

# Research Methods for Business and Management

Session 10- Dissertation Structure

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# Getting Started

- At the stage of starting your dissertation should have a clear idea of:
  - what you are researching
  - What issue you are investigating
  - What outcome you are working towards
  - What is your research question and objectives

# A Few Reminders

- You should be working at a strategic level
- Should be doing very high level of analysis, evaluation, synthesis and critique
- You are working towards 10,000 words
- You must use the Dissertation Report Format
- Must use Harvard Referencing Style

# Time Management

- For roughly 3 months you must be engaged in doing your Dissertation
- It cannot be done overnight or in 3 weeks!!!!
- Making the necessary sacrifice is critical
- Create a time table, a schedule of what you have to do and when
- Think of doing each chapter on a bi-monthly basis
- Consider what activities you can do simultaneously- to save time

# Time Mgt Cont'd

- It is critical that you attend all the meetings, this would work in your favour
- Use meetings to manage progress
- If we had all the time in the world to do something, you probably still would not finish it!
- Work will always expand to fit the time we have!
- **There is never enough time, use it smartly!**

# Supervision

The supervisor's role is to **simply guide not teach**

- Supervision would normally entail a series of meetings
- These meetings could be of a one on one nature or a group meeting
- **Important**, at each meeting you should get your supervisor to sign your **Supervisor Contact Log**, this is mandatory for submission

# Basic Dissertation Structure

- Abstract
- Acknowledgement
- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Chapter 1 - Introduction
- Chapter 2 - Literature Review
- Chapter 3 - Research Design and Methodology
- Chapter 4 - Findings and Analysis
- Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations
- Reference List
- Appendices



# Dissertation Assessment Criteria

- Introduction- 10%
- Use of Literature/Sources- 20%
- Research Design and Methodology- 20%
- Results, Analysis and Interpretations- 30%
- Conclusion and Recommendations- 10%
- Presentation- 10%

# Chapter 1- Introduction

Make sure that you have:

- The Context for study
- Problem /Issue definition
- Clear rationale and potential value of study
- Clear Research Aim and Research Question
- Clear objectives (3-4), well defined and appropriate for an MBA
- Objectives should be progressive i.e. lead to your aim

# Chapter 2- Literature Review

- It should inform the research
- Do not try to reinvent the wheel
- Must demonstrate that you have engaged with current literature and
- Must use high level, **authoritative** literature from quality journals, books, websites etc
- Must review/read 20 to 40 sources
- Must provide **evidence** from other similar work and comparisons

# Lit Review Cont'd

- Must review **theoretical perspectives** and **best practice** or **benchmarks**
- Must present **theme** or issue based review
- The theme must be **relevant** to answering your research question
- Must be **critical** of the literature-bring out the arguments and debate, various perspectives
- Must provide a “**So What ?**” angle, your perspective

# Lit Review Cont'd

- Conclude your literature review with a **Summary**

ESSENTIALLY

- **Develop a Conceptual Framework**

# Chapter 3- Research Design and Methodology

- Should inform the reader of:
  - What data you gathered
  - How you gathered your data
  - Why that particular method is justified
  - What was the sample size
  - How was the data analyzed
  - How did you ensuring reliability and validity
  - What were the limitations
  - How you maintained Ethics

# Methodology Cont'd

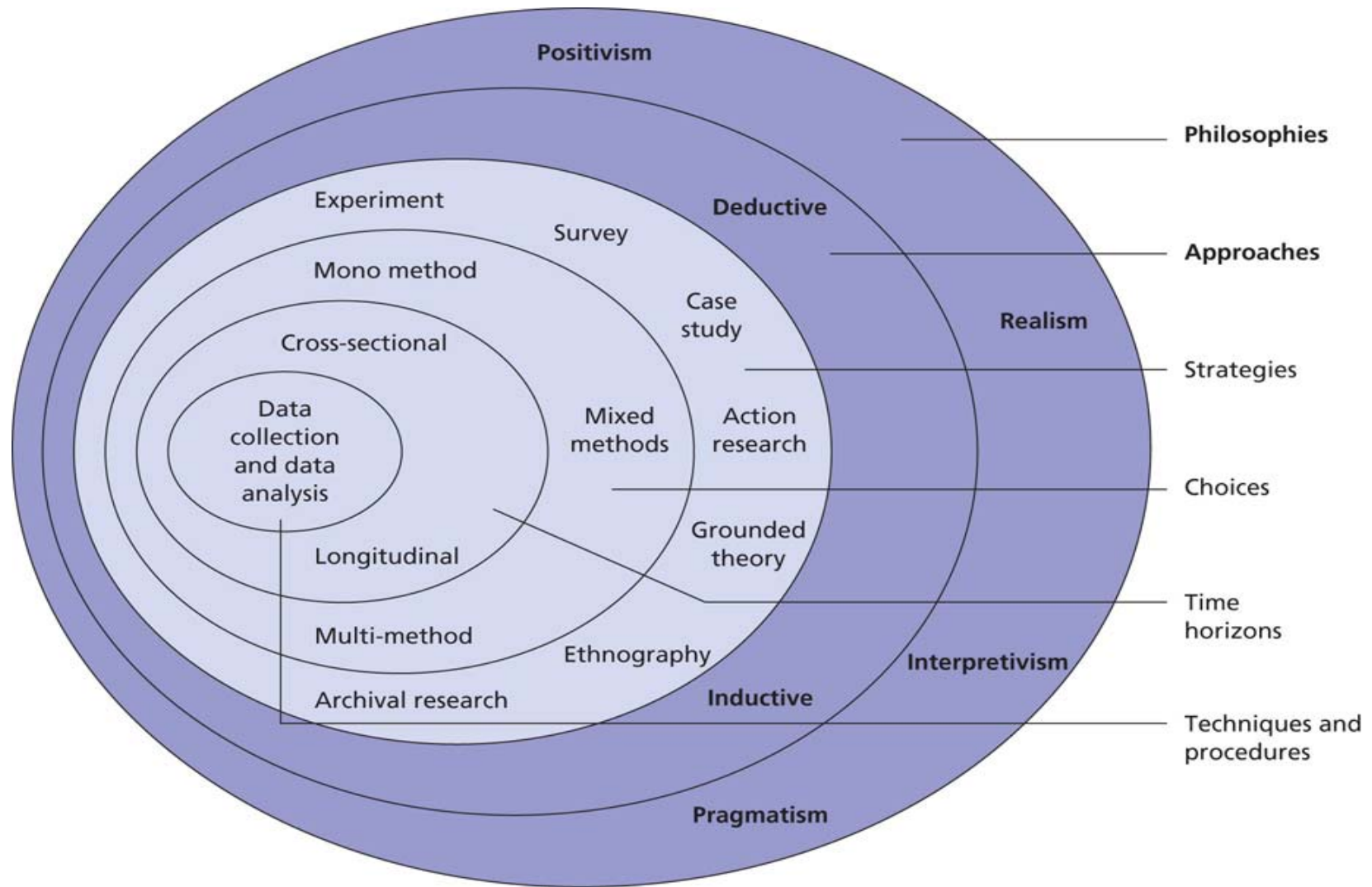
- Must be written in Past tense
- Must demonstrate that your methodology is academically sound
- Must use literature/theory to justify your choices
- Must cite other reputable studies that carried out research on a similar basis

# Typical Structure of Chapter 3

- 1. Research Paradigm
- 2. Research Methodology
- 3. Data Collection Methods
- 4. Data Analysis Techniques
- 5. Ethics
- 6. Limitations to Methodology



# Research Onion Saunders et al (2007)



# Chapter 4- Findings and Analysis

- Must present a structured view of the data collected
- Must address your research question and objectives
- Use research question and objectives to structure the chapter

# 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
  - Thematic Analysis, Narrative Analysis, Content Analysis

# Findings and Analysis Cont'd

- Must say what the data analysis tells you
- Must compare resulting data analysis to:
  - Theory, Best practice
  - Use literature from Literature Review Chapter
- Must provide implications- **What does it Mean?**
- You can outline any new aspects that you uncovered, which might add to existing theory

# Chapter 5- Conclusion and Recommendations

- Conclusion
  - 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
  - Provide recommendations for Future Research

# Key Points

- Work hard and you will finish
- Submit and your chances of passing increases  
**No submission is BIG TROUBLE, obviously you this means you have no chance to pass on first attempt**
- Find ways to motivate and remain motivated
  - Look forward to the big hoo-ray
- Follow the guidelines
- Read Read Read Read Read Read Read.....

# Lastly

- Meet with your supervisor at all schedule meetings
- Supervisor provide feed-forward, this increases your chance of passing and possibly your grade if you use the feed-forward effectively
- **Don't wait until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to get comments and guidance**



# Best of Luck

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