

# Research Methods

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**WEEK TWO**  
**LECTURER: N. QUARRIE**

# Learning Outcome One (1)

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- LO1 Understand how to formulate a research specification

# Objective of Lesson

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- By the end of this lesson you should be able to:
- 1.2 identify the factors that contribute to the process of research project selection



# Overview

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- It is a fact that the selection of a random research topic for a school project can be challenging. There are a number of factors that may influence your topic decision.
- You may also have a case wherein as a researcher for a company you may be asked to do specific research for the company depending different issues etc that are impacting the company.
- We will be focusing on: Hypothesis: definition; suitability; skills and knowledge to be gained; aims and objectives; terms of reference; duration; ethical issues

# What is a Hypothesis?

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“A research hypothesis is a statement of expectation or prediction that will be tested by research. Before formulating your research hypothesis, read about the topic of interest to you (oakland.edu, 2016).”

- View an example of how to write a hypothesis/research question here:  
<https://explorable.com/how-to-write-a-hypothesis>

# Suitability and Relevance

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It is important to select a topic that is suitable. In your case to your it must be suitable based on your field of study.

The topic selected must also be relevant.

“Select a topic that is of relevance to you as a professional. Ensure that your study adds to the existing body of knowledge (Ranjit, 2011).”

# Skills and knowledge to be gained

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- Lets say that you chose a topic in the hospitality, you need to think about the knowledge you will gain from doing that research. Bringing fresh results from a research to an industry could also be beneficial to the industry. So you can think about how the industry could benefit from your research when trying to select a research problem.
- It is important to evaluate the knowledge or skills you will need to have to be able to conduct the research. According to Ranjit (2011) “As a newcomer it might seem easy to formulate a problem but it requires considerable knowledge of both the subject area and research methodology. Once you examine a question more closely you will soon realize the complexity of formulating an idea into a problem which is researchable.”

# Aims and objectives

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- From time to time the selection of a research topic may be based on an external objective of the researcher. Example the researcher may chose a topic based on their area of study because that is what the course requires them to focus on.
- Some persons may have to select research topic based on the aims and objectives of the persons funding the research. For example lets say someone what to do a PhD research and they get a scholarship from an AIDS fund/organization then they may have to ensure that their research focus is in that area, depending on the details of the scholarship requirements.



# Duration

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- When you are selecting your research topic for this course you have to choose one that can be completed within the duration of the semester.
- You are expected to estimate the amount of time it will take to collect data. Note that the section that requires you to collect data usually take some time. It also takes further time to analyze the data collected.

# Ethical issues

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- We should be able to trust results of a research. It is therefore important to not make up results or to cheat to get information for research. According to Nicolas (2011), “Research, however novel its discoveries, is only of any value if it is carried out honestly. We cannot trust the results of a research project if we suspect that the researchers have not acted with integrity. Although it might be easy enough to take short cuts or even to cheat, it really is not worth it. Not only will your research be discredited when you are found out, but you will suffer severe penalties and humiliation.”

# Ethical issues

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There are two aspects of ethical issues in research:

- “1 The individual values of the researcher relating to honesty and frankness and personal integrity.
- 2 The researcher’s treatment of other people involved in the research, relating to informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and courtesy (Nicolas, (2011).”

Many higher education institution usually has a ethical committees that reviews the proposed research and then gives the go ahead to continue if the research is ethically sound.

# Review Questions

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1. What is a research hypothesis?
2. Explain the importance of knowing about the ethical dynamics of a research?
3. Explain three factors that influences the selection of a research hypothesis.

# References/Additional Reading List

1. Wwwp.oakland.edu. (2016). *Association for Interdisciplinary Studies Homepage - Association for Interdisciplinary Studies - Oakland University*. [online] Available at: <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/ais/> [Accessed 11 May 2016].
2. Explorable.com. (2016). *How to Write a Hypothesis - The Research Paper Question*. [online] Available at: <https://explorable.com/how-to-write-a-hypothesis> [Accessed 11 May 2016].

# References/Additional Reading List

- 3. Nicolas, W. (2011). *Research Methods: the basics*. [online] blog.sciencenet.cn. Available at: <http://blog.sciencenet.cn/home.php?mod=attachment&iid=13579> [Accessed 11 May 2016].
- 4. Ranjit, K. (2011). *RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. [online] [http://www.sociology.kpi.ua/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ranjit\\_Kumar-Research\\_Methodology\\_A\\_Step-by-Step\\_G.pdf](http://www.sociology.kpi.ua/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ranjit_Kumar-Research_Methodology_A_Step-by-Step_G.pdf) Available at: [http://www.sociology.kpi.ua/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ranjit\\_Kumar-Research\\_Methodology\\_A\\_Step-by-Step\\_G.pdf](http://www.sociology.kpi.ua/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ranjit_Kumar-Research_Methodology_A_Step-by-Step_G.pdf) [Accessed 11 May 2016].