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Research Methods and Professional Development ACFA7004

Introduction

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Research

- What is research ?
 - **Research = Re+Search**
 - Search/find again
 - Systematic investigation or activity to gain new knowledge of the already existing facts
 - intellectual activity
 - Application of scientific method to solving problems
 - **Definition**
 - “*Research is a systematic effort to gain new knowledge.*” **Redman & Mori**
 - “*Research may be defined as a method of studying problems whose solutions are to be derived partly or wholly from facts.*” **W.S. Monroes**
 - “*Research is an honest, exhaustive, intelligent searching for facts and their meanings or implications with reference to a given problem. The product or findings of a given piece of research should be an authentic, verifiable contribution to knowledge in the field studied.*” **P.M. Cook**

Research

- Purpose of research
 - Systematically investigate to discover new knowledge or solve problem or create new understanding in various fields.
- Why Research ?
 - Publish or Perish ?

Research

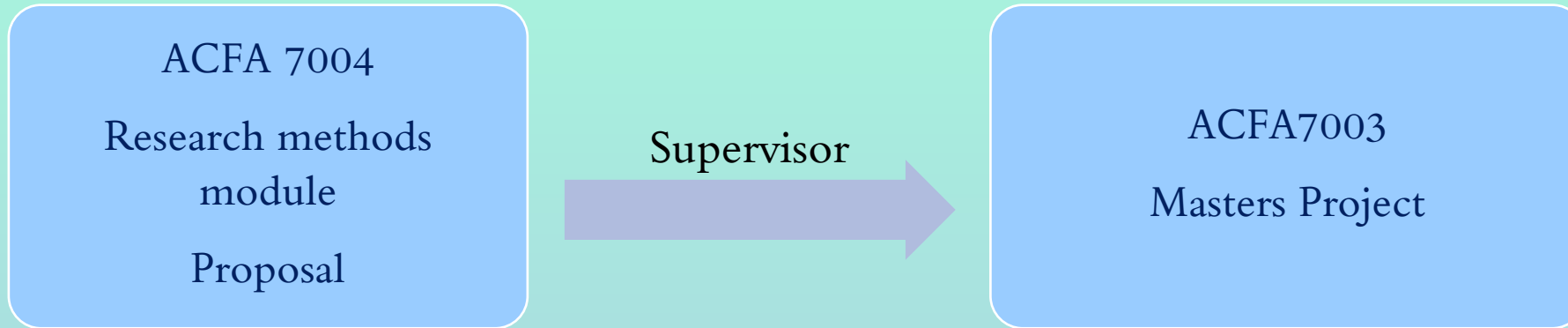
- Steps of the research process
 - Identifying your area of research
 - Identifying the gaps in knowledge or the important questions that you want to address
 - Formulating a Research Question or hypothesis
 - Initial Literature Review
 - Narrowing down and focusing your research question or hypothesis
 - Identifying a subset of further questions
 - Selecting the appropriate research method
 - Detailed Literature Review
 - Identifying and narrowing down your goals and objectives (There may be primary and secondary objectives and gains from your study)
 - Writing a Research Proposal or Protocol
 - Getting permission from the department and approval from Ethical Review Committee.
 - Work and plan on the practical aspects: Resources, timeline and budget

Research

- Possibly apply for a Grant
- Practical Aspects: Doing experiments or ‘fieldwork’; Collecting the Data
- Analyzing the Data (Statistical Analysis)
- Present your findings in simple and easy to understand ways. Tables, graphs and charts may be employed.
- Answering your research questions based on your findings
- Producing Conclusions
- **Writing down your results as a paper, dissertation or thesis**
- Choosing the right journal or forum for sharing your findings
- Publishing your Findings
- Promoting or Sharing your findings.
- Getting feedback
- Implementing your findings. The research should translate into practice and bring about a change
- The Road Ahead: Identifying and starting work on unanswered questions or questions/queries that emerged from your study

Research

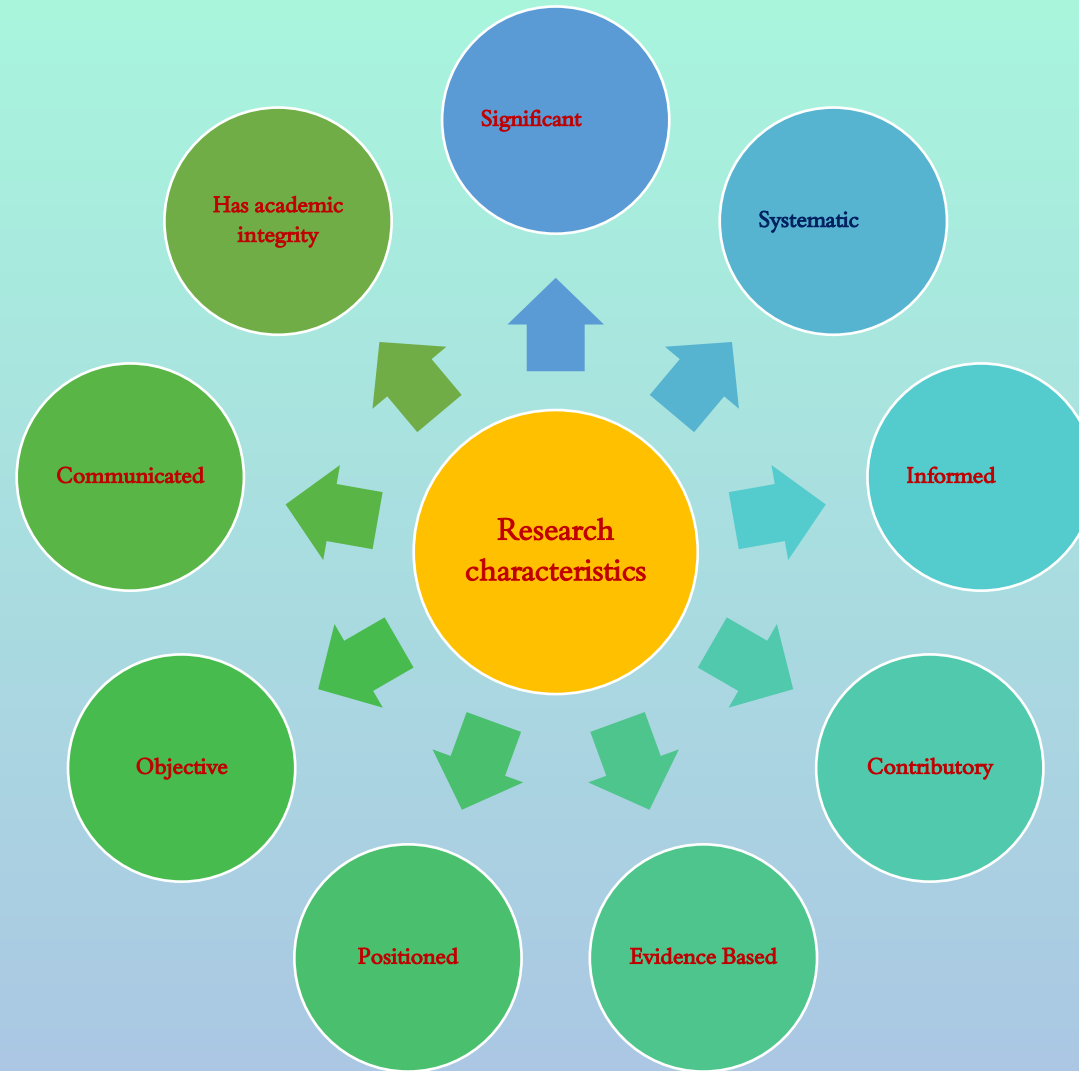
Why research ?



Research Proposal as the Blueprint

- The proposal developed in the Research Methods module lays out the research problem, aims, objectives, methodology, and evaluation plan. This serves as a structured plan for your research project.
- The objectives formulated in your proposal should directly align with the outcomes expected in the Research Project module. This ensures coherence and a clear direction for your research.
- The Research Methods module will allow you to receive feedback on the proposal. This feedback is critical as it shapes the next phase of your project, helping you refine your approach for the actual research and ensuring your project is feasible and scientifically robust.

Research Characteristics



Research Characteristics

- **Significant**
 - Relevant and of interest to those working and studying in the field
- **Systematic**
 - a process that is sustained and methodical/systematic
- **Informed**
 - entailing researching the topic by reading extensively on it to find out what is already established
 - Knowing the experts in the fields and find out their views
 - Building on what is already known

Research Characteristics

- Contributory
 - The findings of the research should be communicated to add to knowledge and understanding within the field in some way
- Evidence based
 - include gathering data, documents, interviews, and other types of material to support your stance, arguments, and conclusions
- Positioned
 - taking a stance on the topics discussed and supporting it with evidence-based reasoning

Research Characteristics

- Objective
 - Instead of favoring information that fits the researcher's purpose or point of view, collect, assess, use, and present the information in a fair and balanced manner
- Communicated
 - it is written and/or presented in an appropriate style and format for others to read
 - it communicates messages about research in the field
- Academic integrity
 - conduct the research and present findings in a manner that is honest, truthful, trustworthy and reliable

Choosing your Topic and Title

- The most important task
 - Not just what you like to study but what is practicable, achievable based on the requirements
 - It is a winding path
 - False starts
 - Too complex, time consuming, too big, too expensive , etc... or fall before some other barrier
 - Plan ahead, investigate on potential topic

Choosing your Topic and Title

- What makes a good topic?
 - Motivating
 - Really interesting
 - See its relevance to your carrier or passion
 - To know more about the topic
 - Interest in studying in depth for become a researcher
 - Challenging
 - The complexity should match the level of study
 - Over-ambitious ?
 - Not able to complete it in expected time consider to scale it down
 - Grounded
 - Choose an area of study where you are already knowledgeable.
 - Expands on a topic you recently covered for your course

Choosing your Topic and Title

- Feasible
 - Possible to do it conveniently
 - Scale : The subject matter is not so vast or intricate that it would be impossible for you to complete the required background reading, information collection, and analysis of your research findings in the allotted time and word count [2].
- Ethics
 - Meet ethical requirements [protect the dignity, rights and welfare of the participants]
- Originality
 - Make a contribution to the knowledge
 - Expand on previous findings
 - Find your own angle
 - Selecting new variables
 - Replicate – see whether you can replicate the results of the previously published research

Choosing your Topic and Title

- A good title
 - clear - make sense to the reader
 - Specific – clearly identified; certain
 - Incorporate a question
 - Precise
 - Fits convention
 - A usual accepted way of behaving : typical title of dissertation used previously

References

- [1] Kasi et. al., (2009). Research: What, Why and How? A Treatise from Researchers to Researchers. 10.13140/2.1.3274.1442.
- [2] Cottrell. S (2014) Dissertations and Projects Reports: A Step by Step Guide, Palgrave Study Skills