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Carving the Research Proposal

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Abstract

This study aims at assessing the process of writing research proposal with its format and lay out used by different researchers and institutions. Using secondary sources of data, the study embarks the structure of the research proposal discussing with regards to the key sections of the proposal like proposal format provided by various institution, cover page, introduction, literature review, research and research question, research purpose and objectives, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, research methodology, ethical considerations, timeline, budget estimations and references employing a descriptive research design. Simple descriptive tools, content analysis and tables have been used for analysis of data. A research proposal is a detail description of a proposed study designed to explore a given problem. An excellent carved proposal has more possibility of persuading the evaluation committee on credibility, achievability, practicality and reproducibility of the research design as the evaluation committees may constitute academic colleagues, policy makers, practitioners and lay audience who potentially evaluate the research proposal. The first class research proposal includes practicality, broader linking, crystal clarity and good plan and also contains the concern literatures that support the study as well as writer's thought explaining all about the time needed to conduct the each stage of the research.

Keywords: Delimitation, literature review, methodology, proposal & universe.

Introduction

A research proposal is a “formal written plan which communicates ideas about a proposed study in order to obtain approval to conduct the study or to seek funding” .Through this plan the researcher aims “to learn something of real or potential significance about an area of interest” (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). As well as serving as a work plan, the proposal offers a justification for the study, indicating why the research is worth doing and how it will be carried out (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005; Matthews, 2006). Mostly the students and those beginning researchers have problem in understanding the meaning of

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research proposal and its importance (Wong, 2008). It is actually the detailed description of a proposed study designed to explore a given problem (Traenkel, 2008). In both qualitative and quantitative research, either in academic or professional field, all research activities are preceded by a research proposal (Kumar, 2014). It informs the academic supervisor or potential research contract provider about the conceptualization of the whole research process that the researcher proposes to undertake so that they can examine its validity and appropriateness. While writing the research proposal, the researcher should mention whether the research study is quantitative or qualitative, and in both cases the researcher use a similar structure but the main difference is in the proposed procedures and methodologies for undertaking the research endeavor as in quantitative studies the researcher should mention in detail the quantitative methods, procedures and models whereas in qualitative studies the detail should be based on methods and procedures that form the qualitative research methodology. While if it is mixed methods approach, the researcher need to describe as either qualitative or quantitative procedures under their respective headings (Kumar, 2014).

The most important step in the process of conduct of research is a clean and well thought-out proposal which is the backbone for the research itself (McGranaghan, 2016). Writing the research proposal is to persuade the readers or the concerns or getting approval from various committees including ethics committee and to request for grants that the researcher has a worthwhile research project and have the competence and the work plan to complete it (Wong, 2008 & McGranaghan, 2016). The research proposal's main task is to find the operational plan for getting the answers to research questions. While doing so it ensures and reassures the reader of the validity of methodology for obtaining answer to research questions accurately and objectively (Kumar, 2004). While discussing about the academic proposal, it is the first step in producing a thesis or major project. Its importance is to convince a supervisor or academic committee that the topic and approach are sound so as to gain approval to proceed with the actual research as well as indicating the plan of action with theoretical positioning and the relationship to past work in the concern area of the study. An academic proposal is expected to adhere with these elements:

- ❖ Choice of the topic with justification showing why it is important or useful within the concern discipline or course and indicating the limitation of the study.
- ❖ A review of accessible literature or the published documents that are related to the topic of the study.
- ❖ An outline of the intended approach or research methodology including the costs, resources needed and a timeline of when to get the work done.

Types of Research Proposal

In all sectors either academic, government or the private sector, research scientists typically seek and obtain competitive funding for their research projects by writing and submitting research proposals for consideration by the funding source. There are different kinds of research proposals. Each type of proposal, outlined below, may have its own requirements or qualifications:

Table 1: Types of research proposal given by Kabir, 2016

Types of proposal	Definitions
i. New proposal	A proposal submitted to a sponsor for the first time or being resubmitted after having been declined by a potential sponsor.
ii. Revised proposal	A proposal that is pending or is unfunded but not official declined by the sponsor.
iii. Continuation proposal	A proposal that already request the funds for the next phase or next year of the project and require a progress report and budget before releasing additional funds.
iv. Pre-proposal/ notice of intent proposal	A proposal which is in the form of a letter of intent or brief abstract and after the pre-proposal is reviewed, the sponsor notifies the investigator if a full proposal is warranted.
v. Solicited proposal	A proposal which is written and submitted in response to the issuance of a “Request for proposal”(RFP)., a document that identifies a specific research problem of interest to the funding agency for which they are specifically seeking a solution.
vi. Unsolicited proposal	A proposal that is submitted by an investigator in response to a general call for proposal that is issued by a funding agency or company in a field or area of study.
vii. Renewal or competing proposal	It is such type of proposal in which request for continued support for an existing project that is about to terminate and from the sponsor’s viewpoint generally have the same status as an unsolicited proposal.

Source: Kabir, 2016

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to analyze the theoretical knowledge on carving research proposal. The specific objectives are to provide the basic concepts of carving

the research proposal and to assess the knowledge on basic requirements, format and elements of research proposal to the readers.

Methodology

Methodologically, this paper has used the content analysis as a secondary data technique. The usefulness of this method is that, it enables the researcher to draw comparative view from secondary data produced by various writers concerning their insights covering format of writing the research proposal. Other research techniques used are: Descriptive cum comparative research design and content analysis. Secondary sources of information have been used in this study which has been obtained from various prior studies, relevant journals and so on. The collected data and descriptive information are presented in different forms.

Analysis and Interpretation

In a proposal one needs to show how the researcher's work fits into what is already known about the topic and what new paradigm will it add to the literature, while specifying the research question that research will answer, establishing its significance and its implications to answer the questions (Nte & Awi, 2006). The written proposal should be capable enough to persuade the evaluation committee on credibility, achievability, practicality and reproducibility of the research design (Saunderlin, 1994). The evaluation committees may constitute academic colleagues, policy makers, practitioners and lay audience who potentially evaluate the research proposal. The first class research proposal includes persuasiveness, practicality, broader linking, crystal clarity and good plan. The proposal should contain the concern literatures that support the study as well as writer's thought explaining all about the time needed to conduct the each stage of the research (Koppler, 2008 & Singh et al., 2005).

a. Format of Research Proposal

In writing the research proposal, there can be variation in the format given by different institutions. The Research Centre, Tribhuvan University, regards it important that research proposals submitted for acceptance and financial grants confirm to a prescribed format. It may often be difficult to write down all kinds of research proposals strictly within the descriptions and categories fixed by a prescribed format (Rector's Office Research Division, 2020). The research proposal in general contain a full description all the facets of the work and should include following items that need to be essentially included in the writing of a research proposal given by "Centre for Research" Tribhuvan University,

Rector Office, 2020 and UGC Research Guidelines (4th edition, 2017) gives the following components written consistently in any format (APA, MLA, Chicago, Turabian, Vancouver etc) (limiting it to 15-20 pages) as research proposal format are as follows:

Table 2: Research proposal format given by Rector’s office (2020) and UGC (2017)

Rector office’s research proposal format	UGC’s research proposal format
a. Title of the study	a. Title
b. Introduction/background of the study	b. Abstract
c. Statement of the problem	c. Background
d. Purpose of the study/objective of the study	d. Problem statement
e. Review of literature	e. Literature review & research gaps
f. Conceptual/operational definition (if need)	f. Theoretical/conceptual framework
g. Test hypotheses (if need)	g. Conjectures/hypotheses, research questions
h. Methodology/theoretical framework/conceptual framework/limitations: methods of data collection, sampling techniques, data analysis	h. Research objectives
i. Man power planning	i. Study design, methods, tools & data analysis
j. Scheduling of time	j. Expected findings
k. Chapter plan: (indicative)	k. Limitations & delimitations
l. Budgeting/estimating of expenses	l. Ethical/safety issues
m. References and footnotes	m. Organization of the study
n. Appendix/Annex (if need)	n. Gantt chart & detailed budget
	o. References
	p. Association to national priority

Source: Rector Office, 2020 & UGC, 2017.

As the requirement of the study, agencies or different academic institutions develops their own style of research proposal or thesis proposal that describes what the researcher intends to do and how it will be done. It should outline in clear terms the nature and intent of the research. The proposal works as a road map in the journey of research. Master’s Degree Thesis & Proposal Guideline 2020(3rd Edition), Institution of Crisis management study Samarpan Academy has developed format for research proposal or thesis proposal given that can be acceptable thesis proposal with the following elements and also Ranjit

Kumar in 2017 argues that a research proposal should contain the following information about the study that is considered as research proposal are given below:

Table 3: Research proposal format given by Samarpan Academy (2020) & Ranjit Kumar (2017)

Research proposal format of Samarpan academy	Format of research proposal given by Ranjit Kumar
i. Cover page	i. An introduction, including a brief literature review
ii. An overview, clearly stating thesis question and hypothesis (1page)	ii. The theoretical framework
iii. Title page with space for committee members“ approvals”	ii. Conceptual framework
iv. Introduction: Research problem, context, justification of thesis (4-6 pages)	iii. The objectives or research questions
v. Literature review (5-7 pages)	iv. The hypotheses (if applicable)
vi. Methodology (2-3 pages)	v. Study design
vii. Objectives and research questions to be answered (1-2 pages)	vi. The setting of the study
viii. Materials (2-3 pages)	vii. The research instrument
ix. Limitations and ethical issues	viii. The sampling design and sample size
x. Work plan, procedure and outline (2 pages)	ix. The ethical issues
xi. Appendix (if any)	x. The data processing procedures
i. An introduction, including a brief literature review	xi. The proposed chapters of the report
ii. The theoretical framework	xi. The problems and limitations of the study
	xii. The proposed time frame

Source: Samarpan Academy, 2020 & Ranjit Kumar, 2017

A research proposal should communicate the given above contents clearly and specifically in such a way that anyone going through it should be able to undertake all tasks (Kumar, 2017). Universities and other institutions may have different requirements regarding style and content of a research proposal. Requirements may also vary within an institution, from

discipline to discipline or from supervisor to supervisor. There can be some additional specific requirements by some universities or supervisors. The proposal should follow the suggested guidelines and be written in an academic style. It must contain appropriate references in the body of the text and a bibliography at the end.

The other structure of research proposal given by different scholars and institutions has been given below:

Table 4: Format of research proposal given by Damoder (1996) & Kathmandu School of law (2020)

Format of research proposal given by Damoder Gyawali, 1996	Format of research proposal given by Kathmandu School of Law, 2020
i. Identification and definition of a problem	i. Title
ii. Justification for selecting a problem	ii. Abstract/synopsis
iii. Objectives and hypotheses	iii. Aims & objectives
iv. Methodology	iv. Background
v. Limitations of the study	v. Research question(s)
vi. Organization of the study/chapter plan	vi. Methodology
vii. Working schedule	vii. Research plan
viii. Budget estimate	viii. Resource requirements
	ix. Bibliography

Source: Damoder, 1996 & Kathmandu School of Law, 2020.

Different practices of writing the academic proposal have been used in different institutions or universities while submitting the thesis proposal or it is written for achieving the grants. The concern should follow the guidelines given by the institutions for writing up the proposal. The preference and widely acceptable research proposal format under the humanities and social sciences in relation to Tribhuvan University according to the recommendation of the author of this paper is as per the following format:

Table 5: Research proposal format under humanities & social sciences according to the author of this paper

Title page or cover page
Chapter I Introduction 1.1 General background 1.2 Statement of the problem 1.3 Objectives of the study 1.4 Significance of the study 1.5 Delimitations of the study 1.6 Organization of the study
Chapter II Literature Review 2.1 Theoretical review/an overview(in overview both theoretical and empirical review is reviewed) 2.1 Empirical review 2.3 Conceptual framework 2.4 Operational definition (if needed)
Chapter III Methodology 3.1 Introduction of the study area 3.2 Selection of the study area 3.3 Research design 3.4 Nature and sources of data 3.5 Universe, sample size & sampling procedure 3.6 Tools of data collection 3.7 Data analysis 3.8 Ethical issues 3.9 Time line schedule 3.10 Budget estimate

In the format given by the author of this paper, one needs to write proposal separating into three chapters. The first page will be the title page which contains the topic of the proposal mentioning the name of the researcher and to whom the proposal is being submitted clearly stating institution's name or faculty and level or and the date of proposal submission. Then the proposal is categorized into chapters 'Chapter I', 'Chapter II' and 'chapter III' with different subheadings mentioned above. Such type of proposal is about 10 to 15 pages in total.

b. Explanation of the structure/framework of the research proposal

The framework given by different institutions is meant to explain about the structure of the research proposal regarding how the contents are kept in the proposal for the researcher but it is not intended to use as a recipe. The framework should be applied within the uniqueness of each study.

i. Cover page

A cover page is used usually in a formal document. The format is generally provided by the proposal evaluation committee or the funding agency. If no format is provided then a cover page can be created including the following (Morse & Field, 1996):

- i. Title of the proposal
- ii. Name and affiliation of the researcher (principal investigator and co-investigator). The affiliation will include the type of degree as well as the name of the institutions or universities.
- iii. Lines for signatures of researcher and university authorities.
- iv. Contact detail information such as address, phone and fax numbers and email address.

The cover page can be in APA or MLA format or other format according the desire of the institutions. The format of cover page in MLA format is given below:

Name of the University
Title of the essay
Subtitle
Course Name & Number
Professor's Name
Paper Due Date

ii. Abstract

It is a summary of the proposal or it is comprehensive of the proposal to explain the reviewers or evaluators about the project (Morse & Field, 1996). It should include a brief introduction of the research problem as well as research questions, research purpose and objectives tracked by the research design and research method. In general the abstract should be written in about 250 to 300 words long but this may differ according to the committee guidelines or the funding agency. In writing the abstract the structure can be given by putting headings or background, purpose of the study, data source, method, results and conclusions followed by the key words which should also not more than five key words arranged alphabetically and should be placed at the end of abstract.

iii. Introduction

The proposal should really begin with introduction. In writing this introduction, the literature review is the main part that serves as broadening the knowledge base and provides the information on the methods and procedures other people have used in similar situations and tells what works and what does not (Kumar, 2017). The significance and the need of the study should be mentioned and should be made crystal clear at the commencement of the proposal (Sandelowski, 2002.) It is necessary to introduce the question and what it is that the researcher wants to know or understand and explain the interest in the topic in this section (Heath, 1997). While writing the introduction, it should be noted that this section attracts the reader and should be able to persuade him/her the importance of the study. As significance of the study should be mentioned in this section, it should answer the following questions as who has an interest in the field of inquiry. What does the researcher already know about the topic? What has not been answered adequately in previous research and practice? How will this research attach to knowledge, practice and policy in this area or in overall why this research is needed (Burnard, 2004)? Therefore, in introduction section, the brief preface is also given of the topic chosen as proposal writing.

iv. Review of the Literature

A literature review investigates books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated. Literature reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources the researchers have explored while researching a particular topic and to demonstrate to the readers how the research fits within a larger field of study (Arlene, 2014). It is the

information seeking by scanning the literature efficiently, using manual or computerized methods or to identify the materials for finding the unbiased and valid studies so that it helps to identify research topics, establish own arguments, identify research gaps, comparing results with other findings, extending prior studies. It is a piece of thoughtful theoretical prose but not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another but to synthesis and evaluate the various types of published or unpublished and other materials according to the guiding concept of the thesis or research question (Adhikari, 2013). Literature review contains all the relevant written sources to the topic that have been selected. These literatures brought for the study should be cited properly that demonstrates the need for the research study in such a way that it convinces the evaluators or reviewers that the study is valuable (Burns & Grove, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to ask questions while doing literature review as the specific question or problem related to the study so that the review help to define the theory, methodology, policy, qualitative or quantitative research, whether literature review are all covered for the study, it is critically analyzed or not, whether reviewers or reader find it relevant, appropriate or useful. As it is the backbone for the research question and statement problem, one should conduct the literature review properly either to extend the prior studies or to find the gaps in the study.

v. Research problem and research question

When a broad introduction to the area under study is completed, it is necessary to focus on central theme by identifying some of the gaps in the existing body of knowledge and identify some of the main unanswered questions. In this section, the knowledge gained from other studies and the literature about the issues that the researcher is proposing to investigate should be included (Kumar, 2014). Similarly, in this section, the researcher has to answer the question: what is the problem? It is the synthesis of the introduction and literature review or it is diagnosing the problem (Bottorff, 2020). In this section, it is necessary to identify the research problem and questions, there should be link between problem statement and review of literature (Pathak & Pokhrel, 2013). This part in reality should identify the issues that are the basis of the study, identify the main gaps in the existing body of knowledge, raise some of the main research questions that the researchers want to answer through the study, identify what literature explains concerning the research questions, specifying the difference of opinion and develop the rationale for the study to fill the gaps in the existing body of knowledge (Kumar, 2014). The researcher can develop research problem as for example the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) in rural areas increased from 24 percent in 1996 to 42 percent in 2006 but then stalled between 2006 and 2011. A different pattern was observed in urban areas: the CPR increased from 45 percent in 1996 to 56 percent in 2001 but then declined to 50 percent in 2011. Despite the

stalled CPR in rural areas and the decreased CPR in urban areas, the TFR has continued to decline in both: from 2.8 in 1996 to 1.6 in 2011 in urban areas and from 4.8 in 1996 to 2.8 in 2011 in rural areas. The problem question in this example can be “what factors are responsible for the decrement of TFR in rural and urban areas?” despite the CPR in both areas ‘rural and urban’ are stalled and decreased respectively. The possible answer can be the decline in the TFR may be due to the momentum gained in last decade, and if substantial efforts are not put in place now to increase the CPR it is unlikely that this decline will continue. While the problem situation presented is clearly fair in this example, the reasons for the problem are complex. Though the single reason has been given but it is likely many could be stated. In situations such as this, the researcher must devote considerable time and attention to identifying the problem situation.

vi. Research purpose and objectives

The objectives of the study should be clearly stated and specific in nature. The researcher should use the action oriented verbs such as ‘to determine’, ‘to find out’, ‘to analyze’ and ‘to ascertain’ in formulating sub objectives which should be numerically listed. But in qualitative studies the statement of objectives is not as precise as in quantitative studies but should mention an overall objective of the study in qualitative studies (Kumar, 2017). The researcher should explain the goals and research objectives of the study: how to answer the research questions, show the original contributions of the study. Similarly, if the study is concern about the knowledge then the researcher should use the action verbs as to define, to describe, to identify, to indicate, to recognize etc. Similarly, if comprehension then the researcher should use: to assess, to compare, to contrast, to demonstrate, to describe, to differentiate, to discuss, to distinguish, to explain, to interpret, to predict, to understand, etc. If application then the researcher need to use: to apply, to calculate, to examine, to investigate, to measure (quantitative), to utilize, etc. If analysis then the researcher should use: to analyze, to criticize, to identify, to infer, to measure (quantitative), to summarize. Moreover, if it is synthesis then use: to arrange, to collect, to combine, to compose, to construct, to create, to develop, to formulate, to generalize, to integrate, to suggest, etc. In the same way, if it is evaluation use : to appraise, to assess, to compare, to determine, to estimate (quantitative), to evaluate (quantitative), to measure (quantitative), to project (quantitative), to rank, to rate, to recommend, to revise, to select, to test. The researcher can formulate the general and specific objectives taking into account the actions to be performed and using the most suitable verbs to state specific actions such as to identify, to describe, to analyze, to demonstrate etc. (Lamichhane, 2013).

The research purpose is the clear statement of the definite goal of the study whereas indicating what the researcher wants to achieve in the study. The research purpose is logically obtained from the research problem that directs the development of the study (Burns & Grove, 2005). Objective is required to provide focus of the research, describe the results that the researcher intends to achieve, dictate the type of research methodology to be adopted and these objectives should be measureable. On the basis of the research problem, the objectives should follow existence such as does X exist or is there such a thing, description and classification such as what is X like and what are its characteristics, what are the components that make X? Relationship such as is there an association between X and Y? Descriptive comparative such as is group X different from group Y? Causality: such as does X cause changes in Y? (Suwal, 2013). In short form, the objectives should have link with research problem and with the research questions.

vii. Significance of the study

In this section the researcher should explain why her/his study is important? Similarly, she/he should explain to whom it is important? And what benefits will occur if the concern study will take place? According to Pant 2012, this significance of the study indicates how research will refine, revise or extend existing knowledge in the area under investigation. In this part, the researcher should mention about the worth of the study such as need of the study and its advantages so that policies and recommendation can be incorporated for further studies.

viii. Limitation and delimitations of the study

It describes abstract boundaries which are not under the control of researcher. Generally, the aspects like climatic condition, geographical conditions, financial constraints, administration conditions, report format etc. do not fall under control of researchers. These subjects are known as the limitations of the study. However, in the academic research the delimitations are mentioned in the study and delimitations are defined as those boundaries of the study created by the researcher himself which are under control of researcher (Khatri, 2012). In limitation section, the researcher should describe what research design cannot accomplish due to the scope of the project, limitations of time and resources. It does not mean that one should adopt a whiny and petulant tone and simply acknowledging reality. Moreover, generally most research topics cover areas that are far too multitudinous, multifaceted, complex or inexhaustible to be addressed in a research study of any scope. These are the research directions and research questions suggested by the research topic but are not addressed in the research study. Thus, delimitations address how the study area is narrow down and controlled. Therefore, in delimitations the

target population, specific areas, community, study variables, sample size, tools of data collection are mentioned properly.

ix. Research methodology

This section is very important as it tells the research committee how the researchers plan to handle the research problem. It should contain the sufficient information for the reader to determine the methodology conceptually clear which the guiding principle for writing the methodology is. However, some argue that it should contain sufficient details to implement the study (Wong, 2008). While some argue that each methodological steps should be illustrated to answer every research question or to test hypothesis (Pajares, 2007). All studies contain conjectures about the world and knowledge that notifies the queries that is no research is value free. Therefore, it is necessary to explain about the research paradigm in the proposal that can certainly influence the design and conducting of the research. World views and paradigms imply how we observe the world and go for conduction the research (Creswell & Planoclark, 2007) whereas Guba and Lincoln in 2007 argue that the paradigm is a basic set of beliefs and assumptions that guide the inquiries. In research methodology, generally, the following topics should be mentioned as research design, study population or universe, sampling procedure and sample size, data collection tools, data collection procedures, analysis and interpretation of data, budget and time schedule (Khatri, 2012).

Research design

In this section the researcher need to convince the reader the overall research design and methods of analysis will correctly address the research problem and to impress upon the reader that the methodology chosen are appropriate for the specific topic (Labaree, 2016). It is necessary to choose the strategy whether to use descriptive, analytical, experimental, and operational or a combination of these depending on number of considerations explaining in relation to the study objectives (Fathalla & Fathalla, 2004). Generally, the nature of the study, structure of the hypotheses, study variables and so on determine the research design (Gay, 1987). A research design is explained as "the set of guidelines and instruction to be followed in addressing the research problem" (Mouton, 1996). It is the plan or the blueprint that the researcher use in conducting research. It is the glue that holds all of the elements of research project together (Trochim, 2008). It is important since it guides the researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting observations and also minimizes the possible errors by maximizing reliability and validity of data. Different scientists and philosophers define research design in various ways on the basis of nature of data, data collection time, nature of the study, relationship of the variables etc. However,

the research designs that have been defined by research statistics of population studies are exploratory, descriptive, developmental, correlation, case study and field study. (Khatri, 2012). Thus, explorative research is used when problems are in a preliminary stage when topic or issue is new and when the data is difficult to collect. Similarly, Best and Khan in 1986 defined a descriptive study as describing and interpreting what is, it is concerned with conditions or relationships that exists, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effect that are evident or trends that are developing. So, descriptive research design is designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning current status of the phenomenon and derive the conclusion from the facts discovered. The research design that focus on past, present and future developmental change to investigate the characteristics of the individual is known as developmental research design. This development research design can be cross sectional and longitudinal study, trend study and cohort study. If the study is aimed at finding out the prevalence of a phenomenon, situation, problem, attitude or issues by taking cross section of the population then it is known as cross sectional study. Furthermore, to determine the pattern of change in relation to time, a longitudinal design is used (Kumar, 2008). If the study is based upon the existence of a common characteristics such as year of birth, graduation or marriage, within a subgroup of a population then it is cohort study. And if the study is concerned to find what has happened in the past, what is happening now and what is likely to happen in the future in a population group is known as trend study (Kumar, 2008). Gay in 1987 defined correlation research design as to determine whether and to what degree in which direction or rate, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variable. A comprehensive study of a social unit be that unit a person, a group, a social institution, a district or a community is called a case study research design whereas Goode and Hatt in 1992 defined field work design as the study of people and their culture in their natural situation.

Study population/universe

Population usually is people in town, region, state or country. However, in statistics term population or universe is the aggregative of objects under any statistical investigation. So, statistical population implies the totality of all units or items under investigation or inquiry (Nepal & Malakar, 2022). Similarly, population implies to all the elements such as individual, objects or substances that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a given universe (Burns & Grove, 2005). Universe denotes a hypothetical infinite set of elements generated by theoretical model. For example if the researcher want to study about the teachers teaching in the college then college teachers are considered as universe and the conclusion drawn from the study is generalized back to the teachers teaching in the college (Malakar, 2020). The researcher in this section should describe the composition

of the population (N) and explain how the researcher select the participants form the total population or universe and gain entry into the research context (Heath, 1997). In general the researcher needs to explain the totality of the population from which the sample is drawn with mentioning the reliable and valid source in this section.

Sampling procedure and sample size

A sample in research study implies to any group on which information is obtained. In another way, a set of measurements taken from a population is known as a sample which is a representative part of the population selected for drawing conclusions regarding population (Malakar, 2020). According to Best and Khan 1998, a sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis whereas Koul in 2009 states that the representative portion of the population is sample. Sampling is the process of selecting any proportion of population or universe as representative of the population or universe. In this section the researcher should mention how observations are made i.e. selecting a sample, how the total sample is made i.e. determining of appropriate sample size, how many observations should be made i.e. collecting the appropriate information from the sample. Thus the researcher in this section needs to mention how the sample is taken from the universe if appropriate needs to apply formula to determine the sample size using different techniques given by Solvin, WHO etc. and needs to explain the sample design for example the researcher has to explain about the sampling techniques of selecting sample whether probability or non-probability sampling techniques and reason of using these techniques.

Data collection tools

In this section the researcher elucidates what she/he is aiming to determine and how the data will be gathered. The whole process of description will rely on the researcher's employment of an inductive and deductive strategy. It is necessary that the researcher should explain the kind of data that will be gathered for example examinations of existing documents, field notes, and internet based data and how these data will be gathered for example interviews, discourse analysis, focus group discussion, case study, participation observation etc. The method must be explained in detail (Heath, 1997). The description must justify each method and how these methods contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon under the study which has been presented.

x. Analysis and interpretation of data

In this section the researcher need to explain the data analysis procedure like coding, sorting etc. and need to give a description of how data reduction and data reconstruction is

planned, organized and retrievable. The data reduction implies the write ups of field notes, transcription procedures and uses of the computer programmes and data reconstruction implies the description of the development of themes, control with existing literature and integration of concepts (Heath, 1997). The researcher needs to explain clearly the use of computer programmes to conduct data analysis like Atlas ti or Nvivo 8 or SPSS or STATA etc. According to Gurung 2013, the type of data and its method of analysis that can be performed is shown in the table below:

Table 6: The type of data with level of measurement and its method of analysis

Type of data	Level of measurement	Example	Method of analysis
Qualitative (categorical)	Nominal (no inherent order in categories)	Religion, ethnicity, occupation	Chi-square test Proportion test
	Ordinal (categories have inherent order)	Job grade, age groups, education	Correlation OLS regression
	Binary (2 categories-special case of above)	Size of household (ratio)	Correlation Logistic/logit/probit regression
Quantitative (interval/ratio)	Discrete (usually whole numbers)	Size of household (ratio)	Correlation\OLS regression
	Continuous (any value in a range)	Temperature °C/°F (no absolute zero (interval) Height, age(ratio)	Correlation \OLS regression

Source: Gurung, 2013.

xi. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations imply the protection of the participations rights, obtaining informed consent and the institutional review process or ethical approval. The researcher must provide the adequate information on each of these aspects like protection of participants’ rights that include the right to self-determination, right to privacy, right to fair treatment and the right to autonomy and confidentially right to fair treatment and the right to protection form discomfort and harm. While considering ethics the researcher is in reality avoiding the conflicts of interest, ensure that the facts and information presented are accurate to the best of the researcher’s knowledge. This code of ethics addresses individual, professional behavior, such as plagiarism and honesty (Hamal, 2013). Sometimes the researcher without having enough time so data and other facts and sometimes made up, or need

more funds for the organization and don't want to hard work involved in gathering the real data or the researcher do not have clear guidelines and procedures make unethical. This can ruin project or loss of funds or reputation (Hamal, 2013). The general principles of research ethics are acceptance of responsibility, conduct of research responsibility of participants and awareness of legislation, provision of information to others and other issues like properly acknowledging the unpublished as well as published work of other scholars etc. These principles should be followed while conducting the research.

xii. Timeline/time schedule

The timeline is the schedule or work plan for the completion of the research (Morse & Field, 1996). In this section the researcher explains the research activities to be completed, predicted length of time and when it will be performed. Often the timeline is presented in table or graph. One can use the Gantt chart. It is a standard tool that can be used by the researcher to structure the timeline of the research project mentioning the definite activities with target dates. In other way, Gantt chart is an overview of tasks or proposed activities and a time frame for the same. The researcher needs to put weeks, days or months at one side and the tasks at the other (<http://www.youtube.com>, 2008). One sample of time schedule and Gantt chart is shown below

Activities		Duration					
		January	February	March	April	May	June
1.	Literature review, questionnaire development, field visit, pretest of questionnaire						
2.	Selection of enumerator, orientation, primary data collection						
3.	Data coding, editing, data analysis						
4.	Preparation and submission of dart report						
5.	Submission of final report						
6.	Dissemination of the research result						

xiii. Budget estimates

The researcher in this section should mention the prediction and cost of all aspects of the research and also the additional allowance for unpredictable disasters, delays and raising costs. According to Morse and Field (1996) in the budget the specific aspects like the

number of participations cannot be predicted as data will be collected until saturation but estimation must be included, recording of data, transcripts of interviews., personnel budget, supplies , travel cost all of these items must kept in the budget with justification. In overall the budget estimates refers the cost involved in conducting the research by the researcher. These costs must be clearly stated with justification. Sample of budget estimates is given below:

S. N	Description	Rate per unit	Total cost (Rs.)
1.	Travel expenses and communication		Rs.20000
2.	Literature review, books, reports, others		Rs.10000
3.	Questionnaire, printing & photocopy		Rs. 8000
4.	Meeting/FGD/		Rs. 15000
5.	Data processing, tabulation & analysis		Rs. 25000
6.	Report production, printing & binding		Rs. 30000
7.	Report dissemination& publication cost		Rs. 10000
8.	Miscellaneous		Rs. 5000
	Total		Rs. 123000

xiv. References

Addressing the research work carried out by different scholars about the subject matter is another important task of the researcher. This is done by mentioning the proper bibliographies of the work in reference section. For web based search include the date of access for the cited website. This work can be done in APA format, MLA format etc. The proposal should end with relevant reference on the subject.

xv. Conclusion

In summing up, in flourishing research proposal the researcher should commune the sound knowledge of the field and method and able to convince the reader. The proposal must contain the noticeable logic from introduction to references. Though different format of proposal has been given by different institutions, it is necessary to follow the format given by the concern authority of doing the research because it is the backbone and main theme of the research. The research proposals reflect the knowledge of researcher so it is the art and science and therefore it should be written to lure the readers and to conform to the requirements of the funding agency (Morse & Field, 1996).This study can guide any beginners who are looking to write the research proposal or who do not have knowledge of research proposal and help in writing up the proposal with in the given format.

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