

Title

A research proposal submitted by

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(The sections in blue are **instructions** and should be replaced with your own text before submission. Do not submit assignments that still contain instructions)

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1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to

1.2 Context of the study

Describe the background to the research, remembering that examiners and other readers may not know much about your industry or even your country, and need a good idea of the context in which you will be conducting your study. Remember to REFERENCE all the statements that you make (according to the format described in the course pack and the proposal example given). Remember to include **recent** references, especially when describing the current situation / context for your research.

Also take note of when the articles you reference were published relative to one another, ie which ones were written first, which ones are more recent. More recent authors may have similar findings to older ones, but not the other way around.

Include a description of the business or management problem or gap in knowledge or practice that you intend to address in your research.

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 *Main problem*

Have a verb at or near the beginning of your statement, and make it a statement, not a question. Break your statement up into logical sections to create your sub-problems. The research problem statement is a statement

of how you will address the business problem. **The business problem is NOT the same as the research problem. Make sure you include relevant, searchable key words.**

Your sub-problems combined should = your problem, and should also have a verb at or near the beginning. Do not add any new concepts or ideas in your sub-problems. Include relevant, searchable key words to use for your literature review.

It is not always necessary to have sub-problems – it may not be possible to break your problem into smaller parts.

1.3.2 Sub-problems

Refer to “how to write a problem statement” in your course pack

The first sub-problem is

The second sub-problem is

1.4 Significance of the study

The study fills a gap in that . . .

Describe and explain the gap in the theory that might be filled by your study, because of its focus, method, or other reason. Justify your reasoning and REFERENCE your sources.

The study will provide guidance to ...

Describe the aspects of management or business practice that the study is intended to be of value to. Describe who may benefit from the study and how it is hoped they will benefit.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

Delimitations are used to narrow the scope of the study. State what will be included and what will be excluded, eg your research topic may focus on a specific market sector, organisation type, level of employees in an organisation, methodology, etc. The sample that you plan to use may be drawn from a specific geographical area (eg Gauteng), but this is NOT a delimitation; it is a convenience sample and should be discussed under sampling in the Methodology Chapter. Bullet points are fine here

1.6 Definition of terms

Include definitions that the reader needs to understand in order to make sense of the proposal. Do not define well-known terms or terms that you do not use extensively in the proposal. REFERENCE definitions where appropriate.

1.7 Assumptions

State any assumptions that could influence the outcome of the research. Discuss the reasonableness of each assumption, and the sensitivity of the research outcome to the assumption.

Present these in bullet points for easier reading.

Eg you probably assume that your respondents will reflect normal perspectives and experiences.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

You MUST reference all statements and claims made. Failure to do so means that you are plagiarising. The format for your references is described in the course pack and in the Proposal example – apply the correct format for in-text referencing AND the reference list at the back of the document.

2.1 Introduction

Introduce the literature review, and describe briefly the structure and contents of the review by each sub-problem in turn. Give some background to the problem and sub-problems.

Discuss key definitions relevant to your topic (and REFERENCE them), then state or describe and justify which one you will be using in this study.

2.2 Definition of topic or background discussion.

If you define your topic here, be sure to specify which of the definitions you discuss, because there will probably be more than one, you are going to adopt as your working definition.

2.3 First sub-problem discussion heading

Introduce first discussion section. ONLY write about the first sub-problem here.

2.3.1 Sub-heading 1

Discussion of an idea or concept using appropriate integrated references.

2.3.2 Sub-heading 2

Discussion of an idea or concept using appropriate integrated references.

2.3.3 Hypothesis 1 OR Proposition 1 OR Research Question 1

State your proposition (etc) here, not as the actual sub-heading. Your hypothesis, proposition or research question must be phrased almost as though it is a single sentence summary of the literature reviewed for this section. It will often have very similar wording to the sub-problem on which this section of the literature was based (Sub-problem 1).

2.4 Second sub-problem discussion heading

Introduce second discussion section. ONLY write about sub-problem 2 here.

2.4.1 Sub-heading 1

Discussion of an idea or concept using appropriate integrated references.

If you include a figure, give it a title, eg Figure 1, a title and a reference. Figure headings go below the image as shown.



Figure 1: Title of the Figure (reference)

2.4.2 Sub-heading 2

Discussion of an idea or concept using appropriate integrated references.

2.4.3 Hypothesis 2 OR Proposition 2 OR Research Question 2

State your proposition (etc) here, not as the actual sub-heading. Your hypothesis, proposition or research question must be phrased almost as though it is a single sentence summary of the literature reviewed for this section. It will often have very similar wording to the sub-problem on which this section of the literature was based (ie Sub-problem 2).

2.5 Conclusion of Literature Review

Summarise and conclude the entire literature review. Then restate all the hypotheses OR propositions OR research questions:

2.5.1 Hypothesis / Proposition / Research Question 1:

2.5.2 Hypothesis / Proposition / Research Question 2:

3 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology that will be followed to address the hypotheses or propositions or research questions that you put forward as possible solutions to your sub-problems in the Literature Review section.

For each sub-section, describe the theory AND how your own research fits the theory, or where it does not and how you are going to overcome the shortcomings.

Describe briefly the structure of the section.

3.1 Research methodology / paradigm

Discuss the research paradigm and method (eg qualitative, quantitative or mixed) you will use, focusing on why it is suitable for your research. Remember to **REFERENCE** the theory that you are describing and describe how your research is appropriate for the theory.

Discuss the assumptions of this methodology / paradigm and why they are appropriate for your research.

3.2 Research Design

Give a description of the methodological approach you will adopt (eg case study, interviews, survey, mathematical modelling etc), focusing on why that particular approach is appropriate for your study.

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this method, as they pertain to your research.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population

Define the population for the research. If you are going to do a case study then discuss the case site here (in which case the heading will be 'case site'), in terms of appropriateness for your study.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

Describe and discuss the sample and sampling method, including the number in the sample, that you will use and why it is appropriate.

State the number of interviews or questionnaire respondents or data points you intend obtaining and how you will get them to participate.

Give a list of potential respondents in a table **if appropriate**. Do not give actual names of individuals for confidentiality reasons. If it is too long put the table in an Appendix. Note that table headings go above the table and that all Tables must be numbered, eg Table 1, have a title and be referenced.

Table 1: Profile of respondents (if appropriate)

Description of respondent type, eg Manager, Union representative, student	Number to be sampled

3.4 The research instrument

Describe the actual instrument (eg open questionnaire, interview schedule, mathematical model, conjoint questionnaire) that you will use for your own research, indicating how each part addresses a specific issue in your research. Create and include your actual instrument in an Appendix, with a covering letter to the potential respondent motivating them to participate. If it is a standard instrument that has been previously published or has been used before, discuss its advantages and shortcomings as they relate to your use of it.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

Describe how you will gather the data using your instrument.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Describe how you will analyse the data. **REFERENCE** appropriate methodological sources, and describe how these methods will be applied in your analysis process. Eg regression analysis, descriptive statistics, content analysis.

3.7 Limitations of the study

Limitations identify and anticipate potential weaknesses in your study relating to the methodology, sampling, analysis methods, etc. Describe these potential weaknesses and their implications, particularly with respect to the interpretation of your findings. Bullet points are fine here.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Describe what each of these in the context of your own research. If you choose to use other validation criteria (particularly in qualitative or interpretive research), then discuss them here. For each criterion discuss how you will ensure it happens or at least make every effort to ensure it in **your** research. Remember to **REFERENCE** your statements. No "textbook summaries".

3.8.1 External validity

Describe (REFERENCE your source) how your research meets or does not meet the external validity criteria. If necessary, explain how YOU will try to maximise your validity.

3.8.2 Internal validity

Describe (REFERENCE your source) how your research meets or does not meet the internal validity criteria. If necessary, explain how YOU will try to maximise your validity.

3.8.3 Reliability

Describe (REFERENCE your source) how your research meets or does not meet the reliability criteria. If necessary, explain how YOU will try to maximise your reliability.

4 RESEARCH PLANNING

4.1 Time-table

Table 2: Time-plan for completion of research report by xxxx

	date	date	date	date	date	date	date
Finalise proposal							
Gain approval							
Gather data							
Do data analysis							
Write report							
Finalise report							

4.2 Consistency matrix

A consistency matrix is a powerful tool in assisting you to align your sub-problems, the references that you used to investigate each sub-problem in turn and the hypothesis or proposition or research question that resulted from the literature that you reviewed. It also lists the analysis method you will use to analyse the data.

It is also a process model – you carry out each step of your research in the sequence shown in the consistency matrix, which is shown on the next page.

Table 3: Consistency matrix

Research problem stated here					
Sub-problem	Literature Review	Hypotheses or Propositions or Research questions	Source of data	Type of data	Analysis
Actual sub-problem 1 stated fully as in the text	List the most important references that you referred to when writing the literature review for sub-problem 1.	Actual Hypothesis 1 OR proposition 1 OR research question 1 stated here in exactly the same words as in the text of the proposal, and based on the literature that you reviewed in the previous step	Actual interview / questionnaire questions that will provide the data, preferably in words Or other specific sources of data, eg stock exchange	Note the type of data, eg nominal, ordinal, etc	Describe the specific analysis method you will use
Actual sub-problem 2 stated fully as in the text	List the most important references that you referred to when writing the literature review for sub-problem 2.	Actual Hypothesis 2 OR proposition 2 OR research question 2 stated here in exactly the same words as in the text of the proposal and based on the literature that you reviewed in the previous step	Actual interview / questionnaire questions that will provide the data, preferably in words Or other specific sources of data eg stock exchange	Note the type of data, eg nominal, ordinal, etc	Describe the specific analysis method you will use.
So on if more sub-problems					

REFERENCES

All references that are used in the text of the proposal MUST be included here, in the APA 6th referencing style., and all references listed here must be in the text of the proposal.

Follow the APA 6th Style Guide from www.wbs.ac.za, then 'research', then 'mba research'.

APPENDIX A

Actual Research Instrument – this is essential in your proposal to evaluate the effectiveness of your instrument in gathering the required data, and or ethics approval