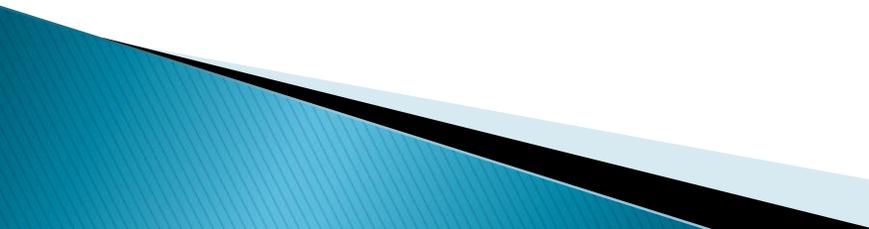


# Unit 16: Research for Strategic Managers

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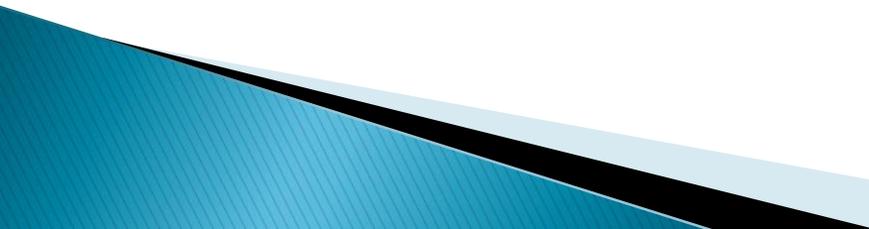
# Content

- ▶ Learning Objectives
  - ▶ Introduction
  - ▶ Key Research Concepts
  - ▶ How to design your research:
    - Nature of Business Research
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    - Selecting a Research Topic
    - Aims and Objectives
    - Rationale for Research Purpose
  - ▶ Selecting research topic
  - ▶ Formulating a Research topic/question
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# Learning Objectives

- ▶ At the end of this session, Learners should:
  - Understand the nature of Business Research
  - Understand how to formulate a research specification :-
    - Formulate a research Question
    - Identify the factors that contribute to the process of research project selection

# Introduction

- ▶ Research is very important to the development of society and the success of businesses.
  - ▶ It is a science that offers special approach to the discovery of reality through personal experience.
  - ▶ Epistemology is the science of knowing; methodology (a subfield of epistemology) might be called the science of finding out (Babbie, 2004:6).
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# Some Key Terms

- ▶ **Quantitative research** is generally associated with the positivist/postpositivist paradigm. It usually involves collecting and converting data into numerical form so that statistical calculations can be made and conclusions drawn.
  - ▶ **Qualitative research** associated with inductive approach to generating theory, often using an interpretivist model allowing the existence of multiple subjective perspective constructing knowledge rather than seeking to find it in reality (Greener & Martelli, 2015).
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# How to Design a Research

- ▶ Getting Started:
    - What is your interest?
    - You may then begin to read something about the issue/interest
    - You may then seek to find out what other researchers have written about the subject matter
    - You may also want to talk to some people who support your position.
  - ▶ These initial activities will help you prepare to handle the various decisions of research design for your study.
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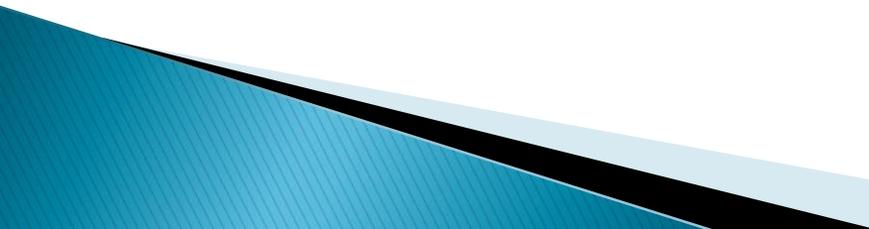
# Understanding the Nature of Business Research

- ▶ In business, and for academic research, the questions we ask must be valid and fair, related to our need for information. We should not just collect information for collecting information sake
- ▶ Collect information in a systematic and fair way.
- ▶ We must also analyse our data with great care in a systematic way. The rigor of our analyse will determine the validity of our research results. This therefore will affect or business decision – invest in what kind of technology, where and when to launch our product

# Defining the Purpose of study

- ▶ Before designing your study, you must define the purpose of your project. What kind of study will you undertake – descriptive, explanatory, exploratory?
  - ▶ Is this paper to satisfy a course requirement, gain information that will allow you to argue for or against an issue, to write an article? In reviewing the previous research literature on what other researchers have done, take note of the design decisions they have made and ask whether the same decisions would satisfy your purpose.
- 

# Objectives of the Study

- ▶ Once you have come up with what you think is a good aim, try to develop some objectives. This detailed work on the proposed study will assist you in uncovering any pitfalls with the aim.
  - ▶ There are numerous definitions as to what an aim is and also what an objective might be. For our purposes, the aim is the overall purpose, the objectives can be regarded as milestones, interim steps that will help you achieve your overall aim. There is no hard and fast rule as to how many objectives to have.
  - ▶ If you have too many it is likely your research is too broad. If you have too few, you may lose track of your study. The key purpose of the aim and objectives is to provide you with a guide to keep you on track (it is very easy to become side tracked in research).
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# Objectives of the Study

- ▶ Step 5: Objectives usually cover things like key areas in the literature that need to be explored, an outline data collection statement, and possibly some comment on data analysis (e.g. the study will apply X's framework to assess job satisfaction in company Y).
- ▶ Avoid common pitfalls:
  - Time
  - Money
  - Contacts
  - Research skills
  - Research materials

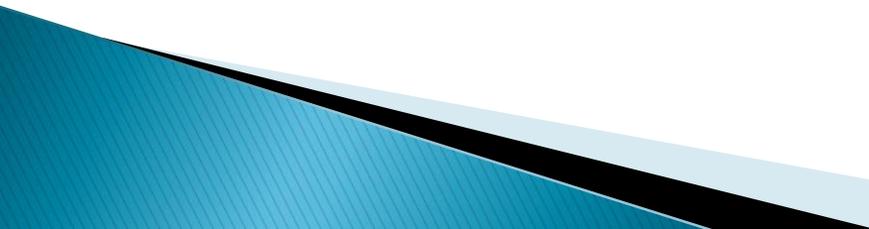
# Be careful not to choose an aim that is too ambitious/unrealistic

- ▶ If a zillion people have already tried to answer a specific research question/aim but to no or little avail then be very careful going down the same path (unless you are convinced you are bringing something novel to the show!). Yes, please work out how to turn base metals into gold and then reveal your secret to me!
- ▶ "This study aims to explain how leadership affects company performance." Nothing is ever this straightforward in the social sciences. How leadership affects performance will depend on a multitude of contextual factors, not least what you mean by leadership and performance. An interest in better understanding the impact of leadership on performance is a good starting point but your study needs to be more specific.

# Selecting a research Topic

- ▶ Greener & Martelli (2015) Perspective:
  - ▶ In doing so, you need to consider what kind of business problem might need a research study. The nature of business is that most business organisation in whatever sector, will require research activities.
  - ▶ When choosing an area, we usually start either with a broad area of management, which may be of particular interest (marketing, operations management) or we start from a theoretical point of view: generalising or comparing one organisation with another (What marketing strategy is more effective in different organisational types?)
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# Refining the researchable topic

- ▶ Narrow down the study topic base on interest, and available time
  - ▶ Choose a topic context – where can you find practitioners and will you have access to them, or a context that is well documents on the web or in the literature
  - ▶ Identify relevant Theory or domains of knowledge around the questions for reading and background understanding
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# Refining the researchable topic

- ▶ Write and re-write the question or working topic – continuously review to ensure it says exactly what you want it to say and that your assumptions are correct
  - ▶ Use the published literature and discuss with others
  - ▶ Identify the possible outcome form topic both theoretical and practical. If not clear, they can be refined.
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# Formulating a Research Problem

- ▶ Babbie (2005) perspective:
- ▶ The first step in the scientific inquiry is the formulation of a general topic into a specific research problem:
  - Understand the problem thorough (see above)
  - Rephrase it into an analytical way – requiring a response/ make it into a question

# Formulating a Research Problem

- ▶ Identify Broad field or subject area of interest to you
  - ▶ Dissect the broad areas into small area
  - ▶ Select what is of most interest to you
  - ▶ Raise research questions
  - ▶ Formulate objectives
  - ▶ Assess your objectives
- 

# Put the Problem into Specific terms

- ▶ Defining the problem clearly is very critical in the process of research. Failure to do so will result in faulty results and unusable findings.
- ▶ The objective of the research problem helps to determine:
  - the data which need to be collected
  - The characterise the relevant data
  - The choice of techniques to be used in the explorations
  - The frame for the Final report

# Conduct Literature Survey

- ▶ Review literature at two levels:
  - Conceptual Literature: concerning concepts and theories
  - Empirical Literature: concerning studies made earlier which are similar to the one proposed.
- ▶ Summarise the problems based on your reading
- ▶ Note your sources:
  - Journals
  - Government/Business reports
  - Books
  - Online Articles.
  - Sources of information is largely dependent on the nature of your study.

# Developing Research Question

- ▶ State in clear terms the working hypothesis (Basic idea of the research problem) this is a working assumptions in order to focus your research. It should be very specific and very well limited to the place of research in hand because it has to be tested.
  - Most commonly, hypotheses take three formats:
    - 1.) a question, "Does temperature affect fermentation?"
    - 2.) a conditional statement, "Temperature may affect fermentation."
    - 3.) an If, then statement, "If fermentation rate is related to temperature, then increasing the temperature will increase gas production."

# Developing Research Question

- ▶ A hypothesis is a logical supposition, a reasonable guess, an educated conjecture. It provides a tentative explanation for a phenomenon under investigation." (Leedy & Ormrod 2001).
- ▶ An example of a formalized research hypothesis is "If skin cancer is related to ultraviolet light , then people with a high exposure to uv light will have a higher frequency of skin cancer"
- ▶ Reference sites for writing Hypothesis:
  - <http://www.uwec.edu/library/Guides/hypothesis.html>
  - <http://www2.fhs.usyd.edu.au/well/knowbase/qintohyp.htm>
  - <http://www.accessexcellence.org/21st/TL/filson/writhypo.html>

# Further reading/guidance

- ▶ <http://guides.is.uwa.edu.au/c.php?g=324809&p=2178053>
- ▶ <http://www.classroomclipboard.com/535521/Test/43BBF5BC4D494A03B1E9437EB1A84DAA>
- ▶ <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/152819-command-verbs.pdf>
- ▶ <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/149928-command-verb-definitions.pdf>

# References

- ▶ Babbie, E 2004 The Practice of Social Research, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., Thompson Wadsworth, USA
- ▶ Greener S. & Martelli J 2015 Introduction to Business Research Method, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Bookboon.com
- ▶ The Four Main Approaches to Research [http://www.academia.edu/5085699/The\\_four\\_main\\_approaches](http://www.academia.edu/5085699/The_four_main_approaches) September 2015