



Introduction to Legal Science Research

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Submission: 24.01.2026. Accepted: 12.06.2026. Publication : 02.08.2026

Abstract:

The structure of scientific research varies according to the field and discipline in which it is conducted. Research in the experimental and technical sciences differs significantly from that in the humanities and social sciences, as the nature of the discipline determines the research methodologies employed as well as the overall organization of the study, from its introduction to its conclusion. One aspect that has particularly attracted our attention is the apparent similarity of the preliminary background sections in many research papers. However, the **introduction**, as an essential component of a research paper, encompasses more than a mere preliminary overview. In legal research, it possesses distinctive structural and methodological features that differentiate it from introductions in other disciplines, particularly with respect to elements such as the research problem, hypotheses, and methodological framework. These distinctive characteristics constitute the focus of the present paper.

Keywords: Introduction; Research Introduction Components; Legal Research; Legal Sciences; Research Methodology.

Introduction

The humanities and social sciences, particularly the legal sciences, possess distinctive characteristics and epistemological foundations that have long given rise to debate regarding their status as autonomous scientific disciplines. Scholarly opinion has generally been divided into two principal perspectives.

The first perspective maintains that the humanities cannot be regarded as genuine sciences because they do not rely on research methodologies capable of producing objective and verifiable findings comparable to those generated by the experimental sciences. Proponents of this view argue that only experimental methods are capable of producing reliable, measurable, and scientifically validated results.

The second perspective, however, advocates classifying the humanities as a distinct category of scientific disciplines. According to this view, although they constitute legitimate fields of scientific inquiry, they do not attain the same degree of precision or scientific certainty as the natural and technical sciences, owing to their inability to produce the consistently measurable and replicable results achieved by the natural sciences¹.

¹ Chemechim Rachid. **Methodologies of Legal Sciences.**: El Khaldounia Publications, Algiers .2018.p33.



The question of whether the humanities should be recognized as autonomous scientific disciplines alongside the natural, mathematical, and technical sciences is neither conceptually problematic nor the subject of genuine scholarly controversy. Indeed, many branches of knowledge have their intellectual origins in the humanities and have subsequently evolved into specialized disciplines. The humanities generate scientific knowledge through the study of social phenomena, and their findings are derived from the analysis of human behaviour and social interactions.

Consequently, they provide an interpretative framework that facilitates a forward-looking understanding of the development of social phenomena.

Likewise, the assertion that scientific research methodologies cannot be applied within the humanities is difficult to sustain. The study of social and legal phenomena is equally governed by the principles of scientific inquiry that underpin the natural sciences, including hypothesis formulation, systematic observation, empirical investigation where appropriate, and the analysis and interpretation of research findings.

Accordingly, researchers in the humanities are expected to master and apply the fundamental principles of scientific research, including research methodologies and the essential components of scholarly inquiry, from the preparation of the introduction to the presentation of the final conclusions. Legal research, in particular, is distinguished by the dynamic nature of the legal phenomena it examines, which are deeply rooted in social structures and patterns of human behaviour. Consequently, the introduction to a legal research paper possesses a distinctive methodological structure that differentiates it from introductions in other disciplines within the humanities. It is characterized by specific features and constituent elements that ensure the coherence, rigor, and scientific quality of the study.

These observations have prompted the present research, which seeks to identify the defining characteristics of introductions in legal research and to examine the essential components that contribute to a methodologically sound introduction. Accordingly, the present study addresses the following research questions: **What are the constituent elements of an introduction in legal research? And. What are the principal characteristics that distinguish it from introductions in other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences?**

To answer these questions, the study adopts the descriptive method in order to identify the principal components of the research introduction, examine its defining characteristics and drafting techniques, and analyze its methodological structure. The paper is divided into two main sections. The first examines the concept of the research introduction in the field of legal sciences, whereas the second analyzes its principal components and structural elements, highlighting the major features that distinguish legal research



introductions from those adopted in other disciplines within the humanities and social sciences

Section One: Definition of the Research Introduction

The research introduction constitutes one of the most fundamental components of scholarly work, as it establishes the conceptual foundation upon which the entire study is built and enables both the researcher and the reader to engage with the subject matter in a coherent and systematic manner. Many legal scholars maintain that, as its title suggests, the introduction is the first section to be written, since it identifies the principal research problem and outlines the methodological approaches through which the study will be conducted.

Conversely, another group of scholars argues that although the introduction is the first section to be read, it should be the last to be written. According to this view, only after completing the research and examining its findings can the researcher accurately define the scope of the study and present its essential elements through an introductory section that effectively prepares the reader for the discussion that follows.

It may therefore be observed that, although the introduction appears at the beginning of the research paper and establishes its conceptual framework, scope, and overall orientation, it is generally drafted during the final stage of the research process¹, commonly referred to as the final preparation or manuscript drafting stage.

The introduction comprises several constituent elements, the nature and extent of which vary according to the subject matter and academic discipline. Nevertheless, most scholarly studies share a number of common components, including the background or preliminary overview, the introduction to the research topic, the significance of the study, its objectives, the rationale for selecting the research topic, the research problem, the methodology adopted, and the organization or outline of the study. In addition, many researchers include a review of previous studies, although some scholars maintain that its inclusion depends upon the nature of the research topic itself.

Alongside these elements, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections, the introduction may also include research hypotheses. Hypotheses constitute another important component, particularly where the researcher adopts a quantitative research approach that requires their formulation and empirical verification.

In legal research, however, hypotheses are rarely employed except in empirical studies or in research that relies on questionnaires as the primary instrument for data collection. In such cases, the collected data are analyzed to test and validate the hypotheses formulated at the outset of the study. A research hypothesis is generally understood as a tentative answer to the research problem that is subsequently verified through the analysis of questionnaire data. More broadly, it may be defined as a provisional proposition that

¹ Bouhouche Ammar. Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Dhanibat. *Scientific Research Methodology and Research Preparation*. 7th ed. Algiers: Office des Publications Universitaires., pp. 76–77.



explains the relationship between two or more variables and is subjected to systematic scientific examination throughout the research process¹.

The limited use of hypotheses in legal and other social science research is largely attributable to the predominance of qualitative research approaches, particularly descriptive and survey-based studies. Furthermore, the objectives of the research itself determine whether the formulation of hypotheses is necessary. Where the purpose of the study is to explain phenomena and investigate the relationships between the variables under examination, hypotheses should be formulated as tentative explanations or preliminary propositions concerning the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Conversely, when the principal objective is to identify, describe, or explore facts and legal phenomena, a qualitative research approach may be adopted, enabling the researcher to dispense with hypotheses as a formal component of the research design².

A research hypothesis may take the form of a **directional (or direct) hypothesis**, where the researcher anticipates the existence of a direct relationship between the variables under investigation. For example, a researcher may hypothesize that there is a relationship between society and legal norms, or that human behaviour constitutes the foundation for the existence and development of legal rules. Conversely, a hypothesis may take the form of a **null hypothesis**, which assumes that no relationship exists between the variables under study. An example would be the assumption that there is no relationship between individuals' behaviour and legal norms.

Accordingly, the hypothesis serves as an essential methodological tool that assists the researcher in defining the scope and boundaries of the study while fostering a rigorous scientific approach based on explanation, empirical verification, and critical analysis. It enables the researcher to formulate preliminary assumptions that are subsequently tested through scientific investigation, thereby leading to validated findings and well-founded research conclusions.

Section Two: Components of Introductions in Legal Research

A careful examination of introductions in legal scholarship reveals that they generally consist of several interrelated paragraphs connected through a coherent methodological framework. Although the introduction appears as a unified whole, it is, in fact, composed of a series of complementary elements that collectively establish the structure of the study. These elements include the following:

1. Background (Opening Section of the Introduction)

The background, or introductory section, constitutes the first component of the research introduction. Through this section, the researcher introduces the subject of the study and provides a general overview of the phenomenon under investigation. Depending on the

¹ Ahmed Abdel Moneim Hassan, *Principles of Scientific Research and Methods of Writing Research Papers and Theses*, Academic Library for Publishing, Egypt, 1996, p. 28.

² Ammar Bouhouche and Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Dhanibat, *op. cit.*, p. 47



nature of the research, this introductory discussion may be either concise or comprehensive. A concise background is generally adopted when the researcher intends to develop the subject in greater detail within the main body of the study, a practice commonly found in qualitative research. In such cases, the researcher briefly introduces the topic by providing a clear and comprehensive definition of the phenomenon to be examined through a systematic scientific inquiry.

The background may be concise when the researcher intends to elaborate on the subject in the main body of the study. This approach is commonly adopted in qualitative research, where the researcher briefly introduces the topic through a simple yet comprehensive definition that identifies the phenomenon to be examined by means of a systematic scientific inquiry.

By contrast, quantitative research approaches often require a more direct introduction to the subject matter. Consequently, the researcher is expected to provide a precise and comprehensive definition of the research topic, thereby eliminating ambiguity and minimizing the possibility of divergent interpretations of the phenomenon under investigation. This detailed introductory framework enables the subsequent analysis of the subject from different perspectives, using methodologies that are consistent with the research approach adopted throughout the study.

The background section constitutes the cornerstone of the introduction, as it captures the reader's attention while defining the scope and general framework of the research. It also demonstrates the researcher's ability to identify and accurately define key concepts, particularly legal concepts and terminology with well-established meanings. This requires the researcher to possess a thorough understanding of the subject matter, supported by a comprehensive review of the relevant scientific literature and previous studies.

2. Significance of the Study

For a study to qualify as rigorous scientific research, it must contribute meaningful knowledge and possess demonstrable academic value, particularly within the social sciences. The significance of a study is primarily derived from its subject matter and the contribution it makes to existing knowledge. Its value may lie in generating new scientific knowledge, verifying or expanding previously established findings, or examining the relationships between the phenomena under investigation¹

. Accordingly, every scientific study is expected to contribute, whether by introducing new insights, refining existing theories, or expanding the body of knowledge within its discipline, especially in an era characterized by increasing interdisciplinary integration, where scientific fields continuously interact and evolve in response to societal needs².

¹ Dhouqan Obeidat, Abdul Rahman Adas, and Kaid Abdel Haq, *Scientific Research: Its Concept, Tools, and Methods*, Dar Al-Fikr Publishing, 1984, p. 48.

² Ammar Bouhouche and Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Dhanibat, *op. cit.*, p. 26.



The scientific value and significance of a research study are also influenced by the methodology adopted, the scientific approach employed, the identification of the research variables, and the manner in which these variables are analyzed in light of the researcher's competence and analytical skills. Collectively, these factors enhance the academic quality of the study and increase its practical relevance, enabling it to contribute to the understanding and resolution of the diverse legal and social issues encountered in contemporary society ¹.

In legal research, such an approach also facilitates a deeper understanding of behavioural variables and their impact on society, while contributing to the advancement of legal knowledge and enhancing the effectiveness of legal rules in regulating human conduct.

3. Research Topic

The selection of an appropriate research topic is a fundamental stage in the scientific research process. A worthwhile topic requires extensive investigation and the researcher's ability to produce a scholarly work supported by scientifically substantiated findings. Accordingly, researchers should select a topic that corresponds to their academic interests and personal inclinations, thereby reinforcing both the objectivity of the research process and the scientific value of the study.

The chosen topic should therefore be of genuine interest to the researcher and possess sufficient originality and relevance to generate new knowledge. The novelty and significance of the study may be assessed through the extent to which it contributes original findings, offers innovative perspectives, or provides meaningful additions to the existing body of knowledge.

To assess the suitability and scientific merit of a research topic, researchers should critically evaluate their own ability to investigate the subject and manage its variables effectively. This may involve asking questions such as: *Is this a topic that I am capable of investigating thoroughly? Does it correspond to my academic interests and research expertise?*

The motives underlying the selection of a research topic may be classified into two broad categories: **subjective motives**, which relate to the researcher, and **objective motives**, which relate to the research itself.

The nature of a research topic varies according to the discipline and field of study. Likewise, the type and academic level of the research influence the selection of the topic. In academic research, different criteria may govern topic selection, including the researcher's personal interests or the assignment of a research topic by the academic institution to which the researcher belongs. In the latter case, institutional requirements may limit the researcher's freedom to select a topic based solely on personal preference ².

When the researcher independently selects the research topic, this generally enhances motivation and facilitates a more efficient investigation of the chosen phenomenon. It also

¹ Ammar Bouhouche and Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Dhanibat, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

² Ahmed Abdel Moneim Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 27.



fosters a closer intellectual engagement between the researcher and the study. Personal interests and academic preferences often influence this choice, as researchers tend to be more proficient in certain subjects than others owing to their professional experience, specialization, or analytical and interpretative abilities. Such familiarity enables them to undertake the research more effectively and to employ methodological approaches that are best suited to the subject under investigation.

In addition to personal motivation, other factors should also be taken into consideration when selecting a research topic, including the researcher's physical and financial resources, as well as their academic specialization. Nevertheless, one of the most important determinants remains the scientific value of the study itself. This value may be reflected in the originality and relevance of the research, its potential to generate new knowledge, or its ability to provide new interpretations of findings previously established in earlier studies.

The scientific merit of a research topic may also depend on the breadth and scope of the subject, its temporal and geographical dimensions, the availability of previous studies, and the abundance of scholarly references upon which the researcher may rely for collecting and analyzing research materials.

4. Literature Review

Every scientific study is founded upon previous research, which serves as the starting point for subsequent scholarly inquiry. As previously noted, scientific research is an investigative process that seeks either to examine a new phenomenon, explore the relationships between its variables, or verify and build upon the findings of earlier studies. Consequently, researchers must rely on existing literature and accumulated knowledge, as these provide the theoretical foundation for formulating hypotheses and producing scientifically sound findings regardless of the field of study.

While some scholars maintain that a literature review is not an indispensable component of the research introduction, the prevailing academic view is that previous studies constitute an essential element of scholarly research. A well-conducted literature review enables the researcher to demonstrate how the present study differs from existing research, justify the selection of the research topic, and identify the gaps in the literature that the current study seeks to address, thereby establishing its originality and scientific contribution.

5. Research Problem

One of the most essential components of a research introduction is the **research problem**, which constitutes the central issue to be investigated. It is generally expressed in the form of a research question that the study seeks to answer and serves as the conceptual framework guiding the entire research process. Consequently, the formulation of the research problem must comply with a number of methodological requirements to ensure its scientific validity and coherence.

The research problem is typically formulated as a principal question, which may be accompanied by a number of subsidiary questions. Alternatively, it may be presented in the



form of a concise explanatory paragraph, provided that it satisfies the requirements of precision, clarity, and consistency. Particular attention should be given to the accurate use of terminology in order to avoid ambiguity that could lead the researcher beyond the intended scope of the study.

Moreover, the research problem must be directly related to the research topic. During its formulation, it is advisable to avoid overly complex or compound questions. Where necessary, the principal variables of the study should be explicitly incorporated into the main research question. In this respect, the research problem functions as the central axis that connects the various chapters and sections of the study, thereby ensuring its logical coherence and structural unity.

The formulation of the research problem represents one of the greatest methodological challenges confronting researchers, particularly in academic research. The scope and structure of the research problem vary according to the discipline concerned. In the social sciences, such as psychology, for example, the research problem may extend over several pages, during which the researcher reviews the theoretical assumptions, conceptual definitions, and alternative explanations before concluding with a clearly articulated statement of the research problem.

By contrast, in legal research, the research problem is generally formulated as a principal research question accompanied, where appropriate, by subsidiary questions. This structure, which is widely adopted in legal scholarship, enables the researcher to integrate the principal variables of the study within a coherent analytical framework. An essential methodological requirement is to exclude issues that fall outside the scope of the research while, at the same time, avoiding an excessively narrow formulation of the research problem. Overly restricting the scope of the research question may diminish the scientific significance and originality of the study.¹

6. Research Methodology

Following the formulation of the research problem, the researcher must identify the methodology to be adopted as the principal means of conducting the study. This should be stated immediately after presenting the research problem. For example, the researcher may indicate: *"The research problem will be addressed through the adoption of the ... method, which ..."* In other words, the researcher is required not only to identify the methodology but also to justify its selection and explain its role within the research.

For instance, a researcher may state: *"The descriptive method has been adopted in order to describe the various aspects and determinants of the phenomenon under investigation, such as a particular form of criminal behaviour, while relying on its analytical techniques to examine the relevant legal provisions."* Likewise, studies dealing with civilizations or the historical development of legal systems within a specific temporal and geographical context may appropriately employ the historical method. In such cases, the

¹ Chemecham Rachid. *op. cit.*, p. 66.



researcher should justify its use by referring to the methodological tools associated with historical research, including the analysis of historical documents, archaeological evidence, internal and external criticism of sources, and the processes of synthesis and inference leading to the final conclusions.

It is important to note a common methodological misconception concerning the use of the historical method. Some researchers assume that merely describing the legislative evolution of a legal phenomenon constitutes historical research. This approach is methodologically incorrect, since the historical method is defined not by chronological narration but by its methodological tools, namely critical examination, analytical deconstruction, synthesis, and reasoned interpretation. Mere description of legislative developments over successive periods does not, in itself, constitute the application of the historical method.

Accordingly, research methodology represents the general framework upon which the study is constructed, and its selection is determined primarily by the nature of the research topic. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are based on different methodological foundations, each corresponding to the characteristics of the discipline concerned. For example, where the study examines a specific pattern of human or criminal behaviour within the field of legal studies, a quantitative approach may be adopted through the application of appropriate empirical methods ¹. Furthermore, the research methodology is closely connected with the research plan, as it determines the structure and organization of the study.

7. Research Structure (Research Plan)

The final component of the introduction in legal research is the **research structure**, also referred to as the **research plan**. It represents the architectural framework of the study and may be compared to the foundation of a building, without which a coherent and well-organized structure cannot be established.

The research plan consists of a systematic division of the study into books, parts, sections, chapters, topics, and subtopics, arranged in a logical sequence that reflects both the principal research problem and the subsidiary research questions. The researcher proceeds progressively from the general to the specific while observing accepted academic conventions of legal writing. Depending on the scope of the study, the structural hierarchy may include books, parts, divisions, chapters, sections, subsections, branches, numbered headings, and other appropriate organizational levels.

The logical sequencing and coherence of ideas are indispensable requirements in developing a research plan, which must be closely aligned with the subject matter of the study. In academic research, the structural organization typically begins with the highest appropriate level—such as a **Book** or **Part**—and continues through successive subdivisions to the final level of organization deemed necessary by the researcher to comprehensively address the research topic.

¹ Ammar Bouhouche and Mohammed Mahmoud Al-Dhanibat, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–149.



The research structure is presented at the end of the introduction, where the researcher outlines the organization of the study by briefly describing the subjects to be examined in each section. For example, the researcher may state: *"This study is divided into ... Parts. Part One examines ... and is composed of two Chapters, the first of which addresses ...,"* and so forth until the complete structure of the study is presented, concluding with the final chapter or conclusion.

Conclusion

Scientific research encompasses a wide variety of forms and approaches that differ according to their respective disciplines and the methodologies employed, particularly with regard to qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. Nevertheless, it may be argued that the most rigorous scientific studies are those characterized by coherence and integration throughout all their components, from the introduction to the conclusion, and by findings that are sufficiently reliable to be generalized to similar phenomena when comparable variables and surrounding conditions exist.

Furthermore, the researcher plays a fundamental role in determining the nature and quality of the study. Their analytical ability and methodological competence are reflected most clearly in the preparation of the introduction, which constitutes the first section read by the audience. Through the introduction, the researcher defines the scientific framework of the study, formulates the research problem, and presents the overall structure of the research.

As previously emphasized, the introduction serves as both the gateway and the foundation of the research. Consequently, its constituent elements should be carefully observed, particularly in the field of legal studies, where the structure of the introduction differs from that commonly adopted in other social and human sciences. While some disciplines omit certain introductory elements, others extend the research problem beyond a single question or paragraph to include several explanatory paragraphs and multiple hypotheses within the problem statement itself, as is frequently the case in disciplines such as psychology and political science.

The following recommendations may be advanced:

- Academic researchers and students should develop a thorough understanding of the essential components of the research introduction and be able to determine whether each element is necessary in light of the nature of the study. In some cases, for example, an introduction may not require a review of previous studies but may instead be based on a research hypothesis that requires empirical verification.
- The introduction should be carefully structured so that its organization is consistent with the nature of the research topic and the methodology adopted.
- Researchers should formulate a clear and well-defined research problem as an integral component of the introduction, ensuring that it is fully aligned with the objectives of the study.
- Regardless of the researcher's academic rank or the level of the research undertaken, it should always be emphasized that the introduction is the product of the researcher's



own scholarly work. It should therefore demonstrate originality and reflect the researcher's mastery of the subject under investigation.

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