

## GUIDELINES FOR WRITING YOUR SYNOPSIS/CONCEPT PAPER

As one of the requirements, you should write and present a short summary to describe your intended thesis research. This will tell the reader why it is imperative carry out your research. It also helps you to spot out shortcomings early so that you move on a clear road map and save you from spending energy in vain. Organize your concept paper around the following subheads: *Research Area; Research Problem; Research question; Significance of the Research; Methodology; Limitations/Delimitations; References.* (Not more 5 pages excluding references).

Here are the details:

1. **Research Area:** Describe your **research area** using statistical data and what is already known or written about the issue of your consideration. Use an inverted triangle (*from general to specific*) in describing your research area. Citations are a must (2pp).
2. **Research Problem:** Describe your research problem with documentation of evidence arriving at the gap that you want to fill with your own research. It is important to connect your research problem with existing literature (1page).
3. **Research Question:** Write a **one sentence** research question that you seek to answer. What is not known that you want to make known to the reader? (One to three lines)
4. **Significance of the Study:** Demonstrate why it is significant to answer this question. Whys is it worth your time, energy and the resources you want to spend? Who will benefit from the answers to the problem? (One paragraph)
5. **Methodology:** Describe how you plan to answer this question (1page). In your description, include the following:
  - a. What kind of research will this be (qualitative, quantitative or other) and what data are you planning to gather to answer the question at hand?
  - b. How will you analyze these data?
  - c. Justify why your method is suitable in answering the question.
  - d. What ethical issues might be on your way and how will you address them?
6. **Limitations/Delimitations:** Describe the self-imposed parameters. Why are you setting search parameters to your study? What areas will be difficult to get across? Describe the barriers and how to circumnavigate them. What are the weaknesses in your approach? How do you anticipate mitigating these weaknesses to maintain credibility/validity of your results? (One paragraph)
7. **References:** This is an annotated *bibliographical reference* indicating why that reference is important for the study, who are the authors and what contributions do they have in the area of your consideration. ***This should be authors who are critically known to have credible contribution to the area of your research. Your annotation should describe their contribution. Include only the references that you cite in this concept paper.***

The concept paper should help the reader to understand the area that you want to investigate, and the main research question you want to address and how you will address it and who will benefit from your efforts. It should clarify why it is important for you to do this at this point in time. This concept paper will be developed into a proposal for submission at the end of this class as one of the class requirements. Bear that in mind as you develop it.