

Research Proposal Template

DEPARTMENT OF

MA RESEARCH PROPOSAL TEMPLATE GUIDELINE

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA

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TEMPLATE TO WRITE A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Title

Your title should answer the question: What is your research about? It should be a short, concise phrase. Narrow down to the specific area to manage in terms of resources.

1.1 Background

The background explains in detail several components of the experiment that must be included in any proposal. After reading the introduction, the reader should conclude why the experimenter is conducting the research and how this research will affect the academic community and society at large.

It is sufficient to grab the reader's attention, introduce the topic at hand, and provide a brief definition of the theory from which the study is based.

In some proposals, the introduction and background are separate; in others they serve the same purpose and are combined. Both an introduction and background section outlines why you chose your topic.

The section should include:

- what prompted your interest in the topic
- relevance to previous research (literature)
- what your research will contribute to the research and the field

1.2 Statement of the problem

The “**Statement of the Problem**” is an imperative part of the proposal, in order for research to be conducted; one must notice a problem in the existing literature that has not been previously addressed.

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For this section, the following questions should be answered:

- Why does this research study need to be conducted?
- What specific issues does this study raise that have not been observed in other literature pertaining to the topic?

Answering these questions will allow readers to understand why this particular study is important and how the study will attempt to answer new, never-before asked questions.

In this section state how the problem is very serious. Refer literature Quote research conducted previously. Include policy issues with regards of your title and your personal experiences and observation.

1.3 Basic Research questions

- What are the research questions you are trying to find the answer to?
- Frame 3-5 basic research questions

1.4 Objective of the research.

1.4.1 General objective

1.4.2 Specific objectives

1.5 Delimitation of the study

Delimitation means scope of your study. Indicate the areas you are going to study and the issues to be included.

1.6 Limitation of the study

In this section explain the problems that you will face while conducting the research.

1.7 Organization of the study

Indicate in order the chapters and their detail information under each chapter.

1.8 Definition of key terms

It is essential that one defines the central ideas or concepts of the research study. Therefore, carefully define each concept/variable that will be used in the study, citing

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other research studies as much as needed. List each term, italicize it, and use a hyphen to define the term.

Define the terms which you consider very critical to your research and indicate the **source**. Besides, add your own definition that elaborates your research.

1.9 Literature review

The literature review for a research proposal may draw on a detailed review that you have already conducted, or may be specific to the development of your proposal.

Your literature review needs to demonstrate that you have read broadly on the topic and its wider context. It should highlight trends in the literature relating to your research topic, including research areas, methodology, theoretical approaches and findings. Information such as where the literature is mainly coming from, or countries/areas that it is focused on could be considered.

Your review should outline some of the limitations and/or gaps in the literature that you have identified (a critique). You need to draw on your literature review to justify your own research. Indicate the gaps your research is addressing and note the original contribution it will make the field in general.

The literature review helps inform and set up your theoretical framework, methodology and research design.

Theoretical/Conceptual/ framework

Drawing on the different theories/Concepts/ you have identified in your literature review, you need to identify which theoretical approach (or approaches) will be employed in your research and why.

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1.10 Methodology

- Research methods are the procedures that will be used to collect and analyze data.
- It focuses on what type of methods is more suitable to collect and analyze the evidence needed.
- It depends on the research design.
- Some proposals distinguish between methodology (the why of how you will gather your data) and the method or research design (the how).
- In discussing the methodology, you need to draw on reviewed literature and consider the different methodological approaches used. Your methodology may include your research paradigm and epistemologies that underpin your research and your rationale for this.
- In this section, it is vital to include the following subheadings while expanding on them in as much detail as possible.

1.10.1 Research design

- ✚ Research design is the overall structure of the research.
- ✚ Focuses on what type of study is planned and what kind of result are expected from the research.
- ✚ It is based on the research question or problem.
- ✚ Include the proposed research design of the study, whether it is a survey, experiment, observation, secondary data of analysis, etc. Then, explain how this design will derive results.
- ✚ Briefly discuss how the data will be administered and collected, including how the subjects will participate in the study.
- ✚ Also, briefly discuss which theoretical model will guide this study and what the model predicts will be the results of the study.

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The different methods are:

1. [Naturalist Observation](#)
2. [Survey Method](#)
3. [Case Study](#)
4. [Correlation Design](#)
5. [Experimental Method](#)

1. Naturalistic Observation

Participants are carefully observed in their natural setting without interference by the researchers. Researchers should be inconspicuous and do nothing to change the environment or behavior of the participants.

This method is good if a researcher wants participants to be reacting normally but it can be time consuming, the "sought-after" behavior may never occur, there is no control over the environment (e.g., fast food restaurant runs out of fries), and it is difficult to know if the researcher will be able to be completely unobtrusive.

2. Survey Method

Questioning a large group of people about their attitudes, beliefs, etc. Conducting a survey requires a representative sample, or a sample that reflects all major characteristics of the population you want to represent. Surveys must also use careful wording in the questions to prevent confusion or bias. This method is very quick and efficient; however it is sometimes difficult to gain in-depth knowledge from a survey and there is no guarantee that the person taking the survey is being open and honest.

3. Case Study

Obtaining detailed information about an individual to develop general principles about behavior. It is sometimes very helpful to study one person (or a very small group of people) in great **depth** to learn as much information as possible. This method is particularly useful in studying rare disorders or circumstances.

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Case studies require a lot of time, effort, and attention to detail. Yet, they reveal more about a particular subject than any other research method. Generalizing the findings to other people or groups is usually difficult.

4. Correlation Design

Measuring the **relation between two variables**. Sometimes correlation studies are seen as a separate research method while other times it is subsumed under another category.

Correlations are stated as either positive or negative. Positive correlations mean that as the value of one variable goes up, the value of the other variable goes up (or, vice versa: as one goes down, the other goes down).

Negative correlations mean that as the value of one variable goes up, the value of the other variable goes down. **See the examples below for further clarification.**

CORRELATION DOES NOT MEAN CAUSATION. The most a researcher can state about two variables that correlate is that they relate to one another. There is no test of cause-effect. In the second example above, it might be tempting to assume that consumption of junk food **causes** a decline in health. However, it is conceivable that the less healthy one is and feels, the more likely it is they'll give up on trying to be healthy and eat junk food. We do not know the direction of influence (eating junk food leads to poor health or poor health leads to eating junk food) and cannot know using a correlation alone. This is one limitation to this method.

Correlations can be deceiving. Finding a significant correlation between 2 variables does not guarantee that they are the only 2 variables. There may be an intervening variable that wasn't measured. Consider the first example above: perhaps the more intelligent a person is, the more likely they are to study for tests, which then translates into a higher grade point average. "Studying for tests" is a potential intervening variable that was not examined.

5. Experimental Method

A study in which the investigator manipulates (at least) one variable while measuring (at least) one other variable

This method is often used in psychological research and can potentially lead to

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answering cause-effect questions.

Participants in an experiment are usually randomly assigned to different groups. The group that receives the independent variable is called the experimental group and the group of participants are treated in the same manner as the experimental group but do not receive the independent variable is called the control group. Sometimes a preexisting characteristic already exists in the participants, such as sex, age, clinical diagnosis, etc. In this case, there is no random assignment and the type of research is referred to as differential research.

The experimental method is very valuable because the researcher is able to constrain or control the situation and various variables.

A research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing data collected.

Research approach: are Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Approaches.

The following table presents the main differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods:

Characteristic	Quantitative research	Qualitative research
<i>Type of data</i>	Phenomena are described numerically	Phenomena are described in a narrative fashion
<i>Analysis</i>	Descriptive and inferential statistics	Identification of major schemes
<i>Scope of inquiry</i>	Specific questions or hypotheses	Broad, thematic concerns
<i>Primary advantage</i>	Large sample, statistical validity, accurately reflects the population	Rich, in-depth, narrative description of sample
<i>Primary disadvantage</i>	Superficial understanding of participants' thoughts and feelings	Small sample, not generalizable to the population at large

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In your method, you should discuss the following aspects:

1.10.1.3 [Sampling](#)

This section should include an expanded discussion of the sample. First, discuss the population under consideration. From where will participants be selected? Second, give the sampling method to be used. Which specific sampling method will be used to select participants? Lastly, list the elements that will be characteristic of the sample, such as sex, age, etc.

Sampling is a principle that specifies the conditions and guides the process of selecting the members of population to participate in the study and to contribute as sources for primary data. The choice of sampling method determines the accuracy of research findings, reliability and validity of the study and has immense implications on the overall quality of the study.

A. Sampling techniques: (Simple random, clustered, Lottery method, purposive, availability etc)

B. Sample size: Using formula i.e

C. Determination of Sample Size

The following formula is presented to have a scientific determination of sample size.

- $Ss = \frac{NV}{1 - Se^2(1-P)}$
- $NSe + \frac{V^2p}{1-P}$
- **(Source for all formulas** above is Calmorin, M (2007). Research Methods and Thesis writing (2nd ed). Manila, Philippines).
- **Where:** Ss= sample size
- N= Total number of population
- V= Standard value (2.58) at 1 percent level of probability with 0.99 reliability

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- Se= Sampling error (0.01)
- P = Largest possible proportion (0.50)
- The formula is workable when the population is more than 100.
- For an illustration of formula (above), the steps are as follows:

Step1. Determine the total population (N) as assumed subjects of the study.

Step2. Get the values of V(2.58), Se (0.01), and P(0.50).

Step3. Complete the sample size using the formula above.

- **For instance**, the total population (N) is 900, the standard value (V) at 1 percent level of probability is 2.58 with 99% reliability and has sampling error (Se) of 1 % or 0.01 and the proportion (P) of a target population is 50% of 0.50. **Then, the sample size is computed as follows:**

Given: N=900

- V=2.58
- Se= 0.01
- P = 0.50
- $Ss = \frac{NV + [Se^2 (1-P)]}{P}$
- $NSe + [V^2 p (1-P)]$
- $= \frac{900 (2.58) + (0.01)^2 (1-0.50)}{0.50}$
- $900(0.01) + (2.58)^2 \times 0.50 (1-0.50)$
- $= \frac{2322.00005}{10.6641}$
- **Hence: Ss = 218**

NB: You can use other's formula

D. Participants: who will you be doing your research with (individuals, businesses, organizations? What is your sample size and its parameters?)

E. Data collection processes: how will you go about collecting your information (surveys, experiments, interviews)? This should also include any equipment or instruments that you will need.

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F. Data analysis and discussion: once you have the information, what will you do with it? Include any tools you will use to assist you with analysis (e.g. programmes, models). Indicate how analyzing the data in this way will answer your research question.

The other technique of fixing sample population is taking 30% from the total population.

Example: the sample population of 900 is 90 participants.

1.10.1.4 Instruments/Tools

In this part, briefly outline the instruments that will be used in the study, including any and all surveys, interviews, or observation grids. Discuss how the instrument(s) will measure the study's independent and dependent variables.

E.g Questionnaire, Interview, Observation, FGD, Document consultation, Checklist etc.

1.10.1.5 Methods of data collection and analysis

Explain the general plan for how the data will be collected, especially how the letter of consent will be administered and collected. Include any survey, interview, or observation procedures, and identify any incentives for students participating in the study. Also, include what statistics or analytical tools will be used for analyzing the data, such as ANOVA, SPSS, or SAS statistics, if applicable.

Data analysis is the process of analyzing all the information and evaluating the relevant information that can be helpful in better decision making. Data analysis is an important part of your Thesis/dissertation. This part would be helpful while you do your Thesis/dissertation. Analysis can be done by using various tools and methods. Data analysis helps in deriving the conclusion out of the gathered information.

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1.11 Validity and reliability of data

Here indicate how you can validate and reliable your data.

1.12 Ethics

Almost all research needs to consider ethics. In most cases this relates to the ethical consideration of how the data will be collected. In this section you should outline your awareness and understanding of ethical issues associated with your research proposal. You should consider the rights of those being researched (including informed consent), your responsibility, and how the data will be collected, stored and disposed of. You should indicate whether your proposal will require approval from an ethics committee and if so, which one.

1.13 Communicating the results

You may need to consider how the information you discover will be shared with the wider (research/academic) community. In most cases, a written document (report, research paper, [thesis](#) or [journal article](#)) is an appropriate means of communicating your findings. If your research is intended to assist a broader audience (for example specific members of the community), other forms to disseminate your knowledge could include conference presentations, pamphlets, musical/theatrical performance, film or general media articles.

1.14 Ethical Considerations

- **Ethics**
- **Communication**
- **Consensus**
- **Confidentiality**

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1.15 Significance of Research

It is important to convince your reader of the validity of your research. You need to communicate enthusiasm and confidence for the research, arguing clearly as to the contribution it will make to the subject area and discipline in general. This is sometimes a separate section; in other instances it forms part of the introduction or background.

1.16 Timeline

A timeline that estimates how long each task will take helps determine the scope of your research and if it is achievable within a given timeframe. Your research proposal timeline should include time allocation for a detailed literature review, time for approval from ethics committee, reviewing or testing of research design, data collection and analysis and writing up of findings. It is important to be realistic with the timeframe, consider if you are able to dedicate full time work to the research, or if it is to be conducted while you are studying other papers, working part or full time or have family commitments.

S.No	Activities							
		Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								

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1.17 Budget

Budget Often when requesting funding for research, a budget is included to indicate where funds will be allocated. A budget may include items such as the cost of survey design and printing, transcribers, software or research assistants. This could be included in the appendices.

S.No	Items/Activities	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price	Remark
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
Total					
Contingency	5%				
Grand Total					

1.18 References

It is important to include all references you have used when writing your proposal. This demonstrates that you are serious about your research and have invested both time and thought into the process. **Use APA or Harvard style of referencing.**

1.18 Appendices

This may include copies of letters seeking participants, consent forms and draft surveys/questionnaires.