticipated that the research proposal and the abovementioned components will guide crafting an organized research proposal that will expertly present the assignment idea. According to earlier research, many research proposals are rejected because they do not have the required parts. This study included all the necessary elements to create a well-organized research proposal.

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