

How to Write a Research Protocol ?

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Research protocol is a document which describes scientific planning to conduct research. It is a blue print of research that directs researcher at every stage of research voyage. It talks about, what is the problem chosen for research? Where from the problem arises i.e. Source of research problem with support of a review, how the research problem is to be addressed i.e. methodology.

Contents of Research Protocol

Cover page: Contains title of the research, investigator's name and other details, affiliation, details of supervisor and the like.

Title to the Study:

It is short but inclusive, conveys the gist of research under study using technical details mentioned in the scope of the study. It should give overall idea of research problem under study.

1. Introduction:

Explain in detail the background and context of research issues under consideration.

2. Social or Management Problem:

Here discuss the research problem in detail with the support of literature review. The crux of literature review should be supported in the discussion. On the basis of context and review of literature list down number of questions which are unanswered and still to be addressed to using research for scientific output. The outputs that can be generalize to the population. The entire discussion should pave the way towards finding research gap.

3. Statement of Research Problem:

From amongst the series of questions raised above in social or management problem **grouping on questions on the basis of similarity**. Prioritize these groups of questions. On the backdrop of resources available select an appropriate group of questions for research. Write the justification of selection and depict its importance. The detailing ends with title of research and justification of its suitability.

4. Hypothesis of the Study:

Hypothesis is **answer to the research question(s)** taken for study. Answer to the select category of research question(s) stated above in statement of research problem that are put to test.

5. Objectives of the Study:

These objectives are derived from hypothesis. Statements direct towards collection of data.

6. Scope of the Study:

Need to specify what geography to cover and taken for sampling? (Geographical scope) Which concepts the study revolves around? Are any new concepts under study? (Conceptual scope) Which analytical tools to be used for data analysis and testing of hypothesis? (Analytical scope) What period is to be considered for data collection (Historical/periodic scope) especially applicable to secondary source data? Specific gender focused by research (Biological scope). Scope determines the context of application of research outcome.

7. Importance of the Study:

Specify for whom? and to what extent the study is important to society, industry, organization (s), government and stakeholders. What are the possible outcomes of the study?

8. Research Methodology:

8.1. Research Design: Need to specify the research design adopted either, an Exploratory, descriptive, diagnostic or experimental.

8.2. Data Required: a list of data points require to test hypothesis and to suffice objectives is to be specified in details.

8.3. Data Sources: From a data list mentioned above few data points are to be gathered using secondary data sources and few are to be collected using primary data sources. Mention bifurcated list of data points to be sourced under heading primary data source and secondary data source clearly.

8.4. Instrument: Detailed description of data collection instrument used (questionnaire or schedule or observation sheet). Mention nature of schedule i.e. structured/unstructured, codified/non codified, closed ended/open ended. If instrument is structured then what are the structures and their titles. Which questions/variables every structure carries and how it is to be measured. Which scales are used dichotomous, interval scales (Five point likert type scale, seven point scale), ratio scales or mix of it? Open ended, close ended or mix of it.

8.5. Sampling: A justified description of nature of universe and population, probability/non probability method used for selection of samples, size of samples, sampling unit(s), statistical technique used for calculation of sample size, justification for the **representativeness and adequacy of samples.**

8.6. Data Analysis: Details of scheme of data analysis. Statistical tools to be used for data analysis. The descriptive statistical tools, inferential tools and statistics used for hypothesis testing. Any special tools used for model building viz. regression analysis, discriminant analysis, structural equation modeling and the like. Planning on scheme of data presentation. into consideration by researcher.

8.7. Concepts Used: Detailing of concepts around which the research revolves. The new defined concepts or the concepts defined by researcher that formulates base for study. Or the concepts taken

8.8. Pilot Testing: Planning of pilot testing or testings in case of series of pilots. Samples to be handled, reliability and validity analysis. Hypothesis testing. Statistical tools to be applied to pilot testing.

9. Organization of Research Report:

Narration on the articulation of report after completion with the help of different chapters. The description of chapter contents to be given.

Description of Annexure:

Bibliography/References: APA, MLA, Harvard style.

Annexure: Planning of list to be enclosed in the support to main report.

Time Table: Detailed plan of action coupled with time frame. It is to be prepared in table format and carries four columns viz. serial number as first column, second column is period, third column is description of planned work corresponding to period and fourth column is remark/corrections/follow-up.

The documents ends with, Signature with name of research scholar and Signature with name of research supervisor. It also carries the place and date where the document is signed.

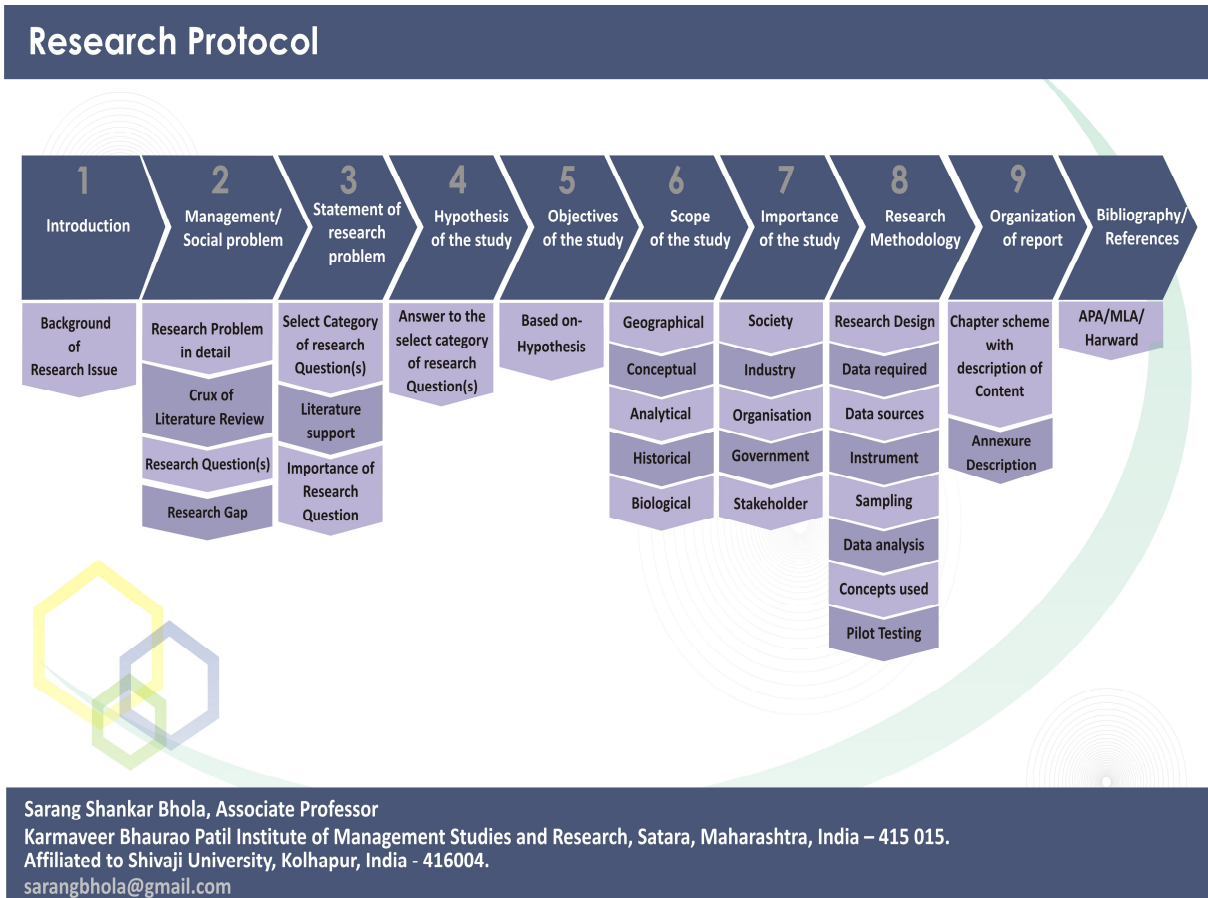
Since the research protocol is a planning it is to be written in future tense and after execution of same, the actual detailed implementation is to be written in present tense as initial chapter of research report which is generally titled as, 'Research Methodology' or 'Introduction to the Study'.

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