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LEADING THE WORLD



INTERNATIONAL MULTI-AWARD WINNING INSTITUTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

**KULLIYAH OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM
AND CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGES**

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**GUIDELINES ON WRITING
RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

RESEARCH PROPOSAL STRUCTURE

A research proposal is a statement of precisely what the researcher is going to investigate and why, and the method he or she is going to follow in answering the questions posed. It deals basically with:

- What the proposed research is about;
- What it is trying to find out or achieve'
- How it will go about doing that;

What we will learn from it and why that is worth learning.

There are no rules governing the form and content of a research proposal. They will vary depending on the unique nature of the problem to be studied. Yet, it is advisable to pay attention to the following step-wise outline for preparing a research proposal.

1. TITLE

Research proposal title should demarcate the main focus/ or theme of the proposed study.

2. CHAPTER 1

a) INTRODUCTION

The background and history highlights empirical foundations of research. The purpose of a background/history section is to give the reader the relevant facts about the topic and/or research site so that they understand the material or case in the proposal and how it links to the questions posed.

b) STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Logically, the first step in any research is to provide a clear statement of the problem. This step is indispensable in the writing process in that it governs the organization and flow of the thesis/dissertation. The purpose statement should provide a synopsis of the purpose of the study, briefly define and delimit the specific area of the research, identify the unit of analysis in the study, and foreshadow the hypotheses to be tested or the questions to be raised. A problem may be stated in terms of a verbal statement, i.e., "The purpose of this research is to examine..." or "This study aims at ascertaining" Problem could also be stated in the form of a question like: "Why are Muslims divided?" or "What are the factors associated with the rise of hate crime against Muslims in the West?"

c) SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In stating the problem, it is also necessary to specify why it is important and what new insights may be found. What would be its net contribution to the body of knowledge in the field, and/or towards solving the problems of the Ummah and humanity at large?

d) RESEARCH OBJECTIVES/QUESTIONS

3. CHAPTER 2

a) LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of relevant literature is the third step and is of great significance. The literature review helps relate the proposed study to the larger ongoing discourse in the literature about a phenomenon, filling in gaps in the literature and extending earlier studies. The literature review is neither a chronological summary of related works nor a mere catalogue of previous studies published in the field.

Literature review is a well-organized critical appreciation of related and relevant literature conceptually integrated within the logic of the proposed investigation. The student should show whether other researchers have studied the same or similar problems before, from what perspectives have these studies been conducted, and whether these researches have been theoretically or empirically adequate.

b) THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A research problem should, where possible, be set within the framework of a theory. A “theory” is a collection of interrelated law-like statements or hypotheses aimed at explaining a phenomenon.

Theories suggest hypotheses to be tested. A hypothesis is a conjectural, conditional (if-then) statement linking two or more variables. Hypothesis grows out of theoretical or conceptual frameworks.

The theoretical or conceptual framework and the resultant hypotheses will identify and name the important variables to be studied. The student must identify the variables and define the variables or terms conceptually and operationally.

4. CHAPTER 3

a) METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The methods or procedures section is undeniably the heart of the research proposal. Yet, this section of the proposal has received insufficient attention in most of the Master’s or Ph.D. proposals submitted for approval. This section normally includes four main areas: the type of study being conducted, data collection procedures, the sample selection and data analysis.

5. PROPOSED CHAPTER OUTLINE

Research proposals also contain tentative chapter outline. It indicates the number of chapters the thesis or dissertation is expected to be composed of. It gives the tentative chapter headings with brief annotations of expected chapter content.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND APPENDIX

The research proposal must contain a thorough, focused succinct bibliography. The candidate should follow the style recommended by **the IIUM Guide**.

The need for complete documentation generally dictates the inclusion of appropriate appendixes in proposals. The Appendix should contain a copy of the instrument and other documents not readily available.

7. SIGNIFICANCE/ EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

Outline the anticipated benefits of conducting the research.

8. WORK SCHEDULE/ TIMETABLE

Indicate roughly how you would allocate the time for doing the research project over the duration of your studies. It is a guide so that you can monitor your own progress and manage your project effectively.

Fill in the research schedule template and attach together with the research proposal.

BASIC TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

- As a rule of thumb, the proposal should be around 4,500 to 6,000 words (about 15-20 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12). Nevertheless, the proposal must be of adequate length to describe, in fair detail, the nature of the proposed project as outlined above.
- Use the provided cover page for research proposal.
- For other basic technical requirements (i.e. footnoting style, quotations, reference format, transliteration, layout for tables and figures) students are advised to consult *The IIUM Thesis/Dissertation Manual*, Centre for Postgraduate Studies.