
HRM 7610

**Writing up the proposal
and report (Day 4 PM)**

Key criteria

- Objectivity
- Accuracy
- Clarity

Content of a HR Research Proposal

- Title page
- Summary or abstract
- Content page
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Conceptual model (if applicable)
- Hypotheses (if applicable)
- Research methodology
- Research plan
- Limitations
- References
- Appendices

Title page

- Title of your report
- Name(s) of researcher(s)
- Date of submission
- Other information required by MHRM Programme

Summary or Abstract

- A **short** overview that reveals:
 - Issue being studied
 - Specific research question(s)
 - Research design
 - **Key findings**
 - **Conclusion**
- Usually less than 150 words

Introduction



**Very
Important!**

- To inform the readers what to expect
 - State the broad problem or issue investigated
 - Why is it important for the organization of study
 - Rationale, focus on puzzles, contradictions and gaps
 - Specify the research problem or questions
 - Highlight contributions of the study
 - Indicate structure or organization of the remaining chapters

My own example (of poor writing)

- 1. When I read your new introduction, to be totally frank, I initially thought to myself, “After all the feedback these authors received about theoretical contribution, they made no progress.” However, when I read your responses to the editor and reviewers, I felt like you actually did a better job of explaining your contribution there than you did in the introduction. For example, in the response document, you talked about how one contribution you make to the mindfulness literature is to explain how mindfulness affects creativity, but in the introduction to the paper you just say that your contribution was to introduce a mediator and a moderator. I realize that if we abstract away from the language used you could say that these two things are the same thing, and you would be right. However, language matters. Saying that you found a mediator and a moderator is just a re-statement of your findings. Discussing how the cognitive processes of problem-framing, search, and idea generating grow out of a greater non-judgmental awareness of the present tells us the meaning of your findings.

Elements of a good introduction

- Capture the attention of the audience
- Provide an overview of the work in this area
- Ensure the contributions of your study are clear
- Get audience hooked and wanting to continue reading your work

Theoretical framework and literature review

- Clear statement and description of theory underpinning study
- Indicate how theory informed your choice of variables and accounts for their interrelationships
- Conclude the discussion with a figure that depicts the pattern of interrelationships
- Review literature on specific relationships
- Provide theoretical and empirical arguments to warrant hypotheses
- Statement of hypotheses

Writing a “Good” Literature Review

- Don't throw everything you read into the literature review
 - *It's not important to let readers know what you know; it is important to let readers know what they should know.*
 - Include the 'key' ones (theory, topic)
 - Considers recent & high-quality literature
 - Recognize all relevant and important areas of literature

Why?

- To show how much you know about the area
- To establish the grounding (research gaps) for your own research

Writing a “Good” Literature Review

- Actual writing...
 - Must be clear and thorough
 - Not only summarize, but also draw proper inferences (but not to overstate, misinterpret, misapply, or selectively report)
 - Good organization
 - Be humble but critical...
 - Find a high-quality paper that has good writing, mimic the writing style (not replicate!)

Conceptual Model & Hypotheses Development (if applicable)

- Graphical presentation of your model of study
- Hypotheses development
 - Conceptual arguments
 - Hypotheses

Methodology

- Explain how the issue will be investigated
- Describe the procedures to be undertaken
 - Research setting
 - Sample
 - Data collection process
 - Ethical issues of concern and how to deal with them
 - Confidentiality
 - Voluntary participation, etc.

Methodology

- Explain how the issue will be investigated
- Describe the procedures to be undertaken
 - Measures (if applicable)
 - Describe as clearly as possible the measures used, their sources and sample items
 - Where possible provide evidence of psychometric properties
 - Analytical strategy
 - What statistical techniques were used to test hypotheses and why?
 - In the proposal, specify the potential logistical problems you may encounter

Results

- Presents results in clear and succinct manner
- Start with tests to ascertain distinctiveness of variables
- Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among study variables
- Present results of tests of hypotheses and indicate whether hypotheses were supported or not
- Interpret results and not just repeat what is in the tables
- Present results in tabular format neatly titled and numbered

Discussion

- Summarize key or most salient findings
- Theoretical implications
 - Focus should be on interpreting your findings in the context of the literature
 - Indicate what new insights they provide in terms of our understanding of issues investigated
- Practical implications
 - What can managers and their organizations learn from your findings OR how do your findings inform the practice of management?

Discussion

- Limitations of the study and future research directions
 - Don't just provide a laundry list of limitations. Explain how they might have compromised your findings.
 - Future research directions must clearly stem from your findings and explain why the problem deserves study.

- Conclusion
 - No more than a paragraph. Briefly restate main research findings and the central message readers can take away from your study. How does the world look different now?

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- Let's read some examples.
 - Chang et al. in press. IJHRM.

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- For the proposal, also include **Research Plan** (e.g., schedule, budget, resources)
 - References
 - use APA format
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
 - Appendices (e.g., cover letter, questionnaires, interview schedules)
 - Be aware of copyrights of published measures

The examiner's perspective

■ Introduction

- Is the story interesting-conceptualization of research problem and establishing connections with the literature is important.
- Are the objectives clearly stated?
- What is the theory that underpins the study and is it sound?

■ Methodology

■ Is the method reasonable?

- does it match research objectives
- do the measures adequately capture the essence of the constructs or variables?
- are the statistical techniques or data analysis techniques appropriate?

The examiner's perspective

■ Results

- ❑ are the results clearly presented?
- ❑ are the results appropriately interpreted?
- ❑ are the results related to the hypotheses tested?

■ Discussion

- ❑ does author demonstrate awareness of the main findings of the study?
- ❑ are these findings interpreted in the context of the literature?
- ❑ does the author highlight new insights derived from findings?
- ❑ does author demonstrate awareness of the practical implications of findings?
- ❑ does author show awareness of the limitations of the study?

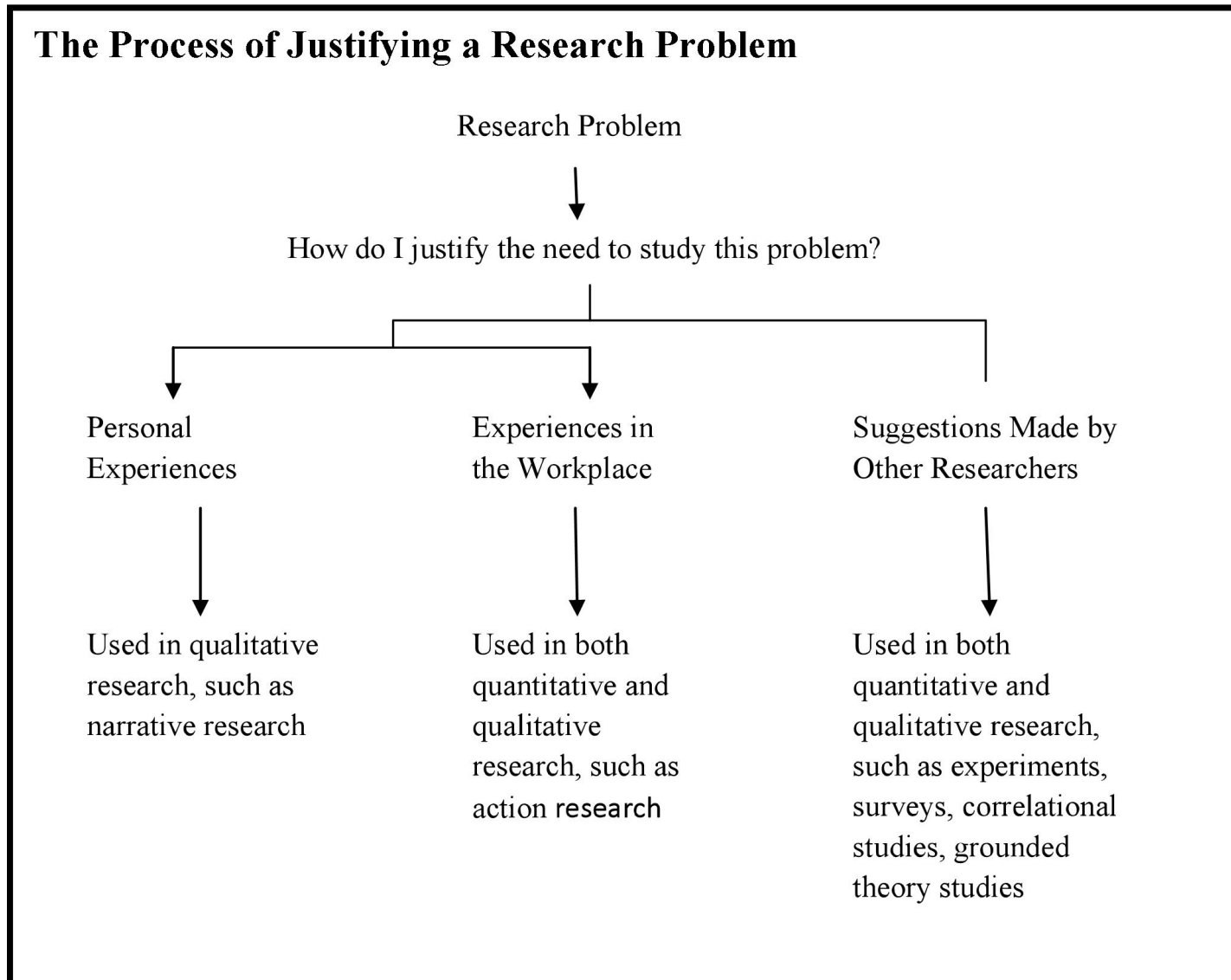
■ Writing

- ❑ is the writing coherent?
- ❑ any evidence of plagiarism and/or dishonesty?

Group research project – some guidelines

- Where does one start?
 - What is the specific controversy or issue that I need to address?
 - Why is this problem important?
 - How will my study add to what we already know about this problem?
 - Who will benefit from what I learn about this problem?

Process of justifying a research problem



Characteristics of a quality research topic

- The research is developed from a sound theoretical base.
 - The research is of interest to both the sponsor and the researcher.
 - The research problem is well defined and the research questions and objectives that flow from it are specific and possible to address through a rigorous research design.
 - Resource requirements in terms of time, finance and data access are well understood early in the research process.
 - The research is expected to make a contribution to knowledge independently of the orientation of the findings. This is particularly important for academic theses and dissertations.
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