

Research Group

Proposal Template



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Developing a Research Proposal

Problem Statement

Clearly write a short, relevant expression of the problem. What is the research problem that guides your proposed research?

Aims and Objectives

Explain the aims and objectives of the project. There should be one overarching aim that captures what you hope to achieve; whereas, there could be a set of objectives, which are a set of more specific goals supporting the overarching aim. These can be listed as a set of points:

- To...
- To...
- To...
- To...

Qualitative Research Studies: This section should include “a clear statement of the specific purpose[s] of the study, which identifies the key study variables and their possible interrelationships” (Verhoef & Hilsden, 2004, p. 11). Therefore, conclude this section with a statement of your hypothesis. This is a tentative prediction or explanation of the relationship between two or more variables. It is a prediction of the answer to the research question.

Quantitative Research Studies:

Purpose of the Study: This should be one paragraph outlining how you will investigate the problem and what this process will lead to: What is the purpose? What do you see as the outcome?

Significance of the Study: Discuss what the benefit of this study may be within the context you described in your introduction.

Theoretical Perspective

Qualitative Research Studies: Briefly discuss the theoretical perspective of the qualitative research design you are proposing to follow in your project. What is the underlying philosophical tradition that informs the research design? Explain why the methodological approach was chosen (how it aligns with the topic) and how / why would it effectively inform knowledge about the topic?

Background/Literature Review

Provide relevant information to help explain the goals of your study by providing a synthesis of what is currently known about your topic and clarify why the reviewer should care about your study (MIT Open Courseware, 2005). This is accomplished through a *critical, deliberate review* and *synthesis* of prior studies related to the research problem (USC Libraries, 2019). This synthesis and discussion places your project within the larger whole of what is now being explored; identify trends, patterns, and gaps, explaining your contribution in more details (Verhoef & Hilsden, 2004)

The literature review needs to be organized so it leads your reader naturally and logically to your research objectives. Use headings to help in your organization and as a guide for your reader(s).

Methodology

In this section, clearly and logically explain the design of your project or type of study to be conducted and the method you will use to obtain the desired outcomes (USC Libraries, 2019; Verhoef & Hilsden, 2004).

Setting

Describe the setting where you will recruit participants and the setting where your study will take place. The rationale or reason(s) you have chosen the setting(s) should be made clear to your reader(s).

Sample

Describe the sample and sample size that will be included in your study. This includes demographic information, such as age, gender, cultural background, religion, education, or any other pertinent information. The rationale or reason(s) you have chosen this sample should be clear to your reader(s).

Ethical Considerations

You should discuss what will be required of the participants in your study, what their rights will be, what risks they might encounter, how these risks will be guarded against, and what benefits the participants might experience. You should also describe how you plan to communicate these rights to your participants.

Data Collection

You should discuss, in detail, the exact process you will follow in collecting your data.

Data Analysis

Provide a concise, clear, and detailed description of how the data will be analyzed. Ensure that this process fits with the philosophy, purpose, and methodology of your project.

Timeline

In this section, it is important to provide a detailed plan and the time it would take for your proposed study. You can use a table for clarity.

Dissemination

Share your plan to disseminate information from your research study. This can be at any stage of the process.

Conclusion

Reiterate the importance or significance of your proposed research and briefly summarize the study. This should be only one or two paragraphs long, emphasizing why the research problem is worth investigating, why your proposed study is unique, and the potential benefits from doing the project.

References

Verhoef, M.J. & Hilsden, R. H. (2004). *Writing an effective research proposal*. Retrieved from www.ais.up.ac.za/health/blocks/block2/researchproposal.pdf

USC Libraries. (2019). *Organizing your social sciences research paper: Purpose of guide*. Retrieved from <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide>

MIT Open Courseware. (2005). *Writing an empirical research proposal*. Retrieved from https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/economics/14-33-economics-research-and-communication-spring-2005/study-materials/gu_4_writ_emp_p1.pdf

For feedback as you develop your research project, you are welcome to email:

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