

How to write Ph. D. research proposal

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Abstract

A research proposal is a tentative plan or design, through this proposal the researcher trying to convince others to trust on their research project because it is genuine and how I'm competent to complete it. Generally, a research proposal should contain all the vital elements involved in the research process and also include adequate information for the readers to assess the proposed study. Irrespective of your research area and the methodology the researcher should choose, all research proposals and try to address the following questions: What is the plan to accomplish it? Why I wanted to do it? and How am I going to do it? When the researcher is begins to think on these questions then he can presume, "I have won half war". Therefore, in the research work researchers thinking capacity and judgment power should be outstanding then he felt the difficult task of Ph. D research proposal is an easy task.

Keywords: research proposal, objectives, hypothesis, methodology, proposed plan

Introduction

At the initial stage the researchers do not fully understand what a research proposal means, nor do they understand its importance. Generally, a research proposal is intended to convince others that you have a worthwhile research project and that you have the competence and the work-plan to complete it. A research proposal should contain all the key elements involved in the research process and include sufficient information for the readers to evaluate the proposed study. Regardless of your research area and the methodology you choose, all research proposals must address the following questions: What have you a plan to accomplish, why you want to do it and how you are going to do it. The proposal should have sufficient information to convince your readers that you have an important research idea, that you have a good grasp of the relevant literature and the major issues, and that your methodology is sound.

The quality of your research proposal depends not only on the quality of your proposed project, but also on the quality of your proposal writing. A good research project may run the risk of rejection simply because the proposal is poorly written. Therefore, it pays if your writing is coherent, clear and compelling.

What is a research proposal?

A research proposal is a document and its length in between 500 to 2000 words minimum. At the initial stage it is not possible to fully develop but it is expected from the Ph. D students in the first year of their study. Hence, the students must have to give crystal clear idea about their research work in the research proposal because the proposal evolves as the student reads on the subjects of the research.

The purpose of the research proposal is to show; what is the present idea? What are the research problems? What are the expected outcomes with clarity and definitions? What is the significance of the research? What is the contribution of the research to the society? In other words, it is one of tool that is helping you to clarify your ideas and make conducting your research easier.

Importance of the research proposal

First and foremost, it is formally outline of intended research. It helps your Ph. D future supervisors to understand your line of thinking, experience in doing research and what is your planning about to write your thesis. In other words it is best instrument that can help you to structure your thinking and outline the way researcher would like to follow during their studies.

Contents of the research proposal

Before start writing a research proposal candidate carefully check the guidelines of the respective university where he is applying because maximum universities provide guidelines on writing research proposals that is helpful the candidate e.g. to improve structure of thinking and what are the specific requirements of the university. Regardless of university specific requirements, most of the research proposals usually include:

Title of the research proposal

The title of a research proposal should be concise and descriptive because it should clearly indicate what your proposed research is about. When the candidate is making title that time he should try to think of an informative but attractive title. For example: 1) A Study on policy measures for promoting railway use in freight transportation in Japan. 2) The Analysis of Government Spending on Education: Theory and Empirical Evidence from the Districts in Indonesia. 3) Human rights of Scheduled Tribes in Pune District – A Socio Legal Study.

Here the research candidate must consider these points while preparing title of the research; what is the research topic? Is it relating to whom? Which is the research area selected for study? What is the nature of research? E.g. doctrinal or non-doctrinal.

Introduction

The main purpose of the introduction is to provide the necessary background of the research problem. The

introduction generally covers the following elements:

1. Firstly, state historical status of the problem.
2. To discuss the existing status of the research issues.
3. Briefly mention the rational measures pertaining to the issue.
4. Why is it required to do study on the respective topic should be mention in brief.

Review of Literature

The literature review determines the candidate's knowledge of the main research achievements in the area of study. The candidate should have to pay attention to providing some of the key references in their area of research which requires doing extensive research on their part. The candidate read the research papers, commission reports, reference books, commentaries, encyclopedia, etc. through this reading he would get knowledge about theories, models and texts that surround and influence in the research questions as well as conveying understanding and awareness of the key issues and debates.

The review of literature shows the gap of research on the context of theoretical and practical knowledge and it helpful the candidate to complete their research work.

Origin of the research problem

Through the review of literature the research candidate must identify the main gap in the research area on which he is going to complete their Ph. D research work. If once he has successful to identify the research problem, he is able to pose the main aims, objectives and hypotheses in their research project.

Rational and Significance of the study

The research candidate first write a background on what all research has been done on the respective research topic, hence researcher should follow this with 'what is missing' or 'what are the open questions of the study.' secondly, identify the gaps in the review of literature and emphasize why it is significant to address those gaps.

Statement of Aims and Objectives

The researchers aims should be in two or three broad statements that emphasize what have you ultimately achieve, accompanied by several focused, and determinate objectives- all the following steps shall be helpful the researcher to take answer of their each and every questions.

1. How the present researches address a gap in the existing knowledge?
2. How this research links to the department that research candidate applying to?
3. Whether is it applying to the social, academic, political, etc. research questions?

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a tentative assertion or a formal statement of theory (testable or refutable) that shows how two or more variables are expected to relate to one another. ^[i] The researcher should give focus on the following point while formation of hypotheses:

1. It should be clear and precise.
2. It should be capable of being tested.
3. It should state the relationship between variables.
4. It should be limited in scope and must be specific.

5. It should be reported as far as possible in most simple terms so that the same is easily understandable.
6. It should be consistent with the most known facts.
7. It should be amenable to testing within a reasonable time.
8. The hypothesis must explain the circumstances that gave rise to the need for explanation.

Proposed Methodology

The Methodology section is very important in the research because through this task the researcher is telling to the Research Committee how the research is going to complete. In short it is providing tentative research plan and describe the activities necessary for the completion of your project. For the qualitative and quantitative studies, the methodology task typically consisting with the following points:

1. Study design: under this point what kind of design choosing by the researcher e.g. doctrinal, non-doctrinal, descriptive, cross-sectional, case control, etc.
2. The researcher should select the research location.
3. Select the respondents: first, the researcher should thing about who will take part in the research work as respondent? What kind of sampling method the researcher is selecting to accomplish research work?
4. Sample size: the researcher need to calculate their sample size based on the type of research study he is conducting?
5. Study instruments: researcher should think about adequate and suitable tools and technique for accomplishing the research work. As well as think on why I am choosing them? Whether are they valid and reliable?
6. Data collection: in which way the researcher may collect the data either primary or secondary as well as while collecting data that time what activities will be involved? How much time it will take?
7. Data analysis and interpretation: after data collection data analysis and interpretation is very important that time the researcher can follow SPSS or EPI-INFO methods for analysis respective data.

Plan of research or Chapterisation

A work plan is a critical component of your research proposal because it indicates the probability of accomplishment within the timeframe and supports you in achieving your objectives throughout your degree. As per this plan the researcher should concentrate on proposed chapterisation of the research. Under this chapter deals the chapter wise contains through that the researcher will have get the easy way to accomplish their research work.

Expected research contribution

When the researcher thinks about expected research contribution that time he/she should consider the following questions, namely:

- Why is my research question or hypothesis worth asking?
- How is the current research lacking or falling short?
- What impacts will my research has on the discipline?
- Will I be extending an area of knowledge, applying it to new contexts, solving a problem, testing a theory, or challenging an existing one?
- Establish why my research is important by convincing

my audience there is a gap.

- My research proposal is my own statement of originality. What will be the outcome of my research contribution?
- My research proposal should demonstrate both my current level of knowledge and how the pursuit of my question or hypothesis will create a new understanding and generate new information. Show how my research is innovative and original.

Conclusion

The entire purpose of the conclusion is to summarize the important points in your paper. The researchers don't want to present information that the researcher already talked about. The focus needs to be on why your study is unique and whether there are things that may stand in your way. Acknowledging that you have thought about the things that may stand in the way is a good way to prove that you have thought about it and that will go a long way in this process.

Bibliography

The researcher should provide a list of references that he has adequately cited throughout in his research proposal.

The main object of this paper to give few guidelines for junior researcher because at the beginning of the research work numbers of questions are raise in their mind, if they are overlook all these above points definitely they would get help to complete research work. While preparing research proposal the researcher must follow the guidelines of respective university. One more thing is here for accomplishment of the research work the researcher must have an interest in the concern subject.

ⁱ Soren Johansen (1991). Estimation and Hypothesis Testing of Cointegration Vectors in Gaussian Vector Autoregressive Models. *Econometrica* Vol. 59, No. 6 (Nov., 1991), pp. 1551-1580.

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