



The Dissertation

The Public Policy Student Guide

CHAPTER 1: THE INTRODUCTION

Genesis of the Problem

- History of the problem
- Origin of the problem
- Past and Current Standing Conditions

Statement of the Problem

- Research Gap
- Identify with clarity the problem being investigated.

Purpose of the Study

- Must bring clarity.
- What is the aim of the study?.

Research Questions & Hypothesis

- Must relate to the problem, be focused, concise and testable
- Includes the Hypothesis

Significance of the Study

- Includes the definition of terms.
- Importance of the study
- Make contributions to the literature.

Logic Model

- Graphically and Schematically summarize the problem.
- Demonstrates the knowledge and understanding the researcher possesses in addressing the problem

Organization of the Study

- Indicates the remainder of the chapters.

Definition of Terms

- Define terms as they relate to this project.

GENESIS OR BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

This section discusses the history of the problem, the origin of the problem, its past and current standing or conditions . Successes and failures recorded in addressing the problem. What is the current standing of the problem to be investigated? Citations are required to support the factual presentation of the problem and issues surrounding the problem. Based on the successes or failure of the problem as presented, the researcher indicates what aspect of the problem the researcher plans to address or investigate. This paragraph leads to the statement of the problem. Usually, ten pages or less or more should suffice to discuss the origin of the problem depending on the nature of the problem. The genesis must relate to the topic of the paper.

THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

– which should include the gap in research after discussing the status of the problem in the genesis. This should lead to the statement of the problem. This paragraph must identify with clarity what the problem is that is being investigated. The statement of the problem must be stated with clarity so that anybody reading the paper must understand what is the problem that is being investigated – with no ambiguity. It could be a sentence or a paragraph- whatever it takes to bring out the clarity.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

– like the statement of the problem, must bring clarity in declaring the purpose/s of the study. What are/is the aim of the study? State with clarity and preciseness the purpose – for example, the purpose of the study is to investigate, to analyze, to compare, to synthesize, to evaluate, to explain a phenomenon, etc. The purpose must be amenable to analysis with data.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions must relate to the problem, and be focused, concise and must be amenable to testing. There must be data to test the questions (see examples below. Any research question that can be answered with one or two sentences is not a good research question. Again, research questions must be clear and focused; the research questions must be amenable to data collection for evaluation or analysis, must be amenable to empirical testing. See examples:

HYPOTHESIS

A Hypothesis is a statement or a proportion that expresses a relation between two or more variable that are measurable or capable of being operationalized.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

EXAMPLE I

Research Questions:

Why was Government Street overrun by chickens for the second time last year? This question is not focused or precise and can be easily answered in one or two sentences.

Revised:

What are some of the environmental factors in Baton Rouge in 2019 that might have caused the chickens to cross Government Street in Baton Rouge? It is precise, focused and can be analyzed using environmental data

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESIS

EXAMPLE II

Research Questions:

Why are social net networking sites harmful? This question is unfocused, not precise. It also has taken the position that net workings are harmful.

Revised:

How are online users experiencing or addressing privacy issues on such social networking sites as Facebook and Twitter?

Hypothesis:

H_0 : {Null}. Users of the networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are more likely to support regulation of the networking sites to safeguard privacy, abuses, false harmful propaganda to harm users and individuals and the public.

H_1 : [Alternative]. Users of the networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are not likely to support regulation of the networking sites to safeguard privacy, abuses, false harmful propaganda to harm users and individuals and the public.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

EXAMPLE III

Research Questions:

Are females smarter than males? This is not a good research question; how will intelligence be measured? It is not focused or precise.

Revised:

Do females aged 17-34 score higher than males aged 17-34 on the WAIS? [WAIS is a standardized intelligence test]. It is precise and amenable to data collection.

HYPOTHESIS EXAMPLE IV

Hypothesis:

H_0 : [Null]. Are males aged 25-40 more likely to be promoted to managerial positions than females aged 25-40 because of intelligence, education, skills, and gender roles.

H_1 : [Alternative]. There will be no difference amongst males and females aged 25-40 in promotion to managerial positions based on intelligence, education, skills, and gender roles.

Finally, as you consider the kind of questions/problems you wish to address or research on, it should aim to accomplish one of these four goals:

- a) Define or measure a fact or gather facts about a specific phenomenon
- b) Match facts and theory
- c) Evaluate and compare two theories, models, or hypothesis/ programs or policies
- d) Affirm that a certain method is more effective than other methods

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY AND DEFINITION OF TERMS** if any. What is the importance of the study? Will it make any contributions to the literature? Sometimes the significance may be stated after the study has been completed.

THE LOGIC MODEL

- The Logic Model is simply a clean graphic presentation tool that provides the reader with a clean picture – graphically/schematically - summary of the problem, events, variables and order of sequence, relationships that will be considered in addressing the problem. The variables, events, steps, input, related to the problem and the expected outcome. Construct the logic model to reflect a clean summary of what you plan to do. Build your model to fit the problem. A good logic model demonstrates the knowledge and understanding the researcher possesses in addressing the problem.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

simply indicates what the rest of the chapters will address or contain, for example, chapter one is the introduction, chapter two deals with the – theoretical framework if it stands alone, chapter three deals with the literature review, chapter four is about the methodology, data, and analysis, and chapter five deals with the summary, findings, and conclusion. The organization heading indicates how the paper will be organized and marks the end of chapter one.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The steps are focused on using theory-driven and emphasizing on the relation of a theory to a selected topic. You are advised to explore theories being used in completed dissertations, doctoral studies, encyclopedias, other literatures, and handbooks. This chapter may stand alone or combined with the literature review. Apply the steps below.

The steps are as follows:

1. Identify your key concepts and the key terms from your problem statement and research questions. Policy frameworks that have been used.
2. List the constructs and variables that might be relevant to your study.
3. Have a list of theories and take notes on how and where they were used.
4. Review past related literature to find theories related to your research work.
5. Select a theory.
6. Test whether the theory fits your study.
7. Search out good seminal works related to those theories to learn how they were been used.
8. Show how your research fits in the selected theory.
9. You may combine different theories in a new and unique way, evaluating and explaining its relevance.
10. Use the theory as a basis for interpreting your research results.
11. Identify and learn more about relevant theories.

CHAPTER III: THE RELEVANT RELATED LITERATURE

Note the term related/relevant literature. The review must be related to the problem being investigated. This section addresses the historical, past, the current issues, theories related to the problem being investigated. It may begin broadly – may include international, national perspectives before zeroing in or narrowing the narrative to the specific problem. Past and present methodologies related to the study and gaps in the literature may be reviewed and critiqued. Again, note the emphasis on related and relevant literature. It must relate to the topic or problem being investigated. The issues and the gaps discussed usually provide rich fodder for developing or improving the hypothesis in relation to the problem identified in the statement of the problem. It's very important that applicants demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the literature. The literature review is expected to be detailed and extensive. While there are no minimum number of pages required, a ten-page literature review at the doctoral level is however unacceptable!

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

Usually, it's after the literature review that the hypothesis is developed, and the variables identified. It may however be developed in chapter one.

Here, you are expected to discuss **fully the steps** to be taken to answer the questions and hypothesis posed. It may be necessary to restate the questions/hypothesis. In this chapter, the method and the explanation of the model that may be used are stated. Depending on the method, if an equation/model is involved, the model is clearly stated followed with the model specification, and the operationalization of the variable in the hypothesis clearly stated. The method and the steps that will be involved must be clearly presented. If a survey is used, the instrument is attached as an appendix. [You are expected to research deeply on different research methodologies].

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This Section may include the following:

- a. Purpose of the study restated
- b. Hypotheses restated, the research questions must be answered
- c. Discussion of findings to support or refute the hypotheses/questions including tables and figures

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This section may include the following:

- a. Significance of the study and limitations. Now that the study has been conducted and analyzed this is the proper place to state contributions of the study.
- b. Finally summarize, discuss the implications of the findings, and provide suggestions for future research

Title Page

Copyright Page (optional)

Abstract

Dedication

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Vita

