Outline

I. What is a Research Proposal?
II. Format of a research proposal
III. Description of a research proposal content
   - Sample proposal
I. WHAT IS A RESEARCH PROPOSAL?

Research Proposal?

Communicates a researchers plan for a study

Research Report?

Communicates what was actually done and what resulted
Writing a research proposal is an important component of a research activity.

Writing for an academic requirement or to apply funding from a certain sponsor.

For the academic purpose -- needs to be presented to a committee for approval.
## II. Format of a Research Proposal

1. Title
2. Introduction
3. Literature Review
4. Methodology
5. Work Schedule
6. Bibliography
7. Budget
8. Appendixes – Letters and Questionnaire
III. Description of a Proposal Content
1.0: Title

- The title refers to the issue focus on in the study.
- The selection of the title is based on what you are interested to study.
- A ‘good’ title has the following characteristics:
  - contains less than 15 words
  - contains variable(s) of the study
  - describe the subject (e.g., adolescent, male adolescent, female adolescent, secondary school students, primary school students, preschool children, working women, dual-earner couples)
  - identify location (e.g., urban, rural, name of district, name of state)
  - contains statistic words (e.g., relationship, comparison, predictor)
  - The title is more of a label for the research and not written in a complete sentence, thus you will not put a period for a title.
Example 1:
- Relationships between self-efficacy, academic engagement and academic support with Chinese students’ academic achievement in Klang valley

Example 2:
- Relationships between Parenting Behavior and Psychosocial Functioning of School-going Adolescents in Selangor

Example 3:
- Effectiveness of group counseling treatment on marital adjustment and parenting stress among parents of autistic children
2.0 INTRODUCTION

- gives the general picture of what you want to study.
- You need to give general description of the purpose of the study, its relationship to the current phenomena, problems related to it and why it needs to be investigated.
- In general this section gives answer to basic questions including ‘what’ and ‘why’ a study needs to be conducted.

Subtopics in this section include:
- Statement of the problem
- Significance of the study
- Objective – general & specific
  - Hypothesis
- Conceptual framework
- Definition of terminology (conceptual & operational)
- Limitation of study
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- In this section you need to declare in clear terms the specific problem you want to focus.

- In other words, tell exactly what you want to study. It must be stated in a ‘logico-empirical’ way, i.e., the problem must be concrete/tangible and can be measured.

- You want to address the questions that you are interested in, and which are appealing to your reader so that they too would agree with you that the study needs to be conducted.

- Describe briefly the background of the problem that you intent to study and how it can help you to answer ‘what’ you plan to study.
STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

- State what the study is in very clear term.
- Help communicate your ideas to others.
- Help guide the research process (e.g., what variables will be examined, what methods will be used).
Well-stated Research Problem

- State in simplest form.
  - Stated as a question is preferable.
- Identify the variables being investigated.
- Indicate the relationships between the variables being investigated.
- Identify the target population.
EXAMPLES OF WELL-STATEd RESEARCH PROBLEM

- The study was designed to identify factors that predict the parenting behaviors of mothers, and to explore whether or not the same factors predict the quality of care provided by Malays, Chinese and Indian mothers. The factors related to the achievement of children ages 6-8 years old, were also examined.

- Factors related to parenting behaviors of mothers from different ethnic groups and their children’s achievement.

- Predictors of mothers’ parenting behaviors and achievement of children from different ethnic groups.
The purpose of this study is to determine what effect preschool experiences have on the socialization of children entering the first grade.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is a difference in the rate of child abuse between female single families and male single-parent families.
SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This section explains to your reader or assessor the potential benefits of the research that you are going to conduct. You may describe how the results can be useful to a specific population or organization.
STUDY OBJECTIVE

- The objective of a study can be classified into two, i.e., 1). General objective and 2). Specific objective. This section discusses the two types of objectives.
GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- Broadly describes the aim of the study. Words that can be used for this objective must be measurable, such as:
  - Describe
  - Explain
  - Evaluate
  - Examine
  - Identify
  - Determine
  - Study
Example:

- This study aims to determine the relationships between self-efficacy, academic engagement, and academic support from parents, teachers and peers with adolescents’ academic achievement.
Specific Objective

- This objective is more explicit, precise and related to the general objective.
- The purpose of this objective is to reflect on the method that will be used to achieve the objective of the study.
- When reporting your research results in your final report, you would definitely need to refer or relate them back to your objectives.
- Research objectives have direct relationships with the results that you will obtain.
Like the general objective, words that can be used in writing your specific objectives must be measurable, such as:

- identify
- determine
- examine
- evaluate
- compare
You must avoid using unmeasurable words in writing your specific objectives, such as:

- to ‘see’
- to ‘understand’
- to ‘know’
HYPOTHESIS

- Hypothesis refers to an educated guess that is developed to guide you on what the expected outcome of your research.
- It is a prediction that can be tested.
- However, students must understand that not all research need hypothesis (e.g., for exploratory and descriptive research).
- You would only need to write hypothesis when you plan to use inferential statistics.
- Your hypothesis should be derived/supported by the literature.
There are two types of hypothesis: 1). Null hypothesis, and 2). Alternative hypothesis.

- Let’s refer to Lecture 4 for our discussions on hypotheses.
- The following slides will present to you more samples of the different types of hypotheses.
The format for writing hypothesis is as follows:

**Null hypothesis**

HoX: There is no significant relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable
Alternative Hypothesis

- HaX: There is a significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

- Or, state the direction:
  - High involvement / score in IV increases / decreases the DV
Example of null hypothesis:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between academic engagement (or self-efficacy, or academic support from parents) and academic achievement among the respondents.

Or:

Ha1: High level of academic engagement increases academic achievement among the respondents.
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

A conceptual framework refers to the working model for your study. The model outlines your study variables, their positions and directions of effects. A good model is a useful model, that is, one that provides you with a clear direction of your research.
DEFINITION OF TERMINOLOGY

- Important terminologies included in your study must be defined conceptually and operationally.
Operational definition

- For this definition you will give an exact specification of how a concept is measured or manipulated in your study.
Conceptual definition

This is a general description of all the constructs, terms or variables that you have included in your study. In this definition you will provide an abstract characterization of all your constructs/terms/variables.
Example:

**Research Title:** ‘Relationship between level of self-esteem and adolescent’s academic achievement’

**Self-esteem**

- **Conceptual:** A person’s overall self-evaluation or sense of self worth.
- **Operational:** Respondent’s score on the Rosenberg’s (1979) self-esteem scale. High score indicates high level of self-esteem.
LIMITATION OF STUDY

In this section you need to discuss the restriction or drawback of your study with respect to aspects such as:

- Respondent
- Sample size
- Location of study
- Sampling technique used
- Variables selected
Example 1:

The current study focused on personal, family, school and peer factors associated with academic engagement and its influence on academic achievement of secondary school students. Sample for the study would include only school-going adolescents in urban areas of the Klang valley.
The "literature" of a literature review refers to any collection of materials on a topic. It could be anything from a set of government pamphlets to scholarly published articles (i.e., non-fiction).

When you conduct a literature review you discuss published information in a particular subject area, and sometimes information in a particular subject area within a certain time period.

The review can be just a simple summary of the sources, but it usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis.
Literature reviews typically contain three basic elements:

1) An introduction or background information section
   - Provides a quick opening of your topic, including its central theme and organizational pattern.

2) The body of the review
   - Contains your discussion of sources and is organized chronologically, thematically, or methodologically.

3) A conclusion and/or recommendations section to end the paper.
   - Discuss what you have drawn from reviewing literature, and where might proceed.
Why Review of Literature

1. Examining the available body of knowledge in your area of interest.

2. Sets the stage for successful completion of research proposal and study.

3. A continuous process from beginning of research to ending.
4. **Beginning:** to become familiar with the research topic.

5. **Ending:** to integrate/compare your research findings with that of others.
Steps in conducting literature review:

1. Search for existing literature in your area of study.
2. Review the literature selected.
3. Develop a theoretical framework; and
4. Develop a conceptual framework.
LITERATURE SOURCES:

General sources:
- Provide an overview of a topic and leads to find more information.
- e.g., newspapers, popular periodicals & magazines, trade books, Readers Guide to Periodical Literature
Secondary sources:

- Provide a level of information not from the original source.

- e.g., books
  - give information on specific subjects
  - Summary of selected research.
Primary sources:
- An original report of the original work or experience.
- e.g., journals, abstracts, and scholarly books, ERIC, movies
4.0 Methodology

The methodology presents the reader with your research design. There are at least four sections you will discuss here:

1). Study location
   - Indicate where you want to conduct your study
2). Population and Sample selection

- Indicate which group of people you want to study
- Discuss whom you would include in your sampling frame, which would you select as your respondents, and what would be your sampling technique?
3) Data collection

- Discuss your measurements for both independent and dependent variables.
- Discuss the tool you would use for your data collection – e.g., questionnaire, observation scale?
- Discuss what method you would use to collect your data – e.g., survey, case study? What technique would you use – e.g., face-to-face interview, mail interview, telephone interview?
4). Data analysis

- Discuss what statistics you would use to describe data and test your hypothesis.
- Discuss the results that you expected, you may want to present these using dummy tables.
5.0 Work Schedule

- Work schedule is important for you to plan and present the processes that possibly may take place in your research.

- The expected time frame you need to complete your research depends very much on the scope of your research.
6.0 Bibliography

- At the end of your proposal/thesis report you will need to list down all the references that you have cited in the text.

- The bibliography maybe written using the format/style provided by the American Psychological Association (APA).
7.0 **Budget**

- In your proposal, you will include a section where you would indicate the estimated amount of money you need to conduct your research.

- This section is very important especially when you are planning to apply for funds/grants from any institution or organization.
8.0 Appendix

At the end of your proposal, you would attach an appendix or appendixes containing materials related to your research project such as:

- Letters
- Questionnaire
- Instruments
- Newspaper clipping
SAMPLE PROPOSAL (LAB)

- Students will go through a sample of a proposal and identify the different components that have been discussed.