

Proposal for Dissertation

A dissertation proposal is a document that presents a plan for a dissertation to reviewers for evaluation. It is actually a road map showing clearly the location from where a journey begins; the method of getting there and the destination to be reached at.

The purpose of the dissertation proposal is to:

- Present the problem to be researched and its importance.
- Give an idea to instructor about how you will proceed in your dissertation.
- Suggest the data necessary for solving the problem and how the data will be gathered, analyzed, and interpreted.

A proposal is also known as a work plan, prospectus, outline, statement of intent, or draft plan. It tells us

- What will be done?
 - Why it will be done?
 - How it will be done?
 - Where it will be done?
 - For whom it will be done?
 - What is the benefit of doing it?
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Format of Proposal for Dissertation

Title Page

It should include:

- The topic
- Name & ID of the student
- Name of the university
- University logo
- Date of Submission

Table of Contents: List the important headings and sub headings in the dissertation proposal with page numbers.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction/Background: Introduce the specific problem you wish to investigate. Describe briefly the background i.e. the impact and implication of the topic/issue on the environment (the specific set up in which you are studying the issue). It should be well elaborated. It is advised to include current facts and figures in background. You should also explain it in context with the work already done on the topic. It should provide all the necessary initial information so that the reader can better understand the situation under study.

1.2 Objectives: State the objectives/goals of the research, keeping in mind the following points:

- These should state the purpose of the dissertation
- These must be based on logical facts and figures
- These must be achievable within specified timeframe and parameters
- These objectives should be presented such that these should facilitate the reader to locate various important points in the research work
- The specified objectives should be clearly phrased in operational terms specifying exactly what you are going to do, where and for what purpose
- At the end of the study, objectives must be assessed to see if they have been met/achieved or not

1.3 Significance: It lays down the importance or potential benefits of your dissertation. It specifies how your study will improve, modify or broaden presented facts in the field under exploration. Make a note that such improvements/ modifications may have significant implications also.

When you are taking into account the importance of your study, pose yourself the following questions:

- What will be the outcomes of this research study?
- Will the results of this research contribute to the solution or development of anything related to it?
- What will be improved or changed as a result of the proposed research?
- How will results of the study be implemented and what innovations will come out?

1.4 Problem Statement/Research Question: It describes the main issue or area to be investigated. The problem is usually represented by the research questions. Research questions are very crucial because research is about finding out what may not be known. Poorly formulated problem/question will lead to pitiable research that's why researcher must know the question he/she would like to find answer for. The following aspects are important while formulating a problem statement/research question:

- A problem statement/research question should be researchable, clear, logical, specific, precise and brief yet comprehensive statement, fully describing the issue under study.
- The research problem should be grammatically correct and completely convey the main idea to be investigated.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literature review is citation/quotation of a comprehensive review of the published work from secondary sources (journals, research papers, etc) of data in the areas of specific interest to the researcher according to the problem/issue of research. The purpose of literature review is to ensure that:

- Important variables that are likely to influence the problem situation are not left out of the study
- A clear idea emerges as to which variables would be the most important to consider.
- The problem statement can be made with precision and accuracy.

Note: *It is important to cite at least 20 findings of researchers in literature review.*

Chapter 3: Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

3.1 Conceptual/Theoretical Framework can be best narrated with the help of sophisticated diagrams mentioning the independent and dependent variables and their causal affects and final outcomes.

The main headings in the theoretical framework are:

3.1.1 Inventory of variables

3.1.2 Schematic diagram

3.1.3 Direction of relationship

3.1.4 Explanation of established relationship among variables

3.1.5 Inventory of propositions in a sequential order

3.2 Hypotheses (Formal statement that presents the expected relationship between an independent and dependent variable)

Hypotheses are the tentative statements that should either be acknowledged or rejected by means of research. Hypotheses give structure and direction to the research. Therefore, care should be taken not to oversimplify and generalize the formulation of hypothesis.

It is not necessary that the research should consist of only one hypothesis. The type of problem area investigated and the extent which encircles the research field are the factors which determine the number of hypotheses to be included in the study. It is formulated when the researcher is totally aware of the theoretical and empirical background to the problem. There are two types of hypothesis “Null” and “Alternate”. Generally, the null hypothesis is used if theory/literature does not propose a hypothesized connection between the variables under study; the alternative is generally reserved for situations in which theory/research recommends a connection or directional interplay.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

The methodology section should portray how each specific objective will be achieved, with enough details to permit an autonomous evaluation of the proposal. The technical procedures for carrying out the dissertation must be explained in a manner appropriate for the reader. This section should include:

4.1 Research Design: Is the study exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory? Why does this particular design suit to the study?

4.2 Data Collection Sources: Describe all the sources that will be used for data collection.

- Primary sources

- Secondary sources

4.3 Data Collection Methods:

- How will the primary data be collected i.e. survey(s), experiment(s), observation(s) etc.?
- Is it possible to use multiple methods? If yes provide justification.

4.4 Sample Design:

- What is the target population?
- What sampling frame will be used?
- What type of sampling technique will be used?

4.5 Data Collection Tools/Instruments:

- Which tools will be used for data collection (i.e. Questionnaire, Structured Interviews, Observations, etc) according to the need of the dissertation?
- Why a particular tool is selected?
- Is it possible to use multiple tools? If yes provide justification.

4.6 Fieldwork/Data Collection:

- How will the data be collected?
- How will the quality control be assured during data collection?
- How will the answers about practical issues be answered? For example if you are going to carry out survey, then think about where and for how long this survey will be carried out? Will organizations (specify names) provide you access (physical, time, documents, etc) to what you need for your research?

4.6 Data Processing & Analysis: (Methods you will use to extract and process the information you will gather)

- How will the analysis be carried out?
- Scoring scheme/scale and the statistical methods that will be applied for the analysis of data should be described.
- Which software package (MS Excel, SPSS, etc.) will be used for data entry and analysis?

Bibliography

Bibliography is a list of source materials on a particular subject. In a formal report, it includes books and other library materials which have been consulted in preparation of the project. As part of the reference matter, it follows the appendices.

Note: The APA format for reference citation is given in the Lesson # 45 of the handouts of STA630. It is also advised to consult the course of STA630 for a good understating of the research process.