AEC 874: FIELD DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

OUTLINE FOR RAPID APPRAISAL AND RESEARCH PROPOSAL

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
Length: Rapid Appraisal, 4 pages (double spaced);
Proposal, 5 pages (excluding dummy tables).
Due: June 12 (Friday)
Weight: 15% of final grade

OBJECTIVE
This report has two sections. In the "rapid appraisal" section you will report on activities carried
out to deepen your understanding of the research topic and to identify potential implementation
problems.

The second section is your "research proposal". The proposal will serve as a guide for
implementing the study. The more effort you put into developing a strong proposal, the fewer
problems you will encounter in implementing the study.

"Field visits" (i.e., meetings with key informants) are required to obtain the information needed
to complete both your rapid appraisal report and the research proposal.

I. RAPID APPRAISAL REPORT FORMAT
Your report must follow the format exactly as described below. If any item is excluded, your
grade will be lowered.

TITLE OF THE STUDY
The title must describe the nature of the study--including the issues, location, and group(s) that
you plan to study.

RAPID APPRAISAL STRATEGY
Describe what you did to obtain background information about the research topic:

1. Contacts. With whom (key informants) did you meet to solicit background information
about the research topic? Key informants may include faculty, potential respondents,
individuals knowledgeable about the problem/topic, etc. Make personal contacts, not phone
contacts.

2. Selection criteria. Why did you contact each of the above noted key informants?

INFORMATION SOUGHT AND INSIGHTS GAINED
Describe the type of information you obtained during these visits.

1. Previous studies. What information did you obtain about related research on your topic?
Cite studies (i.e., journal articles, newspaper articles, reports, etc.) you identified through
your literature search and discussions with key informants.
2. **Insights gained.** For what specific questions did you solicit answer during your visits? What did you learn that will help you to modify your initial plans with respect to (see proposal outline) your approach, population and sample, and instrument/type of questions?

3. **Problems encountered.** Describe any unanticipated problems you uncovered that may affect the implementation of your study. How will you solve these problems?

II. RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORMAT
Your report must follow the format exactly as described below. If any item is excluded, your grade will be lowered.

**TITLE OF STUDY**
The title must describe the nature of the study--including the issues, location, and group(s) that you plan to study.

**PROBLEM STATEMENT**
The problem statement must include three subsections:

1. **Background.** Describe the key issues your study will address.

2. **Related research.** Describe similar studies/related research that has focused on these issues. What insights did these studies provide that helped you to focus you proposed study?

3. **Justification.** Discuss why additional research is needed on this topic. In other words, why should you conduct this study?

**OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. **General objectives.** Describe the general objectives of your study (controlling ideas).

2. **Specific objectives.** Describe the specific objectives of your study and discuss what will be accomplished by carrying out the research.

3. **Research Questions.** For each specific objective, formulate several research questions that you will explore when you analyze the data that you will collect. Recall that: a) simple research questions (e.g., “What percent of East Lansing purchase organic food products?”) do not require you to specify a causal relationship, b) while other research questions (e.g., “What are the differences in the socioeconomic characteristics of residents who do/don’t purchase organic food products?”) indicate a relationship between the dependant variable and one or more independent variables. Be sure it will be possible for you to operationalize (i.e., collect the needed data) your research questions.

**PROCEDURE**
The procedures section must include five subsections:

1. **Approach.** Describe how you plan to accomplish the objectives of your proposed study.
2. **Population and sample.** In survey research, we select a sample of respondents in order to make inferences to a population. In this section, describe: a) the target population from which you plan to select your sample. Your description should include an estimate of the size of the population, its socio-economic characteristics, its location, etc.; and b) the procedure that you plan to use to select the sample. Will the sample be stratified or selected completely at random? How large of a sample will you select? How will you actually select the sample?

3. **Instrument Design.** The instrument/questionnaire is the tool that you will used to collect the data that you will need to answer your research questions. The questions in your questionnaire must be organized into sections that reflect the issues that you have identified as research questions. In this section: a) describe the type of questions that you plan to include in your questionnaire and b) for each question, define the key variables associated with the question.

4. **Analysis.** Once you collect the survey data, you must analyze it in order to evaluate your research questions. While some research questions can be evaluated using descriptive statistics, other others require you to explore relationships between dependant and independent variables. In this section: a) identify the statistical program you will use to analyze your data (i.e., SPSS); b) describe the specific analytical techniques (and variables) that you will use to analyze your **categoric** variables (e.g., frequencies, mode); c) describe the specific analytical techniques (and variables) that you will use to analyze your **continuous** variables (e.g., means, "t" test for significant differences between means); d) describe the specific analytical techniques (and variables) that you will use to analyze **relationships** between dependant and independent variables (e.g., chi square, regression, probit analysis.); and e) construct at least five dummy tables to illustrate how you plan to analyze the data and present the results (include the dummy tables as an appendix). These dummy tables must have complete titles, stubs, and captions.

**WORKPLAN AND PERSONNEL**

In this section: a) describe your timetable (dates) for completing each project component (i.e., rapid appraisal/proposal, questionnaire design/pretesting, data collection, analysis/report writing, report presentation; and b) estimate the amount of time (hours) that your team will require to complete each component.

**NOTE:**
The purpose of the research proposal is to help you to focus your research and to serve as an initial guide for implementing your study. However, as you proceed in implementing the study, you will likely have to modify your proposal.

After you complete a “draft” of your proposal, check to make sure that your proposal clearly shows the relationship between your proposed objectives, research questions, sample, survey instrument, and analysis. The objectives section of your proposal should describe the issues that you intend to study. The research questions section should clarify your objectives by describing the issues that you will explore. The sampling section should describe who you plan to interview. The instrument design section should specify the data you will collect to carry out the analysis. The analysis section should describe the type of analysis you will carry out do inform your research questions. The dummy tables will serve as a check that you are planning to collect the data required to answer your research questions.