

M. K. University of Biskra

(Module) Research Methodology

(Grade) Senior Undergraduate

(Major) Sciences of the Language

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INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Note: *The lecture is presented through discrete points from a PPT presentation.*

Definition of Research Proposal

A research proposal is generally viewed as a *concise description* of a serious, academic *research project*.

A **research proposal** is the student researcher's first "**plan**" to approach the theme under investigation; it is **systematically** arranged, **clearly** defined, **academically** written, and well **referenced** (Bashar, 2015). It is not very long (10 pages max.).

A **research proposal** is a piece of work that, ideally, would **convince scholars** that your project has the following three merits : **conceptual innovation**, methodological rigour ; and rich **substantive content**. (School of Advanced Study, University of London)

Objectives of Research Proposal

The *merit/ worth* of your research project (*beneficial* for mankind) ;

The *value* of your research project in the *contribution to knowledge* ;

The candidate's readiness to undergo an exceptional "journey" in search for *truth* ;

The candidate's ability to *spot a problematic issue* that is worth investigating (i.e., identification of the issue, motivation to search it, and method of solving the problem) ;

The candidate's ability to *read, research, and report* his/ her findings.

Components of the Research Proposal

Title

Abstract

Table of Content(s)

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Review of related literature

Section 3: Methodology

Section 4: tentative Outline

References

The Introduction of the Research Proposal

- Background of the study
- Statement of the problem
- Research Objectives
- Research Questions
- Significance of the study
- Delimitation of the study
- Assumptions of the study
- Definitions of key terms
- Structure of the study

Background to the Study

“It (i.e., BOS) is to establish a framework for the research, so that readers can **understand** how it is **related to other research**” (Wilkinson 1991: 96).

BOS attempts to address the following questions:

- **How did you come to want to investigate your topic?**
- **What are the past “events” that led you to think about your topic?**

Example

Most research on cheating on tests seems to be deterrence-driven. Students frequently feel that exams are meant to punish them for their laziness and/ or incompetence; they feel that exam periods are scheduled to that effect. This attitude turns out to be depressing and demoralizing. This investigation attempts to survey students' attitudes toward cheating on tests quite apart from what needs to deter this phenomenon.

Statement of the Problem

The problem statement **describes** the **context** for the study and it also identifies the **general analysis** approach (Wiersma 1995: 404)

A problem statement is a clear **description** of the issue(s), it includes a **vision**, **issue statement**, and **method** used to **solve** the problem.

The questions that need be addressed are:

- What seems to be the problem?

- What solutions might there be to relieve the bad effects of the problem?

Example

Students consider the examination period “quite stressful”, which amounts to a period of nerve-racking psychological condition. The latter appear to put more pressure on them so much so that they resort to cheating on tests although this practice goes against their Islamic and moral education. With a view of minimizing cheating on tests, the administration and staff should try to understand the underlying reasons that tempt students to cheat, and in the same breath try to take students’ concerns into their consideration in the process of scheduling, constructing, and administering tests.

Research Questions

It is a **prediction** of a **relationship** between one or more **factors** and the **problem** under study that can be **tested**.

A research question poses a **relationship** between two or more **variables** but phrases the relationship as a **question** (Kerlinger, 1979; Krathwohl, 1988).

Example

- What is the impact of cheating on tests on student achievement?
- Is cheating on tests gender-related?
- Is cheating on tests culture-laden?
- What kind of information is likely to be tempting?
- How does cheating on tests occur?

Hypothesis Structures (Quantitative)

- If clauses
- Depend on/ rely on
- It is hypothesized that
- It is predicted that

Example

If students are trained to answer the types of the test, they will feel less anxious and therefore less inclined to cheat on tests.

*Examination standards-abiding students’ behavior **depends upon** students being aware of and familiar with the examination paper format/ layout and content especially when the exam paper resembles the in-class practices.*

Research Methodology

Research methodology discusses the **methodology** that the student researcher adopts to conduct his/ her **research**.

Example

*By its very nature, the issue of CIE requires a paradigm that meets the drive and scope of the current study, which undertakes to explore the issue from students' perspectives. On the score of that, a descriptive-interpretive methodology appears to be apropos. On the **descriptive** level, the attempt is to describe the phenomenon of CIE by collecting quantifiable data through the survey method (i.e., questionnaire) with the premise of disclosing causal relationships between the population and the issue at hand. At the **interpretive** level, the attempt is on trying to understand the CIE phenomenon and find out the motivations of the students. CIE is perceived as a social construct, and therefore, the attempt is on trying to get access to the inner world of the generators of the process, analyze and establish connections, paradigms, and eventually drawing inferences.*

Data Collection Tools

RT are the student researcher's **devices** such as questionnaires, surveys, classroom observation, and other devices that would help him/ her **collect data** for **analysis** (Bacher, 2015).

Example

A questionnaire is envisaged to be constructed in order to collect data. It will be self-reporting; open-ended question-items with options to help respondents check their accurate understanding of the questionnaire.

Population and Sample

Population generally indicates the **overall number** of agents that belongs to an institution.

Sample refers to the **limited number** of agents that the student researcher intends to target in his/ her investigation.

Example

The population of the Branch of English Studies is estimated at 1, 600 students (57% of the population is female students). Freshman students represent 35% of the total population.

This studies, however, will only target 50 freshman students, representing thus around 20% of the freshman population.

Significance of the Study

Any serious investigation should add to knowledge.

It should address the following question:

➤ **To whom this research will be beneficial? Why?**

Example

This study will be of great importance to all stakeholders (parents, administration, teachers, and students). For the parents, it will As for administrators (decision makers, curriculum developers, syllabus designers, etc.), it will As for teachers, it will Finally, students' concerns will be addressed.

Delimitation of the Study

- DOS specifies the time span of the research
- DOS specifies the population and sample
- DOS specifies the topic to be investigated
- DOS defines the key terms (to avoid equivocation)

Example:

The present investigation undertakes to investigate cheating on test among freshman students (class 2015) at the Branch of English studies at Mohammed Kheidher University of Biskra. It should be acknowledged that cheating on tests is taken to mean any illicit resort to means to influence marks and earning a degree. Different scholars utilize different terms such as cheating in examination, academic dishonesty, etc. to refer to cheating on tests. In this study they are used interchangeably.

Limitations of the Study

LOS is generally understood to refer to the objectives challenges that prevented a better approach to the topic.

Example

*It is expected that the return rate of the questionnaire will be of 25%. The administration is expected to be in the post-examination period which might be problematic as the students feel tired and bored especially as the examination period spans over two weeks. Some teachers do not like to have an **outsider** in their classes, and, therefore, it is expected that some teachers will be reluctant to fully cooperate. Finally, as my sponsors are not ready to devote a larger sum of money, this study will only limit itself to a representative population.*

Structure of the Study

The student researcher tries to **outline** the chapters through which s/he develops his/ her theme.

Example

- Chapter One **examines**
- Chapter Two **investigates** the
- Fieldwork **analyzes** and **comments**
- Implication for teaching **discusses**