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# Research Methods

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# Course outlines



1. Define the research problem
2. Perform academic document search and summarize
3. Design research
4. Perform data collection
5. Analyze data and make conclusion
6. Complete report and presentation



# Definitions



## Research (n.)

“a detailed study of a subject, especially in order to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding”



“a careful study of a subject, especially in order to discover new facts or information about it”



“a systematic search for the truth or facts about something”



▷ Find new information (*no one else has discovered*)



Life after death



Human-habitable planet  
beyond the galaxy



How bees communicate  
(discovered)

To claim what we have discovered, the methodology must be academically acceptable.



Experiment



Survey



Interview

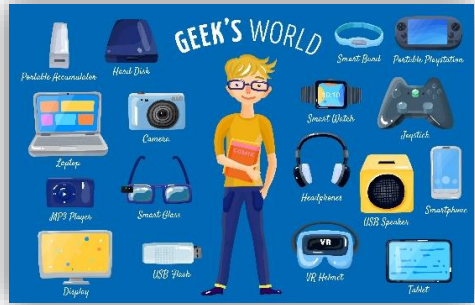


???



## ► Confirm or dispute previous findings

Factors influencing consumers' purchase of IT gadgets.



- New research studies might just change some variables used in previous works.
- Using the appropriate methodology, your findings can be compared, or argue with other similar works.

### **Study 1:** Middle income, Country A

- 1) Price
- 2) Brand
- 3) Customer reviews
- 4) ...

### **Study 2:** High income, Country B

- 1) Brand
- 2) Quality
- 3) Price
- 4) ...



# Basic & Applied Research



## Basic Research (pure or fundamental research)

- Find or expand the knowledge boundary
- Primarily driven by curiosity and the need to explore the unknown
- **NOT** driven by commercial purposes
- **NOT** intended to solve a specific or immediate problem

## Examples of research questions

- How did the universe begin?
- How to turn lead into gold?
- How do bees communicate? *(Solved)*



## Applied Research

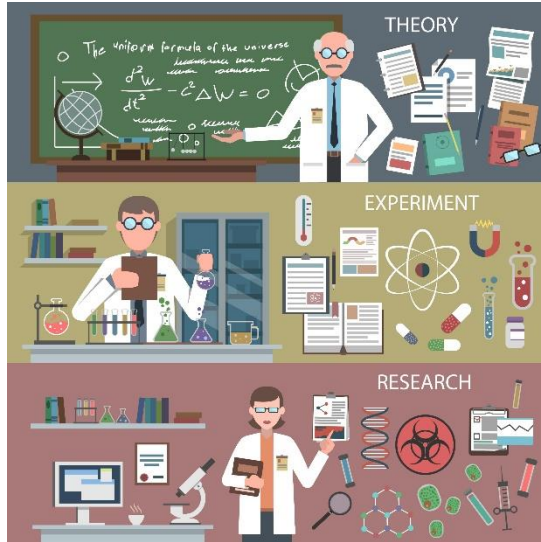
- Apply well-known accepted theories and principles to solve certain problems.
- Most of the experiments, case studies, and interdisciplinary studies are kinds of applied research.

### Examples of research questions

- What are factors influencing consumers' purchase of IT gadgets?
- Do students reading eBooks gain better knowledge than those reading textbooks?
- How is our brand doing compared to our competitors?



# Defining a Research Problem



Theoretical Approach



Practical Approach





## Theoretical Approach

- The researcher focuses on expanding knowledge and understanding.
- Research problems can be identified by reviewing previous studies or theories and find gaps or things that seem to be unclear.

Theoretical research problems may state the followings (*McCombes, S., 2020*):

- A phenomenon or context that has not been closely studied
- A contradiction between two or more perspectives
- A situation or relationship that is not well understood
- A troubling question that has yet to be resolved



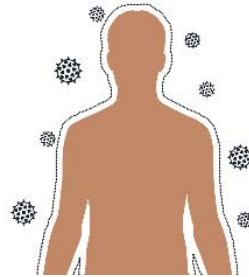
## Examples of theoretical research problem (1)

To what degree that green chiretta herb stimulates immunity in humans, and how?



Green chiretta

Image by Renaudsechet from Wikimedia Commons



Human immunity

Image by Ian Furst from Wikimedia Commons

We assumed that the researcher already searched through previous studies and found no clinical evidence that this herb works as described.



## Examples of theoretical research problem (2)

The Collatz conjecture states that the orbit of every number under  $f$  eventually reaches 1. **No one has proven it yet.**

$$f(n) = \begin{cases} \frac{n}{2} & \text{if } n \text{ is even} \\ 3n + 1 & \text{if } n \text{ is odd} \end{cases}$$

Therefore, the research question was defined as:

### Can the Collatz conjecture be solved mathematically?

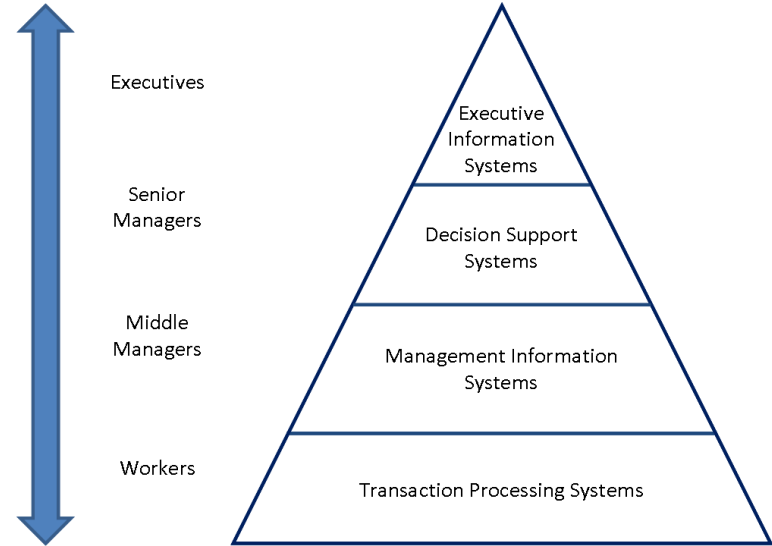
Solving a math formula is considered a kind of research, if:

- It was not solved by anybody else.
- You use an academically acceptable method.



## Examples of theoretical research problem (3)

With the nature of businesses in the digital era, should strategic decisions still be held at the highest level?



## Practical Approach

- Researchers define problems based on their experiences.
- Research problem is likely to have practical relevance to the organization or the job researchers are doing.

Practical research problems may state the followings (McCombes, S., 2020):

- Nature of the problem or difficulty
- A specific group (in the organization or the community) or part of the process that the problem exists
- What has not been found or what makes your research different from the others (*called a research gap*).
- What could be improved, or what are potential benefits
- Your idea of how to find the solution



## Examples of practical research problem (1)

How do shoppers determine the credibility of online stores that sell frozen foods?



## Examples of practical research problem (2)

Will intermittent fertilization improve oil palm yields, and how?



# Conclusion

- As a B.B.A. student, you should focus on the applied research using a practical approach.
- You may start thinking of a research problem in a business field.
- Next time, we will get to know more about the methodology. After that, you should have enough information to make decision.

