

## Preparing your Concept Paper

A concept paper is a document prepared and written by a researcher before starting their research project with the purpose of explaining **what the study is about, why it is important and the methods that will be used.**

- The Research Concept Paper is completed prior to the research proposal and serves as a development tool and summary of the planned study.
- It is a brief document that may range from as few as 2-3 pages.
- The essential point of the Concept Paper is to **explain the importance of a particular research project.**

The primary aim of a research concept paper is to present convincingly that the proposed project is worth doing.

What are the Main Elements of a Research Concept Paper?

**Title page** — provides a tentative title of the research project. The title should be a stand-alone statement that can fully describe the project by summarizing the main idea.

- The title should concisely identify the variables being investigated and the relationship among those variables (American Psychological Association , 2010).
- Words should serve a useful purpose; avoid words that do not add substance or words that are misleading.

The title of the Concept Paper may become the title of the research project.

**Statement of the Problem** — provides the purpose for the research.

This section introduces:

- the problem under investigation,
- why the researcher wants to investigate this problem, and
- how the research findings may help address the problem.

A brief introduction and review of relevant existing literature published within the subject area and identification of where the gaps in knowledge are. This is particularly important as it guides you in defining the statement of the problem.

As you begin to write the problem statement of your Concept Paper, please take note of the following considerations:

- why the problem is important
- how your study relates to previous work in the field
- how you will link your hypotheses and objectives to theory
- how the hypotheses relate to the research design.

- consider the theoretical and practical implications involved in your research project (APA, 2010). A well-developed, concise, and clear problem statement will lay the foundation for a good and strong concept of your research.

**Key Point: Ensure your research question aligns with the problem statement you defined.**

Preliminary Literature Review — provides identification of major literature that supports and validates the topic.

For the Concept Paper, you should connect your research project to a theoretical model reported in the literature. “The most successful research projects have been based on the research of predecessors”.

The Concept Paper provides enough of a description of previous research which suggests that more information is needed.

**Goal Statement** — provides a broad or abstract intention, including the research goals and objectives.

Research Questions — provides a preliminary view of the questions the researchers will investigate.

Questions are based on theory, past research, and need. These questions will direct to the research methodology.

For the Concept Paper, the methodology is simplified or summarized, serving as a general outline of the methods that will be employed.

- The specific data outputs that you plan to capture.

Timeline — provides a range of time for completion of the project, highlighting key elements for each stage of the project.

### **Statement of the significance of the study**

- An explanation why your research is important and impactful.

Significance of the study may be part of the concluding paragraph that **emphasize the statement of the problem, clarifies how your research will address the problem and explains who will benefit from your research and how.**