

General instructions

This concept paper draft is derived from proposal-writing guidelines of the School of Humanities downloadable from http://www.ku.ac.ke/schools/graduate/images/stories/docs/humanities_guidelines.pdf. and also guidelines from the graduate school.

Content of concept paper

1. Demonstrate concisely the:

- (i) “what” (broad definition of research issue/problem) – background and problem statement (**maximum 3 pages**)
- (ii) “where” (location of research problem) – (**Study area**) must have a map (**covers 1 page**), brief description of the study area, and justification of the choice of the study area (**covers 1 page**).
- (iii) “why” (overview justification of proposed study) - justification, brief literature review of related studies, expected output (**maximum 2 page**) and
- (iv) “how” (general explanation of research methodology) – general objective, and specific objectives, research questions, and hypothesis, methods [study design, sample size, research instruments, conceptual framework, data analysis for achieving each specific objective – (**maximum 3 pages**).

2. The concept paper **should not exceed 10 pages double-spaced (excluding the initial pages in roman numerals and references)**. However, students are advised to consult potential supervisors and lecturers specialized in the area proposed for research). Only after the concept paper has been approved by the relevant lecturers in the Department should the student submit it for presentation.

3. All concept papers will be submitted to the seminar coordinator in two steps. Firstly, a concept paper will be submitted as a digital copy to check for **plagiarism (must have less than 20% similarity index)**. If the concept passes the plagiarism stage, then a hard copy will be submitted for format check.

Presentation format

1) Typing

- i) Should be typed on font 12 (Times New Roman) on A4 size paper, double spaced and on one side of the paper.
- ii) A 50mm margin should be left on the left side of the paper and a 25mm on the right side of the paper.
- iii) Typing should begin 40mm from the top of the paper and should not go beyond 25 mm from the bottom of the page.
- iii) A paragraph should have a least three lines (the topical sentence introducing the argument or thesis in the paragraph; a further discussion, critique of the argument and a concluding sentence. **TWO or ONE SENTENCE PARAGRAPH IS UNACCEPTABLE**).

2) Pagination:

- i) Preliminaries (Title page to Abbreviation/acronyms) should be numbered consecutively in roman numbers lower cases (e.g., i, ii etc). **The page number of title page should not appear.**

- ii) The text (from chapter 1 to Appendixes) shall be numbered consecutively using Arabic numbers; **the page number shall appear in the centre of the upper margin of the page.**
- iii) The candidate should submit a copy of the concept paper to the chair of postgraduate seminar or his/her deputy chair.

3) Oral Presentation

The student should use the POWERPOINT format (not more than 10 slides). It is advisable for the **candidate not to read verbatim powerpoint**, rather he or she should aim at providing a succinct narrative using own notes and reference points as guided by the Chair of the Board.

Note: Use future tense in writing the Concept Paper.

Use of tables and figures

1. No table or figure should occupy more than one page. And each should also fit within the margins of the document.
2. Each table, figure shall have a full caption. The table caption appears at the top of the table while the figure caption appears at the bottom of the table.
3. They should be numbered in sequence and be cited by a number in the text.
4. Figure numbers and titles should appear below specific figures to identify them appropriately.
5. A table which is over-size may be divided so that a portion appears on two pages, which face each other. If and when this method is used, the entire title and footnotes, if any should appear on the top left-hand side of the table.
6. Photographs should be scanned and printed on A4 paper and put on appropriate page (s). Photographs should be labeled as plates and should indicate the date they were taken.

TITLE PAGE

The cover page must have the following components “centred on that page”:

(i) Title...

a) Should not exceed 20 words

b) Be clearly phrased leaving out words, phrases or clauses, which do not enhance the clarity of the title. E.g. A study of, articles such as “the...”, “A...” **NB/** Avoid process-based outcomes such as “understanding”, “Assessment”, “exploring”, “investigating”, “examining”. Instead, use outcome-based verbs such “Identify, Evaluate, determine, etc.”

c) Avoid use of uncommon/unconventional and unnecessary abbreviations, repetitions....

d) Do not begin titles with ambiguous phrases such as “Factors influencing...” Instead, state the actual/specific factors for the particular study e.g....economic, cultural, psychological, social etc.

e) Bring out scope and key objective of the research (include site/locale of study, variables, target population, thus providing guidance on internal consistency of the study).

The box below presents an example of a 20-word research title reflecting points given above:

Relationship between self-efficacy (independent variable) and academic achievement (dependent variables) among Form 4 students (population) in Kiambu County, Kenya (site and locale)

(ii) Student’s name–this should reflect the student’s registration e.g. Kazungu Mwanaisha Kipusa

(iii) Student’s registration number – e.g. E55/... xxxx/2013

(iv) School where student is registered i.e. School of Education

(v) Caption of degree for which proposal is made... i.e. A research proposal submitted in partial/fulfilment of the degree of Master of Education (or Doctor of Philosophy) of ...

(vi) University name –Kenyatta University

(vii) Date (e.g. December, 2014).

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

[TITLE OF THE CONCEPT PAPER]

BY

[NAME of STUDENT]

REG NO:

Signature.....

**A RESEARCH CONCEPT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
GEOGRAPHY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN GEOGRAPHY
(SPECIALIZATION) IN THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL
SCIENCES, KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

Date:

Table of Contents page

This should be organized to match the headings and subheadings and page numbers up to maximum three (3) levels

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Abbreviations and Acronyms page

- (i) This section should be included in the concept paper when applicable
- (ii) The abbreviation and acronyms **should be arranged alphabetically**
- (iii) The abbreviations/acronyms should be **Capitalized and separated from the text by 2 indentations of 5-point each**
- (iv) The corresponding explanatory text should be in Title Case and aligned to the left as illustrated by the examples below:

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

STI: Sexually Transmitted Infection WHO World Health Organisation

LIST OF TABLES/ FIGURES

These should be identified with the chapters on which they are captured.

Numbering should be: Table 1.1, 1.2 or Figure 1.1, 1.2 respectively.

Definition of terms

The terms defined in this section should not be merely dictionary definitions of words, rather they should be terms and concepts used in a particular manner in the document (operational terms), and hence a reader of the document would require these definitions and explanations to follow arguments in the document. Only provide definitions of key terms used in the study that are not used in conventional manner. This section should start on a fresh page.

CHARTER ONE (All chapter numbers should stand alone and use font size14)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND/CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

(Chapter title should read as shown above. It can also be enhanced to read as follows:

“INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY”...]. The title should be centred in the page and placed immediately below the chapter number.)

1.0 Introduction (Every chapter must begin with “Introduction”)

Introduction should highlight key contents of the chapter. Provide concise and sequential details of specific content areas. E.g. this chapter entails XYZ, ABC, theoretical framework based on... etc.

1.1 Background of the Study (Every chapter must begin with “Introduction”)

Provide specific Knowledge gaps that are considered the root of the problem. Specifically it should establish the problem leading to the study, and cast the problem within the larger scholarly literature, discuss deficiencies in the literature about the problem, target an audience, and note the significance of the problem for this audience.

This section must contextualise the research issue and culminate into the research problem statement). It must also:

- Create reader interest in the topic by providing a basis for your research issue and problem.
- Lay the broad foundation for the problem beginning from global perspective narrowing down to regional context then to the country and actual location of the study (e.g., in a precise place in Kenya),
- Frame the study within the larger context of the scholarly literature, underscoring key issues linked to your study issue while reaching for your specific audience.
- Highlight the specific knowledge gaps justify your study problem and which must lead logically to the statement of the problem in an ensuing sub-section.

1.2 Statement of the problem

A problem statement points out the precise gap that exist in the literature, theory, or practice which the particular research will address (other gaps would be pointed out in the literature review chapter).

The statement of the problem must entail a logical argument generated from preceding facts as articulated in the background section

- Always avoid in-text referencing characterized by cut-and-paste from background section
- It should be concise and not exceed 300 words.

It is important in a proposal that the problem stands out immediately after the background so that the reader can easily recognize it without having to meander around unnecessary reading in the sub-section. Avoid the trap of obscure and poorly formulated problems that are masked in extended unfocussed discussions crowded with references and citations.

The problem statement should be precise and focused. It should be direct and very well thought out such that it does not leave questions in the mind of the reader about the nature and direction of the intended study. You should provide the following details:

- i) Explain what is not known about the problem.
- ii) Why does the problem matter?
- iii) Provide documentation that this is actually a problem (available results, findings, statistics, etc. from other studies or Available literature that shows that this is a needed area of inquiry). Remember: statistics are always convincing.
- iv) Details of any related theories: - make sure to cite or refer to what others have accomplished relative to your research. Beware of stating that you are the only

person who has ever proposed such a project. Even the most brilliant and innovative concepts are based on the work of others from related fields.

- v) Your opening paragraph MUST capture the community needs you have identified while also stimulating the reader to continue reading your work.
- vi) Explain the problem that exists in the environment under study (study area), and how by conducting this research, this problem will be effectively solved. A problem is a statement, not a question. However, a good problem can be restated in one or more ways to produce one or more research questions. A problem can be something to be explained, to be further understood, to be addressed, unpacked, etc. Characteristics of a good problem: - Should state the concepts to be related clearly and unambiguously and whose solution should be feasible.

Remember: The simple fact that no one may have looked at this problem is not sufficient justification. Avoid justification based on your own conveniences (e.g., place of birth, language, costs, work station, or personal experience). A justification is a scientifically defensible statement that demonstrates a need for research (inadequacy of knowledge or techniques for solving the problem at hand), and the suitability to pursue the study in the site chosen.

1.4 Justification of the study (Rationale)

- Mention the beneficiaries and how they may benefit from the findings of the study.
- Also targeting particular audience, explain how the study adds to the scholarly research literature in the field, and why the study will improve policy or available information. Describe the anticipated benefits/output and who will benefit. What you expect to add to science from when your research is completed.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives should be clearly stated and should be achievable. *An objective is a statement of measurable outcomes that relate to the goal. An objective includes “who, what, and when” information. It is not a statement about “how”.*

1.5.1 General Objective

- The purpose statement should provide a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall goal of the study.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

- Should be directly linked to the study variables as indicated in the title.
- They should be SMART- Specific/Specific, Measurable, Attainable/Achievable, Realistic, Time bound.
- **Should be outcome based verbs** such “Identify, define, relate, describe, determine, review, justify, indicate, distinguish, etc.” and unless for clearly stated purpose try based on specific types of qualitative studies, it is important to **avoid process-based outcomes** such as “understand”, “explore”, “investigate”, “examine”
- Exploratory studies may use process based verbs because they are mainly qualitative in nature.

1.6 Research questions and or Research Hypotheses

1.6.1 Questions

They should stem from objectives (creatively and not necessarily in a cut-and-paste fashion)

They should not be stated in a leading form that elicits yes/no response (e.g.,...questions that start with “is there normally...” would often elicit a yes/no response).

1.6.2 Hypothesis (dictated by nature of the study as explained below)

Hypotheses are usually presented as directional declarations of relationships between variables

- While a research question poses a relationship between two or more variables but phrases the relationship as a question; a hypothesis represents a declarative statement of the relations between two or more variables (Kerlinger, 1979; Krathwohl, 1988). For example, compare “how does labeling of students influence academic performance?” with (e.g. “there is no relationship between positive reinforcement and academic performance”).
- Deciding whether to use questions or hypotheses depends on factors such as the purpose of the study, the nature of the design and methodology, and the audience of the research (at times even the taste and preference of committee members, particularly the Chair).

1.7 Limitation (these should be explained separately to avoid confusion)

- *Limitation*– this requires identification of potential weaknesses of the study that may be beyond the capability of the researcher to intervene e.g., the nature of self-report, your instruments, and the sample size. The researcher needs to think about threats to internal validity that may have been impossible to avoid or minimize. Hence, it is imperative to explain how you as the researcher intend to overcome such limitations as much as possible.

CHAPTER TWO (Should stand alone and use font size14)

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

(centred)

2.1 Introduction (provide structure of this chapter in line with objectives in Chapter One)

- (i) Use relevant headings developed from the research objectives to guide the structure of this chapter – (creatively -not direct copy-and-paste).
- (ii) Highlight the knowledge you find already existing in relation to the study problem.
- (iii) Bring out what is still not known about this study problem, i.e. the knowledge gaps.
- (iv) Demonstrate evidence of your understanding of current research on the subject under investigation through relevant and logical discussion
- (v) Be systematic and synthetic in style using logical links in the flow of arguments
- (vi) Show clearly which gaps in knowledge with regard to and not excluding methodology, theory, scope and how these link to your proposed study
- (vii) Provide the chapter summary in approximately a page to capture the following:
 - Key knowledge issues,
 - Controversies in literature,
 - Main research gaps and
 - The actual gap(s) that your research will address

2.1. Review of Related Literature

In this section the student should demonstrate evidence of understanding of current research on the subject under investigation, and show clear gaps in knowledge that will be discussed. The review should be consistent with the requirements of the title (internal consistency) and aspects

of the introduction e.g. background of the study. Any other relevant themes should be discussed under this heading.

2.2. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework.

It should provide conceptual view of the study problem. If a certain theory fits the study, it should be clearly discussed and its applications in the study explained.

2.2.1 Theoretical framework

This is a structure derived from existing relevant theorization of key aspects of your study.

Often existing theory/theories provide foundation for the theoretical framework within which to position your research. Hence, it is important to do the following:

- (i) Mention the proponents of the theory or theories to be used
- (ii) Cite the main points emphasized in the theory/theories
- (iii) Support your exposition of the theory/theories by ideas from other experts and your own interpretation;
- (iv) Demonstrate the link of theoretical proposition and the proposed study.

2.2.2 Conceptual framework

This is the researcher's own perception of the problem and how variables operate in influencing each other. The researcher is expected to provide a graphic presentation that is self-explanatory showing how various variables interact and the direction of the outcomes from such interactions.

It ought to be characterized by:

- (i) Original visualization by the researcher or adaptation of an existing model used in a previous study
- (ii) Direction of interactions of variables of study
- (iii) A diagrammatic format (graphic presentation)
- (iv) Brief explanation of the conceptual framework for clarification of the flow.

CHAPTER THREE (Should stand alone and use font size14)

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter highlights methodological details appropriate for the study. *Give an overview of your methodology, how the project will be carried out, and any innovative approaches, techniques, or processes that will be used. Include general timelines for what you hope to accomplish.* The following subheadings are suggested, but not all studies will utilize all the subheadings;

3.1. Introduction: provide structure of the chapter.

3.2. Location of the Study- Describe the physical setting where the study will be undertaken and where applicable, provide relevant maps and diagrams.

(i) state the location of the study and actual sites where research will be conducted,

(ii) Justify the choice of that location, and

(iii) Discuss the characteristics unique to the site that are relevant to the study problem.

Figure 3.1. Map of study area (*A map of the study area helps contextualize your proposed research and sets the scene for your further discussions*).

3.3. Research Design- State and justify the chosen method(s).

(i) State the designs adopted and provide reasons for your choice.

(ii) Link the design to the study topic

3.3.1 Variables/Categories of Analysis- Explain the independent and dependent variables or show the units and categories of analysis for the study.

(i) Explain the Independent and Dependent variables.

(ii) Indicate the scope (coverage) of the study

3.3.2 Research methodology and specific data collection methods

(i) Indicate the overall methodology (e.g., quasi experimental, qualitative, historical etc.)

(ii) Specify the actual data collection methods for the methodology chosen

3.4 Target Population- describe the population, giving figures.

(i) Describe the population from where your research sample will be selected

(ii) Justify the choice of the target population and give figures where appropriate.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

Explain the method of deriving a sample category from the population you identified...e.g. random sampling, purposive, convenient, snowballing....

3.5.2 Sample Size

Give the proportion of the sample in relation to the accessible population .e.g. how many students (girls and boys) from each selected class; how many teachers (heads of departments, class teachers etc.)

- Present the sample size in a table format

3.6 Research Instruments

Explain how field data collection will be done using the specific method/tools/instruments that have been chosen for this activity. This process involves setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials, establishing the protocols for recording information, and setting the data parameters that will best answer the research questions. The research instruments can be for physical phenomena and may involve field experiments and laboratory analysis.

Ensure that instruments linked to objectives and questions to ensure that data is generated for each objective to be achieved and to guide your findings chapter.

3.7 Pre-testing/Piloting Study (where applicable)

Describe how the research instruments will be tested for their worth using pilot sites deliberately selected for the purpose and in view of addressing the following aspects of the study:

3.8 Validity & Reliability (where applicable).

Explain how validity of the instruments will be established.

NB: If using standardized test, quote test and existing reliability levels and demonstrate how these will be attained practically in the research process.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures-

(i) Data analysis can be statistical, laboratory, and geospatial (i.e. employing geostatistical methods such as geographical weighted regressions - e.g., Kriging, Inverse Distance Weighted regressions, Splines etc.).

(ii) Explain the methods that will be applied in analysing the data based on each objective stated (e.g. Atlas ti, NUDI*ST; Chi Square, t-tests, other correlational tests etc.).

(iii) Clarify the methods of analysis of each research question/ hypothesis e.g. State your null hypothesis and indicate statistics used to analyse the hypothesis.

(iv) For non-numerical data indicate the method of thematizing, coding, and indicate questions software used.

(v) Explain how data will be presented after analysis is complete (e.g., in text, tabular, graphic etc.) collecting information, sorting it out into clusters, indicate that the process will be based on data reduction and interpretation, reducing data into patterns, categories or schema.

Mention a plan to represent the information in some form of matrices (array, lists, tables) which show relationships between categories of information, display categories by informants, sites, demographic variables, role ordering and many other possibilities.

3.10 Data Management and Ethical Considerations

Logistical considerations

Explain how you will manage logistical requirements of the research (e.g. various levels of authorisations that include the various procedures of ensuring successfully access into the field)

Ethical considerations

(i) Demonstrate your understanding of research ethics and show how you will observe ethical issues related to researching human subjects (e.g. confidentiality, anonymity, soliciting informed consents among others that capture the considerations you will use to protect human rights of the research subjects/participants and ensuring they suffer no harm from the research process and outputs/outcomes).

References

You must use the current version of the APA system of referencing and include the version in the list of references for your study (Search the www for examples of how to conduct this activity)

All reference items must be accurately and consistently written and acknowledged using correct conventional format of the APA system

- In-text citation should be presented using the same APA system (get examples in current edition on website).

- Ensure italics are used correctly in the right phrase where applicable. (APA does not have underlining, so keenness is required on use of underlines)

Below are a few examples of the APA referencing styles (it is your responsibility to search appropriate usages for your work.)

I. Book

Each reference should include four elements: (1) Author/Editor/Producer (2) Date (3) Title of the work and (4) Publication Information.

Author, A., & Author, B. (Year). *Title of the work*. Place name: Publisher.

Caulcutt, R. (1991). *Statistic in Research and Development* (2nd ed.) London: Chapman & Hall.

2. Edited Book

(a) Letheridge, S. & Cannon, C.R. (eds.) (1980). *Bilingual Education: Teaching English as a Second Language*. New York: Praeger.

3. Periodicals/Journal articles

Items published on a regular basis, such as **journals, magazines** and **newspapers**, are known as serials or periodicals. Include the same elements as for a book, but exclude the publication information and **add the volume, issue and page number(s)** instead.

Each reference should include the following elements: (1) Author (2) Date (3) Title of article (4) Title of Periodical (5) Volume, Issue and Page numbers.

E.g. Author, A., & Author, B. (Year). Article title. *Title of Periodical*, x(x), pp-pp

Horowitz, L. M, Post, D.L French, R.S Wallis, K.D & Siegelman, E.Y. (1981). The prototype as

construct in abnormal psychology: 2 clarifying disagreement in psychiatric judgments. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 90(4), 575-585.

These should be single-spaced and listed alphabetically. For citation within the text the format of author and year of publication is recommended. Whichever style the Department adopts must be internationally recognized and consistently upheld all throughout the document.