

# Research Proposal Writing

Kabuye Uthman Sulaiman

Department of Fundamental and Inter-Disciplinary Studies  
Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences  
International Islamic University Malaysia

# Reasons for Research

- Integration/Harmonization
- Relevantisation

# Dichotomy of knowledge

Muhammad Abid al-Jabiry cited in Amin Abdullah states that the backwardness of Islamic civilization dues to the disintegration between natural sciences (al-ulum al-kauniyyah) with 'Islamic Science', which based on the sacred text, the Qur'an.

# Research Proposal

- Research proposal is a roadmap: It is a description of your journey; where it is taking you and how you plan to get there.
- It is what convinces your peers that they should read your research.

# How to structure a proposal

- There is no right or wrong way to structure a proposal.
- Regardless of the structure, there are some commonalities in proposals across all disciplines.

# Research proposal

Before writing a research proposal:

Identify gaps in academic literature in your field. This is essential to create new knowledge.

# Aims of the research proposal

1. To guide a student in the research process.
2. To think about each stage of the research process.

- What is it that you want to investigate?
- Why is it important?
- How will you do the research?



# Research Roadblocks/Challenges and How to Overcome them

Choosing the right/relevant topic

Choosing the right methodology

# Choosing the right/relevant topic

A research topic is the foundation on which everything else rests. Therefore, you should make sure that the topic you develop is:

- a) Doable: That is, within your scope of knowledge and comfort zone (money, time and energy)
- b) Feasible; i.e. that you can accomplish it within the given time and with the limited resources

# Choosing the right methodology

In order to move forward, you must have a clear methodology or the procedure for conducting research. This comes after you have stated the purpose of your study/research and formulated the research questions.

You must state:

- a) From whom you're going to collect data;
- b) How you're going to collect the data; and
- c) How you're going to analyze it once you collect it

# Checklist

Ensure that:

1. What you propose to do will result in a significant contribution to knowledge.
2. You have a thesis statement. Your thesis statement is the last part of your introduction. It is written after the crucial background information about your topic. The body of your thesis comprises of all the main ideas applicable to your thesis statement, and the details and proof that support it.
3. The proposed research is achievable within the required time and with the available resources. A lack of background knowledge may hinder ....
4. You have adequate expertise and experience to undertake the project.
5. You prepare a clear and detailed proposal.
6. You consult the Qur'an, the Sunnah and the writings of our ancestors.

-It is essential to look at successful proposals in your discipline.

Please note that the major sources of data for any research on Islam are: the Holy Quran, Sunnah and

# Elements of research proposal

A research proposal should consist of the following elements:

1. Title
2. Introduction
3. Background and rational
4. Research aims and question(s)
5. Review of literature
6. Research methodology
7. Plan of work and time schedule/timeline
8. Expected outcome/impact
9. Bibliography

# Introduction

The introduction should answer the following questions

1. The question of 'what:' What has been written on the topic (review of literature in brief); objectives of the study/research; the gap in knowledge that your research will fill; the questions to be answered later in the research/hypotheses; the anticipated outcome(s); research problem; a definition of terms (if required).
  2. The question of 'why:' Why do you choose that topic for research; why it is important; why you adopted a particular method or approach; and so on.
  3. The question of 'how:' research structure.
- ❖ Keep in mind that the introduction is not the place to dive down into the details.

# Background and rational

1. Introduce your research topic and explain why it is significant or what prompted you to write about the chosen topic.
2. Write a short literature review; that is, some background information about the emergence and evolution of the topic. Focus here on the dominant trends.
3. Showcase how your project design brings a new approach to an existing or newly identified problem.



# Research Plan

Lay out how you intend to carry out your project, leading the reader from general to specific.

In this section of your proposal you will need to answer three questions:

1. What kind of data or sources will you use?
2. How will you collect and manage/analyse the data (methodology)?
3. Which theoretical and methodological techniques will you use to interpret and analyse these data/sources?

# Resources

- Identify the lab, center, or institute where you will carry out the work;
- If you'll need special equipment or materials, clearly state that;
- If you'll require access to field sites, subjects, or informants, explain what arrangements you have made.

# Research question(s)

- What problems and issues are to be explored and why they are worth exploring.
- A primary research question might break down into several smaller ones

# Aims of the research

Research aims can be multiple; each independent with its own plan for data collection and method of analysis.

# Review of literature

What is it that you should review?

You should review what is related to your topic in the form of:

1. Books
2. Refereed journal articles
3. Postgraduate theses
4. Media sources

# Phases to Research Proposal Writing

Writing a research proposal comprises the following phases:

- 1) Planning
- 2) Consultation
- 3) Preparedness

# The planning process

- A careful and a well thought-out planning at every step of the way.
- A sequence of action steps to achieve a specific goal.
- Standards against which performance is measured.
- The direction to which one intends to achieve.
- The vision and foresight.
- Development of strategies to assure the accomplishment of one's objectives.
- Who** is going to do **What**, **How** and **When**.

-On the way to our goal, we tend to get off the highway into the side streets. Planning keeps us on the course.

-If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.

-Planning helps a person to foresee problems that may be encountered when writing the research and prompt him to think about how he will manage them when they arise.



# Consultation

Before making a decision that shall have huge impacts on our future, it is advisable to consult the qualified, knowledgeable and experienced people.

Al-Tabarani reported through Anas Ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said:

***The one who asks Allah for guidance by performing Istikhara prayer would never be disappointed, and the one who consults others would never regret*** [Al-Tabarani by Anas]

Consultation is one of the practical ways to get more and new perspectives into one's experience and thought process (it expands one's perspective and horizon). It is also one of the ways to build a relationship with others.

To consult others also means to read more and more broadly about the research area.

Please take note that a topic is narrower than the research area. This means the latter is broader.

Reading is one of the most efficient and powerful ways to broaden one's perspective.

# Preparedness

- a) Intellectual preparedness
- b) Mental or psychological preparedness
- c) Physical preparedness
- d) Financial preparedness

Preparedness for unexpected things to happen.

# Intellectual Preparedness

Intellectual preparedness/readiness in regard to the following:

- Report writing
- Data collection
- Analysis of information from different sources
- Planning and scheduling

## **Some of the skills related to reading and writing:**

### 1. Lateral thinking skills - the ability to:

- Use one's imagination to look at a problem in a fresh way and come up with a new solution;
- Solve a problem using an unusual or creative approach.

### 2. Critical thinking skills: the ability to:

- Conceptualize the information (to understand the information fully);
- Apply the information;
- Analyze the information (interpret the information);
- Synthesize the information (arrange, unify, harmonize, combine, integrate);
- Evaluate the information gathered (judge the information with respect to its worth or significance);
- To question or reflect on the knowledge and information

# Mental and Physical Preparedness

The following are some of the things recommended to prevent or get one's mind and body ready to cope with stresses:

- 1) Time management
- 2) Eating healthy food
- 3) Getting proper sleep
- 4) Getting time to exercise everyday