

The Title of your Project

by

Your Name

Research Proposal

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# Introduction

## Background

The Background section introduces your topic to the reader. It gives a broad and general perspective on the topic that you are writing about. A good way to approach the content of your background section is to look at the title of your project and focus on the main terms in the title. That usually starts with the general phenomenon that you are studying. Then you provide some basic information on things such as the studied population (e.g., a specific age group), geographic region (e.g., Pogradec), historic background (This doesn’t have to go back too much in time. E.g., if you are studying a phenomenon related to social media you might write about how social media has developed over the last 10 years). Also, you can write about current events related to your topic. For example, when you write about a COVID related topic you can write about the impact of COVID. Make sure you only provide information that is relevant to your topic.

## Statement of the Problem

In our everyday world, a problem is something we try to avoid. In academic research however, a problem is something you consciously identify and then try to solve. A practical problem is caused by some condition in the world that makes a certain group of people unhappy because it costs them time, respect, security, pain, money, even their lives (For example, COVID). The purpose of research is to learn something about the identified problem in order to help solve that problem. Or in other words in order to help eliminate the costs of the identified problems such as money, time…etc.

For example, people get sick because of the COVID-19 pandemic. That comes with the cost of people dying. This problem motivates research for vaccines.

Another example from the business world could be declining sales numbers in a company. That comes with the cost of declining revenue. This problem could motivate research for a better marketing strategy.

In this “Statement of the Problem” section you should describe the practical problem that you have identified in the field of your topic.

## Research Questions

The aim of this research project is to answer the following research questions:

1. Research Question 1

2. Research Question 2

3. Research Question 3

4. Research Question 4

## Significance of the Study

In the previous section “Statement of the Problem” you have introduced the practical problem within your research topic, and you have explained the cost that comes with this problem. Also, you have already stated your research questions. In this “Significance of the Study” section you must explain how getting answers to your research questions would help solve the initially stated problem. Who benefits and how do those people benefit from the results of your study? How do your results help eliminate or reduce the cost of the problem that you have explained earlier? In this “Significance of the Study” section you should provide answers to those questions.

In the example of COVID-19, doing research on vaccines is significant because a proper vaccine will reduce the number of infected people or the severeness of a COVID-19 infection. Therefore, less people have severe symptoms. That leads to more capacities in hospitals and overall, less people will die or have other negative consequences.

In the example of a company that has declining sales numbers, research on this company’s marketing strategy is significant because an ineffective marketing strategy is a waste of money. If research can reveal a better marketing strategy this company’s sales numbers can increase and therefore this company’s revenue.

## Limitations and Delimitations

The purpose of this section is to describe what the study will not include or what the design of the study will not allow.

Limitations refer to limiting factors of your study that are out of your control. They may have an impact on the validity and generalizability of your study. For example, if the sample size of your study is small because it is difficult to find many participants that fit the criteria you are looking for, that is a limitation of your study.

Delimitations refer to limiting factors that result from how you as the researcher designed your study. For example, if you limited your participants to a certain age group or if you limited your study to a certain geographical region, that constitutes a delimitation.

## Definition of Terms

To the investigator, certain terms used in the thesis may have specific meaning that are not apparent to those who will read the thesis. For this reason, it is often necessary to define certain terms in the manner that they are considered by the investigator. The investigator has the privilege of defining any given term in a certain manner for purposes of the study, provided that this specific meaning is clearly defined in the preliminary part of the research. You can keep the explanations for those terms short in this “Definition of Terms” section. More detailed explanations should be provided in the Literature Review.

# Literature Review

The literature review provides details about your topic that help readers of your paper understand your study and put it into context. The literature review summarizes, critically analyses and evaluates previous research available on the subject. Here are some questions that you can ask yourself to decide what to write about in your Literature Review: *What terms in my title need clarification/further explanations? What assumptions in my Problem Statement need evidence/further explanations? Have other researchers addressed my Research Questions in a similar context?* Generally, try to ask questions that start with *What…? When…? Who…? Where…? How…? Why…?* when you try to decide what to write about in the Literature Review.

As an illustration, see the example below from the book “Research Methods – A practical guide for the social sciences” by Bob Matthews and Liz Ross. It’s an example for the structure and content of a research topic “Childhood poverty and educational achievement”. Notice how the content in this example starts with more general information at the beginning (What is childhood poverty?) and gets more detailed towards the end (Review of research work linking childhood poverty and educational achievement).

Ein Bild, das Text enthält.

Automatisch generierte Beschreibung

Also, remember that the literature review is not about your personal experiences and opinions! If your literature review barely contains any references something went wrong!

## Subsection 1

Write about the first Subsection of Literature Review here. Remember that you have to use references in APA style. For example: One of the references of the Research Methods lecture is a book on Practical Research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015).

A very helpful and practical website to find information about APA style citations is Scribbr (Scribbr, 2021).

### Subsubsection 1 of Subsection 1

You can also include subsubsection within the subsections of your Literature Review.

## Subsection 2

Write about the second Subsection of Literature Review here. Remember that you have to use references in APA style.

## Subsection 3

Write about the third Subsection of Literature Review here. Obviously, you can have more than three subsections which follow after this one in the same style as in previous subsections of the Literature Review. Remember that you have to use references in APA style.

# Methods and Procedures

## Scope of the Study

In this section, you have to describe the study population from which data is collected. Information to give here could be the population’s age group, geographical origin, ethnic origin, etc. Or if you studied businesses it might be information about businesses’ size, region, products, etc.

## Instrument

It is important that you describe the instrument(s) you use to collect data.

If you use a questionnaire to collect data, give a short overview of how the questionnaire is structured. (Don’t show the full questionnaire here! Use the Appendix of the paper to show the full questionnaire if you are required to include a questionnaire in the Research Proposal).

If you use interviews to collect data, give a brief overview of what you are trying to cover with your interview questions. (Don’t show each interview question here! Use the Appendix of the paper to show all interview questions if you are required to include interview questions in the Research Proposal).

## Procedure

In this section, you should describe step-by-step the procedures you take to collect the data from your subjects. Each step should be stated in simple but definite terms. The information you provide here includes answers to the questions *Who did you contact as participants? How did you contact your participants? Ich which time period is the study conducted? How do you conduct interviews? Where do you conduct interviews? When do you conduct interviews?* Not only should the researcher tell what was done, but also how it was done. The procedures should provide enough detail so that any person reading your proposal could replicate your study.

## Data Analysis

In this section, you should describe how you are going to analyze data after you have collected it. For example, you should describe what kind of software you use and what you are doing with it. If perform any statistical analysis of quantitative data, you explain that here.

# References

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2015). *Practical Research: Planning and Design (11th Edition)* (11th ed.). Pearson.

Scribbr. (2021, December 27). *APA Citation Generator (Free) | Verified by Experts*. https://www.scribbr.com/apa-citation-generator/

# Appendix

Generally, the Appendix is a place to include “bulky” elements in a proposal/thesis which are too large to be included in the main part of the proposal/thesis.

A typical element to put in the Appendix is the questionnaire of your study. Other elements could be large tables or additional graphs with data that supports your thesis but isn’t as important as the data that you show in the main text.