Writing a research paper

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Remember

- Undergrads
  - 2 pages
  - references
- Post Graduate (Masters and PhD)
  - 8 pages
  - + Abstract and
  - References
- GUIDELINES ARE THERE FOR A REASON. Please stick to them
- ALWAYS KEEP the assessment criteria in mind
  - 20% Originality
  - 50% Scientific/ Intellectual merit
  - 15% Potential application
  - 15% Overall quality of the submission
100%
• Select a broad **Topic**

• **Literature** used to justify research problem
Abstract

• A summary of what your paper is about.
• Usually between 200
MUST state
• What is the problem
• Describe **what** the researcher did
• Describe **why** the researcher did what he/ she did
• Describe **what happened** (n.b Methodology)
• Describe **what the results mean**
• Describe the **recommendations**
Introduction

Seeks to give an entry in general about what you are going to TELL/ REPORT/ WRITE about.

You are attempting to inform the reader about the rationale behind the work, justifying why your work is an essential component of research in the field.

No strict word limit, unlike with the abstract, but it should be as concise as possible.
TIPS to write a good introduction

• **Keep it Short**
  A long and rambling introduction will soon put people off and lose your audience.

• **Define the Problem**
  – The entire introduction should logically end at the research question and thesis statement or hypothesis.
  – By the end of the introduction, the reader should know exactly what you are trying to achieve with the paper.

• **Keep it coherence and organised**
  – The story must be clear where it is going
Background

• Seeks to set a scene, tells where you are coming from and hints on the why/ importance of your work
• Creates context and highlights how it fits with previous researches/ know facts.
  – What is the status quo on or about your topic
  – Definitions that might be important to your topic
• Allows historical narratives relevant to your study
• Can give the reasons why the researcher want to undertake this study (what bothers you/ encouraged you)
• It can form part of your introduction
• No strict word limit, however it should be about 1 to 1½ pages
TIPS to write a good background

• Begin the section with clear descriptions of the where you are coming from (Background)
• Tell us about the history of the problem.
  – Be specific
  – Be coherent
  – Refer to relevant literature/ acts/ policies, etc. where need be and be precise

• REMEMBER:
You are explaining or highlighting here factors that led to the problem, comprise the problem and historical significance relative to the problem
Motivation of the study

- Motivation vs Rationale of the study
  (Always keep your research question in mind)
- Key QUESTION
  - WHY…
    - is this study undertaken/ conducted?
  - WHO…
    - is the target for the study?
Rationale of the study

• Rationale is defined as the reasoning behind a decision or something.
• The fundamental reasons, or rational basis, for something

• What is the rationale for the proposed research?
• What are you trying accomplish and how will this research accomplish your aims?
Write purpose statement

- Three basic elements
  - Central issue/phenomenon you are going to study
  - Participants/target group/subjects
  - Research site

- Research methodology can be included
Purpose of the study

• What does this research seek to investigate/ find out/ explore/research
  • This study seeks to explore….It will reflect on whether……
  • The purpose of this research is to…..
Purpose/ Aim of the study

- Note: Difference between Research PURPOSE and AIM of the research. Is there one?
  
  - Purpose – Reason for conducting it
    - My purpose was to tap telephones.

  - Aim – Intent to achieve….
    - So that I can over hear the conversations.
Purpose/ Aim of the study

• What does this research seek to investigate/ find out/ explore/research

  • The purpose of this research is to ….
  • This study seeks to explore….It will reflect on whether……

  • The study aims to bring forth the experiences of .......and how to address them (the experiences)
How to write a purpose statement

• “The purpose of this qualitative study will be to (explore? discover? understand? describe? the (central phenomenon) for (participants) at (research site)” (Creswell, 2002: 149)

Example: The purpose of this qualitative study will be to explore the experiences of high school principals in terms of school management in rural settings.

The aim is of bringing to the fore the contextual factors affecting rural principals’ school management practices.
ACTIVITY: Is the following statement strong or weak research statement
ACTIVITY: The purpose of the research

- The purpose of my research is to prove that there is a link between class size and students achievement (3 min)
  - Weak – The researcher is predisposed to a particular outcome for the research (PROVE)
  - Strong – Quantitative research, wants to prove

- The purpose of my research is to eliminate drug abuse among high school children (3 min)
  - Weak – The researcher confuses INQUIRY with ACTIVISM (Eliminate)
  - Strong – The researcher refuses to make a distinction between abstract inquiry and committed research; Action oriented research is a respectable form of inquiry
Research Problem

- Problem statement??
- Research Problem???
- Research Questions????
- Research hypothesis?????

What is the gist here:

What is it that you are trying to ANSWER or PROVE
2. Research Problem

What is the....

PROBLEM/ PUZZULE/QUESTION

....that I want to investigate/ find out/ explore/research?
Research question (s)

- Flow from purpose statement and are general and broad
- Three basic elements
  - Central issue/ phenomenon you are going to study
  - Participants/ target group/ subjects
  - Research site
- Research methodology should be kept in mind

**Example:** What are the high school principals’ school management experiences in rural settings?
3. Research Question (S)

Higher level questions
1. How
2. Why do
3. What

Lower level questions
1. Do…..
2. Is there…..

The problem with lower level questions is that they tend to have a YES or NO response

• Subquestions
4. Rationale/ Significance of your study

- Why do you propose to do this research?
- Who will benefit from findings of your study
Significance of the study

- What is the CAPITAL of this study?
- What VALUE will this study bring to knowledge?/ to participants?
- What ADDITIONS will this study bring?
- What is the VALUE that this study is contributing to practice?/ to policy?
- What is innovative about this study?
- What importance is this study bringing to another person’s life/ livelihood?

  - “The study will develop a community centre model for caring for children in child-headed homes”

  - “The study will develop a patient referral model between the traditional health practitioners and the allopathic practitioners”
Limitations

• Opportunity to highlight ANY weaknesses in your study
• Weakness can be due to Methodology; Research itself, etc.

Assumptions

• They are preconceived ideas or conclusions in relation to your study before you undertake and/ or complete it
• NB. Point out any assumptions that you make about conditions during the research.
• Ensure that all the cited work is indicated.
• References vs Bibliography
• NB Plagiarism
  – Turnit in software – an originality checking tool
• Always remember Ethics of research
Remember

- The purpose of this presentation is to give a guide on research proposal writing, with the aim of assisting the participants in gaining proficiency in research proposal writing.

- This presentation will not make you proficient in research proposal writing. It is your activities after you have listen to this presentation that may result in your proficiency in research proposal writing.
Ke ya leboga.

Thank you.