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Learning Objectives

This session provides the guidelines for writing a research proposal. It also discusses the relationship between research proposal and the Chapter one of a long essay or dissertation. At the end of the session students should be able to understand the key components of research proposal and also learn how to turn the research proposal into the Chapter One of their long essay or dissertation.
Research Proposal

- Introduction
- Research Objectives
- Research Questions
- Significance of the Research
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Project Schedule
- References
# Research Proposal vs Chapter One

## Research Proposal
- **Introduction**
  - Research Background
  - Research Problem
  - Research Purpose
- **Research Objectives**
- **Research Questions**
- **Significance of the Research**
- **Literature Review**
- **Research Methodology**
- **Research Limitations**
- **Project Schedule**
- **Chapter Outline**

## Chapter One Outline
- **Research Background**
- **Research Problem**
- **Research Purpose**
- **Research Objective**
- **Research Question**
- **Proposed Research Methodology**
- **Significance of the Research**
- **Research Limitations**
- **Chapter Outline**
Research Background

• Usually provides an introduction to the research issue
• It may examine current discourse, trends or views concerning a social phenomena in order to pose a research question
• The research question will not be explicitly stated but implied in an argument
Social networking in workplace

Social networking is increasingly becoming a phenomenon in social and business lifestyles of employees. Statistics from the 2011 Forbes’ report on Social networking and business, stated that, 85 per cent of workers in America spend a minimum of 30 minutes of working hours to visit social networking websites (Forbes, 2011). These statistics are not too far from that of Africans, as a recent study in South Africa also found 70 per cent of South African workers interviewed browsed facebook during working hours (Ngu, 2011). Then again, beyond the concern on growth in the use of social networking platforms in the workplace, there has been concerns about the implications it has on both employers and employees (Jackson, 2012). While some employers have been reported to requesting access passwords to employee accounts (Carlifornia Times, 2012); others are exploring policies and strategies to leverage social media in marketing and sales (Carmen, 2009; BBC, 2011).

Somehow businesses have to respond this growing phenomena. However, the questions are should employers be concerned - what is the potential risks and benefits of social networking in the workplace and how can businesses address the risk?
Research Background

Aggressive Behaviour in the Nursing Homes

Nursing homes play a key role in society supporting the elderly and the families of elderly. A report from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2009), states that about 75 per cent of families in the USA, Canada and UK have family members or close relations in nursing homes. A number of developing countries are also increasingly introducing nursing homes. For example, as of 2008 the number of nursing homes in South Africa and Nigeria have averagely increased by 60 percent, with each of the countries having not less than 2400 registered nursing homes (WHO, 2010). Families who adopt or use nursing homes tend to agree to benefits including quality of health care, quality of social support and improved familial relations as the elderly are no longer viewed as a burden (Burns, 2008; Nisa, 2011). Despite these benefits, recent reports have questioned how nursing homes are managed and regulated especially as residents may have different health and emotional needs (Roberts, 2011; Health Watch, 2012). If the benefits of nursing homes are to be sustained, then, there is a need to review the needs or behavior of residents and how they can be addressed.
Research Problem

• A situation in need of a solution, improvement, or alteration; or a discrepancy between the way things are and the way they ought to be.

Research Problem

Social networking in Public Sector in Mexico

The adoption of social media by the government confronts a series of barriers. Some of these barriers relate to records management, privacy and security issues, accuracy, and administration-specific requirements (Bertot et al., 2012; Bryer and Zavattaro, 2011; Landsbergen, 2010 and Sherman, 2011). As social media includes two-way communications, the risk of inserting malware into governments' websites exists (Bertot et al., 2012), so the IT people should be prepared to protect government's information technology infrastructure. Governments that would like to implement social media need to verify if people in charge of updating the media will have the time to update the new communication channel; they also need to answer other questions such as what to post, how and when often they will update (Bryer and Zavattaro, 2011 and Landsbergen, 2010). The lack of resources and procedures could undermine the accuracy of the information posted on social media.

Although the use of social media in Mexican state government portals is recent, the development of relationships between government and citizens is growing fast (Sandoval-Almazán et al., 2011). However, in contrast with other countries, to our knowledge, there is still no guideline for the use of social media in Mexico. The study of perceived risks, benefits, and strategies will be very helpful in the development of those guidelines.
Example of Research Problem

Aggressive Behaviour in the Nursing Homes

Aggressive behavior in cognitively impaired elderly is often problematic for family and professional caregivers who attempt to provide compassionately for their needs. If caregivers view aggression as meaningful behavior to be explored and understood rather than as disruptive behavior to be controlled, they may find it more of a challenge and less of a threat. In the future, behavioral problems in the cognitively impaired are likely to have an even greater impact on individuals, families and society, since the prevalence of dementia is known to increase with age (Kern, 1998) and the number of the old in this country is projected to continue to rise sharply (Longino, 1998). Both family and professional caregivers will need to understand dementia and develop skills in the prevention and management of behavioral problems in this population (Ryden et al., 1991, p.87). This research seeks to respond to this need.

Source:
Research Problem Example 2

Corporate governance has been identified in previous studies to influence firms' financing or capital structure decisions which also affect performance (see Berger et al., 1997; Friend and Lang, 1988). These empirical studies tended to focus mainly on developed economies with inconclusive results. Very little, however, has been done on corporate governance in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially with respect to firms' financing decisions. In Ghana for instance, economic development and restructuring have introduced modern forms of business activity and diverse financing structures like the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE) in the past two decades. Thus firms are being exposed to more financing options than previously. It is crucial to determine how current issues in corporate governance affect the financing decisions of Ghanaian firms. This paper specifically examines the relationship between various variables of corporate governance and the capital structure decisions of firms listed on the GSE during the six-year period (1998-2003).

A purpose is a **concise, clear statement** of the specific goal or aim of the study. The purpose includes the variables, population, and setting for a study.

*The purpose of the study is to determine the nature, frequency of occurrence, and context of aggressive behavior in a nursing home sample of cognitively impaired residents.*

Research Purpose = Problem Statement

• The purpose of this study is to understand [what] of [who or what] involving [what or who] from [when] to [purpose].

• The purpose of this study is to determine the nature, frequency of occurrence, and context of aggressive behavior in a nursing home sample of cognitively impaired residents.
Research Problem & Research Objective

- **Research problem**: typically a rather general overview of the problem with just enough information about the scope and purpose of the study to provide an initial understanding of the research [*it may include the research purpose*]

- **Research objective**: more specific, focused statements and questions that communicate in greater detail the nature of the study
Research Problem & Research Objectives/Statement

• Research Problem

[begin with description of the problem from literature and practice and end with research purpose]

– The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of high school students to mandated drug testing programs.

• Research Objective

– This study examines the differences between males' and females' attitudes toward mandated high school drug testing programs.
Research Objective

*From the nursing study*

- **The purpose of this study is to determine the nature, frequency of occurrence, and context of aggressive behavior in a nursing home sample of cognitively impaired residents.**

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the proportion [context] of cognitively impaired nursing home residents that demonstrate aggressive behavior; and
2. To investigate the types of aggressive behavior which occur most frequently among cognitively impaired residents.
Research Question

- Research questions are **interrogative statements** that focus on **what variables** or **concepts** are to be described and **what relationships** might exist among them.

Research Question

From the nursing study

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the proportion [context] of cognitively impaired nursing home residents that demonstrate aggressive behavior; and
2. To investigate the types of aggressive behavior which occur most frequently among cognitively impaired residents.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What proportion of cognitively impaired nursing home residents demonstrate aggressive behavior?
2. Which types of aggressive behavior occur most frequently?
Good Research Questions

- *Is your research question clear?*  
  Research questions must be as clear as possible to offer direction.

- *Is your research question focused?*

- *Is your research question complex?*  
  Research questions should not be answerable with a simple “yes” or “no” or by easily-found facts. They should, instead, require both research and analysis on the part of the researcher.

Retrieved online from the George Mason University Writing Centre  
http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources-template.php?id=59
Good Research Questions: CLARITY

- **Unclear:** Why are social networking sites harmful?
- **Clear:** How are online users experiencing or addressing privacy issues on such social networking sites as MySpace and Facebook?

The unclear version of this question doesn’t specify which social networking sites or suggest what kind of harm the sites are causing. It also assumes that this “harm” is proven and/or accepted. The clearer version specifies sites (MySpace and Facebook), the type of harm (privacy issues), and who the issue is harming (users). A strong research question should never leave room for ambiguity or interpretation.

Retrieved online from the George Mason University Writing Centre [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources-template.php?id=59](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources-template.php?id=59)
Good Research Questions: FOCUS

- **Unfocused**: What is the effect on the environment from global warming?
- **Focused**: How is glacial melting affecting penguins in Antarctica?

The unfocused research question is so broad that it couldn’t be adequately answered in a book. The focused version narrows down to a specific cause (glacial melting), a specific place (Antarctica), and a specific group that is affected (penguins). When in doubt, make a research question as narrow and focused as possible.
Too simple: *How are doctors addressing diabetes in the U.S.?*

** Appropriately Complex: *What are common traits of those suffering from diabetes in America, and how can these commonalities be used to aid the medical community in prevention of the disease?*

- The simple version of this question can be looked up online and answered in a few factual sentences; it leaves no room for analysis. The more complex version is written in two parts; it is thought provoking and requires both significant investigation and evaluation.
- As a general rule of thumb, if a quick Google search can answer a research question, it’s likely not very effective.
Research Question

*From the nursing study*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the proportion [context] of cognitively impaired nursing home residents that demonstrate aggressive behavior; and
2. To investigate the types of aggressive behavior which occur most frequently among cognitively impaired residents.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What proportion of cognitively impaired nursing home residents demonstrate aggressive behavior?
2. Which types of aggressive behavior occur most frequently?
Literature Review/Relevant Literature

- The literature review section in a research proposal often seeks to explain the concepts behind the research and also present a theoretical approach to addressing the research questions. This is often difficult for new researchers as they may not be sure of theoretical approach/model/factors to use for the research they are yet to begin.

- As a general rule of thumb, you can use this section to introduce the relevant literature you need to read or review for your research. Also explain the key concepts in the research and possible factors or issues to be explored. If a research framework has been identified you can mention it. This is a good starting point.

- That is why it is good to categorise literature and identify the keywords in your research.
Example: Mobiles Phones and Micro-trading

This study investigates the impact of mobile phones on the micro-trading activities of women traders in Ghana. To obtain answers to this objective, four strands of literature will be reviewed. The first strand will explore the concept of trading/commerce from the perspective of the transaction cost theory. Transaction cost theory is arguably the most commonly used theory in studying issues relating to assessment of the impact of ICTs on commerce or trade (Pare, 2003). Transaction costs are described as “the costs of running a system” (Williamson, 1985: 19). The study will use the costs involved in micro-trading. The second and third strands of literature will review literature on features of mobile phones and benefits of using those mobile phones in the reducing costs of trading.

The fourth strand of literature will examine the impact of mobile phones generated by virtue of the benefits. Mobile phones are conceptualized to have three effects on its adopters – incremental or amplification, transformational and production (Heeks and Jagun, 2007). These effects will be used to analyze the impact of mobile phones on trade.
Research Methodology

• Identify the type of study to be carried out
  – Quantitative or Qualitative or Mixed Methods study
  – Unit of Analysis: Individual/households, Organizations, Industry, Country

• What research strategy will be used to conduct the study and why were those strategies were selected?
  – Case study or survey

• Where data will be collected and what methods will be used? - Why
  – Study Population
  – Primary Data: Questionnaires, Interviews, Observation
  – Secondary Data: Industry reports, company documents
Example: Gender Differences in E-banking Adoption

- The study will use a quantitative approach to study the gender differences in the adoption of e-banking services among university students. The study population are students in the University of Ghana Business School. A study by Turkson (2009) found that students enrolled in finance and accounting programmes are more likely to adopt e-banking services. A survey will be carried out on a sample selected from students in the third and fourth year enrolled in finance or accounting programmes.

- A questionnaire concerning the adoption and use of e-banking services will be administered to 150 students. The study will also examine statistics on student banking activities from campus banks.
Significance of the Research

This section discusses the potential benefits or implications of this research study on **Future Research, Practice and Policy**

- **Implications to research**: how does it inform research area?
- **Implications to Practice** (managers, practitioners, employees, organizations etc)
- **Implications to Policy** (if applicable)—what do your findings tell government, international community, development agencies etc.

Source: Boateng (2011)
Example: E-banking in Rural Banks

• The significance of the study can be viewed along three strands: research, practice and policy. Concerning the research significance, this study goes beyond current research on e-banking in rural banks by examining the strategies for implementing and integrating e-banking technologies. Literature on strategic perspective on e-banking in rural banks is arguably non-existent on Ghana and perhaps this spreads to the West-Africa region.

• Concerning significance to practice, the study will provide guidelines to other rural banks on the factors which influence e-banking adoption and strategic options to address challenges in managing and sustaining e-banking applications. This will be very helpful to ARB Apex Bank and to rural banks in its network.

• Concerning significance to policy, the study will provide feedback on policies driving the computerization of rural banks which is critical to the operations of financier, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the government of Ghana and other donors who have interest in supporting ICT integration in rural banks. These contributions to practice and policy will become necessary to the development of more advanced or complex functionalities for rural banks including internet banking and mobile banking.
Research Limitations

• Points out the limitations in the research issues which may influence the research
• Definitional concepts
  – what is included and what is not
• Scope and Constraints
  – which respondents will not be involved and, perhaps why
• Variables
  - Which data will not be collected/studied
Example: E-banking in Rural Banks

• A sample size of 50 computerized RCBs will be selected out of the 97 based on proximity for ease of data collection and time constraint for the study. The study will not cover the use of electronic channels such as ATM, POS, mobile phone and internet since these channels have not yet been deployed to the banks. It will only focus on the computerization project under the mandate of the ARB Apex Bank.

• Also there is a possibility that some of the respondents may not return their questionnaires since it will touch on their financial and operational performance before and after computerization.

• The study will focus more on the banks than their customers in assessing the challenges and prospects of the project.

Source: Boateng (2011)
Project Schedule

• Activities to done
• Time required
• Time it will be finished
## Project Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 4-6</td>
<td>Complete Draft Learner Plan</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6-25</td>
<td>Send inquiry letters, survey contacts (Schleiner, Pearce, Condon)</td>
<td>Ongoing (2 of 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26</td>
<td>Article survey, Key rhetorical texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Complete bibliography, learner plan</td>
<td>Currently Ongoing</td>
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<td>May 1-4</td>
<td>Chapter 4.3 abstract submitted as paper proposal, DiGRA</td>
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<td>May 4-14</td>
<td>Chapter 4.3 complete in draft</td>
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<td>May 14-24</td>
<td>Introduction and Methodology complete in draft</td>
<td>Schedule meeting for review</td>
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<td>May 25-June 4</td>
<td>Chapter 4.1 complete in draft</td>
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<td>June 5-14</td>
<td>Chapter 4.2 complete in draft</td>
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<td>June 15-25</td>
<td>Chapter 4.4 complete in draft</td>
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<td>June 26-July 2</td>
<td>Conclusions complete in draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2 - July 5</td>
<td>Review, Draft one to primary/(secondary) supervisor</td>
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<td>July 6 - July 12</td>
<td>Formatting, stylistic and reference review</td>
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<td>July 13- July 19</td>
<td>Completion of final draft for review</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>Final version submitted to full defense committee</td>
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## Project Schedule

### January
- **Christmas:** Write research proposal
- **Literature review**
- **Complete literature review and conduct pilot study**
- **Main data collection**

### February
- **Complete data collection**
- **Analyze data**
- **Analyze data**
- **Write dissertation plan, then begin first draft**

### March
- **Complete first draft**
- **Discuss draft with supervisor**
- **Second draft**
- **Second draft**
- **Proofing/checking**
Project Schedule

• Activities to done – *Use the Chapter Outline*
• Assess how much time you have
• Be Realistic
• Consider “No Show of Data”
  – Time required
  – Time it will be finished
Chapter Outline

• Present an outline for the long essay detailing the objective of each chapter
• Gives an indication on the number of chapters in the dissertation
Example: Use of Technology by Health Care Professionals

- The first chapter comprises; research background, research problem, research purpose, objectives of the study, research questions, research significance, scope and limitation of research and the chapter synopsis/organization of research.
- Chapter two focuses on a review of relevant literature on the overview of HIS and research framework. The third chapter entails the context of the study, which covers the brief overview of the health care system in Ghana and the profile of the case setting.
- Chapter four deals with the methodological approaches which highlights on study area, source and study population, sampling techniques and sample size, data collection instrument and method, data processing and mode of analysis, variables and ethical considerations. Chapter five entails data presentation, analysis, and discussion of findings. Finally, chapter six comprises the summary, conclusions and recommendations. The references and appendices follow this chapter.
References