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Research Proposal, Research Project, Thesis and Dissertation Writing Format

Introduction (Please Read before you begin your Research Study)

All over the world, the fundamentals of writing a research proposal, research project, thesis and dissertation are largely the same. What may change is the format, because you will find that different schools, and even different departments within the same school, will have different formats for doing their academic papers.

Before you embark on your research study, the important thing to do is to confirm from your supervisor or department the correct format for your research proposal, research project, thesis and dissertation.

The following is the standard format that comprises of all the required chapters and sections. Align the sections to what your school or department requires.

Format

a. Preliminary Pages:

- i. **Title Page:** - Should contain your research title or topic; your name, your admission or registration number; your school's preamble that is in the form of - A Research Proposal/Project/Thesis/Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfilment for the Award of Degree in...; the month and year.
- ii. **Declaration:** - Contains the declaration that the document you are presenting is your original work and that you have not copied it from elsewhere, and that you have not submitted it to any other academic institution for any award or certification.
- iii. **Acknowledgement:** - written in paragraph form mentioning the people and organization who have played key roles in enabling you to complete the research study.
- iv. **Dedication:** - Written in paragraph form mentioning the people or organizations you are dedicating your research project to.

- v. **Table of Contents:** - It is automatically generated after you have completed all your chapters in the document, and formatted the document headings that you would like to appear in the Table of Content. It is not manually written.
- vi. **List of Figures:** - It is automatically generated after you have completed all your diagrams in the document, and captioned them. It is not manually written.
- vii. **List of Tables:** - It is automatically generated after you have completed all your tables in the document, and captioned them. It is not manually written.
- viii. **Abstract:** - It is a summary of all the major sections of your research study document, giving a summary of each section. When a reader goes through your Abstract, they should be able to know all the major details of your study from the first chapter to the last. To quickly and easily generate a proper Abstract for your research study, visit projectsandthesis.com, proceed to the 'Generate Chapters' page, then to the 'Generate Abstract' page, fill in the required details and click on 'Generate' button to have your Abstract generated for free with all the required details according to your research document.

b. Chapter 1 - Introduction

This is the introductory chapter to your study, and should explain to the reader: what your study is about; why your study is relevant; what is happening around the world and locally as regards your study subject; what gaps are there in relation to your study subject and how will your study address the gaps; what are the objectives of your study; which questions will your research study answer; or what assumptions (hypotheses) will your study confirm or negate; and what is the scope of your study. The chapter has the following sections:

1.1 Background of the Study: - Explain the history and give the situational audit of your study subject. Give this explanation beginning with a global perspective, then regional perspective, and lastly your country perspective. You should also talk briefly about previous studies related to your study subject, what they found out, and gaps they presented that your study will address. Lastly, if your study is based on a Case Study, have a section that explain the history and function the organization or the area, and justify why it is an appropriate case study for your research.

1.2 Statement of the Problem: - This is sometimes called the Problem Statement. This is where you will indicate what the actual problem is on the ground, and why this is the case, what is being done about the problem currently but it's not working, who

is the problem affecting and how is it affecting them, explain why the identified problem is significant and why it warrants attention, identify any gaps in the current literature and knowledge, hence justify need to carry out this study by having the last sentence in the statement of the problem beginning like, ‘Therefore, this study seeks to

1.3 Objectives: - This section is subdivided into two sections: General Objective that presents the study title as an objective beginning with the word ‘To...’; and Specific Objectives that present the independent variables used in the study. It is important to note that the specific objectives are drawn from both the independent and dependent variable. By reading the specific objectives, the reader should be able to tell all the variables in your study. The specific objectives are listed in Roman numbers. You can have any number of specific objectives, although most supervisors prefer you to give three objectives. Having helped hundreds of students successfully complete their research projects, thesis and dissertations, I strongly advice you to have between two and four specific objectives unless instructed otherwise by your supervisor. The more specific objectives you have, the more variables you'll have in your study, therefore the longer your document will be, and therefore the more work you will be required to do.

1.4 Research Questions/Research Hypotheses: - Research questions are the questions that your study will seek to answer in relation to your study subject. Research hypotheses are the assumptions that your study will seek to either confirm, or negate. In this section, you list the questions that your study will seek to answer. They are drawn from, and are linked to, your specific objectives. If you have three specific objectives, you should have three corresponding research questions/hypotheses. It is important to note that you should either use research questions, or research hypotheses - you cannot use both. The research questions or research hypotheses are also listed in Roman numbers.

1.5 Scope of the Study: - This is the section that talks about how far your study will go in terms of geographical coverage, content reach, and time taken. You will therefore talk about the geographical area that your study will cover, what content your study will seek to cover, how much time your entire research study is likely to take, I terms of months or years.

1.6 Significance of the Study: - Just as the sub-title suggests, here you will be required to explain why your study is important, by linking its importance to the

people or organizations it will affect. You will have sentences that begin like, 'This study will help policy makers...'

1.7 Justification of the Study: - Many schools/departments will not require you to have this section, but if it is required, this is where you will explain why your research study is important. And just like the Significance of the Study section, the explanation should be linked to the beneficiaries.

Word and Title Format for Chapter 1: The chapter title should have H1 formatting in the font and spacing prescribed by your school. The subtitles in the chapter should have H2 formatting.

To quickly and easily generate a proper Chapter one for your research study, visit projectsandthesis.com, proceed to the 'Generate Chapters' page, then to the 'Generate Chapter One' page, fill in the required details and click on 'Generate' button to have your chapter one generated for free with all the required details according to your research title.

c. Chapter Two - Literature Review

This second chapter will have the following arrangement unless otherwise directed by your school or supervisor:

2.1 Empirical Review: - In this chapter, you will be required to document previous studies by other researchers in your field that you have consulted as you carry out your study.

2.2 Research Gaps: - This is done so as to establish what is already researched and known on your study subject, and therefore derive a gap that you intend to fill with your study. The section where you analyze past research studies is called Empirical Review.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: - In this chapter you will also document the theories that your study will be founded on. Before you, many researchers have studied various subjects in your field, and have come up with statements that attempt to explain behavior(s) of people and other living and non-living things. These explanatory statements are termed as theories, and are academically recognized as standards. From the Empirical Review earlier described, you should be able to explain theories that affect your study, and your study will therefore seek to analyze these theories by confirming them, or disputing them based on the findings from your research.

2.4 Conceptual Framework: - Your chapter two will also have a Conceptual Framework, which is a text and diagrammatic description of your study's variables and how the variables relate with each other. Your research will therefore seek to show whether the relation is direct or indirect. Having said that, your chapter two should have the following subheadings:

Word and Title Format for Chapter 2: The chapter title should have H1 formatting in the font and spacing prescribed by your school. The subtitles in the chapter should have H2 formatting.

To quickly and easily generate a proper Chapter two for your research study, visit projectsandthesis.com, proceed to the 'Generate Chapters' page, then to the 'Generate Chapter Two' page, fill in the required details and click on 'Generate' button to have your chapter two generated for free with all the required details according to your research title.

d. Chapter Three - Research Methodology

This chapter is sometimes called Research Methods. In this chapter, you will be required to have the following sections unless otherwise directed by your school or supervisor:

3.1 Research Design: - What research design you will adopt. The research design tells the reader what structure and components your methodology will have.

3.2 Study Area: - This section is sometimes not required in some schools since the study area is adequately described in chapter one under the Scope of the Study and in the Background of the Study sections. But if you have it in chapter three, it should describe the place where the study will take place. A map of the area is provided in the Appendix section of your study document.

3.3 Study Population (Target Population): - What will be your target population? You should give an exact, or approximate number of all the people or things that your research will seek an opinion from. This section should end with the information on the target population on a table.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size: - Here you will explain how you derive your sample population from the target population in terms of the formula or the rationale you will use. You will also explain why your choice of method to derive the sample population is the best for your study.

3.5 Data Collection: - What research instruments you will use to collect data (questionnaires, interview schedules, Focus Group Discussions and observation)

3.6 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments: - Explain how you will ensure validity and reliability of the research instruments (usually through a pilot study, or expert analysis). In the case of a pilot study, explain where the pilot study will take place, your sample population and whether the findings of the pilot study will be included in the final study.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation: - In this section, explain how you will analyze the data collected, and how you will present it (using which tools). The research design adopted for your study as explained in 3.1 determines how your data will be analyzed and presented. The two aspects should sync.

3.8 Ethical Consideration: - The last section of the chapter will be the Ethical Consideration where you will be required to explain how you will ensure privacy and safety of respondents' data and information, and highlight the approvals you will seek from relevant bodies and institutions to conduct the study.

From the Methodology chapter, your supervisor will want to see that you have clearly thought out how you will conduct your data collection, and that you have adequately determined your target and sample populations.

Word and Title Format for Chapter 3: The chapter title should have H1 formatting in the font and spacing prescribed by your school. The subtitles in the chapter should have H2 formatting.

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e. Chapter Four - Findings and Discussions

This is the 4th the chapter of your research document, where you present your findings from the research process you have described in chapter 3. This chapter will have the following sections:

4.1 Findings: - In the Findings section, you will first give the demographic characteristics of your data (how many people from your sample returned your research instruments, what was their gender, age, cadre, location...etc), then you will present all the

findings in accordance with your research questions as enumerated in Chapter 1, and you will present them according to the research design as you will have indicated in chapter 3.

4.2 Discussions: - In the Discussions section, you will explain what the findings show in relation to findings from previous studies, and in relation with the theories that your study is grounded on. The Discussion section will also be arranged according to the research objectives/questions. The discussion should seek to answer the research questions, or confirm or deny the research hypotheses.

From the Findings and Discussions chapter, your supervisor will want to see that you have adequately presented your findings according to your research design, and that you have given the findings a holistic discussion in relation to your study objectives, the previous studies conducted, and theories that underpin your study.

Word and Title Format for Chapter 4: The chapter title should have H1 formatting in the font and spacing prescribed by your school. The subtitles in the chapter should have H2 formatting.

To quickly and easily generate a proper chapter four for your research study, visit projectsandthesis.com, proceed to the 'Generate Chapters' page, then to the 'Generate Chapter Four' page, fill in the required details and click on 'Generate' button to have your chapter four generated for free, with all the required details according to your research title.

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f. Chapter Five - Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the 5th and final chapter of your research document. In this chapter, you will document the summary of the findings of your study, conclusions of your study and the resultant recommendations. The chapter will be organized as follows unless otherwise directed by your school or supervisor:

5.1 Summary: - In this section, you give a summary of the findings in your study. This is organized per research question, and this is where you get to understand the purpose of the research questions. In the summary, you will answer the research

questions of your study. If your study had research hypotheses instead of research questions, then you will confirm or negate the research hypotheses in this section.

5.2 Conclusions: - You should conclude your research study by giving direct answers to your research questions, or by confirming or negating the research hypotheses as documented in your chapter one, section 1.4. Therefore, the conclusions sections will be categorized per each study objective.

5.3 Recommendations: - This section is informed by the *Significance of the Study* section from your chapter one. All the people and organizations that you had indicated will be affected by your study need to have recommendations from your study.

From this Conclusion and Recommendations chapter, your supervisor will want to see that you have drawn relevant conclusions from your discussions, and that you have given valid recommendations to all the affected parties as you had described in your *Significance of the Study* section in chapter 1.

Word and Title Format for Chapter 5: The chapter title should have H1 formatting in the font and spacing prescribed by your school. The subtitles in the chapter should have H2 formatting.

To quickly and easily generate a proper chapter five for your research study, visit projectsandthesis.com, proceed to the 'Generate Chapters' page, then to the 'Generate Chapter Five' page, fill in the required details and click on 'Generate' button to have your chapter five generated for free, with all the required details according to your research title.

References

In the reference section, you will be required to list all the references that you have used in your study. They are presented in the format prescribed by you school, department or supervisor.

Appendices

In this section, you will show and attach all supporting material for your study including the questionnaires, interview schedules, and Focus Group Discussion points utilized; any authorization letters sought and given; maps; and pictures.