

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

EE 469 Seminar in Development Economics

Semester 2/2014

Recap: Research Proposal Components

- Research topic
- Research problem
- Research question/Hypothesis
- Literature review
- Theoretical/conceptual framework
- Methods

Literature Review I

- A survey of studies that have been written about a particular topic, theory, or research question.
- Purpose of literature review (Anderson, 1997):
 - Become familiar with the ‘conversation’ in the area of interest
 - Identify an appropriate research question
 - Find out the nature of previous research and issue related to the research question
 - Find evidence in the academic ‘conversation’ to *establish a need for the proposed research*

Literature Review II

Steps to writing a literature review:

1. ***Gathering sources***

- Focus on the topic
- Read with a purpose: isolate key themes or issues related to your topic

2. ***Evaluating sources:***

- Consider credentials and arguments/evidence of each source
- Compare sources and come up with conclusions and gaps or omissions

Literature Review II

3. *Writing a literature review*

• Introduction

- ✓ Identify topic and its significance
- ✓ Conclusions based on the analysis and synthesis of the literature

• Body

- ✓ Discuss and assess previous works based on *specific organization principles*
 - **Theme**: explain key themes or issues**
 - **Methodology**: discuss studies with different approach
 - **Chronology**: historical changes are central to topic

• Conclusion

- ✓ Summary and how you research will fill the gaps

Literature Review III

To write a good literature, you should:

- Group **similar information** together
- Show the **relationship** between the work of different researchers
 - similarities or differences?
- Indicate the **position** of the work in the research area history
- Move from a **general** discussion of the research area to the more **specific** area that is closer to your research

Source: http://web.pdx.edu/~bertini/pdf/literature_review.pdf

Example: “Bad” literature review

“Previous studies have looked at the issue of ‘...’ Their findings and suggestions are reviewed here.

Author A (xxxx) developed a model to investigate... It was proved that....

Authors B and C (xxxx) studied... Their results suggested that...

Author D (xxxx) conducted experiments.. It showed that...”

Source: Adapted from http://web.pdx.edu/~bertini/pdf/literature_review.pdf (p.3)

Good example: Outline of a literature review on monetary rule and exchange rate (ER) uncertainty:

1. Theoretical literature

- 1) No ER uncertainty
 - I. No ER response
 - II. With ER response
- 2) With ER uncertainty
 - I. No ER response
 - II. With ER response

2. Empirical literature

- 1) Single Equation estimation
 - I. Industrialized country
 - II. Emerging country
- 2) Structural estimation
 - I. Industrialized country
 - II. Emerging country
- 3) Empirical studies about Thailand
 - Chronological order

Exercise & Discussion

- Read a selected article and identify the structure of literature review in that article.
- Identify key themes in the literature that you have reviewed so far or, you think, might be relevant to your research question

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

- Identify tentative generalizations, concepts, or frameworks from past research
 - Provide the rationale for research to be performed
- Use of economic models:
 - Give predictions
 - Provide explanation of cause and effect
 - Use as a basis to develop hypothesis
- Example?

Methodology vs. Methods

- **Methodology**
- Is a way to systematically solve the research problem
- Provides the principles for organizing, planning, designing and conducting research
- Is a part of topic selection
- **Methods**
- Specific details and/or procedures to accomplish a task (i.e. techniques)
- Constitute a part of methodology

Broad Groups of Research Methods

- Experimental vs. descriptive
 - *Experimental*: conduct experiments to manipulate conditions to measure the effect on Y
 - *Descriptive*: obtain data on conditions as they exist
- Quantitative vs. qualitative
 - *Quantitative*: employ statistical techniques e.g. regression, variance analysis, and estimation
 - *Qualitative*: employ interviews and observations
- Positivist vs. postpositivist
 - *Positivist*: identify a question, collect data, formulate hypothesis, and test it empirically
 - *Postpositivist*: allow alternative interpretations and develop alternative theories

Research Methods in Economics

- Theoretical Research
 - Derive equilibrium conditions
 - Use diagrams, equations, or logical statement for theoretical deduction
- Applied Research (use induction)
 - Statistical and econometric analysis
 - Calibration and computations of system of equations
 - Strategic analysis
 - Experimental analysis

References

- Books:

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- Wisker, G. (2008). *The Postgraduate Research Handbook*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

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