

# [Research] [Proposal]



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**Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre**

# Outline of My Talk!

- Basic Understanding of Research Proposal (RP) and its significance
- Components of RP
- Miscellaneous
- Good News!

# Research Proposal (RP)



- A formal written plan which communicates ideas about a proposed study in order to obtain approval/funding
- A detailed plan or 'blueprint' for the intended study, and once it is completed, the project should flow smoothly
- Basically, RPs must address the following questions: **What you plan to accomplish?** **Why you want to do it?** **How you are going to do it?**
- Crafting a good RP is a crucial skill which will facilitate acceptance of a project and the eventual write up of a paper

# Is this Discussion needed for You?

- Enhance convincing capacity
- Demonstrate expertise/competency
- Deeper understanding of something particular
- Excellent planning tool, contract!
- Module of 80<sup>th</sup> FTC - IRP!

Course Curriculum and Brochure



## Module 17

: **Social Research**

## Evaluation Method

: Individual Research Proposal = 50

## Module Objectives

: After the completion of the module, participants will be able to:

- describe different aspects of social research and its implications;  
and
- apply social research methods in taking decisions in public sector.

# RP Journey

## Research Topic/Title

“Well begun is half done (first impression).” Choose topic carefully and avoid problems later. You can check the initial feasibility of the topic with 5Ws and 1 H (What, why, where, who, when and How)

Title needs to include three elements that are related to the study objectives:

The Population or item/material under investigation; The Intervention; The Outcome

# Introduction

- Design to create interest in the reader about the topic and proposal - “set the stage”
- Convince target group of the value, significance, necessity of the study
- Some background information, basis of some common understanding, without engaging much with the literature.
- A few questions to assess the significance of the study are: (i) Who has an interest in the domain of inquiry? (ii) What do we already know about the topic? (iii) What has not been answered adequately in previous research/practice? (iv) How will this research add to knowledge, practice and policy in this area?

# Literature Review (LR)

- Done even before any research begins. In fact, the study topic is selected after reviewing the literature and founding some gap in it.
- LR demonstrates that the researcher is aware of the breadth and diversity of literature that relates to the research question
- LR is not simply a list/summary of books, articles that the researcher has read. It combines the most significant aspects of the works you have consulted, combining and synthesizing them in an integrated description of the field of study
- LR is performed using the secondary sources of information to gather more information, knowledge on the topic and to understand what is already known and to determine difference that your research will make
- LR provides a new knowledge to refine proposal further and bring some more clarity to it.
- Five 'C's while writing a literature review – Cite, Compare, Contrast, Critique, Connect!

# Literature Review (Contd.)

- If you are having difficulty with this section, try structuring your work around these questions:

Q: What are the broad bodies of literature that have relevance for your research topic (local and international)?

Q: What methods and results, history have previous researchers in your field produced?

Q: What theoretical model, or models, relate to your research topic?

Q: What different methodologies have been used by other researchers? Try to identify the key methodological issues that must be addressed, since these will determine your own choice of methodology.

Q: What are the most recent research findings in your area of study?

Q: What gaps and contradictions exist among these findings? What new research questions do these findings suggest?

Q: What structure suits my literature review best?

# Research Problem, Aim, Objective, Question

- ‘Statement of the problem’, in one paragraph mainly after the review of the literature. Usually, research questions come out from this segment
- Aim should be clearly stated using simple language (without unnecessary jargons) that non-specialists can comprehend
- Objectives: should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable (or Attainable), Realistic, and Time-related

# Research Problem, Aim, Objective, Question (Contd.)

- Paint your research question in bring out its significance. A **common mistake** is to define the **question too broadly** (or to set no limits at all) and then find that the resources required for such a large study are not available.
- Narrowing, clarifying, and **even redefining research questions are essential** to the research process
- Attribute Grid (tentative example!)

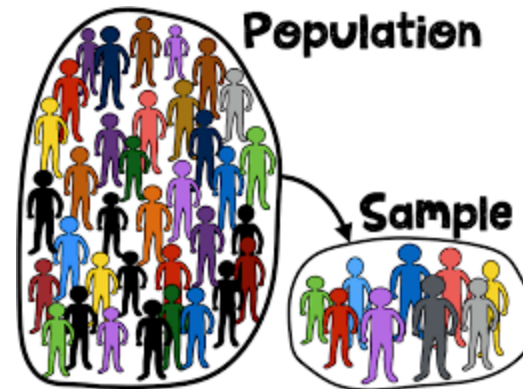
RQ/ Indicators	Information Access	Theoretical Background	Methodology	Institutional Requirements	Necessary Skills?	Time	Budget
RQ1							
RQ2							
RQ3							

# Methodology

- Clearly outline (in future tense) how the data will be collected and analyzed
- This section needs to contain sufficient information for the reader to determine whether methodology is sound
- **Qualitative** research: Data collection and analysis are often concurrent. Uses **subjectivity** where researchers need to find the answers to the research problems by claims, reasons, evidence, and interpretation
- **Quantitative** research: Data collection precedes analysis. Uses **objective assessment** of variables of interest (dependent and independent), describe those using basics of statistics or assess the relationship between variables or test existing theories
- **Mixed Method-** uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches, where any one approach may or may not dominate. They help in balancing between **objectivity and subjectivity**
- **Triangulation!**

# Methodology (Contd.)

- Should be a clear description of the materials, subjects being used for the study. Specific elements of the data collection instruments (questionnaires, interviews, observations, FGD) should be identified and their intended plan of use outlined. The rationale for their selections should be provided
- Population and Sample: Population refers to all the elements (individuals, objects or substances) that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a given universe and sample refers to subset of population which meets the inclusion criteria for enrolment into the study.



- You could calculate sample size using online sample size calculators!

# Limitation

- Constraints beyond the researcher's control that might affect the results, generalizability of the study
- Limited resources, inadequate time, lack of prior studies, small sample size, study areas and so forth

# Ethical Consideration

- Refers to the protection of the participants' rights (right to self-determination, privacy, confidentiality, fair treatment and right to protection from discomfort/harm), obtaining informed consent and the institutional review process (ethical approval, risk register)
- Researcher needs to provide adequate information on each of these aspects
- Informed consent needs to be obtained from the participants, as well as the research site and the relevant authorities

# Timeline

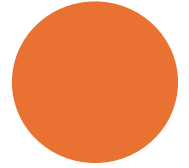
**TIMELINE: RESEARCH PROJECT**

ACTIVITIES	DURATION (Month)									
	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	
Topic selection	■									
Literature review	■	■	■							
The first draft				■						
Proposal presentation				■						
Data collection				■	■	■				
Data entry and analysis						■	■			
Report writing							■	■	■	
Project report submission										■

Figure 2. An example of the research project timeline

# Budget

- Budget plan begins with an innovative research question, objectives and design of the study
- Should predict and cost all aspects of the research and then add an additional allowance for unpredictable costs
- All items should be justified and realistic
- Before finalization, understand the expectations of funding agencies and the team of researchers



# Dissemination

- A key feature often neglected, is a discussion of the processes by which the research findings will be disseminated
- Ways of disseminating research results include research reports, journal articles, books, conference presentations, electronic publishing, newspaper and magazine articles, and public presentations

# Reference/Bibliography

- **Reference cards** to keep detailed records of your reading. Advanced users can access reference managers like **Mendeley, Zotero** and Endnote. Books, Journal articles are the most **credible sources of information**
- **Bibliography** contains all the sources of data that you have referred in your project work. This list is the complete source of the secondary data that you have referred. **Reference** lists only the literature that you actually used or cited in your proposal
- **Different styles** of writing the reference. **Harvard, MLA, Chicago, APA, BJPA Style.** If not clear, you can always **seek advice** from your research supervisor
- The cited references comply to the **triple-R rule: relevant, respected, and recent**

# Appendices

- Documents that support the proposal and application. The appendices will be specific for each proposal but documents that are usually required include informed consent form, supporting documents, questionnaires, measurement tools

# Miscellaneous!

## Abstract/Keywords/Results/Conclusion

### Do's:

- Develop a professional looking proposal
- Be interesting, informative
- Write in a way that is easy to read
- Include a contents page
- Be concise and precise
- Construct clear arguments
- Check your spelling and grammar

# Miscellaneous! (Contd.)

## A Few Common Mistakes

- Failure to provide the proper context to frame the research question and delimit the boundary conditions
- Failure to cite landmark studies; citation lapses and incorrect references
- Failure to accurately present the theoretical, empirical contributions by others
- Failure to stay focused on the research question and to develop a coherent and persuasive argument
- Too much detail on minor issues, less detail on major issues; no clear sense of writing direction

(The best proposals move forward with ease and grace like a seamless river!)

# RP vs RR



# Finally, Good News!

## 1.6 RESEARCH PROPOSAL WRITING POLICY

### Module 17: Social Research

#### Guidelines on individual research proposal writing, Full marks-50

As part of the evaluation under the Module 17, each participant will write a research proposal of 1000-1200 words on a topic of his/her own choice. These brief guidelines aim to direct the participants to a successful accomplishment of their research proposal writing assignment. Topics for research proposal: Each participant should choose a topic for research proposal that falls within the broader purview of the public administration, governance, and development issues of Bangladesh. It will be a social science research proposal.

Paper Structure: a) Each proposal will have a COVER PAGE mentioning the research title at the top, participant's name and roll number in the middle, and the course name along with the organization's name and date of submission at the bottom of the page. There will be no indication of the participant's name and roll number anywhere on the paper except the cover page. b) The rest of the assignment will have the general look of a research proposal. It will include:

#### 1.6.1. Title

A good title gives the reader a good understanding of the nature of research work. It should (i) have the most important words at the beginning, (ii) not use ambiguous or confusing words, and (iii) break up into a title and a subtitle if it has too many words.

#### 1.6.2 Introduction

The introduction will give a big picture of the topic. It will have a few paragraphs addressing different issues. The first paragraph will present an overview of the issue (the background of the topic proposed for an investigation). The second paragraph will describe what is not known about the issue through scientific research—knowledge gap/research gap (problem statement). The final paragraph will set objectives for the proposed study, followed by the rationale for the study.

#### 1.6.3 Literature Review

This section will give a critical overview of the past studies leading to developing a conceptual framework/ analytical framework/ theoretical framework.

#### 1.6.4 Methodology

This part of the paper will tell the readers about the research approach (inductive/deductive), details about research population, sampling technique and sample size, data collection method(s), and data analysis method.

#### 1.6.5 Reference

The proposal will follow the BIPA's referencing style. The participants should carefully read the author guidelines available on the journal's website for details. Note that the proposal will be checked for plagiarism using the Turnitin software. Up to 25% similarity with proper referencing in academic writings is accepted at BPATC.