
Writing a good proposal

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When is a proposal good?

- When it facilitates the reviewer/evaluator's work
 - A compelling summary
 - Being credible
 - Being consistent
 - Being clear and concise



A compelling summary (1/2)

“X is an important phenomenon/problem. Previous research showed Y and Z about X. My research investigates also the role of W”

Why is X important?

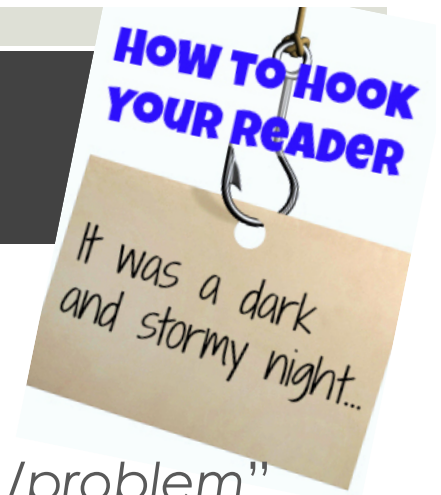
Who cares?

Why do we need to investigate W?

So what?



A compelling summary (2/2)



- **Articulating the study significance**

“X is an **important** European **widespread** phenomenon/problem”

- **Situating the study in literature**

“Extant literature states Y and Z about X.”

- **Problematizing literature to make space for contribution**

“**However**, knowing Y and Z **is not enough**. X is a **more complicated** phenomenon. **It involves also** W, which **we know less about**”

- **Foreshadowing how the study addresses problematisation**

“ **I aim to** investigate W. To reach this aim I shall address the following **research question**... Relying on **an innovative approach**, I shall achieve the following **outcomes**.... This will **impact** on our understanding of X in the multiple ways: ...”

BEING CREDIBLE (1/2)

□ State of the art

- Knowledge of all relevant perspectives on the research subject
- **Up-to-date** knowledge of the research subject
 - “*Recent research (e.g. Mr Scholar, 1980) shows that..*”

□ Methodology

- Literature based indication of the inquiry strategy.
 - “*To address my research question I will conduct some interviews*”
 - “*To address my research question I shall adopt inductive case study research as inquiry strategy (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007).*”
- Indication of data sources and and data analysis techniques
 - “*I shall collect data relying on three sources: interviews, archival sources and observations...I shall apply grounded theory techniques to data analysis*”
- Novel methods and techniques
 - Which ones? why? What makes them new?

BEING CREDIBLE (2/2)

- You have a plan
 - “*I shall*” sounds better than “*I might*” or “*I could*” or “*I would like*”

Avoid adjectives like “*some*” and ending a sentence with “*and so on*” “*and the like*”
 - Specific and detailed description of the activities in your plan

“*I will take some training on Project Management*”

“*I shall take the (Name of the Course) delivered by (department/professors) to improve my skills to work under time pressure*”

BEING CONSISTENT

- Link your objectives to methods and outcomes and timetable

“To improve our understanding of the role of W in explaining X, I shall apply (research design you planned to apply)... After data analysis at month N, I shall be able to reach (e.g. outcome M)”

- Justify every sentence

“I shall rely on multiple data sources in order to increase the validity of my research and to achieve a more comprehensive portrait of W and its role in explaining X (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Creswell, 2012)”

- Deliver what you promised in the summary!



BEING CLEAR AND CONCISE

- Using sub-sections

2 Methodology. 2.1 Inquiry strategy, 2.2 Data collection 2.3 Data analysis

- Relying on graphs and tables

- Using **short** sentences and expressing one aspect per sentence

“The project will gain a better understanding of diversity, as it manifests itself across the identified communities and social networks, gaining insights which use languages, community groupings and networks, “tribes”, and the bridges or divides which become manifest, and which will be used to form the strategies for intervention”

- Using the active form

“I shall conduct exploratory interviews” vs. “Exploratory interviews will be conducted”

- Respecting page limits

**Get started & Good luck with
your application!!!**



Thank you for your attention!

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