Contents

Preface xi

1 Introduction 1
   1.1 Research proposals: purpose and use of this book 1
   1.2 Background to this book 2
      1.2.1 Empirical research: data 2
      1.2.2 Quantitative and qualitative data 3
      1.2.3 Relaxing the quantitative–qualitative distinction 4
      1.2.4 Social science and social science areas 5
      1.2.5 Relationship of this book to Introduction to Social Research 6
   1.3 A view of research 6
   1.4 Chapter outline 7
   1.5 Review concepts 8

2 The Proposal: Readers, Expectations and Functions 9
   2.1 What is a research proposal? 9
   2.2 Readers and expectations 10
   2.3 Functions and purpose of the proposal 12
   2.4 Prestructured versus unfolding research 13
   2.5 The research proposal as a plan 14
   2.6 Research questions or research problems? 15
   2.7 A simplified model of research 16
   2.8 Review concepts and questions 18

3 A General Framework for Developing Proposals 19
   3.1 An overall framework 19
   3.2 A hierarchy of concepts 20
   3.3 Research areas and topics 21
   3.4 General and specific research questions 22
   3.5 Data collection questions 24
   3.6 Research questions and data: the empirical criterion 25
   3.7 Three tactical issues 26
      3.7.1 The importance of the pre-empirical stage 26
      3.7.2 Questions before methods 27
      3.7.3 Do I need hypotheses in my proposal? 27
   3.8 Review concepts and questions 29
## 4 The Role of Theory and Dealing with the Literature

4.1 The perspective behind the research

4.2 The role of theory
   4.2.1 Description versus explanation
   4.2.2 Theory verification versus theory generation

4.3 Structured versus unfolding

4.4 The literature
   4.4.1 Relevant literature
   4.4.2 Relationship between study and literature
   4.4.3 Using the literature

4.5 Reviewing literature

4.6 Review concepts and questions

## 5 Methods

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Quantitative data, qualitative data or both?

5.3 Design
   5.3.1 Strategy
   5.3.2 Framework
   5.3.3 Sample
   5.3.4 Data collection: instruments, procedures
   5.3.5 Data analysis

5.4 The question of methodological expertise

5.5 Ethical issues

5.6 Review concepts and questions

## 6 Writing the Proposal

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Proposal headings
   6.2.1 Abstract and title
   6.2.2 Introduction: area, topic and statement of purpose
   6.2.3 Research questions: general and specific
   6.2.4 Conceptual framework, theory and hypotheses
   6.2.5 The literature
   6.2.6 Methods
   6.2.7 Significance
   6.2.8 Limitations and delimitations
   6.2.9 Ethical issues: consent, access and participants' protection
   6.2.10 References
   6.2.11 Appendices

6.3 Qualitative proposals

6.4 Academic writing
   6.4.1 Strategies to help with academic writing