RESEARCH HANDBOOK FOR EMERGING RESEARCHERS

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Foreword

Louise Simonsen Aaen

Since 2016 the government of Denmark has been supporting higher education institutions in Myanmar to integrate and develop their capacity to do academic research in the field of human rights. This has been done through a series of capacity strengthening and training interventions, **-** all designed together with Myanmar scholars and based on the needs identified. During Covid-19 and extended lockdowns in Myanmar, many academic researchers took the opportunity to continue to develop their knowledge of research methodology and skills through investigating research questions and development as well as publication of academic articles and research papers in regional and international journals. Several Myanmar scholars emphasized that higher education institutions needed to introduce courses on academic research methods and that the quality of academic research had suffered from lack of knowledge and training on research methods.

Already then, the idea emerged to develop a research handbook – an introduction in English and Burmese that could support new and emerging scholars.

Following, the 1 February 2022 military coup in Myanmar, the political and humanitarian crisis has continued to unfold and despite tremendous hardship this has caused for the majority of the population, academic researchers have continued to stress the importance of enhancing legal and human rights research capacity and worked tirelessly to seize even the smallest of opportunities to engage in academic research.

As Myanmar scholars very much wanted to ensure that less experienced researchers had guidance and support during a difficult time, the development of this handbook commenced in 2021.

The introductory handbook has been developed by Associate Professor, Dr Jonathan Liljeblad together with 7 Myanmar scholars and with the great support of Senior Legal Adviser. All initial training and planning for the handbook development as well as later discussion of the drafts has been carried out online. Scholars have worked independently on chapters and strived to incorporate feedback and suggestions to the drafts.

The introductory handbook is meant to be a living document and will be bolstered in later versions with new ideas and tools as well as be updated based on feedback from Myanmar scholars.

With great admiration and thanks to all Myanmar scholars that co-authored this handbook and equally with thanks and appreciation to Dr Jonathan Liljeblad.

Introduction

Jonathan Liljeblad

The present handbook is intended to be an introduction to research methods, with a specific focus on elements of research methods appropriate for human rights studies in Myanmar. As a result, it is not meant to provide a comprehensive education in the full range of research methods used in scholarly studies, but rather is aimed at summarizing fundamental principles appropriate for Myanmar human rights scholars. In Myanmar, human rights as a subject is taught by Law Departments, and the Law Departments largely conduct theoretical and empirical research conforming to social science approaches involving primary and secondary sources drawn from document review, interviews, and surveys. As a result, in seeking to aid human rights researchers in Myanmar, the following chapters focus on the above aspects, with specific chapters dedicated to research design, research ethics, interview design, survey design, and research paper writing. Each chapter presents core principles reflecting the practices of the larger international scholarly community, but also directs comments on the application of such principles in Myanmar.

Purpose of human rights research

Research in human rights incurs a number of issues specific to the field of human rights, organized around the sensitivity of topics, critical analysis, the purpose of human rights, and the position of human rights relative to the status quo. First, with respect to topics, human rights encompass events and concepts that may be sensitive. As a result, researchers who study human rights topics may encounter controversy. It should be understood, however, that human rights as a field does not have an express purpose of creating controversy, but instead seeks to ensure the freedom to engage the elements of inquiry: freedom of speech, freedom to have an opinion or conscience, freedom to associate with others, and freedom of information. In addition, researchers embody the "spirit of inquiry" held by a global community of scholars, and as a result may conduct research on sensitive topics as a way of expanding knowledge and understanding.

Second, in exercising the "spirit of inquiry" for human rights topics, researchers apply scholarly approaches in critical analysis. Critical analysis involves descriptive components in terms of identifying problems or questions and determining answers regarding "who," "what," "when," "where," "why," and "how." It also involves prescriptive components that formulates theories allowing prediction of future cases. To be effective, critical analysis incurs a need for discussion open to information, which in turn requires space allowing diverse perspectives and transparency in deliberations between them.

Third, research into human rights topics should recognize the larger purpose of human rights, which is to support the promotion of dignity for all human beings through the provision of rights to all individuals and peoples. In doing so, human rights assert norms, which are standards that define appropriate treatment of human beings. As a result, human rights researchers are associated with an ongoing global project dedicated to promoting norms that prescribe appropriate ways for human beings to treat each other. Critical analysis may identify problems and challenges regarding human rights, but it serves the purpose of "constructive criticism" that informs and aids efforts to promote human rights—and its norms—in the world.

Last, the promotion of human rights in the world often means a change in local contexts. In promoting universal norms for human behavior, human rights involve the introduction of universal norms that may differ from the practices and conditions in different places. That means that human rights may challenge the status quo in a given location. That, however, is part of the mission of human rights: to ensure the growth of norms that protect all human beings in the world. As a result, researchers studying human rights issues should understand that as much as their work is not just about critical analysis of human rights but also about critical analysis of the status quo. In essence, research in human rights is exploring the nature of change in support of human rights ideals.

Challenges of doing human rights research in Myanmar

The context of Myanmar poses specific challenges for research on human rights. To begin, Myanmar has due to decades of military rule remained a restricted society. The military always lacked political will to implement human rights and hence implementation has suffered. During this period, not only academics but the general public throughout the country have had very few opportunities to enhance their knowledge of human rights. Hence, Myanmar constitutes a case where the introduction of human rights faces uncertain risks from a status quo that is ignorant or hostile to the values of human rights.

Next, the Myanmar academic education suffers from and has not yet recovered from decades of control and limitations on access to information about human rights and academic research. With the assistance of international aid organizations, human rights training has occurred in Myanmar over several decades, but the number of people who received training constituted only a fraction of the larger population. While there were efforts to incorporate human rights education in Myanmar schools, such efforts only began in the past few years and so have had little time to produce results. Similarly, research methods training has been supported by international aid programs, but it has not been a formal part of training for faculty involved in human rights education, especially in universities. As a consequence, human rights scholars in Myanmar universities are in need of help to build their capacities in areas of both human rights and research methods.

The above challenges are compounded by the current conflict in Myanmar. Since the February 2021 military coup, Myanmar has suffered from an escalation in human rights violations. The instability has forced the departure of international aid programs, preventing further capacity-building work for human rights scholars. The circumstances are difficult, but that means human rights research is now more important than before—human rights is most critical in places that have no human rights, and research is most critical in places where there is no scholarship.

The present handbook

The assembly of chapters in the present handbook seek to fulfill the purpose of human rights research by responding to the above challenges in Myanmar. Together, the chapters function to help human rights researchers in Myanmar by presenting guidelines and advice on fundamental research methods appropriate for Myanmar. Specifically, they focus on elements of research methods most common for scholars exploring human rights issues in

Myanmar, with commentary written by Myanmar scholars who have conducted studies on human rights in Myanmar. Hence, each chapter constitutes the insights of first-hand perspectives, making their insights specific for Myanmar's current context. In essence, the chapters offer advice from human rights scholars with experience in Myanmar to other human rights scholars in Myanmar.

Chapter 1 addresses the topics of research design and research proposals. Both are important, since a research design deals with the planning of a research project and a research proposal presents the research design for review by potential funding sources. Chapter 2 discusses research ethics, which deals with the safety of research participants (e.g., interview participants, survey respondents, document authors, etc.). The safety of research participants is a paramount concern when the research topic deals with sensitive issues—such as human rights. Chapter 3 focuses on interview design, which is a popular qualitative method in research. While there are multiple qualitative methods, the present handbook directs attention to interviews because it is a useful approach to collecting information and because it is relatively easy to use compared to other methods. Chapter 4 centers on survey design, which is a common quantitative method for data collection. The present handbook does not discuss statistical analysis, but instead introduces surveys as a way of gathering data from a population of respondents that is too large for interviews. Surveys are useful in identifying patterns and trends in data collected from a group of people. Chapter 5, presents the basics of writing research papers for scholarly audiences. It should be noted that different scholarly journals and different scholarly conferences have different requirements regarding the format and organization of papers, but they all require common elements. Chapter 5 provides the principles for recognizing those elements, as well as the fundamentals for assembling the necessary elements in a way that is acceptable for most scholarly audiences.

Because the chapters are a handbook, they are intended only as an introduction. More advanced researchers will need to go beyond the contents of this handbook. The contents are given with the spirit of helping to build a foundation of human rights scholarly capacity in Myanmar, and as a result the intention of this handbook is to reach a wider audience of human rights researchers. In focusing on principles, the chapters offer accessibility for anyone in Myanmar seeking to do begin research in human rights. The editors and authors welcome comments from readers to help the handbook improve its progress towards the goals of expanding capacity for human rights research in Myanmar. You can provide your comments through this email (researchguidebook.feedback@gmail.com). The handbook was originally written in English for the international senior scholar to provide sparring on drafts with the Burmese co-authors, but to reach a wider audience, it will be translated into Burmese.

Chapter (1)
Part I
Elements of Designing a Research Project

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the various aspects involved in research. This section shows how to structure research design activities. It will explain the steps involved in conducting research projects, such as choosing research topic, problem, objectives and questions, choosing a research methodology, searching existing literature for ideas, thinking about resources (money, people), and planning the project. In the field of education, a research project is often written by scholars seeking grant funding for a research project. The research design helps to clarify the details of a research project by summarizing the resources, procedures, data, and problem. A research project should contain all the key elements involved in designing a completed research study, with sufficient information that allows readers to assess the validity of your proposed study.

Step.1 Selection of Research Topic or Title

When writing a research project, the first step is to choose a research topic. The research topic identifies what a researcher will write and do for a research project (Lin, 2019). It is important to have a good topic because it will provide a rough idea to begin your research. Firstly, you must have a good topic. Then, you can get a rough idea to get started on your research. Selecting a topic for the research is like finding an address of a location the researcher wants to go (Dayarathna, 2019).

1.1 Title

For a researcher, the title of research should be from a field of special interest to him or her and it must be in accordance with the specified period. The topic must be clear (i.e., it should not be vague or ambiguous), must be completed within the specific time, must be reasonable with the budget plan, and must not be too narrow or too wide in scope (Lin, 2019). A scope that is too narrow will make a project less valuable because it provides too little study, but a scope that is too wide will make a project overwhelming.

Research topics can arise from various sources; sometimes, a researchable topic can be found from the literature review as well as researcher's personal interest. The title of any research project should be as brief as possible and as precise as possible (Fasih, 2010).

1.2 Name of Researcher/Co-Researchers

At the beginning of research proposal, the researcher must state accurately his or her name (name of researcher) and your fellows s (names of co-researcher).

1.3 Affiliation and Date

Each researcher name should be accompanied with an affiliation (the institute that each author belongs to). It is usually listed below the author names, as the "department, university" of the institute each author worked at during the time that the study was conducted. Then, the date is located under the title of the research.

Step.2 Research Problem and Research Question

The researcher should state the research problem, which is the issue that is the focus of the research project. It can be in the form of a question, with the project having a purpose of finding an answer to the question. The researcher should consider these factors as an introduction to the project: 1) the research problem, 2) the topic of study related to that research problem, 3) methods that should be used to analyze the research problem, and 4) importance of research, its significance and the outcomes of the proposed study.

2.1 Introducing the Research Topic

The researcher needs to introduce the research topic at the beginning and explain why it is significant. The researcher may also need to provide some background information about the emergence and evolution of the topic. It should include, especially, "Why is this topic significant to you? Why should others be interested in it?" (Miner & Lynn Miner, 2005). After reading the introduction, readers should not only have an understanding of what the project will do, but they should also be excited about the study's possible outcomes.

2.2 Statement of Research Problem

The first important step of the research process is to define the problem that it is to be answered by the research. This is the most important part of the process, as it provides a focus and direction for the project. "The problem statement describes the context for the study and it also identifies the general analysis approach. It might be defined as the issue that exists in the literature, theory, or practice that leads to a need for the study" (Pajares, 2007). The research problem is similar to setting a destination for a traveler.

The research problem should be understandable to the reader. It should be explained briefly and clearly within the text. It is a necessary part of all proposals.

A good problem statement will answer the question "why does this research need to be conducted?" For conference proposals, the statement of the problem is generally incorporated into the introduction, but, academic proposals for theses or dissertations should have this as a separate section (Pajares, 2007).

If the problem is unclear and poorly defined, the result could be a lot of wasted time and resources used in gathering potentially useless information and data. For assistance in defining a research problem, it is helpful to collect preliminary information from secondary sources such as books, mentors, etc. When the problem is clearly defined, researcher can then begin the next step.

2.3 Research Objectives / Research Questions

After defining the research problem, the researcher needs to solve it with objectives and questions (Lin, 2019. p.58). The research objectives are the specific components of the research problem that the researcher will study in order to answer the overall research problem. It is therefore, important that the objectives are clear and achievable, and that they will directly assist in answering the research problem. These are frequently broad and it is written as a statement regarding an action by using the words, such as "to discover….," "to determine…," "to establish…," etc.

The research question allows the researcher to identify the specific information. Before you can start designing your research, you should already have a clear idea of the research question you want to investigate. The criteria for a good research question vary from one field of study to another. It is helpful to consult with a supervisor and examine examples from other studies to get a sense of the requirements in a field. A good research question should be;

(a) relevant (it must clearly relate to the problems or issues that the project seeks to address).

(b) clear (it should not be ambiguous).

(c) precise ((it should specify what is being investigated).

(d) researchable (the information and sources required to answer the question must exist and you must be able to access them) (Miner & Miner, 2005).

Note: It is important to note that you can change your research question at a later stage if you think that you need to change the words or if you make findings that encourage a different approach to the topic.

2.4 Hypothesis

Research begins with an idea that leads to a question. The topic or question to be investigated is often referred to as the research problem. The researcher needs to give the hypothesis to these questions or problem. The hypothesis is a predictable answer to the research question. The hypothesis is a statement or proposition that can be tested by reference to empirical study. A hypothesis can be proved to be true or false because of empirical research.

2.5 Literature Review & Significance of the Research

This part indicates how your research will clarify, revise and extend the existing knowledge in your study by investigation. Most grant applications, many institutional review board applications, and some journal articles speak directly to issues of research significance (Ryan, 2015, p.154). Research is significant if it contributes new of expands knowledge in existing literature about a topic. The review of the literature provides the background and context for the research problem. It should establish the need for the research and indicate that the writer is knowledgeable about the area (Pajares, 2007).

The literature review enables the researcher to gain an understanding of what is known about the topic. This knowledge can help narrow and demarcate the research topic in a manner specific enough to be explored through the research process and provides basic information about the topic (Ryan, 2015. p.153). The literature review studies key academic works in your field of research, such as books, journal articles, and reports etc. The review should summarize, analyze, and compare the significant works. A literature review for a research project should focus on works that are directly related to your specific topic. The researcher reviews and thinks about "what questions other researchers have asked, what methods they have used, and what is your understanding of their findings and their recommendations". In a project therefore, the literature review is generally brief and to the point, and relevant.

After the literature review, there should be discussion of the effectiveness of the research, "who will it be beneficial to or where would it be effective". For instance, a research project may identify the relation between the anti-corruption and access to justice in the judiciary, and produce knowledge that can apply outside the research topic. This connection will support the judicial sectors to reduce corrupt conduct. The aims of such research would be to support the implementation of policies and rules related to the fighting corruption. It will also help to improve access to justice for all people who suffered violations of their rights in the judiciary.

Step 3. Methodology

After introducing a research problem and providing a literature review, the research should present an effective and reasonable methodology to do the project. The research methodology flows logically from the prior parts of the study design and prescribes specific goals and activities aligned to the study's broader parameters (Ryan, 2015, p.155).

3.1 Project Plan

One of the remaining design activities to carry out is to draw up a plan. This refers both to processing the research project and writing the research report. Planning systematic procedures is especially important in every research, where the researcher needs to precisely define procedures and ensure measurements are reliable and valid. The scope of any investigation is also dependent on several factors such as time, money and human resources available to the researcher. Developing a research plan is important for researchers, who often operate under tight deadlines and budgets.

3.2 Study Time Duration

When preparing a research project, the researcher should consider and present the time duration of the project. Each stage of the project should specify the time required for the completion of that stage. For the process of carrying out the research project, it is not only advisable to draw up a time schedule with deadlines for various ‘products’. It is also important to specify beforehand what activities should lead to these ‘products (Verschuren & Hans, 2010, pp.23-24).

3.3 Methods

After deciding the research problem, the researcher should select a suitable approach (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches) to do the research. The researcher can describe what they plan to do only after a clear direction and boundaries have been set by the research question, literature review, and statement of significance. In this part, the researcher should describe systematically all forms of research design, types of research and questions, methods of data collection, and how to analyze the data collected. In choosing methods, the researcher needs to plan exactly how to use these methods to collect data that are consistent, accurate and unbiased.

3.4 Materials

The next phase is the plan for gathering the research material. A first step of this plan is to define the research population. The research population is the actual segment of reality the researcher would like to study. After that, the researcher should select the resources that will give information about this population. Research resources can be people, objects, situations, media and documents. Then, the researcher needs to decide how to obtain the required information from these resources. Some of the well-known gathering techniques are questionnaires, interviews, observation and content analysis of written and audio-visual documents and media contents.

3.5 Measures and Procedures

This session should explain the steps the researcher will follow to conduct research. The measures should be described with as much detail as possible. This session also includes the methodological steps you will take to answer every question or to test every hypothesis (Pajares, 2007). The researcher should disclose to the reader the sources for data and what efforts the researcher has made to account for them. The researcher should be aware of possible sources of error in research design because there is no such thing as a perfect, error free design. The research should however, anticipate possible sources of error and attempt to overcome them or take them into account in the analysis. The researcher should outline the instruments be used in the study such as surveys, scales, interview protocols, and observation grids.

The next step should discuss sampling of the population. It may be the extent to which the interpretations of the results of the study follow from the study itself and the extent to which results may be generalized to other situations with other people outside of a chosen population. A statement of sampling should detail procedures to obtain informed consent and ensure anonymity or confidentiality.

3.6 Data Analysis

After discussing data collection, the research should describe the analysis of data and reporting of results. In describing data analysis, the research should outline the general plan for collecting the data such as survey procedures, interview and observation procedures. It may include an explicit statement covering the field controls to be employed and a general outline of the time schedule (Pajares, 2007).

The procedures to collect data also vary depending on the research methods and the sources of data. For quantitative data, the researcher should describe what kind of numerical analysis will be applied to the data (e.g., statistical analysis) that is relevant to the research project. For qualitative data, the researcher should describe what kind of information (e.g., personal experiences from interview subjects) is useful for the research project.

3.7 Research Limitation

In designing a research project, the researcher should limit the field of study due to factors such as timeliness and accuracy. It limits the things that are too wide to control by researcher and things that could affect the research (Lin, 2019, p.82). It helps to focus the project by confining work and eliminating issues unrelated to the project.

Step 4. Outcomes

The researcher should conclude the research proposal by stating the expected outcomes regarding arguments and conclusions. The reader will understand that these are projected outcomes based on the extent of research at the time of writing. It is essential, however, that the researcher give the reader a sense of what conclusions may be drawn as well as allow the reader to further assess the significance of the project.

Step 5. References

For this session, the researcher follows any guideline regarding use of references in the text and in the reference list. A research committee or research discipline may require reference formats such as APA, Chicago or MLA.

Step 6. Budget Proposal

When preparing a research project, the researcher must consider cost estimation as part of the operational design. The cost of the project is to be estimated in terms of the expenses of travelling, data processing, stationery and printing, books and journals etc.

Part II

Doing Literature Review

Introduction

A literature review is an essential part of research. It evaluates the gaps in the previous/existing data and identifies how the researcher's findings fills the gaps. By doing literature view, it is possible identify a suitable direction for a research project. To do a literature review, it is necessary to know the research question and main problem of the paper. A literature review can be a review paper. A literature review is a thorough, analytical examination of previously published literature on a particular topic. The main objective of writing a literature review is to evaluate the existing data or results, which can be done through analysis, modelling, classification, comparison and summary. The purpose of a literature review is to help identify a particular research question, useful theoretical or practical approaches to study the research question, and give readers in-depth knowledge and state-of-the-art understanding of the research area (Creative commons [CC], 2021).

1. Structure of review

The structure of review begins with a listing of the different components of a relevant subject. By filtering among these subjects, the researcher identifies a specific area with references for citation.

Some strategies for better results in literature review include the following:

- to focus on the good and bad effects of the topic.
- to take note of the summary of main point of the authors.
- to search the correct ways with impartiality on existing situation.
- to conduct the collection and finding of relative information.
- to decide how to analyse the scholarly articles, journals and books

2. Document Analysis

A researcher must critique previous research published on a topic. A researcher must avoid using ambiguous and indefinite words. Document analysis supports the extension of existing research.

2.1 Scholarly Articles, Journals and Report

First, researchers must read the opinion and recommendation of previous scholars on a topic because it helps to improve understanding of a topic and clarify how to extend the existing scholarship. It helps to define the scope and research title by reviewing previous literature. It is important to use literature published in scholarly journals which use a peer review process. Peer-reviewed journals are more reliable than non-peer-reviewed sources. As a result, a research can make a better assessment about the significance of research by referencing peer-reviewed sources.

2.2 Official Information Factsheets

Official information factsheets are the other way to get reliable sources. Information factsheets often list useful sources on a topic. If researchers cannot easily find other data, information facts or sheets can help in identifying other sources of data.

2.3 E-Books

E-books are also applied as an online legal resource in research. Many e-books can be easily downloaded from open access sources. In Myanmar, you can now seek support for your literature (e-books, academic journals, etc.,) from the Kant-Kaw-Taw Online library (https://kantkawtaw-library.org/). By using Boolean operators ("and, or, and not"), it is possible to find specific information in an e-book. Although each e-book databases have restrictions, researchers can usually access these databases. Researchers easily take notes, summarize and highlight remarks in the e-book file.

2.4 Legal Analysis

It is important to analyse statutes and the implementation of statutes. It is a way to build the better law resources in future. Explanations on how to find and interpret law can help to study the law. The motivation of legal analysis is to understand the exercise of law, and provide critiques of the law.

2.5 International & Domestic Laws

There are different sources for research on international law, international conventions, treaties, international custom, and general principles are the major sources of international law. Judicial decisions and publications from qualified scholars provide supplementary sources. Resolutions of the United Nations reports of Conferences, the work of the International Law Commission (ILC) and International Human Rights Framework are also example sources of international law. Study of these sources supports investigation of norms and concepts of law.

Doctrinal, empirical and comparative legal research take into consideration the effect and impact of law. Comparison of domestic law and international law helps to clarify whether domestic law is consistent with international norms on a particular issue. Domestic law must be studied on what are the provisions of law for current events of the country, how to exercise in the practice and what are necessary to modify.

2.6 Generals Comments or Recommendations

The United Nations human rights treaties committees publish their interpretations of human rights provisions in general comments on treaty provisions, thematic issues or methods of work (Refworld, 2021). General comments often seek to clarify the reporting duties of State parties with respect to certain provisions and suggest approaches to implementing treaty provisions (United Nations Library, 2021). General Comments are valuable contributions to the development and application of international law and also provide guidance with regard to other issues.

General Comments assist non-government stakeholders as well as Governments in understanding treaty provisions and in strengthening national advocacy (International Play Association [IPA], 2021). State parties of International Human Rights Treaties broadly know the interpretation of articles in the general comments. Researcher can understand the state obligations by studying general comment. Those general comments on specific human rights issue can be accessed at the official (https://www.ohchr.org/en/ohchr_homepage) website of the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner.

2.7 States' Reports

States' reports play a significant role in research, and are available in international human rights bodies. Examples include human rights treaty bodies such as the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which is the body for the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In case of Myanmar country reports on women rights implementation to the CEDAW Committee, you can access all the reports through this link. Another example is the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Such United Nations bodies receive state reports that are publicly available from this website.

Conclusion

In doing literature review, the researcher collates research and review papers relevant to research and necessary to further inform the research' problem statement and relevant research gaps. Furthermore, researchers frame the research title, abstract introduction, appendices, detailed methodology and discuss the major findings. The Researcher draws conclusion based on strength and weakness and proposes future perspectives.

Part III
Template of Elements in a Research Proposal

Research Problems

- start from a general problem.
- translate the general problem into specific research questions.
- give the brief information to understand the contest of the research problem.

- address an existing gap in knowledge in the field and lead to further research.
- make a persuasive problem statement to describe the ideal, the reality and the consequence (Bwisp, 2018).

Research Questions

- focus on a specific problem.
- prepare the questions on the issues of a specific problem.
- make sure the research question is neither broad nor narrow.
- be clear and relevant as possible in order to make your points clearer (The Writing Center, 2021).
- identify descriptive, analysis and critical research questions.

Research Objectives

- explain what the project will set as goals that will provide answers to the research questions. (i.e., what kind of answers do we want the project to produce?).
- maximize the benefit of community and minimize the harm and risk.
- explore how to examine the research finding.
- explain what kinds of findings will come from the research.
- guide the performance of research/project and plan for achievement of research outcomes/objects.

Research Methodology

- identify the primary and secondary sources.
- prepare how to collect the data by doing interviews, surveys and/or focus group discussion with key informants, informant, other informants, including experts, and respondent .

- define the sample size which is suitable for ensuring relevant and effective data.
- utilize the ethical research practices.
- study and review the previous scholarly articles, journals and books.
- determine the different data collection method suitable for collecting and analysing the data.
- write the research report.

Research Finding

- interpretation of key findings is essential
- compare and contrast to previous study.
- highlight the strength of each layer of the study.
- discuss unexpected findings.
- summarize hypothesis and purpose of the summary.
- discuss potential future research (The public library for science, 2021).

Project Plan

- propose the tentative time frame of research project.
- need to specify the date submitting the paper.
- prepare the specify the date including for the coverage of editing and publication process.
- draw outline and checklist of research project.
- identify the timeframe for interviewing process.
- arrange the interview schedule, data analysis form, consent form, and ethics template.

Budget Proposal/Budget Plan

- make a list of everything that researcher plan to do in the project.

- apply the grant proposal for research project.
- request the registration fee to present the research paper through virtual webinar and conference.
- calculate the publication and editing process fees.
- estimate the data collection, translation, transportation and accommodation fees.
- justify differences between proposed amounts and real cost.

Tips for Myanmar Researchers

There are some things that people should keep in mind when writing a research proposal. When writing the research proposal, the researcher can encounter challenges, such as difficulties in deciding the topic for research, weak knowledge of methodology, and weak foundation in theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

In the early stages, sometimes the research topic is too broad and not clearly defined. Researchers may have a more refined topic within their mind, but they don’t articulate it well in their proposal. Researchers need to aim for a fairly narrow focus when creating their research topic. It's important not only to have a clear focus for the research, but to articulate it well in the proposal.

Next, researchers will sometimes have knowledge of methodology. They don't know exactly what they're going to do, and they don't have a good plan to do it. They need to have a clear design in mind and should be able to outline their plan in their proposal. For methodology, researchers need to devote attention to consider the work plan or procedure that will be followed for accomplishing the research project.

Moreover, the proposal needs to have a strong theoretical foundation. Sometimes the aims and objectives of the research are not connected to the research questions. Thus, when preparing the proposal, be clear about how they differ and make sure they're all perfectly aligned with each other. In addition, one of the most important challenges that has been faced by researchers is proficiency in English language. Writing in proper English language can improve many research proposals. Also, researchers should follow the suggestions and guidance of their mentors and plan their research projects for a successful proposal.

With respect to literature review, common difficulties include the search for reliable information, systematic analysis of data sources, and locating data results, such issues can be resolved through careful review of literature, but there can be a lot to read. The researcher can improve their efficiency in reading by scheduling daily reading of scholarly materials, keeping a record of database searches, and observing the citations in works the researcher is using. Other useful tips include skimming or surveying material (i.e., do not read every word, but instead look at major arguments). It also improves efficiency to look at the abstract and the initial and concluding sections of an article or chapter, which allows the researcher to understand the general purpose of a paper or chapter without reading the entire work. Do not print a source; it saves space, time, and the environment. Instead, leave other fascinating pieces behind and, if the researcher can, preserve an electronic copy.

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Chapter (2)
Research Ethics: Elements of Ethics Issues in Doing Research with Human Subjects

Introduction

Qualitative socio-legal research can involve human subjects, and as a result requires anticipation of ethical issues in the research design. Research ethics means the principles to protect and promote the rights of researchers and participants in research activities. Research must comply with ethical standards and values. The principles of research ethics require that researchers and others involved in planning and undertaking research do not just collect information, but also promote the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of everyone involved in the research process. The researchers have a responsibility to develop and follow procedures to do no harm, ensure valid consent, maintain confidentiality, and provide due process consistent with the rights of everyone involved in a research project (Dooly, Moore & Vallejo, 2017, p.1).

The conduct of research involving human beings is directed towards advancing human welfare, knowledge, and understanding of the human condition. It may, for example, alleviate human suffering, legalize social or scientific theories, dissipate ignorance, and analyze the policy. Informed consent and seeking consent for the participation of people is the prime responsibility of the researcher. Such research is driven by the desire of a person and may have several benefits for researchers, research participants, particular groups, and the society (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018, p.1).

1. Research Ethics

Ethics does not prescribe a specific set of rules or policies. The general framework of principles for ethical analysis ought to reflect accepted norms and cultural values. The most common identified principle is that researchers should be free to decide for themselves whether to participate or not. Then, the researchers consider how to do a study with the obligation to do good for others and to avoid causing harm to others. Research ethics can be divided into research participant ethics and general ethics. The researcher has primary responsibility and different ethical issues arising at various stages of the research process (Parveen & Showkat, 2017, pp.3-6).

2. Researcher's Obligations

The researchers have obligations during the research process. The obligations include duties to research participants regarding transparency, free and explicit consent, confidentiality, and respect for privacy. In addition, obligations include a duty to do no harm, protect vulnerable groups of people, manage data, and protect the professional community and society. Each is discussed in the subsections below.

2.1 Duty to transparency to research participants

The duty to provide adequate information of the research to the research participants goes together with the duty to obtain free and explicit consent. The researcher must make sure that the participants fully understand the nature and purpose of the research and any possible consequences which the participant may encounter by engaging in the research (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018; The National Committee for Research Ethics in the

Social Sciences and the Humanities [NESH], 2019.). In general, the information must at least cover the research area, the purpose of the research, how the research and its finding are going to be used, how the cost of the research is incurred, and possible risk and consequences of participating in the research. It is important that the information is provided in an effective manner considering the participants' level of knowledge, cultural background, vulnerability, and language. If it is necessary, and interpreter must be used (NESH, 2019).

2.2 Duty to obtain free and explicit consent

Voluntary consent from a research participant is essential. In giving consent, a research participant must be able to exercise free power of choice without the intervention of force, fraud, deceit, duress, constraint, or coercion. Importantly, the research participants must be informed that they are free to withdraw from the research process at any time (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018). Research participants should also understand the meaning of their involvement in research, which means they need to know the purpose of the research and the potential positive or negative impacts of the research upon the research participant (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018); NESH, 2019). In the case of minors, it is necessary to obtain permission from parents or guardian (NESH, 2019). There can be an exception to the requirement of consent in the case of publicly available data. In some research, it is possible to get personal data of research participants from a third party instead of gathering data from the research participants. For example, data can be available from the public domain, including official websites of an international organization or a company. In this situation, the researcher does not have direct physical contact with the research participant and the data available are not sensitive in nature (NESH, 2019). Thus, the participants' freedom and self-determination may remain unviolated even if the requirement of informed consent is not completed before the commencement of the research. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the ethical responsibility of confidentiality exists whether the research data are obtained directly from research participants or through any other third party or other publicly available domain (Canadian Institute of Health Research [CIHR], Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC] & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [SSHRC], 2018)

2.3 Duty of confidentiality

Confidentiality is a fundamental principle and the cornerstone of the relationship between researchers and participants. It is necessary to safeguard against unauthorized disclosure of data regarding research participants. Researchers are informed of relevant confidentiality obligations and restrictions on the use of research data and privacy principles. The researcher must maintain the confidentiality of records and other sensitive information, and must avoid carelessness and negligence. It is necessary to meet the obligation of nondisclosure regarding research participant data because disclosure may cause negative impacts on research participants, their families, and their communities. Therefore, all personal information must be protected, and it is necessary to get permission from research participants before sharing research participant data.

Researchers who use confidential or other sensitive information in a research project must take care in handling it. Information subject to confidentiality includes secret religious or cultural practices, identifiable human medical/ health and personal or data, national security information, and police records. The researchers must ensure that security and privacy with appropriate storage, limited access, arrangements regarding sharing of data and information, and recording in a data management plan (Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, 2019).

2.4 Duty to respect privacy

Respect for privacy means that each participant in the research have the right to be protected against interference and exposure from the others in the research activity (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2018, p.57). Privacy is fundamental for the research participants for their emotional issues as well as in relation to factors such as their bodies, personal information, sexuality, cultural and religious beliefs, political opinions, their personal relationships and communications with others, personal space, and occupancy (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2018, p.58). It is also important that researchers avoid asking questions of intimate matters unrelated to the research project (NESH, 2019) Researchers should not put pressure on research participants. Research participants should have autonomy regarding the time, place, and extent of the information they would share or withhold. (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018). Researcher should make sure that the research is carried out with careful consideration of personal integrity, privacy, responsible use, and storage of personal data (NESH, 2019). If it is necessary, the data collected should be anonymized (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2018, p.59). If the data collected is identifiable, the researcher has the responsibility to restrict the re-use of the data for another research project (NESH, 2019, p.10).

2.5 Responsibility to avoid harm to participants

While scientific research is meant for the good of the society, there are risks of physical and mental harm to research participants depending on the research and methodology. Harm may be either direct or indirect and, in some cases, it may have long-term consequences (Ulrich, 2017). Human rights research is less likely to cause direct physical harm since they do not involve any experimental work like medical and natural science research (NESH, 2019, p.12; Ulrich, 2017). However, there can be direct mental harm since they usually involve inquiry and interviews with individuals or group of people whose rights are allegedly violated. While doing interviews and inquiries, participants may repeat their traumatic personal encounter or recall any other undesirable things of their experiences (Ulrich, 2017, p. 200). Therefore, they may be in an embarrassing, stressful, and mentally hurtful situation while participating in the research (Ulrich, 2017, p. 200).

In areas of conflict or government repression, human rights activities may be seen as having a detrimental impact on those in power research (Ulrich, 2017, p. 199). Under such circumstances, researchers have greater responsibility to safeguard the security of the research participants by ensuring the confidentiality of research data collected from them. Ulrich, 2017, pp. 199-200). For this reason, researchers are responsible to follow ethical standards at every stage of the research project. In some cases, ethical responsibility of the research may remain long after finishing the research since there is possibility of reusing the data of a particular project in another subsequent project (CIHR, NSERC & SSHRC, 2018).

2.6 Vulnerable groups of people

Vulnerable individuals include elders, the sick, and mentally ill, and children (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018). They can also include groups that experience discrimination based on factors such as race, ethnicity, indigenous status, nationality, gender, language, or sexual orientation. They are generally not able to defend their interests when participating in the research. It is possible that they do not want to be the subject of the research since they do not want to expose themselves to general public in an undesirable way (NESH, 2019, p.21). They are entitled to be protected against abuse, discrimination, and exploitation in course of the research (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018). When the research involves communicating with such groups of people, the use of ordinary procedure to receive their consent or obtaining the information from them will not be ethically sufficient for the researcher (NESH, 2019). Thus, it is necessary for the researcher to use special procedures to communicate the information of the research with them and to receive their consent to protect their interests (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018).

2.7 Responsible data management

Researchers must adhere related to the management of data and information. A data management plan should be developed as early as possible in the research process and should be clear from the beginning of a research project. Data management involves practices that maintain the security of data. Research data can include Freedom of Information requests, and any information that is delivered will be provided in an understandable format and state (Australian Research Council and Universities Australia, 2019, pp.4-6).

2.8 Responsibility towards professional community and society

Researchers also owe ethical responsibility towards their own professional community. Researchers should always conduct research in compliance with good scientific practice (Ulrich, 2017, p.213). Research should contribute to the benefits of the society by enhancing knowledge and understanding (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018). Academic freedom is important for researchers so that they enjoy freedom to inquire and disseminate their research findings (Canterbury Christ Church University, 2018; NESH, 2019). At the same time, researchers bear the responsibility to conduct their research with honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, and openness (Nolan Committee, 2014). Universities and research institution have responsibility to ensure that their students and researchers are provided with guidelines on integrity standards (NESH, 2019).

2.9 Plagiarism

To avoid plagiarism is a fundamental ethical consideration and part of good scientific practice of a good researcher (Ulrich, 2017, p.213). Plagiarism is "presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement" (University of Oxford, 2022). It is a severe case of academic misconduct because it violates the integrity of scientific research by lacking truthfulness, originality, humility and collegiality (NESH, 2019). Since plagiarism can seriously damage the reputation of the researcher and the research institution as well as the credibility of the research, (NESH, 2019) many universities around the world have provided referencing guideline for the students and researchers to prevent plagiarism. Students and researchers must avoid plagiarism by comply with good citation practices such as paraphrasing, using quotation and by giving proper credit to the others' works (Arizona State University, 2022).

Conclusion

In doing research involving human subjects, researchers owe ethical responsibility towards the research participants, to its own professional community and to the society at large. In research with human subjects, there are risks of direct and indirect harm to the research participants depending on the research methodology and research area engaging in. Therefore, the researchers

need to uphold ethical standards at each stage of research project to prevent harms to the research participants as well as himself.

Tips for Myanmar Researchers

- Do not just collect information. A research project should also promote the rights of both researchers and research participants, and should prevent harm to them. Avoid asking questions unrelated to the research project.
- Ethics are more than specific set of rules or policies. They are ultimately about norms and values to prevent harm.
- Be aware of vulnerable groups of people and take care to use special procedures that give them additional safety. In the case of minors, it is necessary to obtain permission from parents or guardian.
- Participants need to fully understand the nature and purpose of the research, and also need to understand risk and consequences of participating in the research.
- All personal information must be protected. Maintain confidentiality, and get permission from research participants before sharing research participant data.
- Research should provide benefits to the society.
- Avoid plagiarism.

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Annexed : Sample written consent form

Title of Study

Principal Investigator

Name -

Department -

Address -

Phone -

Email -

Purpose of Study

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

(Briefly describe purpose of Study).

Confidentiality

The participants' data will keep until the project end and will be destroyed after that. All the data collected by the researcher would not be used outside except for this study. The respondents can decide whether they want to have their real or pseudo names appear in the paper.

Consent

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that the information will be used exclusively for the purpose of this research. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. (One copy for the participant/one copy for the researcher).

Participant's Signature ______________________________

Date__________

Investigator's signature_____________________________

Date __________

Chapter (3)
Qualitative Methods: Interview Design – basics of writing interview questions & conducting interviews

1. Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Qualitative research, is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., relating to quality or variety. Such type of research is typically descriptive and harder to analyze than quantitative data. Qualitative research involves looking in-depth at non-numerical data (Mishra & Alok, 2017, p.3). Interviews are a way of gathering non-numerical data. Interviews can complement the other qualitative sources such as document review and participant-observer methods. This chapter focuses on the interview methods, because they are 1) a common research tool which 2) allows researchers to gather information on subjective perspectives of people who have experienced a situation at the center of a research project. Interviews, however, must be done which ensure they gather information useful to a researcher's project. The following sections give a summary of the issues that the researchers basically must consider in designing interviews that strengthen analysis.

2. Interview Types and Methods

2.1 Types of Interviews

The following types of interviews are generally applied by the researchers for conducting qualitative research.

Informal, conversational interview

In an informal interview, no specific questions need to be formally scripted though certain themes or topic may be prepared in advance. Nonetheless, "actual flow of conversation may depend upon the responses of the individual respondent" (Lane & Berg, 2017, p.69). Questions are freely opened and should be adapted as possible to the respondent's context and preferences. When exploring a topic in an informal interview, it is the best way to follow upon what the respondent might want to say by encouraging him/her to lead the conversation.

Standardized, open-ended interview

Standardized interviews are designed to elicit information using a set of predetermined or planned questions that are anticipated to produce the respondents' thoughts, opinions, and attitudes about study-related issues. Therefore, the researchers need to ask the respondents questions as exactly as planned ones. In asking questions, the same and identical open-ended questions are asked to all respondents, and as a result, "this approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analyzed and compared" (Lane & Berg, 2017, p.68). In a study where two or more researchers are working together but separately conducting in the data collection process, the standardized interview method may be useful to facilitate the data analysis.

General interview guide approach

To ensure all relevant topics are covered and questions are asked in an open and direct way, the researchers need to prepare a basic checklist for interviewing. It will be helpful with a guide and thereby questions are to be constructed in a way that the respondents can think more deeply about the phenomenon or topic being explored. By using a guide, "the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee and the interviewer is still free to explore, probe and ask questions of interest" (Roberts, 2020, p. 3192). Researchers are refrain from putting their personal interests upon the experience of the respondents. Nevertheless, "interview guides can be useful but must be used with caution" (Seidman, 2006, p. 92).

2.2 Interview Methods

In qualitative interviews, the researchers generally conduct face-to-face interviews with participants, and/or interviews participants by telephone or by email, or engages in focus group interviews. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2019, p. 181).

Face- to- Face (FtF) Interviews

Face- to- Face interviews are conducted by "synchronous communication in time and place" (Opdenakker, 2006, p.4). Both the parties are physically present and interacting spontaneously when asking questions. It gives researchers opportunities to gather extra information with social cues like voice, intonation, and gesture of the respondents and use such information as a supplement to their oral answers.

In order to achieve interactive communication, unstructured or semi-structured interviews should allow the creation of spontaneous questions. Spontaneous questions also guide interviewers in aligning the research interest and maintain the pace of interview. However, if the interviewer becomes highly involved in formulating spontaneous questions, this can frequently lead to interference that introduced interview effects, in which interviewer behavior influences the interviewee in a special direction. A sign of ending the interview is saying appreciative words to the interviewees for participation in the research and asking interviewee if there are some remaining points to add relevant to the topic (Opdenakker.2006, p.4).

Telephone Interviews and/or online communications platform interviews

The main reason for phone interview or online communications tools for a qualitative interview is physical inaccessibility to reach the interviewee. Physical inaccessibility includes geographically different locations, security reasons, or other travel restrictions due to pandemic or epidemic outbreak. The advantage of a telephone interview is to get easy access to people around the world. They can be interviewed if there is a contact phone number or contact addresses through online. Another advantage of these communications tools is inclusiveness of difficult-to- work persons in working space such as mothers caring their new born children at home or persons with disabilities. By taking these tools to interview, even in war zones or on sites with limited access such as hospitals, religious compound, prisons or other limited areas can be accessible by reducing the harmful risk as well as the more or less avoiding bureaucracy (Opdenakker, 2006, p.4). In contrary, apart from phone interviews, the other communications tools highly depend on the internet and also the familiarity with those tools to handle.

Text Message Interviews

Text message interviews have the advantage of wide coverage of participants. It also provides a chance for researchers to have enough time to interpret the meaning of the answers. The emoticons can be used to show the intonation in the text message. The researchers or the respondents can use pseudonyms to maintain some extent of anonymity (Bampton & Cowton, 2002, p.18). The text message interview also saves time and budget as it is not necessary to travel. However, the challenge of using text message is willingness to participate in the research and waiting for a reply from respondents. In addition, it also demands the technology friendly both for the respondents and for the researchers (Bampton & Cowton, 2002, p.25).

E-mail Interviews

E-mail interviews are conducted via an e-mail account. Interviewers or researchers can formulate or design a list of research questions for the study and then mail them to several respondents at once whereby he/she can individually response with answers or provide ideas at any convenience time. Researchers should prepare clear and precise instruction in written form so that the respondent knows what to do (Flick, 2018, p.276). E-mail interviews allow access to shy people or people who do not feel at ease with talking personally (Meho, 2006, p. 1287). There might be some challenges that researcher might have to wait to get back responses from the respondents for days or weeks. In such situation, using a reminders at an appropriate time will be the best solution to it (Opdenakker, 2006, p.9).

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The Focus Group Discussion is "a qualitative research method in which small groups of unrelated individuals are selected to discuss a given topic or issue in depth, facilitated by an investigator." (GUIDE, 2016; Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017, p.1). Group participants are openly talked with each other and is normally led by the interviewer (often refereed as 'moderator') in a semi-structured discussion of areas of interest.

FGD is functional in collecting opinions, diverse ideas, experience and impressions on a particular topic or issue from the participants in a single time. Occasionally, respondents are unwilling to share sensitive ideas and concerns in a group discussion. In order to get an active group discussion, selection of participants and discussion themes should be arranged carefully with pre-determined criteria and most moderator rely on an outline, or guide, so as to ensure that all the requisite topics or areas of concern are covered. The discussion is normally led by the moderator asking open-ended questions. In some cases, there may be difficulty for the researcher to manage the group when some participants try to dominate the group as well as discussion (GUIDE, 2016; Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017, p.1).

3. Basics of writing Interview Questions

The precise wording of questions plays a vital role in determining the answers given by respondents (Bradburn, et al. 2004, p.3). Well-written questions can quickly engage the interest of the participants. The questionnaire plays a major role in making the experience enjoyable and in motivating the respondent to answer the questions. (Bradburn, et al. 2004, p.9). The researcher has a clear idea of the kind of information that is required about the topic. When researchers are not clear in their minds about the nature of the information they require, they cannot hope to ask questions that are relevant to their topics of interest.

Three rules advocated by Sudman and Bradburn (Bradburn, et al. 2004, p.22) are pertinent to this issue. They are:

(a) Do not formulate specific questions until you have thought through the research question.

(b) Write the research question down and keep it handy while formulating specific questions.

(c) Keep asking, 'Why do I want to know this?' (Foddy, 1993, p.12) and be able to explain how the question is closely related to the research question (Bradburn, et al. 2004, pp.12, 32).

3.1 Preparation for Interview

Choose a setting with the least distraction

Interviews should be conducted in an environment which is, particularly for respondent, comfortable as well as compatible to create personal space and to answer your questions with ease. Appropriate spaces are where the respondent gets privacy for the interview and so it is better to avoid crowded spaces or noisy environments that might distract the respondent from the interview.

Explain the purpose of the interview

After choosing a suitable accommodation for the interview, it is necessary to provide adequate information to the respondent about the interview. Explain the purpose of the information collected from the interview, and explain why it is necessary to get the respondents' answers. It needs to begin with a clear definition of the topic and a clear idea of the information that is required about the topic

Address terms of ethical principles

It is your ethical responsibility as a researcher to inform the respondents as fully as is appropriate about the purposes of the interview, to explain the general content of the questions, and then explain who will get access to their answers and how their answers will be analyzed. In addition, you should inform respondents about the degree to which their answers will be held confidential. The interviewer let respondents answer questions anonymously.

3.2 Types of Topics and Types of Questions in the interview

Questions should be free of assumptions, allow for complex answers, and convey that the researcher is open to all aspects of the experience; both positive and negative. The interview questions should be structured so that they are focused on the topic of interest, but not framed in a way that limits the focus to one portion of the experience. They must be worded in a way that allows the research participant to identify what they feel is important, and focus on their personal experience instead of asking them to interpret the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and perspectives of others (Roberts, 2020, p.3190). Questions can be worded in a way that deals with behaviors, or opinions/values, or feelings, or knowledge, or sensory, or background/ demographics of one's person upon the topic of interest.

Questions can take in different forms including (1) direct questions; (2) indirect questions; in order to get at the individual's own view; (3) structuring questions; (4) follow-up questions; (5) probing questions (following up what has been said through direct questioning); (6) specifying questions; and (7) interpreting questions. In what means of question are applied, the ability to use a suitable language that can adjust the respondent (child, professional, etc.) is the essential feature for the qualitative researchers.

3.3 When asking Questions

In addition to being conformity with the research question/questions, the interview questions "must align with the purpose and goal of the study (Roberts, 2020, p.3190).

The following tips will be helpful for qualitative researcher when asking interview questions.

- First of all, prepare to list down the broad area of knowledge that can be relevant to answer the research questions.
- After designing the range of areas, develop interview questions within each area of knowledge.
- Start the interview using "warm-up" questions that can be understood and answered by the respondent easily.

- In order to avoid confused answers, try to ask one question at a time and be aware not to combine multiple questions at once.
- As an interviewer, be always stay in neutral as much as possible. "Neutrality refers to the research being from researcher bias." (Mayburg & Poggempoel, 2007, p.66). There is a suggestion that the qualitative researcher/interviewer has to keep any strong emotional reactions upon the responses given by the interviewee so as to avoid altering their responses.
- Pay close attention to the interviewee and use non-verbal communication including body language as smile, or nod (at proper times), or eye contact, and/ or using different kinds of probes as silence, echo, 'uh huh', tell-me more, long question, leading question, or baiting (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p.74).

- Take care to avoid using words with multiple meanings as well as with moral overtones. Questions should be worded in such way that the respondents are motivated to answer openly and completely.
- Keep in mind the logical flow of the interview and thinking about what types of topics be first priority in the questions, and what may be followed by somehow naturally.
- Ask some usual questions first before asking to the difficult or potentially embarrassing questions. It is important that respondents be given enough time to formulate appropriate answers (Foddy, 1993, p.37).
- Particularly make sure to provide transition between major topics.
- Adjust the interview language in accordance with the particular respondent for instance, minor, adult or experts, etc. Language can be

utilized as the most efficient way in qualitative interview to get directly accurate and actual information.

- Try to avoid asking respondents for information they do not have and if such questions are to be asked, it is the best to let know the respondent that it is understandable for him/her not to know such matter (Bradburn et al. 2004, p.12).
- Summarize the interview by asking the last question which provide a chance for the respondent to give any other information preferred to add or to suggest upon the research hypothesis (Harvard University. (n.d.).

There is no formal guideline for asking effective question in an interview. It depends on the researcher. A specific phenomenon is explored and discussed by the researcher through collected data with observing, experiencing and conversing with concentrated listening, engaged genuine interest (Seidman, 2006, pp.93-94). As soon as the interview finished, it is better to note down any observations noticed during the interview or any clarifications needed to explain additionally (McNamara, Carter, 1999).

4. Data Recording Procedures

Before entering the field, qualitative researchers usually plan their approach to data recording. The proposal should identify what data the researcher will record and the procedures for recording data (Creswell, 2009, p.181).

Use a protocol for recording observational data

Researchers often engage in multiple observations during the course of a qualitative study and use an observational protocol for recording information while observing. It is the best way to use an interview protocol for asking questions and recording answers during a qualitative interview. "This protocol includes the following components:

• A heading (date, place, interviewer, interviewee)

• Instructions for the interviewer to follow so that standard procedures are used from one interview to another

• The questions (typically an ice-breaker question at the beginning followed by 4-5 questions that are often the sub-questions in a qualitative research plan, followed by some concluding statement or a question)

• Probing questions, to follow up and ask individuals to explain their ideas in more detail or to elaborate on what they have said

• Space between the questions to record responses

• A final thank-you statement to acknowledge the time the interviewee spent during the interview" (Creswell, 2009, p.147).

Researchers record information from interviews by making handwritten notes, by audio-taping, or by videotaping. It depends on the researcher's own experience and ability to ask questions and record the answers almost at the same time. If audiotaping is used, researchers need to plan in advance for the transcription of the tape. It is suggested to transcribe the interview as soon as possible after its completion for better results.

5. Researcher's Bias

Understanding research bias is important for several reasons: first, bias exists in all research, across research designs and is difficult to eliminate; second, bias can occur at each stage of the research process; third, bias impacts on the validity and reliability of study findings and misinterpretation of data can have important consequences for practice (Smith & Noble, 2014, pp. 4, 17, 101).

Bias may be introduced if researchers unknowingly interpret data to meet their hypothesis or include only data that they think are relevant. The most common and highly recognized bias is *confirmation bias* which occurs when a researcher interprets the data to support his or her hypothesis.

Researchers may also omit data that does not favor their hypothesis. They need to consider all the data obtained and analyze them with a clear and unbiased mind. They might ask questions in an order that may affect the participant's response to the next question or ask leading questions that may prompt a certain response. This is called question-order bias.

While constructing interviews, it is proper to arrange the questions in suitable order by reflecting potential bias. Qualitative researchers avoid leading the interview when responding to what the research participant communicated. By asking leading questions that lead or prompt the participants in the direction of probable outcomes may result in biased answers. It is always best to try to avoid using leading questions that prompt the respondent to respond in favor of any particular hypothesis (Roberts, 2020, p.3199).

An ethics committee has an important role in considering whether the research design and methodological approaches are biased, and suitable to address the problem being explored. Qualitative researchers must demonstrate rigor, openness, relevance to practice, and congruence of the methodological approach. Although other researchers may interpret the data differently, appreciating and understanding how the themes were developed is an essential part of demonstrating the robustness of the findings (Smith & Noble, 2014, p.103).

Tips for Myanmar Researchers

- Qualitative research is a kind of research strategy that focuses on data in the form of words instead of numbers.
- Researchers generally apply these types of techniques in interviews:

1) Unstructured interviews—Informal, conversational interviews (no specific questions and questions can be changed depending on the respondent's context and preferences, but respondent can provide information not raised by the researcher or respondent can raise new questions). These are useful in cases where the researcher is interested in having interview participants introduce topics and questions not expected by the research plan, but can require a lot of time and long transcription of the interview.
2) Semi-structured interviews—Standardized, open-ended interviews (planned questions, but respondent can raise additional information beyond the researcher questions and can ask new questions). These are useful when the researcher wants interview participants to provide information not expected by the research plan, but still limit the time and transcription of the interview.
3) Structured interviews—General interview guide approach, with specific list of questions allowing open-ended answers (basic list of questions, but interview respondent is not allowed to introduce new topics, raise information outside the questions, nor pose questions beyond those given by the researcher). These are useful when the goal is to gather information on specific questions from respondents.

- In a case where the researchers need to collect opinions, diverse ideas, experiences, and impressions on a particular topic or issue from the participants in a single time, it will be better to apply "focus group discussion" (FGD) method.

- A well-written questions are vital to get the information that is required for the study. The interview questions have to be aligned with the main purpose and object of the research. Before conducting interviews, it can be helpful to test the questions using sample people who are unrelated to the interview respondents. This will allow the researcher to find out if the questions provide the data required by the research. When testing questions, ask people in the test sample to provide feedback on how to improve the interview questions.

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Chapter (4)
Quantitative Methods: Survey Research

Introduction

Quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of numerical data. Quantitative research offers different uses compared to qualitative research. Qualitative approaches such as interviews, focus groups, or participant-observer methods they allow research subjects to introduce ideas and information outside the questions used by the researcher, and so qualitative approaches are effective research tools when a researcher wants to get individual perspectives unknown to the researcher. In contrast, quantitative data is very useful for studies of groups involving many people, because they make it easier to 1) identify trends across the members of a group, and 2) determine correlation and causation between different trends. Quantitative research is exemplified by statistical analysis, where the statistics are calculated using numerical data collected by a researcher.

Surveys are an effective way of collecting numerical data from a group of people. People who provide answers to a survey are survey respondents. Survey answers can provide qualitative or quantitative results (Kelley et al. 2003). For quantitative research, surveys present questions and answers in a way that can be assigned numerical values. The numbers allow statistical analysis, which can support latitudinal or longitudinal analysis. Latitudinal studies seek to determine trends across the members in a group of survey respondents at a specific moment in time. Longitudinal studies seek to follow changes in trends within a group of survey respondents over a range of time. (Nardi, 2018).

1. Survey Questions

Survey questions can appear in different formats, but the format of survey questions can also produce bias in the survey answers. As a result, researchers should recognize different kinds of survey questions and different kinds of bias in survey questions. Each is addressed in separate subsections below.

A. Survey question formats

The choice of a survey question format depends on the type of data that the researcher wants to collect from survey respondents. Researchers who wish to use surveys to collect data should consider what kind of data they want to collect from survey respondents. A summary of typical survey question format is presented below, with accompanying figures providing examples of each.

Close-ended questions

Close-ended questions limit the answer choices available to survey respondents (Pew Research Center, 2022). Close-ended questions are useful when the researcher wants to fix the range of answers to simplify the determination of trends. An example of a close-ended question is given below, which asks the survey respondent to choose only a single answer out of a range of answers to a question:

Close-ended question	*Why do you like Yangon?* • ____ It is very clean

- ____ It is very safe
- ____ There are many things to do
- ____ There are good jobs

Open ended questions

Open-ended questions contrast with close-ended questions, with open-ended questions allowing survey respondents to give answers unknown to the researcher (Pew Research Center, 2022). It allows the collection of information or perspectives that are unexpected to the researcher, and so can improve the researcher's understanding. However, because it allows survey respondents to give answers outside the answer choices, it makes it more difficult to determine trends across a group of survey respondents. An example of an open-ended question is given below, which gives survey respondents the freedom to write their own answers using their own words:

Open-ended question	*Please explain why you like Yangon:* ________________________________

Categorical questions

Categorical questions go beyond close-ended questions by controlling the form of answers available to survey respondents (Nardi, 2018). For example, they can force survey respondents to give answers as true or false, or force survey respondents to give answers in a multiple-choice format (i.e., asking survey respondents to choose a single answer from a group of multiple answers). Examples of categorical questions are given below:

Categorical question

- Dichotomous questions:
  - ❖ *Yangon is a good place to live* True/False
- Multiple-choice: *the best city to visit in Myanmar is*
  - ❖ Yangon
  - ❖ Mandalay
  - ❖ Naypidaw
  - ❖ Other (please specify) ___________________

Interval-ratio (Likert scale) questions

Interval-ratio questions ask survey respondents to indicate the degree or intensity of their feelings regarding a specific question topic. They are sometimes called Likert-scale questions because they were popularized by Rensis Likert, a psychologist who sought to understand and compare the strength of feelings across the members in a group of research subjects (Jenn, 2006). Interval-ratio questions give research subjects a scale representing a rank from least to highest (e.g., indicating agreement to a question by marking a number between 1 to 10, with 1 being least agreement and 10 being highest agreement). An example of an interval-ration question is given by below:

Interval/ratio & Likert scale question	*Yangon is a good place to live* Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Not sure Somewhat agree Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5

Rank order questions

While Likert-scale questions ask the survey respondent to choose an answer on a scale set by the researcher, rank order questions ask the survey respondent to identify their own personal scale. Rank order questions are useful in identifying how survey respondents rank or order the importance or intensity of different possible answers (Fowler, 2009). In a rank order questions, the researcher controls the different answers available to survey respondents, but survey respondents can identify their order of preferences across the different answers. An example of a rank order question is given below:

Rank order question	*Please rank the following in terms of their importance for the development of Yangon (with 1 being highest or most important):* • _____ Improved roads • _____ Improved train • _____ Water taxi • _____ More shopping malls

- _____ More hotels
- _____ More residences
- _____ More schools
- Other___________________________

Matrix questions

Matrix questions are useful when the researcher wants to have multiple survey questions with the same choice of answers. Matrix questions help to reduce the amount of space needed in a survey form (Nardi, 2018). An example of a matrix question using Likert-scale questions is given below:

Matrix question

Please rate this book according to the following criteria:

	Poor	Fair	Good
Subject is important			
Easy to understand			
Quality of paper used to print book			

	Affordability of book price

B. Biased questions

In writing survey questions, the researcher should take care to avoid biased questions. Biased questions yield poor data because they lead survey respondents to give answers that distort data analysis. Examples of biased questions are listed below, with accompanying examples and explanations about why they pose problems for analysis (Pew 2022; Nardi 2018; Fowler 2009; Jenn 2006; Kelley et al. 2003).

Type of biased question	***Example***	***Type of bias***
Negative question	*Please indicate if you agree or disagree: I have never heard of the term cybersecurity* • *Yes* • *No*	Requires a "no" response to indicate affirmative answer, so makes the question confusing for the respondent. Better to avoid the negative: *I have heard of the term cybersecurity*
Double negative question	*Was the company not behaving illegally?*	Uses 2 negatives, and makes the question confusing for the respondent.

		Better to say: *Was the company behaving legally?*
Vague question	*Is Myanmar more expensive than other countries?*	Presents broad and unclear question (e.g., there is no definition of expensive). Better to be specific: *Is the cost of rice more expensive in Myanmar compared to Thailand?*
Dichotomous question	*Do you know about illegal wildlife trafficking?:* • *Yes* • *No*	Restricts respondent to 2 choices, but respondent may have different feelings. Better to allow more choices: *How much do you know about illegal wildlife trafficking?* • *Never heard of it* • *I know the term, but do not know what it means* • *I know the Myanmar laws about it*

		• *I know more than the Myanmar government about it*
Double-barreled (compound or double-direct) question	*Are you satisfied with the performance of Myanmar lawyers and their compliance with professional ethics?*	Expects respondent to give 1 answer regarding 2 different issues. Better to separate the issues: • *Are you satisfied with the performance of Myanmar lawyers?* • *Are you satisfied with the compliance of Myanmar lawyers to their professional ethics?*
Leading (or lead-in) question	*How bad is Donald Trump?*	Gives the respondent a suggestion that there is a preferred outcome Better to use neutral language: *What is your opinion of Donald Trump?*
Jargon question	*How often do you face-time with your co-workers?:* • *Never*	Assumes the reader understands the

	• *More than once a week* • *Once a week* • *Less than once a week*	terminology (e.g., "face-time") Better to use ordinary language, or provide a definition: *"Face-time" means you meet with others using internet video-conference. How often do you do this each week?*
Loaded question	*What is your favorite alcoholic beverage?*	Makes assumption about the respondent that may not be true Better to divide into 2 questions: • *Do you drink alcohol?* • *If so, then what is your favorite?*

2. Survey Collection

Separate from survey question format, there are also potential issues with the delivery of surveys. The manner of delivery can produce bias in the survey results. There are different forms of delivery that cause different forms of bias (Pew 2022; Nardi 2018; Fowler 2009; Jenn 2006; Kelley et al. 2003). A sample list, with possible solutions for each, is given below:

Demand bias

Demand bias occurs when a respondent gives answers based on advance knowledge of the survey/interview (i.e., the respondent tries to predict the purpose of the survey, and then matches their answers to the purpose). It is possible to mitigate demand bias by using the following methods:

- Minimize details of the survey/interview questions
- Try to be neutral/independent
- Reduce human contact

Social desirability bias

Social desirability bias occurs when a survey respondent gives answers based on their personal sense of morals/ethics, because they do not want to make a bad impression (i.e. they do not want to present themselves in unflattering way). If you do not want survey respondents to give answers based on their personal morals/ethics, then use impersonal questions. For example:

- DO NOT USE – "do you take bribes?" (this poses social desirability bias, because the respondent may want to give impression of being a moral or ethical person who does not take bribes)
- A BETTER WAY – "do you believe people in your Ministry take bribes?" (this avoids social desirability bias, because it does not ask respondents to describe themselves, but instead asks respondents to describe others)

Non-response bias

When you deliver surveys, you usually want to give the survey to respondents selected randomly from the population. But when people refuse to answer a survey, it means that people who participate in a survey can be very different from those who do participate. The result is that you no longer have a random sample. Examples of how this happens include the following:

- You send surveys via email to everyone in Myanmar, but the only respondents are those who have internet
- You send surveys to working and retired teachers, but only the retired teachers have time to answer the survey

There are ways to reduce non-response bias. Some potential ways are:

- Make sure the people who participate in your survey are the people you want to answer the survey questions, so that your analysis does not require answers from people who chose not to answer the survey questions
- Make survey questions short & easy to understand, so that people do not become discouraged from answering the survey questions

Voluntary bias

Voluntary bias occurs when the only people who volunteer to take a survey are people with strong motivations. While strong motivations may produce useful data, there is a problem if the data only comes from people with strong feelings & opinions. Data that is based only on survey respondents with strong feelings & opinions means that there is no data from people who do not have strong feelings or opinions. Such a situation will skew (bias) the data because the data only comes from people with strong feelings & opinions. There are some potential strategies to reduce voluntary bias:

- Try to avoid surveys that rely on people to volunteer to answer the survey questions, because only people with strong motivations will volunteer to participate in a survey
- Offer incentives for people to take a survey, so that people without strong motivations are more likely to answer the survey questions

- In your research, acknowledge that the survey data reflects only the preferences of the people who volunteered to answer the survey questions

Answer order bias

In surveys that use multiple-choice questions, there can be bias resulting from the order of the answer choices given for each survey question. When given a list of possible answers, people tend to choose the answer at the top of a list or the answer closest to their strong hand (e.g., if a person is right-handed, they tend to choose answers closest to their right hand).

Usually, the easiest way to mitigate answer order bias is to have a single survey use multiple questions on the same issue, but across the questions try to

- Change the order of answers for different questions
- Diversify the format of questions, so that some are multiple-choice and some are not

Extreme bias

Extreme bias arises with interval-ratio (Likert-scale) questions. When a question incites an emotional response from the survey respondent, the survey respondent may choose more extreme answers (e.g., if a survey question makes a survey respondent angry, the respondent may be more likely to choose an answer "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree").

It is possible to address extreme bias by

- Trying to use neutral language to reduce emotional responses from survey respondents
- Acknowledging that the purpose of the question is to get an emotional response from a survey respondent

Neutral bias

Neutral bias sometimes appears with surveys having many questions. When answering survey questions, survey respondents may lose attention, become bored, or become indifferent (i.e., they do not care about the questions). In such situations, the survey respondents may try to finish the survey quickly by consistently giving the same answer to all survey questions (e.g., all answers are "neutral," or "not sure", or "strongly agree/disagree").

Ways to mitigate neutral bias include:

- Know your target population, so that the survey respondents are interested in the survey questions
- Try to shorten the survey so that there are fewer survey questions
- Diversify questions (use multiple questions on the same issue, but with questions having different formats)—for example, in exploring whether survey respondents are introverts or extroverts, use both of the following questions in the same survey:
    - ✓ Are you outgoing/social? Yes/No
    - ✓ Which do you prefer more? Staying at home/Going to tea with friends

3. Survey Analysis

Surveys require the selection of survey respondents. A group of survey respondents is a "sample," since it indicates that survey respondents are a subset of the general population of people. The previous sections discussed "non-sampling errors," which are errors caused by problems unrelated to the choice of survey respondents. This section deals with "sampling errors," which are errors resulting from the choice of survey respondents.

Surveys use samples because it can be difficult to collect survey answers from everyone in a population. In such situations, it is necessary to get survey data from a smaller number of people who represent the larger population. For example, it may be too difficult for you to gather surveys for the entire population of Myanmar, but it may be possible to gather surveys from a group of people (or sample) who represent the population of Myanmar.

There are different ways of gathering a survey sample, with different approaches to choosing survey respondents. Each approach is called a "sampling method." Each sampling method has its own advantages and disadvantages. As a result, a researcher must choose an approach based on its ability to provide data that is useful for a research project. In addition, a researcher must state the chosen sampling method, so that readers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the survey used in a research project. In general, the various sampling methods can be organized into "probability sampling" and "non-probability sampling."

Probability sampling

Probability sampling refers to sampling methods that try to ensure each member of a population has an equal chance of participating in a survey (Hibberts et al. 2012; Chaudhuri & Stenger, 2005). For example, while a researcher may find it is difficult to have everyone in Myanmar participate in a survey, the researcher can ensure that each person in Myanmar will have an opportunity to be chosen to participate in the survey. Several common forms of probability sampling methods, along with their potential positive and negative issues, are summarized below:

Type of sampling	***Description***	***Positives/negatives***

Simple random sample	For a total population of N people, you desire sample of x, and each person in x has same chance of being selected from N (e.g., lottery)	• *Positive:* everyone has same chance • *Negative:* For large population, difficult to identify everyone in the population
Stratified sample	Divide total population into groups/strata, then do simple random sample to choose people from each group/strata (e.g., divide into men & women, and do random sample of each)	• *Positive:* ensures every group/strata is represented in the data • *Negative:* complicated, have to plan groups/strata
Cluster sample	Divide total population into clusters, then do simple random sample to choose clusters (e.g., divide into categories of age clusters, and randomly select which age cluster to sample)	• *Positive:* easier if resources are limited • *Negative:* danger of missing data from clusters that are not selected for sampling
Systematic random sample	Create list of every person in population, then take interview/survey of people in periodic intervals (e.g.,	• *Positive:* easier if resources are limited

	take interview/survey of every 10^{th} person)	• *Negative:* requires list of people is randomly generated (to avoid periodic pattern)
Multi-stage sample	Combine the above sampling techniques	

Non-probability sampling

Non-probability sampling refers to sampling methods that makes no guarantees about each person having an equal chance to participate in a survey. (Hibberts et al. 2012; Chaudhuri & Stenger, 2005). Common forms of non-probability sampling methods, with attendant potential positive and negative issues, are summarized below:

Type of sampling	***Description***	***Positives/negatives***
Voluntary (self-selecting) sample	People who self-select to participate in interview/survey (e.g., you ask people to volunteer to take the survey)	• *Positive: easy to do* • *Negative: data is only relevant for the people who participated in the interview/survey*
Convenience sample	Choose people who are convenient to reach	• *Positive: very easy to do*

	(e.g., for survey of judges, you go to OSCU building in Naypyidaw and survey people who walk in/out of the building)	• *Negative: high probability of bias*
Snowball sample	You interview/survey 1 person, that person then contacts their social network to participate in your interview/survey (e.g., you want to survey the members of the NLD in the Hluttaw, so you ask 1 MP who is member of NLD in the Hluttaw and ask her to contact other MPs who are also in the NLD in the Hluttaw)	• *Positive: very easy to do, good for targeting specific types of people* • *Negative: limited data pool, data is only relevant for the type of people who participated in the interview/survey*

Tips for Myanmar Researchers

For researchers in Myanmar, there are some useful tips to conducting surveys:

- When doing surveys, it is important to protect the identities of survey respondents. This requires anonymous survey forms (i.e., no one can identify the person who filled out a survey form) and anonymous submission process (i.e., no one can identify the person who submitted a survey form to you).

- Separate records containing the personal information of survey respondents (e.g., research plans that list the people you want to take the survey) away from records containing the survey responses.
- If the survey is done via paper, you may want to have survey respondents answer a survey form in a “safe space” that is private and out of sight. You can instruct survey respondents to do the survey when they find a safe space, or you can provide a safe space for them.
- It is possible to do surveys on-line. Popular on-line survey tools include Google Forms (https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/) and Survey Monkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/). Both have versions which are free. They have the advantage of automatically recording survey responses into an on-line database. However, they require survey respondents have access to internet.
- It is possible to do surveys via Wi-Fi (e.g., mobile phone). Both Google Forms and Survey Monkey can be done via mobile phone. Be careful, since this means only people who are comfortable with mobile phones will answer the survey—which will create a bias in your survey data that favors mobile phone users.
- Surveys provide better findings with more survey responses. As a result, a population of survey respondents will always be larger than a population of interview respondents.
- Survey response rates tend be low—for example, only 1-2% of people who receive anonymous mail surveys ever respond. If you achieve a response rate of 10-15%, then your survey is doing well. Response rates can improve if the survey respondents know you and know the research project that requires surveys. But be careful, since revealing information about your research project can bias the responses from survey participants.

- It is also possible to improve survey response rates by administering a survey in an enclosed space. For example, a survey of conference participants will have a higher response rate if the conference participants receive the survey while they are in the conference room. But be careful, since a confined space increases the risk of someone identifying survey participants with specific survey forms. You will need to monitor the privacy of survey respondents.

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Chapter (5)
The Basics of Academic Research and Writing

Social science research is a process of investigation into social issues and social problems in the society. The objective of social research is to create a better society through exploration, description, explanation, and prediction of the collection of data and its analysis. Research writing should have following attributes: conciseness and simplicity. It concerns the amount of text in proportion. Articles in social science research journals usually have 5,000-8,000 words. To fit within the word limit, writing should avoid issues such as unnecessary details, superfluous explanations, going too far afield, digressing from a topic, circumlocutions, repetitions, filler words, and empty phrases.

In addition, research writing should have a simple style. This means that the choice of words and sentence construction should be short and clear. Typically, a research paper must include the following parts: abstract, introduction, research question, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusions. Each is discussed in the sections below.

Abstract

The abstract is a useful tool which enables you to introduce your paper briefly and concisely. Writing it out will help you get to the point of your topic, order your ideas and plan the actual production phase. During this phase you should pay particular attention to the criteria relating to the content. All aspects of research should be dealt with in an abstract. Abstract helps readers understand the project title, ideas and plan. In the social sciences, an abstract is typically a single paragraph of approximately 100-250. The first sentence should clearly state the social or legal issue of current event. If the issue is based upon a real situation, which is greatly preferred, the research problem should be stated and followed with statements describing its basis and evaluation. The subsequent sentences describe how the investigation was carried out. The following sentences address to what about the research and the results of the experiment. The final sentences describe the significance of the results and the impact of this work on the general field of study.

Introduction

The introduction is the first part of the research paper. It combines the facts and arguments of research proposal. It contains the written text in relation to research title. The introduction should be divided up into three parts: research background, purpose, and problem. Background information is necessary in order to understand the research. The statement of the purpose shows the actual reasons for doing the research. It must be sure to clearly state the purpose and issue or problem of research that the research intends investigate.

The introduction requires a short review of the literature pertaining to the research topic. The introduction is best constructed as a descriptive writing, starting with broad topics and slowly focusing on the work. One approach may be to start with one or two paragraphs that introduce the reader to the general field of study. The subsequent paragraphs then describe how the existing research could be improved. The final paragraph clearly states that the, research question will be answered by the present study. The final paragraph usually contains the thesis sentence, which is a single sentence stating the main argument being advanced by the paper. After presenting the thesis sentence, the introduction also provides a hypothesis that will be evaluated in the paper. Next, briefly describe the approach that was taken to test the hypothesis.

Finally, a summary sentence may be added stating how the answer of research question will contribute to the overall study. This section will contain all the sub questions required to answer your central question and the anticipated finding under investigation in research.

Usually, it is better to avoid a very vague or complicated language because it can be assumed that the research cannot clearly state its own research interests. The introduction should always be very clear about the point of research. The introduction should also describe how to construct a research argument.

When you are structuring your paper, please observe the following rules: The structure of the 'Introduction' has to be in a logical order, starting with general points and then becoming more specific. The main heading must be a summary of all the sub-headings on one level. If you are subdividing a section further, it has to contain at least two subheadings.

To keep the structure simple, the introduction should be subdivided in such a way that the individual sections will not be difference greatly as regards thematic research view. But there are no hard and fast rules about which heading style to use in an academic research paper. The introduction is a very important for research audience. If the research is not able incite audience curiosity or at least interest, the audience will only reluctantly read or listen or not bother with it at all.

The Research Question

The research question should explain briefly and concisely what the research is about and the main argument that will be investigated. It should also mention how the research problem is relevant in the overall context of the particular subject. This research question is the real issue of social life and the hypothesis of exploration. This part should also mention how the research problem is relevant in the overall context of the subject.

Literature Review

The literature review supports the latest points of view and developments of the research question under investigation and will give useful hints about the existing literature and authors who have already dealt with the topic. But, the particular challenge when using digital information is in evaluating the quality of the data in terms of, selecting it and putting it in a meaningful context. The literature review must be related to subject-specific theories in accordance with research question. The literature review should give necessary information from any academic papers in existence which investigated similar questions. It gives information previous studies that informed your understanding of the research paper topic, and identifies how your paper is different or similar to the other studies on the topic.

The literature review should help to identify and compare the basic research approaches in relation to your research question. This section will contain all the sub-questions required to answer main research question and the hypotheses under investigation in research. It should avoid vague and complicated word expressions. At this point, this research will describe how to strengthen the argument, and the paragraphs should have enough organization to identify the research questions and the information used to answer them.

A good literature review should include following characteristics: it shows the current state of research. It gives information about previous scholarship that helped to frame the analysis, and it shows the differences and similarities to other studies.

Research Methods

This section should be a straightforward description of the methods used in your study. Each method should be described in a separate section. To begin, a single section should state the materials used in the study, including the vendor for each material used in the analysis.

This information is critical so that readers have the capability to repeat the work in their own institutions. Next describe, in separate sections, each key procedure and technique used in the study. Keep explanations brief and concise. Similarly, if a theoretical or modeling component is utilized, it should also be incorporated in the initial portion of the methods. Finally, remember to describe the statistical analysis methods that were utilized to analyze the results, most likely in the final section of the methods section. At this point in an theoretical research, it should include sources which will be used as references in arguments. Empirical research should state if primary data will be collected from interview, surveys, or other methods. This section should also discuss the research design and the methods used to gather qualitative or quantitative data.

The section should also explain why this research method was chosen to help gather research findings and should further explain the relevance of methodology.

Data Analysis and Finding

Data analysis presents the real collected data. The next step is to write about your investigation of the topic based on your research and analysis of the materials you have collected and, if applicable, to support it with any qualitative and quantitative surveys which were used in the research. This section, often the most difficult to write, should be relatively easy if the previous suggestions have been followed. In particular, look to the last paragraph of the introduction. If the work has characterized a phenomenon by studying specific effects, use the results to describe each effect in separate paragraphs. If the work has presented a hypothesis, use the results to construct a logical argument that supports or rejects your hypothesis. If the work has identified three main objectives for the work, use the results to address each of these objectives.

A well-defined study that is described in the 'Introduction', along with supporting results that are presented in the 'Results/ Findings' section, should ease the construction of the data analysis section. This section should start with a brief paragraph that again gives an overview to the work. It should summarize the most important findings and, if applicable, accept or reject the proposed hypothesis. Next, identify the most interesting, significant, remarkable findings that were presented in this section, and contrast these findings in light of other studies reported in the literature. It is often informative if a discussion of the potential weaknesses of the interpretation is also included. Finally, at the end of this section, consider the other works in the literature that address this topic and how this work contributes to the overall field of study. The results of the research study should be described with points, explanation and casual link between specific theories and findings. Research finding should include deduction relevant results with examples of real case studies. Discussion shows fact-based evaluation such as opportunities and risks.

Conclusion

The next step is to write about your investigation of the topic based on your research and analysis of the materials you have collected and, if applicable, to support it with any surveys which you may have carried out yourself. The conclusion is useful tool to convince your reader of the findings of your research. It should summarize the research question, findings, arguments and conclusion in a few compact sentences that will remind readers of the logical structure of your research. This way, the most important points will stay in their minds. At the end of the conclusion, it should also express own subjective evaluation or opinion and point out any questions that are suitable for clarification during further research, e.g. after transposing them into another context or by looking at them from a different viewpoint. The conclusion serves to conclude on the research outcomes. Again, first introduce the work and then briefly state the major results. Then state the major points of the discussion. Finally, end with a statement of how this work contributes to the overall field of study. A conclusion shows a summary of the findings and their relevance to the research question or problem.

References or Bibliography

This includes all references used in research or referred to for background information. This must be done using the referencing style or citation specified by relevant academic institutions. Generally, the rule of citations' format of books and article is such as Last name, First name. Year. "Title of Article in Quotation Marks." Citations should be formatted in alphabetical order (A-Z) with a hanging indent. For more information on citing sources, refer to relevant reference style publications manual.

It is also worthwhile to understand the difference between reference and bibliography. Reference refers all the list of sources that you have been referred in the research work to support an argument. In the case of bibliography, you have to make a list of all the materials which have been consulted during the research work to generate the idea either you cited them or not. Both references and bibliographies appear at the end of a scholarly work to help researchers avoiding plagiarism as well as allow readers to seek for more information from the original sources.

Tip for Myanmar Researchers

Academic writing is an essential tool for carrying out and communicating research clearly and also to ensure research publication in recognized journals. All of the component parts of the research such as abstract, literature review, introduction, finding, conclusion, and recommendations are composed with academic writing. Generally, all parts of research required systematic thinking, critical review, and unbiased conclusions. It needs to be easily understandable for all readers. But most Myanmar researchers are not familiar with academic writing due to lack of enough training on academic writing and research in the past. Another reason is due to lack of fluent English skill to present the research idea clearly, although English is recognized as an official language for learning and teaching for all universities in Myanmar.

To avoid vague writing style, the key point is to construct simple sentences. Compound and complex sentences can be difficult to understand. It is better to understand narrative or descriptive writing style with clear phrases, clauses, and conjunctions. Research writing should not include use of unnecessary words that cause confusion in meaning. In addition, research writing should stay away from unidentified concepts and jargon which are not explained.

To recognize good research, it is helpful if Myanmar researchers read journal publications, scholarly books, and academic blog websites. They can provide examples of good academic writing. But researchers should take care to avoid plagiarism in copying such materials.

Before starting research writing, all Myanmar researchers should ask themselves the following questions:

- Which theoretical and conceptual frame work should be used as a starting point?
- How are large database and secondary resources organized?
- Do findings contribute to understanding in the field?
- Which resources should be included?

References

Lapai, Niger. (2019). Understanding Social Science Research: An overview, *Lapai International Journal of Management and social science*, 11 (2).

Bailey, Stephen. (2018). Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students, 5th edition, Routledge.

RESEARCH HANDBOOK FOR EMERGING RESEARCHERS

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