

1. Writing Synopsis In Academic Research

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1. Introduction:

“A well planned start leads to fruitful end”

It is important that a synopsis is made with this thought. The very first step taken to communicate the outline of one’s thought is designated as synopsis. The noun meaning of the word synopsis is summary. The ancient meaning of the word synopsis means “General View”. Synopsis is a snapshot of the work which is planned to achieve the desired outcome. It is an outline prepared to present the action plan of a particular task which an individual desired to perform. The synopsis mainly covers the probable answer of what, why and how. It covers mainly the points to state the brief understanding of the subject matter on which the detail study will be carried out. Synopsis gives panoramic view of research. It helps their viewers to give quick analysis. Synopsis forms an integral part of a research project or a thesis or any kind of artistic work.

A synopsis is a gadget for the writing process. The main objective of writing synopsis is to give the brief understanding of the detailed work. In addition to this the synopsis helps to verbalize the idea and at the same time makes it more concrete. It is a tool for thinking the subject and argument and it helps the writer or the researcher to focus the structure the task or project undertaken. Synopsis is prepared for all kinds of things—any type of fiction or nonfiction book, academic

papers, journal and newspaper articles, films, TV shows, research work, project proposal just to name a few!

The basic difference between summary or abstract and synopsis is that the former is the condensed presentation of a research work whereas the synopsis is an outline of the entire

research work planned to be achieved in the desired time frame. It is the condensation of the work, reflect the thought process of the individual.

2. Importance Of Synopsis:

Effective planning lead to successful execution. A well draft synopsis helps to accomplish the desired task of the researcher or writer. The synopsis drafting is an art as well as science. As a scientific approach the proper steps are to be followed while writing the synopsis and as an art the creative approach is applied so as to make it impressive for the reviewer or the reader. It is the first tool to grab the attention and give the schematic presentation of the entire story. Synopsis is drafter for varied reasons, below mentioned are some of the reasons for which synopsis is written. Depending upon the purpose for which it is written, it is important that key points are remembered while writing the synopsis.

2.1 Synopsis Of A Novel:

When we write synopsis of a novel, the key incidents of the novel reflecting the theme of the novel, the turning point in the storyline, the parallel storyline and the specific personality of the characters are covered. The purpose of the synopsis in this case is to give the motivation to the reader or to the reviewer to get the insights of the entire details of the novel. Thus, the construct of the synopsis should be in a way so as to generate the curiosity in the readers' mind.

2.2 Synopsis Of A Film:

The synopsis of a film aims to create the excitement and anticipation in the audience. The synopsis in this case covers the main highlights of the storyline with twist and turns to create the interest in the mind of audience. It may also include the theme, the turning points, the parallel storyline and the specific personality of characters involved.

2.3 Synopsis Of An Academic Writing / Doctoral Research Work / Project Proposal:

It is mandatory in the academic writings to give the snapshot of the entire research work for the quick understanding and also for the approval for the further research work to proceed. For the academic work the synopsis covers various steps highlighting systematic approach to answer what is to be researched, why and what is the need and how the proposed research shall be conducted. The ‘what’ of the synopsis includes the objectives for research and also the background of the research work already undertaken. The ‘why’ of the synopsis gives the justification of the proposed work, the need for the research and the rationale behind the work. It brings out the motivation for research as to how will the results be useful. The third part comprises of ‘How’ the entire work will proceed. This is answered by presenting the research design, sampling design, sample size and the hypothesis formulated. The skeleton of the entire research work or blue print of the research is reflected in this segment. All of this requires the researcher to undertake a lot of literature review and a researcher can find all the answers to what, why and how only through literature review. On the literature review, a lot of brainstorming is required to be undertaken under the able guidance so that the researcher does not get confused with what is the sole objective with which the

research is to be undertaken. In that sense, academic synopsis writing is quite different from other types of synopsis.

The next section of the chapter will highlight in detail about the contents of writing a synopsis in academic research.

3. Contents Of Synopsis:

3.1 Rationale / Background Of The Area:

Every researcher should highlight why he wants to undertake the said research and how it is of utmost importance in the given broad area of study. The rationale should come out of the present scenario and present state of affairs in that regard and at the same time should also be based on the existing review of literature. Some of the well known scientists or researchers in that area of research should also be highlighted so that the importance gets highlighted further. If the researcher is able to bring out some recent policy initiatives or some recent debate with reference to this area of study, it will further bring out that the area of study that you are undertaking has relevance in the present context. This will add to the relevance and at the same time rationale for undertaking the study/research.

The researcher should creatively use all the above to formulate arguments to bring out the rationale of the study. It is of extreme importance to bring out how the results of the study are useful in the present context.

3.2 Literature Review:

The rationale should be followed by the literature review where the researcher should give an extensive detail about the related literature undertaken so far. The primary purpose of the literature review is to bring out the gaps in the existing literature and how the proposed study would fill in these gaps. The literature

review should be exhaustive and should be having the relevance to the study area. On the basis of the review of literature certain variables and determinants can be identified. And also, the methodology used for the purpose of achieving the objectives is finalised.

3.3 Research Gaps:

These are the gaps that are found to exist in the available research done so far in the said area. This helps the researcher to put forward the proposal for his research that is relevant and meaningful. It is utmost important to bring out the research gaps so that meaningful research can be conducted, and you come out with something unique to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and literature.

There are various levels in which gaps can be identified. The gaps can be in terms of geographical locations, population, time, use of variables, methodology etc. Let us try to understand these with some examples. Suppose a study is conducted in various countries of Europe but is yet to be extensively undertaken in Asian countries, there is a research gap. Similarly, a study is not undertaken extensively among rural populations, or a study that was done in 1990s has not been done much recently, or the variables used for the purpose of research are absolutely different than those proposed by you, in all these cases there is a definite gap that can be highlighted. Similarly, if the researcher is able to show that he proposes to use an altogether different methodology, there can be a research gap in such a situation as well.

3.4 Research Design:

- **Research Questions And Objectives:**

On the basis of the review of literature and the problem identified, research questions are formulated by the researcher. Out of these research questions, the

researcher finalise a few as his objectives that he would undertake for the present research. The objectives are finalised keeping in view the constraints of the researcher. These objectives also help the researcher determine the scope of the study to be undertaken.

- **Sample Size, Sampling Methods And Data Collection Methods:**

On the basis of the objectives the researcher should also bring out the type of data that he is ought to use during the research. In case, secondary data is to be collected, the researcher should identify the sources and the availability of the data for the recent years should also be ensured. Due care should be taken in this regard so that authentic sources of data are used for the research. All the efforts of the researcher may go in vain in the absence of the same.

In case primary data is to be used by the researcher, literature review should be appropriately done so that research tool for primary data collection can be formulated.

In case of primary data, sample size has to be finalised making use of scientific methods. Accordingly, sampling methods are also to be finalised.

The software to be used should also be pinned down by the researcher and its availability should also be duly specified in the synopsis.

In the present times, academic research has allowed more flexibility and these can be altered to some extent, but they are to be included in the synopsis so that the researcher gets a direction in which he has to proceed for carrying out the research

3.5 Proposed Chapter Scheme:

Due effort should be made by the researcher in preparing the chapter scheme which gives direction to the way in which the dissertation will be undertaken by the researcher. Although there is a standard chapter scheme that is place where the first chapter is about introduction, followed by literature review. The third chapter is on research methodology and next on data analysis and interpretations. The fifth chapter is about the conclusions and suggestions. However, researcher may feel a need to develop a chapter on theoretical framework also.

3.6 Time Frame /Action Plan:

Academic research is now more specific with respect to the timeline. A separate timeline is given by the regulatory bodies for full time and part time researcher. First six months are for the course work and finalisation of the topic. Next six months is about looking for the literature review and finding gaps. This would help in finalising the objectives of the study as well. Next six months are about variables for the study followed by developing a theoretical framework. Data collection tool is finalised next and is validated. During this time, the sampling methods are also finalised. Next six months' pilot is conducted, and the tool is finalised to be used for data collection, in case of primary study. In case of secondary data, the data is collected from various sources and is cleaned using appropriate methods.

3.7 Limitations And The Future Scope:

On the basis of the objectives of research the researcher should also bring out the limitations that the proposed study might have along with the future scope.

3.8 Deciding The Title:

The researcher should start from deciding the area and then go on narrowing it down. The title of the thesis should be decided only after all the above exercise is

done by the researcher. In case of academic research, it is not recommended to give very catchy titles. The title should be precise but at the same time should bring out the essence of the work undertaken.

On the basis of the problem identified and objectives finalised, title should be finalised and this is the last step in writing the research synopsis.

3.9 Expected Outcome:

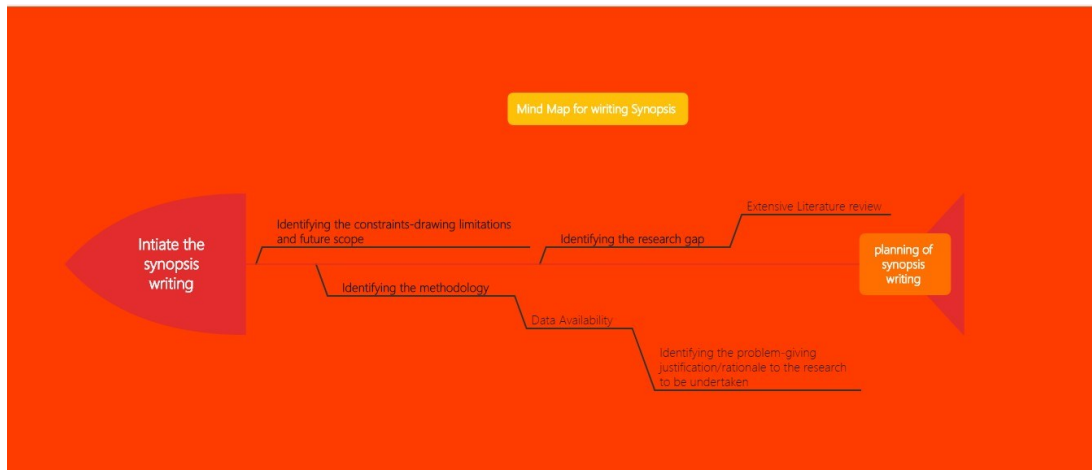
The researcher needs to pen down the outcome which are expected from the research work in the points and along with this it is also important to write the contribution to be given by the research work to the specific society or in general. It is very important to mention these points as it gives the reviewer a basic understanding about the rationale of conducting the research work.

References:

1. Extensive list of references should be given along with the synopsis.

4. Mind Mapping Before Writing Synopsis:

Before initiating the synopsis writing process below mentioned steps to be considered by the researcher. A researcher has to construct a framework in his or her mind and have to cover various facets before initiating the synopsis writing process.



Source: Author's Creation

Once all these steps are clear in the mind of the researcher and with the due discussion of the experts related to the field the drafting of the synopsis should be initiated.

A well drafted synopsis means the half work done!!!!