

**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION**

**Typical Outline of a Report of a Study (and a proposal for research)**

Excluded are Preliminary Pages, Abstract, References, and Appendices. Items asterisked must be included or addressed in a Proposal for Research, even if briefly because of page limitations.

**Chapter I**

Introduction\* (Set the stage, but keep it brief! This section may give an historical account, a more current analysis, or perhaps a philosophical setting for the study.)

Statement of Problem\* (What is it that we do not know? This section should precede the statement of purpose of the study so that the reader learns quickly why you are undertaking the study.)

Purpose of Study\* (What is it, overall, that you tried to accomplish?)

Specific Objectives\* (These relate to accomplishing the purpose. They are not a rewording of the purpose!)

Theoretical Base for Study\* (Provides the rationale for hypotheses or research questions to be tested or answered and should relate clearly to the specific objectives and purpose. While developed fully in Chapter II as a result of the review of literature, postulates [statements] of key points that summarize and make up the theoretical base should be listed here.)

Hypotheses and/or Research Questions\* (Either or both may be necessary in conducting a study. They evolve from the theoretical base and specific objectives.)

Need for Study\* [or] Importance of Study\* (Why is this study important? Not always is it necessary to have this separate section if the need or importance can be built into the introduction or into the statement of problem. However, if it is necessary to describe the need for or importance of the study, in addition to carefully stating the problem, and if this description takes up very many pages, insert it here because it is important to let readers know early the purpose of the study. It is irritating to readers to have to read five to ten pages of introduction, statement of problem, and need for study before figuring out what you tried to find out!)

Delimitations\* (The setting in which the study was conducted. How many, who or what were or were not included, where, and when. "The study was delimited to ...." This is not a description of weaknesses in the study, though a particular delimitation could be a weakness to be addressed further in the limitations section of the report.)

Limitations\* (The weaknesses of the study. You want to tell the world ahead of time that you know what the weaknesses are and why they are present because you don't want the world to think that you are so dumb as not to recognize those weaknesses.)

Basic Assumptions\* (Conditions that you accept but that you did not test in the study. For example, in a study of innovativeness of teachers of agricultural science, a basic assumption could be that "Innovations in programs of agricultural science existed that were universal in their application to experienced teachers in all adopter categories." Do not state "a given," e.g., "People will respond honestly," unless something unique exists about the conditions under which the study was conducted that has to be explained.)

( O-V-E-R )

Definition of Terms\* (Include only those that are essential to understanding the way in which they were used in the study, and in preventing misunderstandings. If using somebody else's definition, give the source. Do list defined terms in alphabetical order! A complete listing may be omitted from a research proposal if doing so exceeds the 10-page limit.)

## **Chapter II**

Review of Literature\* (Review the literature as it relates to developing theory that affects the problem, objectives, hypotheses, and research questions. Help your reader associate key points from your review with specific hypotheses or research questions by using those hypotheses or questions as subheadings in the review. Not always do you need a separate chapter titled "Review of literature." See the example of another way to report a study outlined in GC-12a. A review in summary form may be all that you are able to address in a proposal for research if page limitations exist, but should be based on a full review.)

## **Chapter III**

Method of Investigation\* (From whom were data collected? Did the data come from a population or a sample? How was the sample chosen? How did you collect your data? Why did you collect it in the manner that you did? What did you do to check for validity and reliability? How did you analyze your data? What timeline was followed in conducting the research? Why did you analyze it in the manner that you did? What defensible precedent exists for using the techniques or statistics for analysis that you used? What levels of statistical significance did you specify?)

## **Chapter IV**

Major Findings (List and discuss these in the order in which you presented the objectives, hypotheses, and/or research questions in Chapter I. In some way help the reader see which findings refer to which objectives, etc. Showing continuity and logical progression in presenting your findings will help readers see how well organized you are and minimize straining your readers' brains. You need to "idiot-proof" the presentation of findings for the readers so as to minimize misunderstandings about what you found.)

**Chapter V** (This section of the report should stand by itself. The reader should be able to turn to this section and quickly find out what you did, why you did it, what you found, and what you think that it all means.)

Summary (Purpose, objectives, hypotheses and/or research questions derived from a theoretical base, summary statement of problem or importance of study, delimitations, summary of methodology, and summary of key findings)

Conclusions (Drawn from the findings. If hypotheses were tested, conclusions are drawn accepting or rejecting them. Where appropriate, draw the literature back into your study at this point. Do your findings support or refute earlier research? Additional conclusions may be drawn from findings not directly related to specific hypotheses or research findings.)

Implications (In stating implications, you are beginning to stick your neck out. Implications are drawn from findings and conclusions. You often draw attention to possible actions that may be taken. Implications may arise from combinations of findings and conclusions.)

Recommendations (You stick your neck out farther and make recommendations for action. These usually are based upon and drawn from a logical progression starting with findings and moving through conclusions to implications.)