

EDF65 Literature Review & Research Proposal Directions

1) Introduction

You may choose any quantitative research study related to education or psychology. While not required, I encourage you to propose a quantitative research study related to **your current or future career** that you **might** conduct in relation to your current or future employment, for a master's thesis, or dissertation. You must use a research design that is described in chapters 13, 15, 16, or 17. Your proposal must include the sections and follow the guidelines on the text book - with the exceptions noted below.

I have posted several example research proposals from my previous students. I recommend you review these before you start writing your own research proposal, however, keep in mind that the examples are not perfect and are actual student papers. It is your responsibility to compare the examples to the Research Proposal **Grading Checklists** below **and Rubrics (on the BB)** to see where they went wrong.

You are **not required to carry out the research** that you are proposing as part of this class. Whether you pursue the research in the future is up to you, but you must consider all ethical and **practical** issues and obtain any necessary approvals before doing so.

2) Guidelines

- Your literature review does not need to be exhaustive; however, you must include at least **TEN** relevant **peer-reviewed** articles. At least **SEVEN** of the articles must be **quantitative empirical** studies.
- Do not use exact quote unless you cannot find any other ways to say something. You need to be able to summarize and paraphrase research results, which is an important skill to develop.
- Your data collection methods should use existing instruments that are described in a published reference. The only exceptions should be simple demographic information (e.g., age, gender) or something that can be counted without any subjectivity (e.g., number of days absent, number of computers in the classroom).
- The budget section is to seek funds from your current employer or an external agency. You should also consider the resources available at WM (e.g., physical space and equipment, undergraduate students as participants, the students from the Center for Gifted Education for participants) and your employer, but you should **not** plan on any funds from the university.
- Follow the APA publication manual for writing your proposal.
- Use appropriate APA textual citations and include a list of references at the end of the proposal (see the APA Publication Manual).
- I will give you appropriate feedback for your draft. The earlier you submit your draft, the earlier my feedback will be. I will **not** provide specific feedback on your final paper.

3) Formatting (See the APA manual for specific information)

- Papers should be typed, with double-spacing, Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1" margins, and no spaces between sections.

- Your paper must start with a numbered title page that includes (in order) project/study title, course number & title, your name, your Program, The College of William and Mary, date of submission, my name, and the semester (Fall 2009).
- All pages should have a page number with your last name on the top right corner (NOT APA).
- Your paper must end with a reference list using APA style.

4) Outline

1. Title Page

Project/study title
 Course number & title
 Your name
 Your program & department
 The College of William and Mary
 Date of submission
 My name
 EDF 65 – Research Methods in Education, Fall 2009
 Research Proposal

2. Abstract

3. Introduction

Problem to be Investigated
Purpose of the Study
Significance of the Study

4. Review of the Literature

Theory (if appropriate) and/or Related Studies
Research Questions or Hypotheses
Definition of Terms (if needed) and Variables

5. Method

Description of Participants
Discussion of External Validity Issues
Description of Instruments
Description of Research Design
Procedural Details
Timeline
Discussion of Internal Validity Issues
Data Analysis

6. Results

7. Discussion

Conclusions
Implications

8. Budget

- 9. References
- 10. Appendixes

5) Research Proposal Grading Checklists

Title

- How complete is the title in giving the reader a clear idea of the contents of the article?
- Does the title make clear the population of interest & the major variables?
- Have vague, biasing, and/or emotion-laden terms been avoided?

Abstract (**Less than 120 words on a separate page**)

- Is the problem stated clearly?
- Are the number & type of subjects described?
- Are the major variables described? The measuring instruments used?
- Is the design used identified?
- Are the procedures described in brief?
- Are the major results & conclusions stated?

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

- What is the problem being addresses in this study?
- Is the problem statement clear?
- Is the problem “researchable”?
- Does the problem statement indicate the variables of interest & the specific relationship(s) between those variables were investigated?

Purpose of the Study

- Is the purpose of the study discussed?

Significance of the Study

- Is the educational significance of the problem discussed?
- What is the educational (psychological, administrative, instructional, etc; whatever is appropriate) significance of the problem? Is the significance (importance) clearly discussed? Are you convinced?

Review of the Literature (**No more than 600 words**)

(NOTE: I consider this the most important part of your final proposal. Do not just list of available research or even abstracts of relevant research. You should use the available and appropriate literature, properly cited, to concisely and logically support your research questions or hypothesis.)

- How complete and concise is the literature in relation to the problem?
- From where has the foundation for the study been developed?

- What is the theoretical orientation of the researchers, if theory-based; what is the practical context for the study, if derived from experience or need?
- What background information on the problem is presented? Is it sufficient, appropriate in breadth and depth?
- Is the review of literature comprehensive; are studies recent (within 10 years) and inclusive of disagreeing or contradictory findings?
- Is the review evaluative? Have the references been critically analyzed and the results of various studies compared and contrasted; i.e., is the review more than a series of abstracts or annotations?
- Is the review well organized; does it flow logically?
- Is the language used neutral or biased; does the language and style help or hinder your understanding?
- Are all referenced cited relevant to the problem under investigation? Are all relevant aspects of the study addressed in the review?
- Are the references at least ten empirical sources?
- Does the review conclude with a brief summary of the literature and implications for the problem under investigation?
- Do the implications discussed form an empirical or theoretical rationale for the research questions or hypotheses that follow?

Hypothesis (and or Research Question), Variables, & Operational Definitions

- Do the research questions or hypotheses follow logically from the statement of the problem?
- Are the questions and/or hypotheses stated clearly & specifically?
- Is each hypothesis testable? Is each research question answerable within a school year?
- What are the major variables being studied & how are they operationalized?
- Does each hypothesis state an expected relationship or difference among variables?
- List all of the variables (independent, dependent, confounding, & moderator) & the specific operational definitions.
- How adequate are the operational definitions of each of the variables?
- Are there any major concerns about how the variables were defined?

Methods

Participants

- Describe the participants of the study & how they were selected.
 - Discuss advantages and/or disadvantages of this sample selection.
 - Are the size & major characteristics of the sample described?
- What sampling method was used?
 - Is the method of selecting the sample clearly described?
- Does the sampling allow for generalization to the population of interest
- Is the sample size appropriate for the method of research represented & for generalizability of results?

Discussion of External Validity Issues

- Are all possible issues addressed?

- Are the ways you can control the issues addressed?

Instruments

- What instruments are used in the study? Are relevant validity & reliability issues described?
- Is the rationale given for the selection of each of the instruments & measures used?
 - Is each instrument described in terms of purpose & content?
 - Are administration, scoring & interpretation procedures described?

Design

- Does the design match hypotheses or answer the questions of the study?

Procedures

- Are the procedures described in sufficient detail to permit them to be replicated by another researcher?
- Do the procedures provide sufficient control for internal validity?
- Are any potentially confounding variables that were not able to be controlled for discussed or accounted for?

Timeline

- Does it contain specific dates or time periods?

Discussion of Internal Validity Issues

- Are all possible issues addressed?
- Are the ways you can control the issues addressed?

Data Analysis

- Are the kind of scores (e.g., raw scores, standard scores, standard deviations, average scores, etc.) to be analyzed described?
- Which scores from which instruments are compared to which scores from which instruments?
- Are the plans for analysis appropriate for the research questions?

Results

(NOTE: In your proposal, you will only need to state a paragraph of expected results; you do not need to do the actual research)

- Are the descriptive & inferential statistics clearly presented in the study?
 - Are the data described in tables, figures, the text, or all of these? Do tables & text complement each other? Are the tables & figures, if any, well organized & easy to understand?
- What are the major results? How thoroughly did the researcher present the tests of significance & probability levels in relation to the hypotheses being tested?
 - Is there evidence that the researcher considered any assumptions required for the statistical tests used?

Discussion

(NOTE: In your proposal, you need to discuss what your expected results mean and what you want to suggest to the educational leaders, principals, school board members, parents, etc.)

Conclusions

- Are the results presented in relation to the hypotheses?
- Is each result discussed in terms of its agreement or disagreement with previous research results?
- Are generalizations consistent with results?

Implications

- Are theoretical & practical implications of the findings discussed?
- Has the author addressed practical as well as statistical significance?

Budget

- Are all possible costs for the research reported?

References

- Do the references follow the APA Style?
- Do the references include more than 7 appropriate articles?

Appendices

- Do they contain all needed information that is not included in the text?