

Dissertation Resit

2012

Agenda

- Dissertation Structure
- Overview of each chapter
- Maybe a brief discussion - one on one

Basic Dissertation Structure

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgement
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures and Tables
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Findings and Analysis
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Reference List
- Bibliography
- Appendices

Abstract

- There shall be an abstract bound into the Major Project/Dissertation immediately
- The abstract shall provide a concise synopsis of the Major Project/Dissertation stating the **nature and scope of the work** undertaken and the main **conclusions** which have been **drawn from the findings**.
- The abstract shall not exceed 300 words, produced in single spacing on one side of the paper

Dissertation Assessment

| Criteria | Related Chapter/Section |
|---|--|
| • Introduction 10% | Chp 1 Introduction |
| • Use of Literature/Sources 20% | Chp 2 Literature Review |
| • Research Design & Methodology 20% | Chp 3 Research Methodology |
| • Results, Analysis and Interpretation of Data 30% | Chp 4 Findings and Analysis |
| • Conclusions & Recommendation 10% | Chp 5 Conclusion Chp 6 Recommendation |
| • Presentation & Referencing 10% | Bibliography & Reference List |

Introduction- Chapter 1

- This section should set the context of your research
- When the examiner reads this section they should thoroughly understand:
 - Exactly what you are doing
 - What **strategic problem** you are trying to solve
 - Why it is important to solve this problem
 - Your aim and objectives of the research

Introduction

Make sure that you have:

- **The Context for study:**

- Make good first impression
- Introduce topic area, use current issue or debate
- Company or industry **Background**
- May choose a tool such as McKinsey 7 S's, SWOT, Porter's Five Forces, PEST
- Discuss the particular area (department or division) where the problem exists

- **Problem /Issue definition**

- Link background to problem area
- Remember the issue/problem must be of a Strategic nature
- Why is it an issue now, today?
- Discuss the main issue or problem under research
- Discuss 3 to 4 sub-points/problems
- Must provide evidence as to the size of the problem
- **Get Empirical evidence** that the problem exists (research data, from secondary sources)
- Use theory to provide evidence that problem could exist

- **Rationale or Worth:**

- Should give **reason as to why** this problem should be understood
- Must say why this problem should be solved
- Must provide **evidence of the rewards** of solving this problem to the industry, sector or organization
- Could say how the research outcome will be of **value** in solving the problem
- Use theory to provide the strategic benefits of the topic area to the company

- **Research Question:**

- Avoid a question that will give you a yes or no answer
- Avoid words that suggest relationship between variables such as: effect, influence, impact, determine, association
- Usual to begin RQ with **WHAT, HOW, CAN**
- Avoid using IS or WILL
- Be sure to illustrate your **strategic intent** through your RQ

- Make sure to **discuss** the research question
- Providing a question alone would not be very useful
- **Justify** the research question by saying that this would involve doing exploration, explanatory etc research
- Discuss the focus of your research
- Remember your problem definition should clearly lead to the RQ

- **Aim:**
 - **One** aim is all we need
 - The aim should be the end product of the entire research
 - i.e. the major outcome of the tedious research process
 - Should **provide an answer to your RQ**
 - Remember to use a **high level verb**

- **Objectives:**

- **3 to 4** objectives is sufficient
- The objective should represent milestones in your research project
- It should build up to the aim at the end
- It should be documentable in your report
- Remember that project tasks are **not** objectives
- Think of the things that you would have to do in order to answer your RQ or achieve your Aim
- **Progressive, Action, Outcome, Evidence**
- **Use high level verbs**

- **Structure of Dissertation**

- Here give an overview of how the dissertation will be presented
- Could outline the succeeding chapters

Literature Review- Chapter 2

- You should use a basic structure:
 - **Introduction**- here you introduce the topic area, use current debate or example, strong quotation and outline the theme or key areas that will be reviewed
 - **Body**- this is where you present the reviewed literature, use headings and sub-headings,
 - **Summary**- here you present your Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

- Develop a **theme/s**- tell a story
- The theme or areas reviewed **MUST** be **linked** to your **RQ and Objectives**
- Think of the areas that you need to understand in order to answer your RQ
- Think of what do I need to know in order to achieve these objectives
- Must review **theoretical perspectives** and **best practice** or **benchmarks**

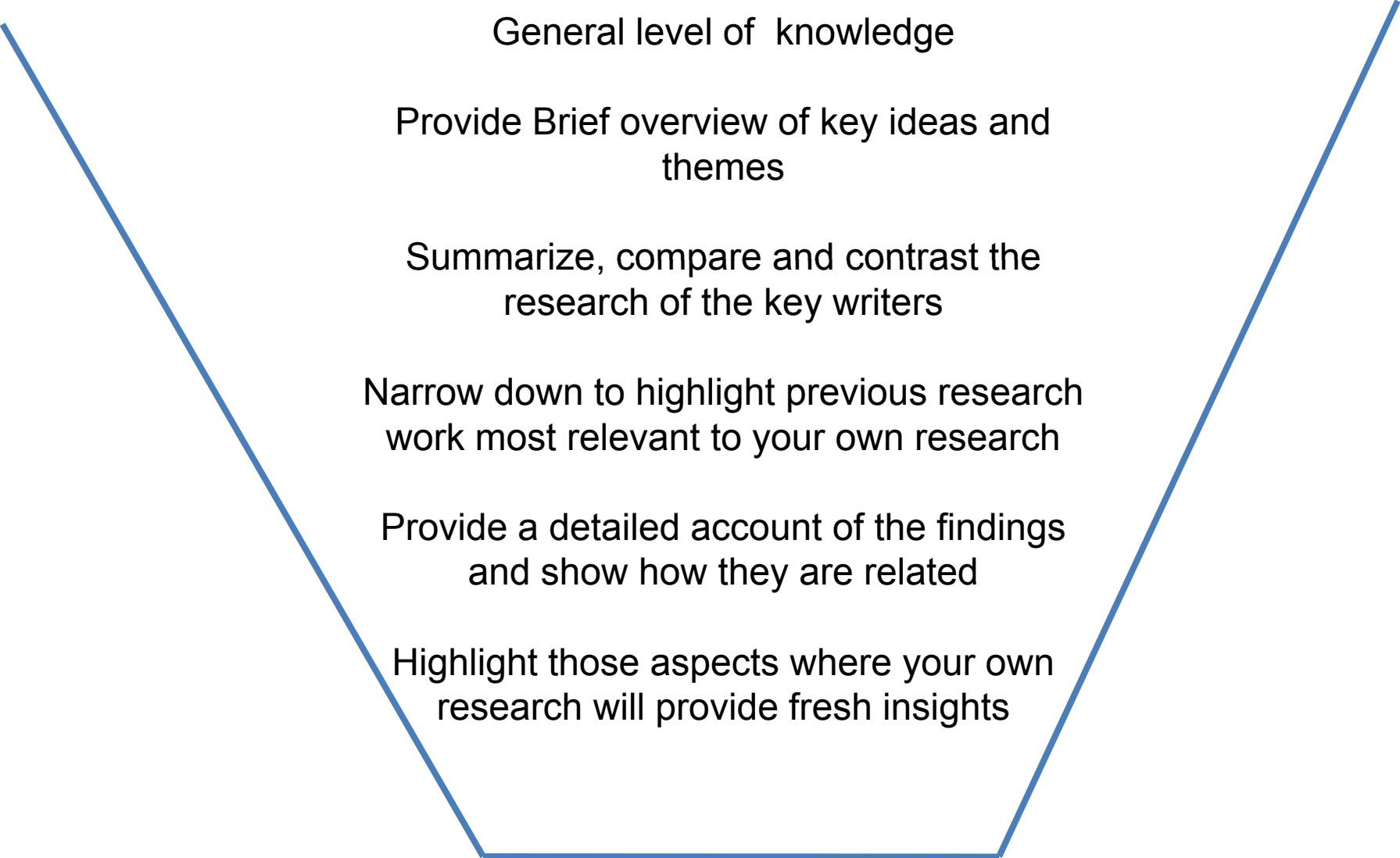
Literature Review

- Must demonstrate a **command of the Literature** at the end
- Should set up a **Conceptual framework** for the research
- Don't be afraid to **use headings and sub-headings**
- Start by introducing the topic area
- Establish the link to the situation being investigated
- Critically review the literature!

Literature Review:

- Critical means **to bring out the debate** or argument- for, against, neutral
- Provide a **so what?** Of the literature i.e. add a synopsis or summary to the argument for each point
- **Highlight gaps in the literature**
- Remember **get to the source** of the work
- You need to review **as many sources at least 20**
- Might be useful to review **several case study** of the phenomena you are researching

Structuring your Lit Review



General level of knowledge

Provide Brief overview of key ideas and themes

Summarize, compare and contrast the research of the key writers

Narrow down to highlight previous research work most relevant to your own research

Provide a detailed account of the findings and show how they are related

Highlight those aspects where your own research will provide fresh insights

Structuring Cont'd

- The idea is that you try to **funnel** your discussion
- Start with a broad discourse i.e. general
- Then **drill down** to the key work which is most appropriate to answering your research question (well as much of an answer as you can get)
- Most importantly organize your discussion according to a **THEME**, sort of like telling a story

Developing a Conceptual Map

- A conceptual map is a visual display of the theory or theories that is relevant to your study
- A picture of what the theory says is going on with the phenomenon that you are researching
- A concept map consists of two things:
 - concepts and
 - the relationships among these
- Lets look at some examples!

Alan Smart, (2010) "Exploring the business case for e-procurement", International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management, Vol. 40 Iss: 3, pp.181 - 201

Level 1:
Overall goal

Establishing a business case
for e-procurement

Level 2:
Criteria

Control

Cost

Process

Roles

Suppliers

Level 3:
Drivers

Compliance
Centralisation
Raising standards
Optimise sourcing strategy
Auditable data

Buying leverage
Monitor savings target
Transactional cost reduction

Common process
Standardisation
Visibility
Efficient invoice settlement

Knowledge sharing
More value added activity
Productivity improvement

Reduce supplier numbers
Supplier management and selection
Integration

Level 4:
Applications

Buy-side RTP

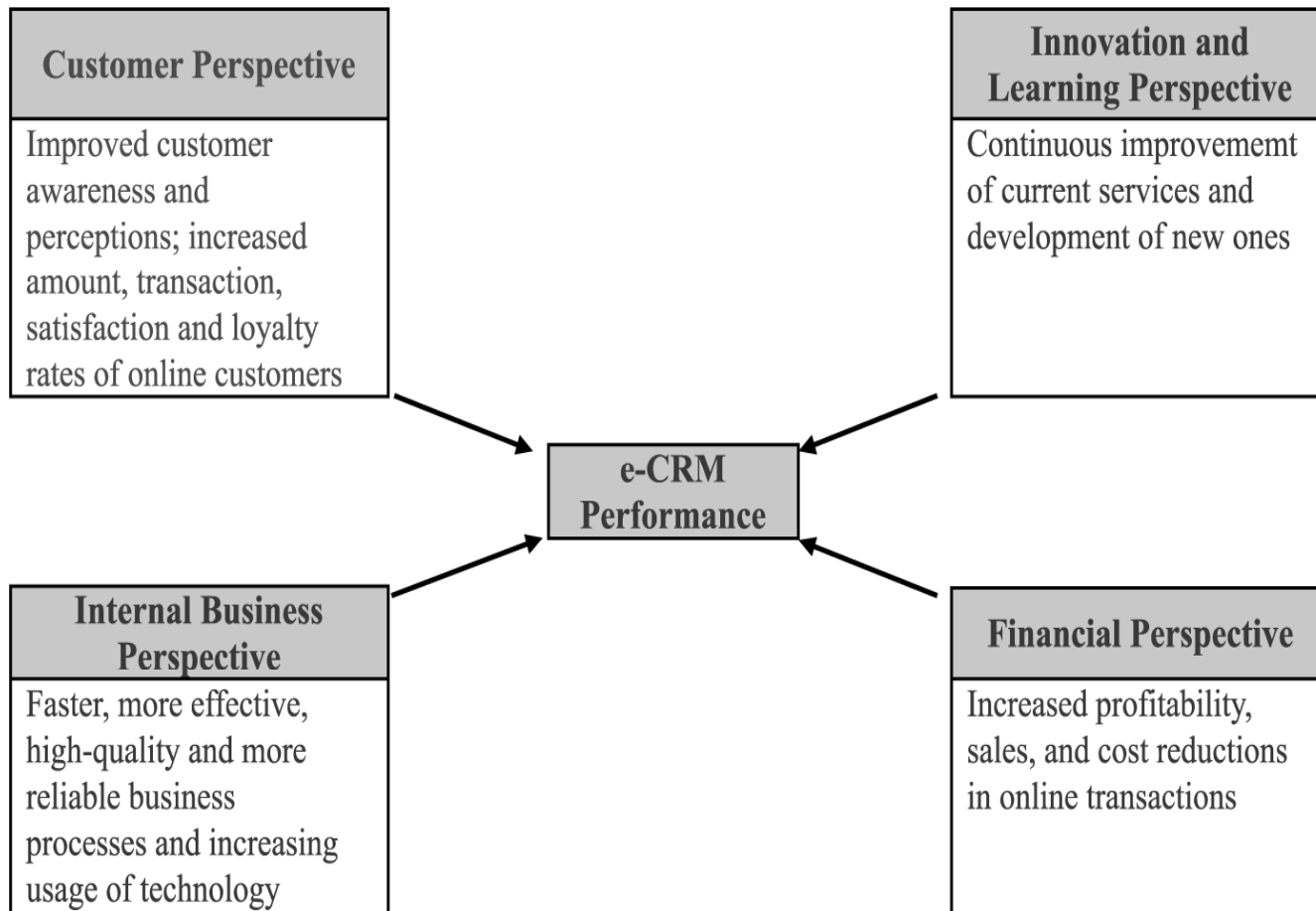
Sell-side catalogues

e-Markets/
exchanges

Reverse auctions

e-RFX

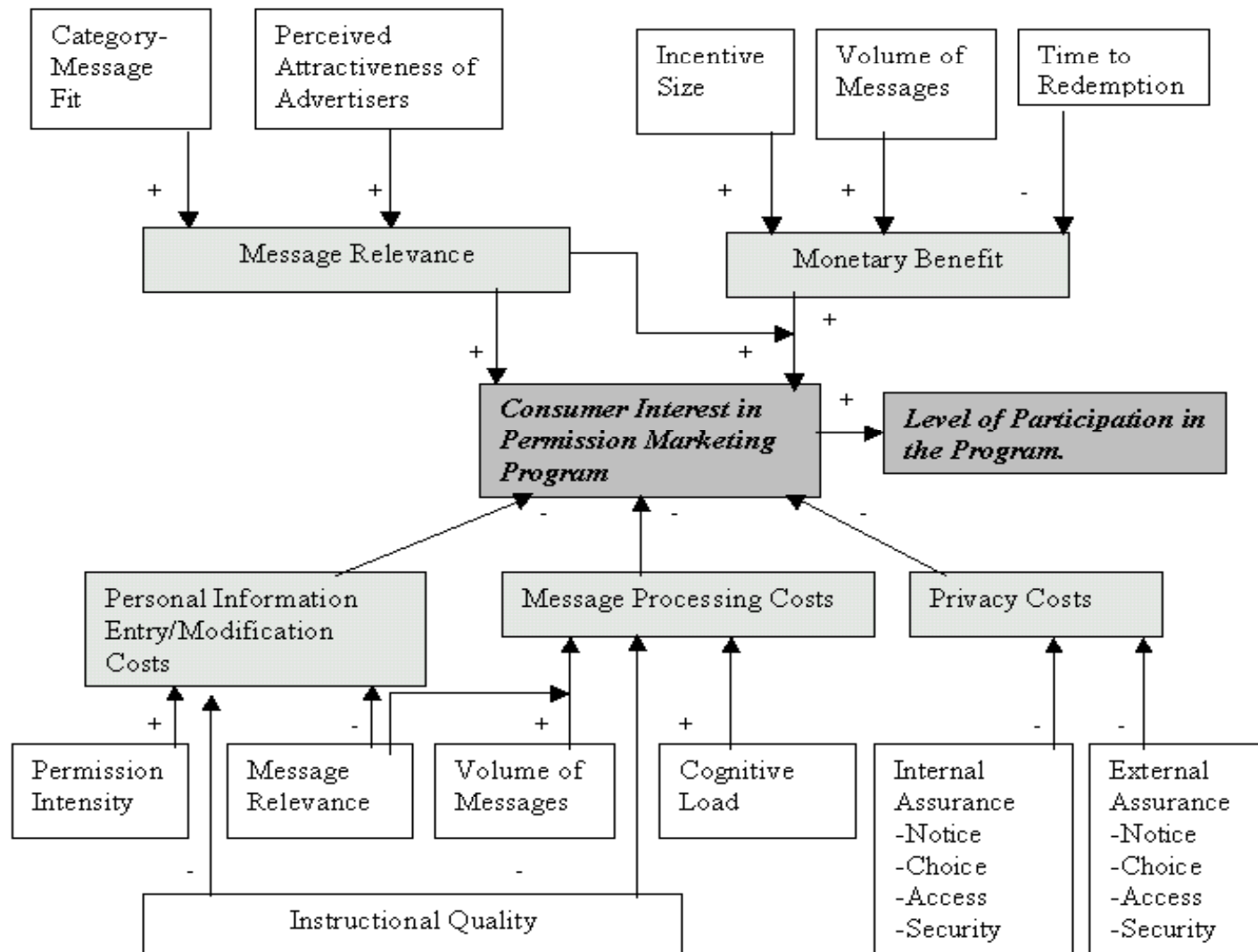
Hande Kimiloglu, Hülya Zarali, (2009) "What signifies success in e-CRM?", Marketing Intelligence & Planning, Vol. 27 Iss: 2, pp.246 - 267



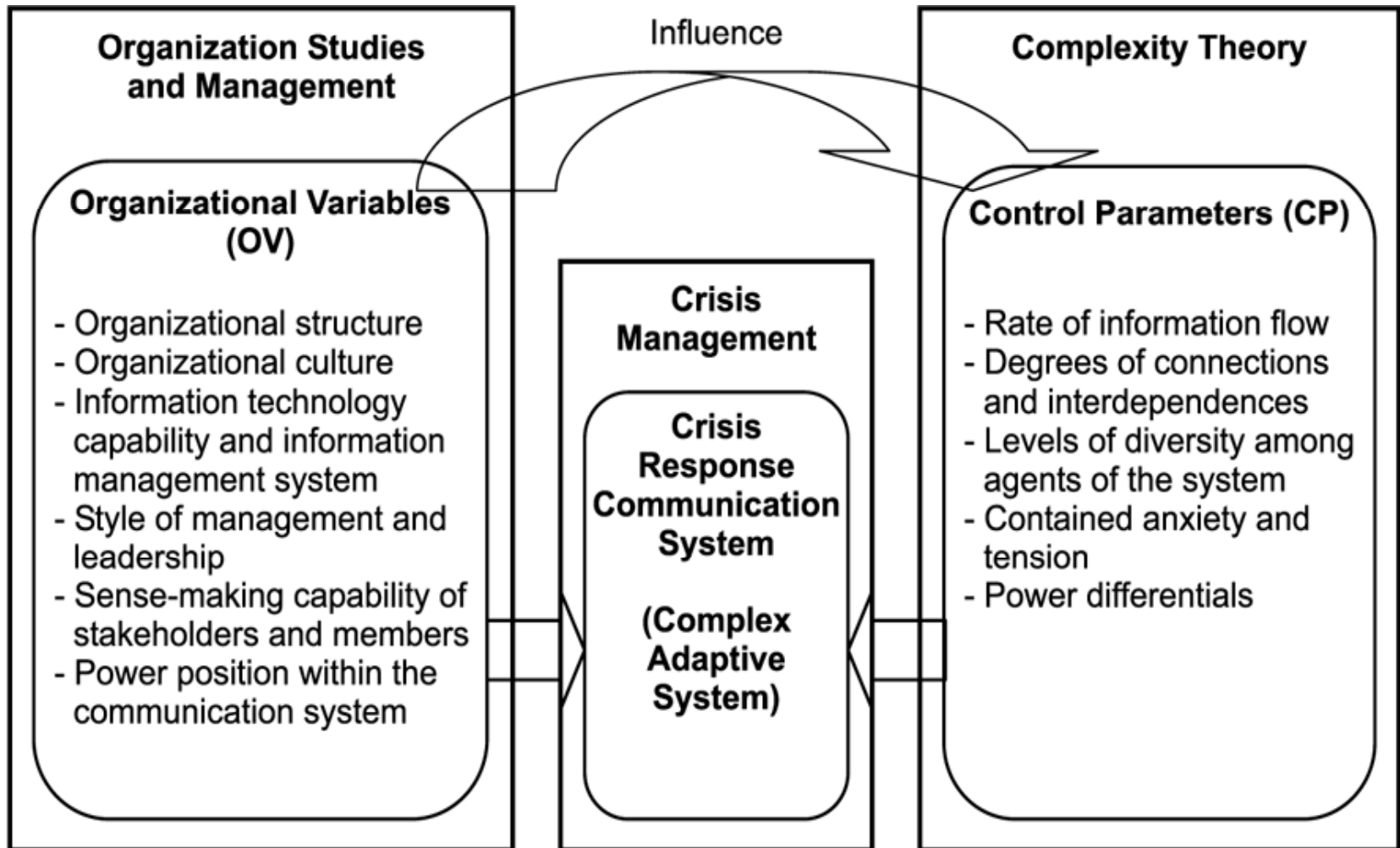
Sandeep Krishnamurthy (2001) A Comprehensive Analysis of Permission Marketing

Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol6/issue2/krishnamurthy.html>



Ying Zhong, Sui Pheng Low, (2009) "Managing crisis response communication in construction projects – from a complexity perspective", Disaster Prevention and Management, Vol. 18 Iss: 3, pp.270 - 282



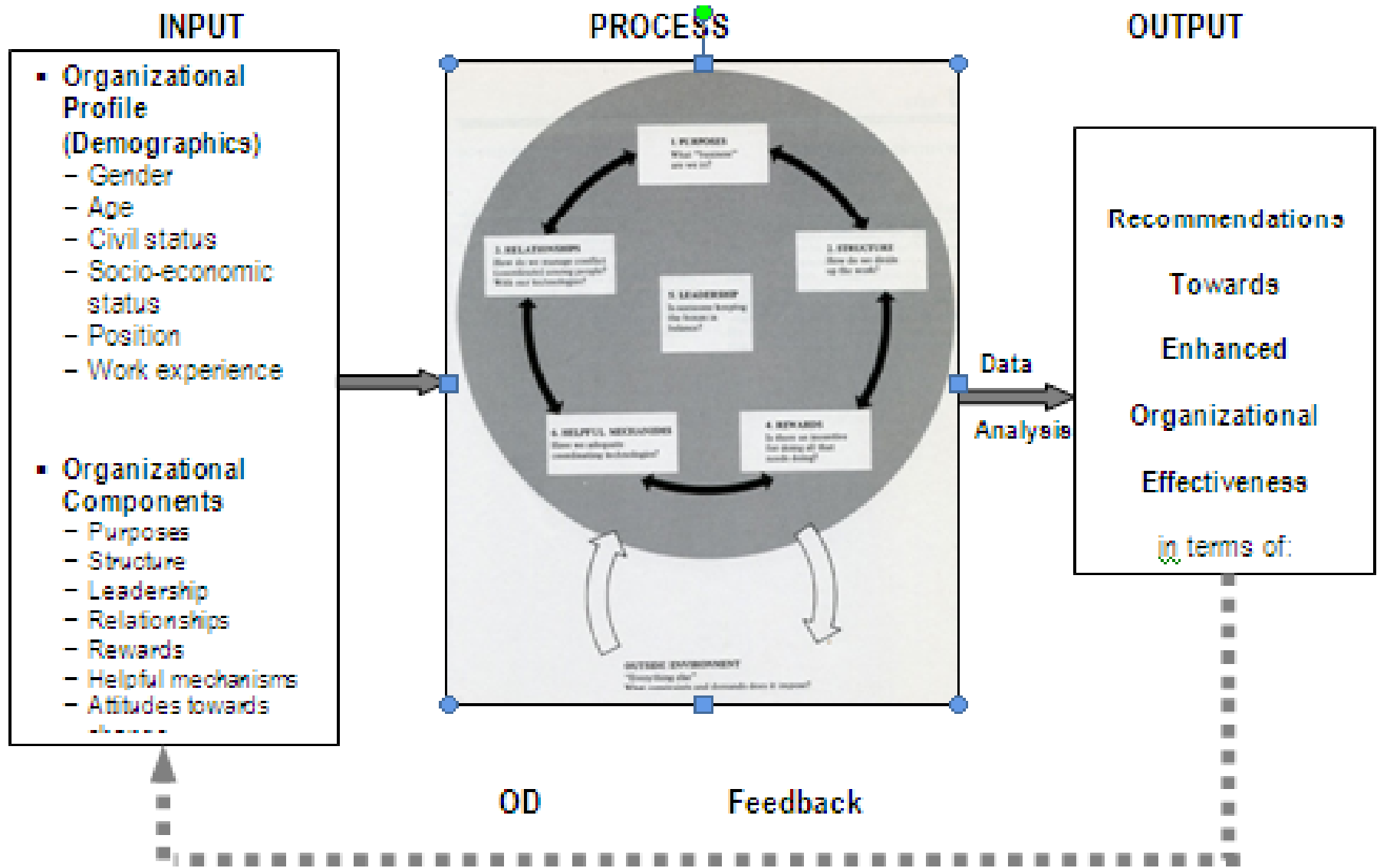


Figure 11: The Conceptual Paradigm of the Study
(adapted from Landy & Conte, 2010, p. 595; Weisbord, 2011)

- So at the end of the Lit Review you must build a **Conceptual Map**- an integration of the key theories and concepts reviewed
- The Conceptual Framework is developed as you review the literature, theories or concepts in the body of the Lit Review
- The key is to:
 - Include the concepts and theories that are relevant to your RQ and Objectives
 - Use the key aspects that came out of the debate i.e. the best options

A useful technique

Theme A

| My Notes | Source | Author | Evidence from Source |
|----------|--------|--------|----------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Theme B

| My Notes | Source | Author | Evidence from Source |
|----------|--------|--------|----------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



Common Faults

- No theme connecting all the elements together
- Too narrow a view of the topic area
- Only a justification for the research idea is given
- Repeating the same materials several times
- Too few sources used
- A narrow range of sources is used i.e. only internet ones
- Poor use of citations
- **No student content and the work relies entirely on the quotation or paraphrase, etc**
- The student has no idea whether they are quoting, paraphrasing, summarising, analysing, etc
- Plagiarism

Research Design and Methodology-

Chapter 3

- Should inform the reader of:
 - What were the underpinning assumptions used in the research
 - What was the overall strategy used
 - What data you gathered
 - How you gathered your data
 - Why the particular method/s were justified
 - How you presented and analyzed the data
 - How did you ensure reliability and validity
 - What were the limitations
 - Strategy for being Ethical

Methodology Cont'd

- Must demonstrate that your methodology is academically sound
- Must use literature/theory to justify your choices
- Must cite other reputable studies that carried out research on a similar basis
- Must work within a theoretical framework
 - Test a theory (P-T-P)
 - Use theory to understand and explain a business issue (T-P-T)

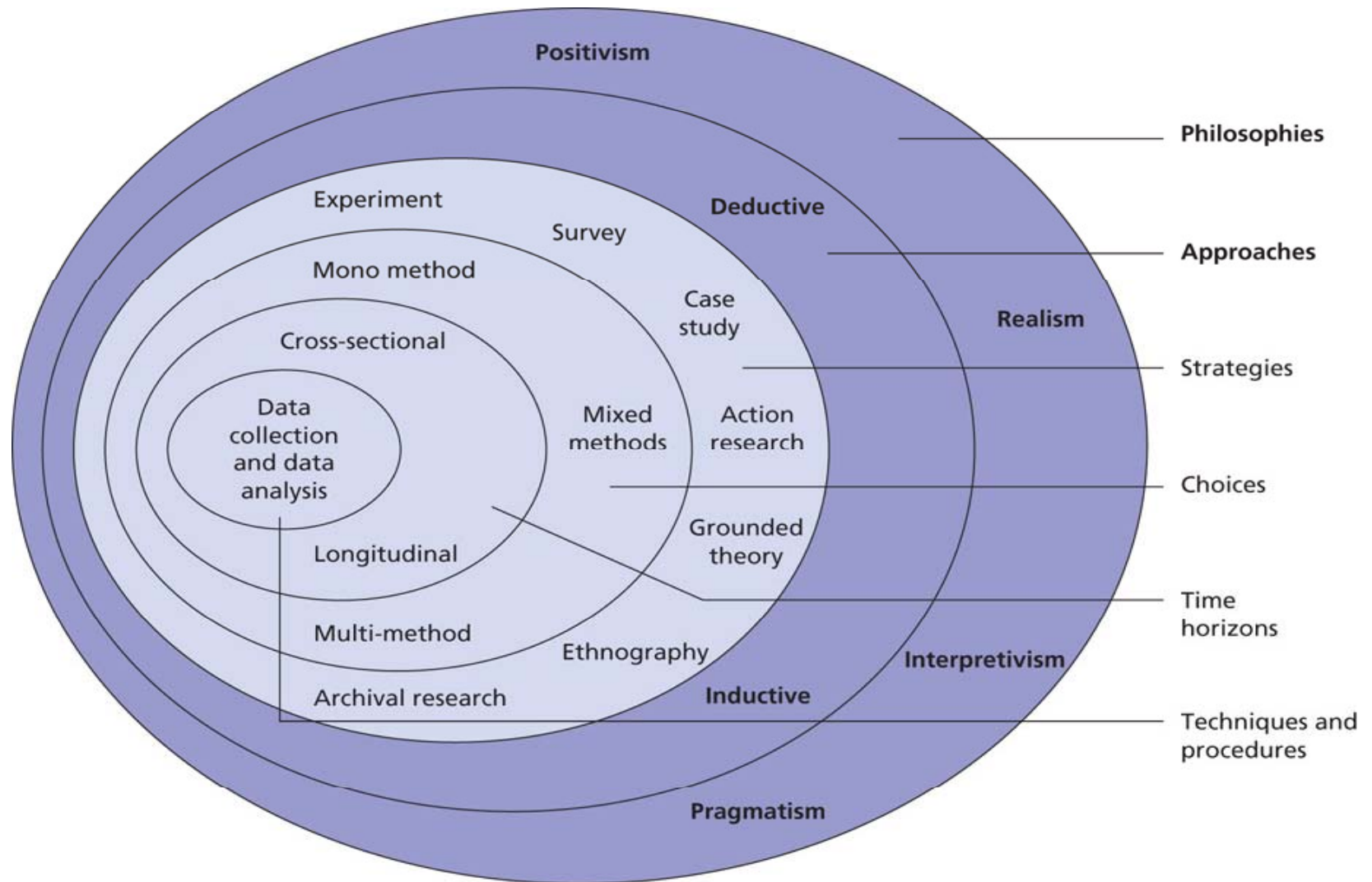
Most Importantly

- The methodology used **must be linked to the RQ and objectives**
- You could repeat these in the introduction of the chapter to give focus
- Also in the introduction outline the areas to be discussed in the chapter

Methodology Cont'd

- Must use the Research Onion Saunders et al (2007)
- Must outline every level of detail for each layer
- Must be very detailed

Research Onion Saunders et al (2007)



Basic Structure of Research Design

Chapter

- **Research Paradigm**
- **Research Methodology**
- **Research Methods**
 - **Data Collection**
 - **Primary Data**
 - **Secondary Data**
 - **Data Analysis and Presentation**
- **Limitations**
- **Ethics**

Research Paradigm

- Start with a discussion of **Epistemology**- Knowledge and Knowing
- Move on to the idea of **Ontology**- Reality
- Discuss whether your research will be based on Objective or Subjective Reality
- You must decide on whether you are using a **Phenomenological OR Positivistic paradigm OR Mixed Methods**
- Justify !!

- You must then relate that to whether you are following a **Quantitative or Qualitative approach**
- Must discuss whether you are **using Inductive or Deductive**
- It is important that you justify your choices given the context of your research
- It might be useful to say why the other cannot work or why it might not be applicable

Research Design:

- Research Methodology
 - Must outline the strategy chosen either; action research, survey, ethnography, case study etc
 - Should justify your choice
 - Explain how the methodology would be rolled out
 - Full details needed here
 - Not good enough to state choice
 - Support your choice by referring to theory
 - Must give the time horizon of your research, either **Longitudinal or Cross Sectional**

Research Design:

- Research Method:
 - There are two sections to be discussed:
 - Data collection
 - Data Analysis and Presentation

- Data Collection:
 - Must specify **what primary and secondary data** will be required
 - The **source of the data**, where it will be collected from?
 - Access issues, permission needed?
 - **Sample size** and **Sampling method** with justification
 - Confidence interval, margin of error, population size, proportion or percentage required.
 - Should show calculations

- Choice of Collection methods: Questionnaire, observation, interviews, focus group
- Discuss each one separately
- Must go on to say **how each of these method will be administered**. Specific details needed
- Should discuss the idea of **triangulation**

- Data Analysis:
 - Must say **how** you are going to collated the data collected
 - Must explain **how it will be analyzed**
 - Must specify whether **quantitative or qualitative analysis** or both will be done
 - Each must be explained in detail
 - Quantitative Analysis:
 - Descriptive Statistics- Tables, Distribution Frequencies, Cross Tabulation, Central Tendency (Mean, Median, Mode), Scatter Diagrams, Graphical Forms (Pie, Bar etc)
 - Inferential Statistics- Forecasting, Time Series, Pearson's Coefficient, Spearman's Rank Coefficient, Chi Squared and Student t-test

- Qualitative Analysis:
 - Analytical Induction, Grounded Theory, Repertory Grid, Thematic Analysis, Narrative Analysis
- It will not be good enough to say you will be using SPSS or Excel or graphs etc
- **Must be specific!**

Research Design

- Limitations to Methodology
 - Every methodology would have some margin of unknown or **area of uncertainty**
 - You may also be working at this stage on many **assumptions**
 - You need to state these

Research Design:

- Ethics:
 - Remember that you will always have to collect data from participants
 - **Do not deceive** them
 - Must consider what issues the participants may have as a result of providing data
 - *Confidentiality, privacy*, etc
 - So you must outline your 'anti deception' tactics
 - Must say that a letter of approval needed and would be sort- **Informed Consent**

Findings and Analysis-Chapter 4

- Must present a structured view of the data collected
- Must address your research question
- Structure Chapter according to:
 - Research Question and Objectives OR
 - The Theme or Concepts from Conceptual Framework in the literature review

Findings and Analysis Cont'd

- Must have a very high level of analysis and interpretation
- DO NOT:
 - Present raw data
 - Simply provide aggregate data
 - Present data in a very simple form e.g. pie chart
- Data must be analyzed in a sophisticated manner:
 - Descriptive and inferential statistics
 - Content Analysis, Narrative Analysis, Thematic Analysis, Repertory Grids

Findings and Analysis Cont'd

- Must say what the data analysis tells you
- Must compare resulting data analysis to:
 - Theory
 - Best practice
 - Use also benchmarks from international org
- Must provide implications
- You can outline any new aspects that you uncovered, which might add to existing theory

Conclusions and Recommendations- Chapter 5

- Must **conclude based on your objectives**
- Must summarize the **answers to your research question**
- Must use the data as the strength of your conclusions
- Must let the data guide your conclusions
- Must refer your own conclusions back to literature review- does your work add, contradict, overlap with existing theories and cases

Recommendations

- Must present in accordance to a framework
- Two levels:
 - Particular recommendations for the organization
 - General suggestions for the field or for other companies facing similar situations
- You cannot make a recommendation other than what the data tells you
- Must include recommendations for further research

Some Submission Guidelines

- Please place the abstract BEFORE the table of contents
- You are required to submit 2 hard copies of the dissertation, please label one as the **COPY** of the dissertation. The other will be considered the **ORIGINAL**.
- You are required to include 3 LOOSE copies of the abstract with the dissertation, please tuck into the inside cover of the **original** dissertation. DO NOT BIND to the rest of the dissertation.

- Please include the mark sheet (given in the Post Graduate Major Project Module Guide Appendix 3) as the VERY first page of the **original** dissertation. On this mark sheet include BOTH your name and your student ID number.
- You are required to submit **ONE** electronic copy of your dissertation on CD. Please put your name and student ID on this CD as well as the title, 'post-graduate major project'. DO NOT bind to the dissertation. It will be kept separately from the hard copies.

- Print the official coversheet from the University via EVision and include your word count on this sheet. This should follow the grading sheets. Use a blank coversheet if yours is not available on EVision.
- Place the approved Ethics and Proposal forms in the appendix of your dissertation. They must be included.
- Place the supervisor's log form in the appendix of your dissertation. It must be included.

Best of Luck !

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