

A guide to writing a research proposal

I. INTRODUCTION

A. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: In one sentence, encapsulate what your study seeks to examine. Then below it, list the following in bullet points:

1. THE POINT OF FOCUS: Which component of the mediation process will you be examining? To answer this, simply state whether your work is about media institutions, media texts, or media audiences/users/consumers.
2. THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS: What scale will your research deal with? Examples of possible answers would be:
 - for an institutional point of focus: staff, department, organization, conglomerate, etc.
 - for a textual point of focus: headlines, front page articles, newspaper sections, etc.
 - for an audience/user/consumer point of focus: individual, family, community, etc.
3. THE KEY CONCEPTS: What are the key factors or variables that you will be examining?

SAMPLE:

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: This research will attempt to find out how the local newspaper representation of indigenous peoples—in the context of the socio-political issue of mining in the Philippines—is linked to the discourse of development.

- POINT OF FOCUS: text
- UNIT OF ANALYSIS: newspaper articles
- KEY CONCEPTS: representation of indigenous peoples; discourse of development

B. RATIONALE: (approx. 300 words)

1. In the first paragraph, argue for the social significance of your work. Begin by discussing the importance of your work. The aim here is to show that your study is relevant to many readers. Second, move on to explain how this issue is also an important concern in the Philippine context. The aim here is to show that your study is particularly relevant to local readers. Cite your sources using the proper APA in-text citation format. (approx. 150 words)

SAMPLE:

The issue of development has always been one of importance all over the world. In their unending efforts to improve and promote their countries' economic and social development, different government systems have caused concern to the indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. In Southeast Asia for instance, Hettne (in Clarke, 2001, p.424) asserts that "the nation state project has been a primary cause of conflict and of policies which at times have proved ethnocidal in their efforts on minority groups." And in the Philippines in specific, there have been tensions as well between the government's drive at development and the survival of indigenous peoples (Corpuz, 1996). The media play a central role in this, as their representations of such groups either help or hinder people's proper understanding of them (Silverstone, 1999).

2. In the second paragraph, provide a brief summary of the kinds of studies previously done about your topic. Then, show how your own work either (a) seeks to validate/reexamine previous research or (b) approaches the topic from an angle that has not been looked at before. Cite your sources using the proper APA in-text citation format. (approx. 150 words)

SAMPLE:

Currently, there is a narrow selection of studies on indigenous peoples directly related to this research. Voyageur (2005), for example, discusses how mainstream media objectified the Aboriginal people in the past. Also, Pietikainen (2001) and Reinhardt (2005) do similar studies showing the different discourse in media in relation to the Sami people and the Native Americans respectively. Meanwhile, the books that study indigenous peoples and how they live have no comprehensive discussion on media portrayal, much less on mining. Thus, this study contributes to the limited pool of knowledge through the creation of a research on a relatively unexplored but socially relevant topic.

II. RELATED LITERATURE: (approx. 800 words)

- A. Divide this segment according to your key concepts. Provide one-paragraph summaries of how each concept has been defined by previous works. Cite your sources using the proper APA in-text citation format.
- B. Provide a list of the studies that you mentioned. Use the proper APA format for bibliographic citations.

SAMPLE:

Literature on the Discourse of Development

Lertzman and Vredenberg (2005) relate the concept of development to sustainable development. They define this as “development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p242). On the other hand, Clarke (2001) talks about the concept of ethnodevelopment, a term which refers to “development policies that are sensitive to the needs of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples and where possible controlled by them, and assesses the extent to which such a pattern of development is emerging in the region” (p. 415)...

III. FRAMEWORKS:

A. TABLE: Provide a table that summarizes your key concepts as they are defined:

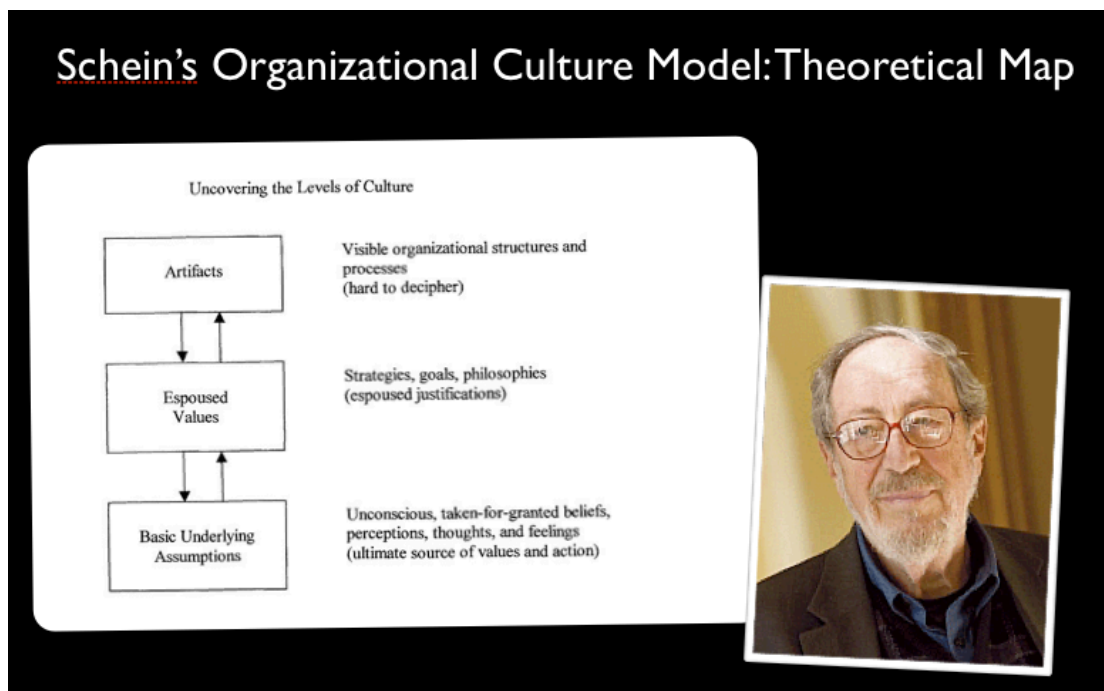
1. theoretically
2. conceptually
3. operationally

THEORETICAL LEVEL	CONCEPTUAL LEVEL	OPERATIONAL LEVEL
<i>Define the key concepts according to the theory.</i>	<i>Specify the key concepts in the context of your study.</i>	<i>Provide concrete measures for your key concepts.</i>

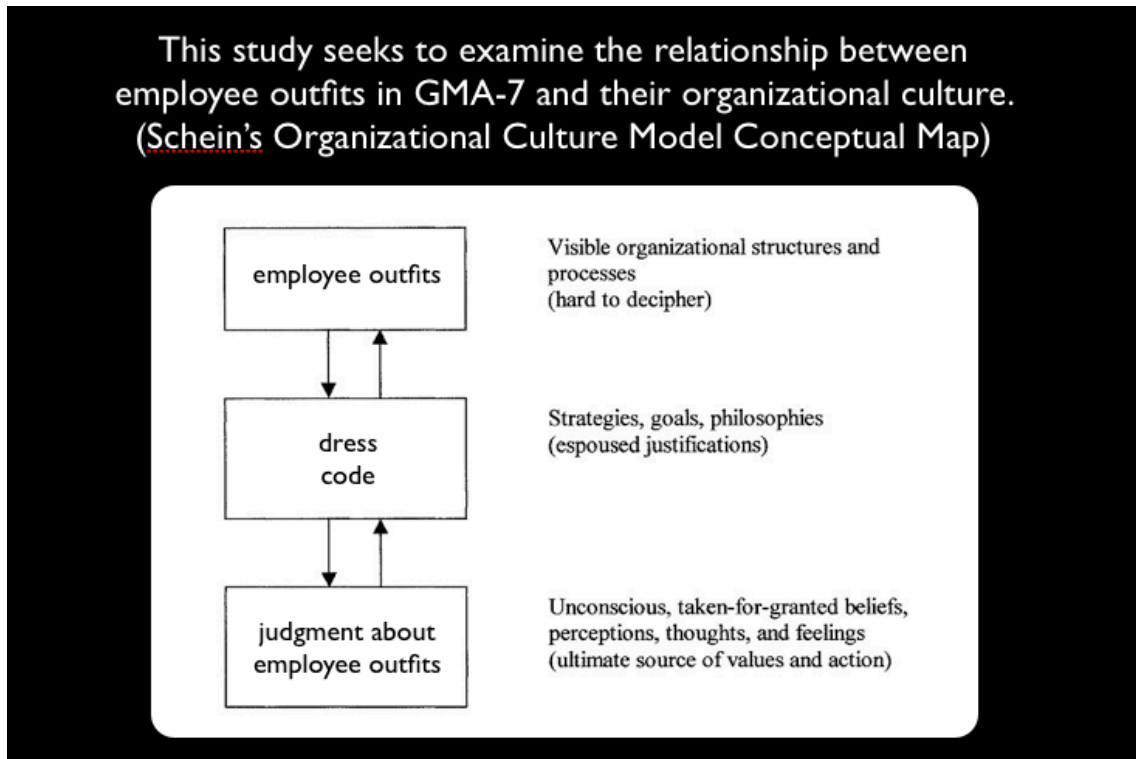
Indicate the source of your definitions in APA in-text citation format.

B. VISUAL MAPS: Provide visual maps of both your theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

SAMPLE OF A THEORETICAL MAP:



SAMPLE OF A CONCEPTUAL MAP:



PARAMETERS:

Arial 12, double spaced, 1 inch margin all around, short bond paper

IV. RESEARCH METHODS (approx. 300 words)

- A. **METHODOLOGY**: Argue for why the quantitative or qualitative approach is suitable for your study. Make sure to cite sources that will strengthen your argument.
- B. **SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**: Enumerate your case selection criteria. Make sure that you justify each criterion.
- B. **RESEARCH TOOL**: Briefly summarize the key themes in your survey, in-depth interview questions, FGD questions, and/or content analysis.

Samples presented in the Introduction and Related Literature sections adapted from: Lonto, M. A. P., Mesina, K., & Yambao, I. (2008) The invisible Other: A critical discourse analysis on the representation of the indigenous people in Sun Star General Santos Online in the context of mining in the Philippines. Unpublished undergraduate thesis. Quezon City: Department of Communication, Ateneo de Manila University.