

# Key Check Points on Your Draft Research Proposal

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### 1.1 Background of the Study

- The common pattern of discussion in the **background of the study** follows:
  - To discuss key concepts underlying in your research topic
  - To provide key background information about the subject of your study (institutions, organizations, programs...)
  - To provide a brief summary of empirical review
- Make sure that that your discussion in the **Background of the Study** pursues these common structure: discussion of key concepts (use two paragraphs), background information about the subject of your study (institutions, organizations, programs... use two paragraph), and a summary of empirical review (use a page).
- The entire discussion in **Background of the Study** is better not to go beyond two pages.

### 1.2 Statement of the Problem

- The common pattern of discussion in **Statement of the Problem** follows:
  - To discuss the essence of your topic and its relation with greater policy and macro issue
  - To discuss a practical problem, challenges, consequences, societal and organizational problems
  - To provide a critical review of empirical studies, focusing on local studies in your area of research—identify general

limitations and gaps as well as specific limitations in some local studies.

- To provide a brief description of on the purpose of your study
  - To provide a brief explanation on the importance of your study.
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- Make your discussion in this section in consideration of the common discussion points of **Statement of the Problem**
  - The entire discussion in **Statement of the Problem** is better not to go beyond two pages.

### 1.3 General Objective

- In this section write the **overall purpose** of your study using a single statement.

### 1.4 Specific Objectives

- Put the specific objectives forwarded to you in your previous email.

### 1.5 Research Questions

For each of your specific objectives, construct a corresponding research question using the following leading question types

- For objectives regarding assessment, leadership role , effectiveness, practice ... use **To what extent ...**
- For objectives regarding factors.... Use **what are the factors ...**
- For objective regarding challenges .... Use **what are the prevailing challenges...**

### 1.6 Scope of the Study

- Briefly discuss the geographical, thematic, and temporal scope of your study
- A single paragraph is enough to address the **Scope of the Study**

## 1.7 Limitation of the study

- Discuss the potential limitation of your study inherent to the scope, methodology, instrument, and sampling... etc. For instance,
  - Due to the specific geographical scope and selected sample organizations, your study may not be **generalized** to other cases.
  - Due to the limitations in your methodology (including consideration of few variables), your study could be limited to explain the **interrelationship** between your dependent and independent variable.

## 1.8 Significance of the study

- Discuss in brief the potential contributions of your study to (1) policy makers, (2) practitioners and leaders, (3) to the development of empirical facts<sup>1</sup>, (4) to the overall the body of knowledge and literature in your area of study.
- Here identify which objective of your study contributes to which users (policy makers, employees and leaders.. etc)

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Your literature review should be organized as follows:

### 2.1 Theoretical Literature

#### 2.1.1 Concepts and definitions

#### 2.1.2 Theory 1

#### 2.1.3 Theory 2

#### 2.1.4 Theory 3

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<sup>1</sup>Empirical facts are facts, very specific and developed from research findings of numerous quantitative studies with common or similar findings on a specific area.

## 2.2 Review of Related Research

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework of your Study

**Consider the following points in writing the literature review section of your paper**

- In **2.1.1 Concepts and definitions**, provide explanations as well as definitions on the key concepts underlying in your study.
- In **2.1 Theoretical Literature**, select only relevant theories related to your study and briefly discuss their ideas, propositions, and also critically review the limitations of these theories. Identify what are the variables or issue relevant to be further explored in your study. At the end of **Theoretical Literature**, make sure that you identify the concepts and ideas, variables, constructs etc relevant to be explored in your research.
- In **2.2 Review of Related Research**, discuss recent and relevant empirical studies conducted on your topic. Discuss in brief their findings, implication to the topic of your research, methods applied as well as limitations and gaps. Discuss local studies at the end of this section. At the end of **Review of Related Research**, make sure that you identify the concepts and ideas, variables, constructs e.tc relevant to be explored in your research— as well as gaps of existing empirical studies.
- In **2.3 Conceptual Framework of your Study**, provide a figurative representation of your understanding of your topic in general—in particular, the dependent and independent variables, their interrelationship as well as key issues and concepts, dimension etc.. and all these are emerged you're your review of literature.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

- Briefly discuss the general methodological approach applied in existing empirical studies (use up to three sentences).
- Indicate that you use a mixed research approach
- Indicate your research design is a concurrent triangulation design
- Indicate that you use both quantitative and qualitative research methods
- Relate which methods (if quantitative, survey, regression model; if qualitative, interview) address which of your research objectives.

### **3.2 Data Source and Data Collection Instruments**

- Identify the data source ( primary and secondary data source)
- Discuss the data collection instrument you apply to collect primary data . For instance,
  - o A sample survey will be conducted to collect data from employees in public sector organizations
  - o A semi-structured interview will be conducted to generate data from branch managers of Commercial Bank of Ethiopia
- It is important to identify and discuss **key characteristics** of your respondents in survey as well as participants of interview.

### **3.3 Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques**

- Discuss the sample techniques and sample size for each of your data collection instruments
- For survey
  - o Identify the unit of analysis, the population (an estimate), the sampling technique (for many of you, this could be a proportional random sampling, for some of, cluster sampling), the sampling formula...
  - o Show the calculation of your total sample.
  - o Discuss the distribution of your total sample among sample cases. If your sample cases are sub-cities, divide the total sample proportionally among sub-cities.

- o Use Yamane (1967) sampling formula. Make sure that your total sample is much higher than 300 ( up to 400) as it allows you some quantitative analysis and tests
- For interview
  - o Identify your participants and their compositions
  - o Indicate your sampling techniques. Discuss your sampling considerations such as number of issues you explore in your interview, and point of maturation. Indicate that you will sample up to 20 participants.
  - o Discuss how you allocate 20 samples over your participants. Here consider the sample cases as well as the composition of interviewees.

### **3.4 Model Specification**

- Discuss the relevance of your model. Why this model is relevant when compared to other models?
- Show the quantitative model you will apply to address your specific objective no.2. Here use a regression model.
- Provide an operational definition for both the dependent and independent variables

### **3.5 Data Processing and Analysis**

#### **Consider the following points**

- Indicate that you will conduct a Chronbach's alpha test ( and factor analysis)
- Discuss how you analyse your quantitative data **using**
  - o descriptive analysis (mean, frequency, percentage etc)
  - o inferential analysis, including regression model as well as its key diagnostic tests (such as homoscedasticity, heteroscedasticity), and significance tests such as T-test etc
- Discuss how you analyse your interview data

- o Discuss the qualitative analytical techniques you will apply including thematic analysis
- Indicate the data processing software you use such as SPSS, STATA

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability**

- Identify the potential validity and reliability threats of your study
- Discuss the proposed measures you will consider to address and minimize these validity and reliability threats such as:
  - Pilot test
  - Chronbach's alpha test
  - Apply operational definitions
  - Member checking... and others

### **3.7 Informed Consent and Ethical Considerations**

Consider the following points in addressing this section:

- Claim that you will pursue the ethical guidelines and practices of social science research in general and Ethiopia Civil Service University in particular
- Provide explanations to respondents and participants as to the purpose of the study
- Indicate that the participation of respondents will be voluntary
- Indicate that you will avoid harm, deception, and manipulation in times of data collection
- Indicate that you maintain the confidentiality of responses as well as the anonymity of respondents
- Indicate that you will apply anonymous citations
- Discuss how you will acknowledge all your sources and apply proper citation and referencing styles

### **General concerns in your proposal**

- Address the following issues of your research proposal as per the guidelines of your respective department
  - Language clarity
  - Overall proposal structure : Numbering, pagination
  - Citation
  - Reference
- Please read the materials in regard to proposal writing I have sent you in your previous emails.

**Good Luck!**