

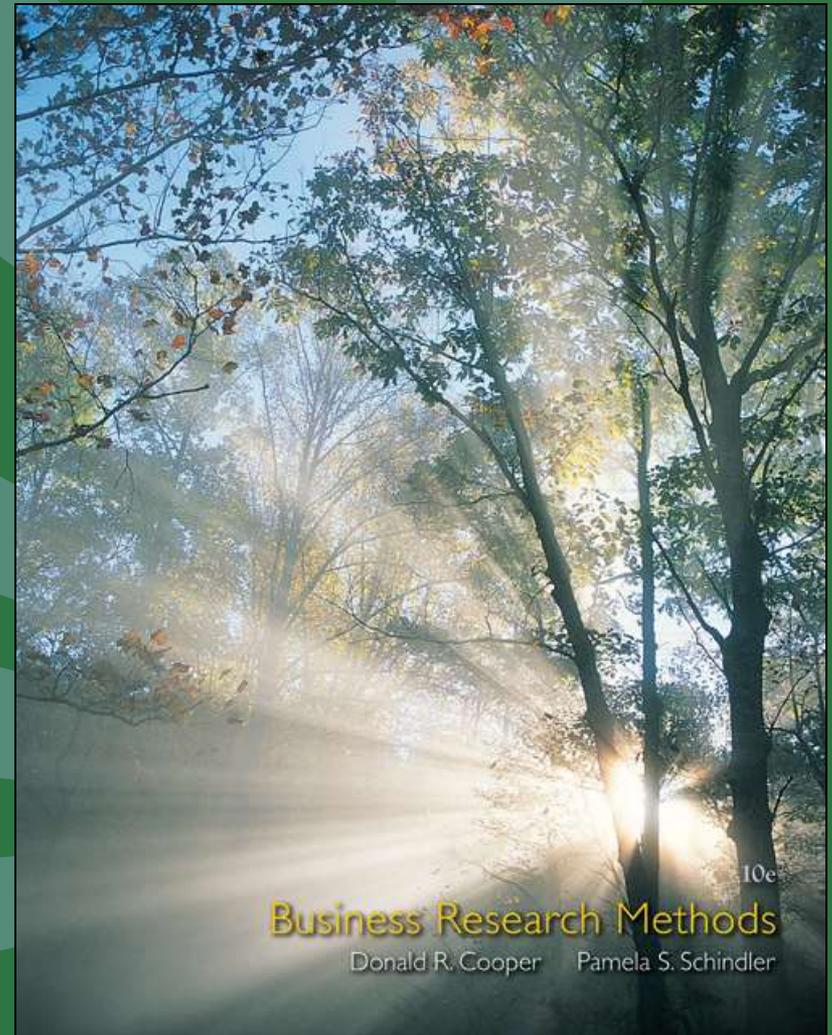
People will forget what you said.  
People will forget what you did.

But people will never forget,  
How you made them feel.



  
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# The Business Research Process: An Overview





# Learning Objectives

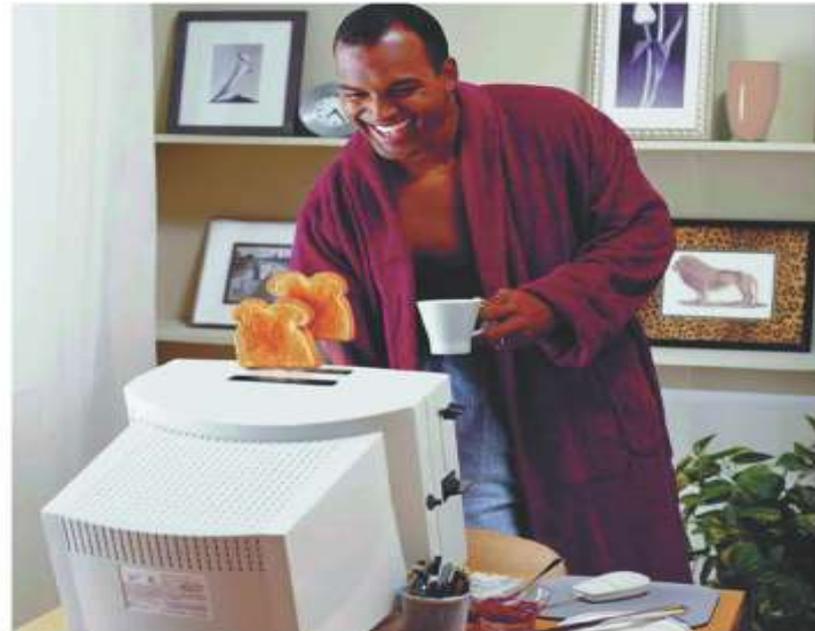
## Understand ...

- That research is decision- and dilemma-centered.
- That the clarified research question is the result of careful exploration and analysis and sets the direction for the research project.
- How value assessments and budgeting influence the process for proposing research, and ultimately, research design.
- What is included in research design, data collection, and data analysis.
- Research process problems to avoid.

# Purpose of Research

Reduce the level of risk of a business decision.

**DON'T THROW GOOD MONEY  
AT A BAD IDEA.**



Before you launch your new product, see if anyone wants it.

Pretest your new concept — online — with the company that pioneered marketing research on the Internet. Our panel of more than one million consumers from all across the Internet, the largest of its kind, includes exactly the people you want to reach.

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# Evaluating the Value of Research



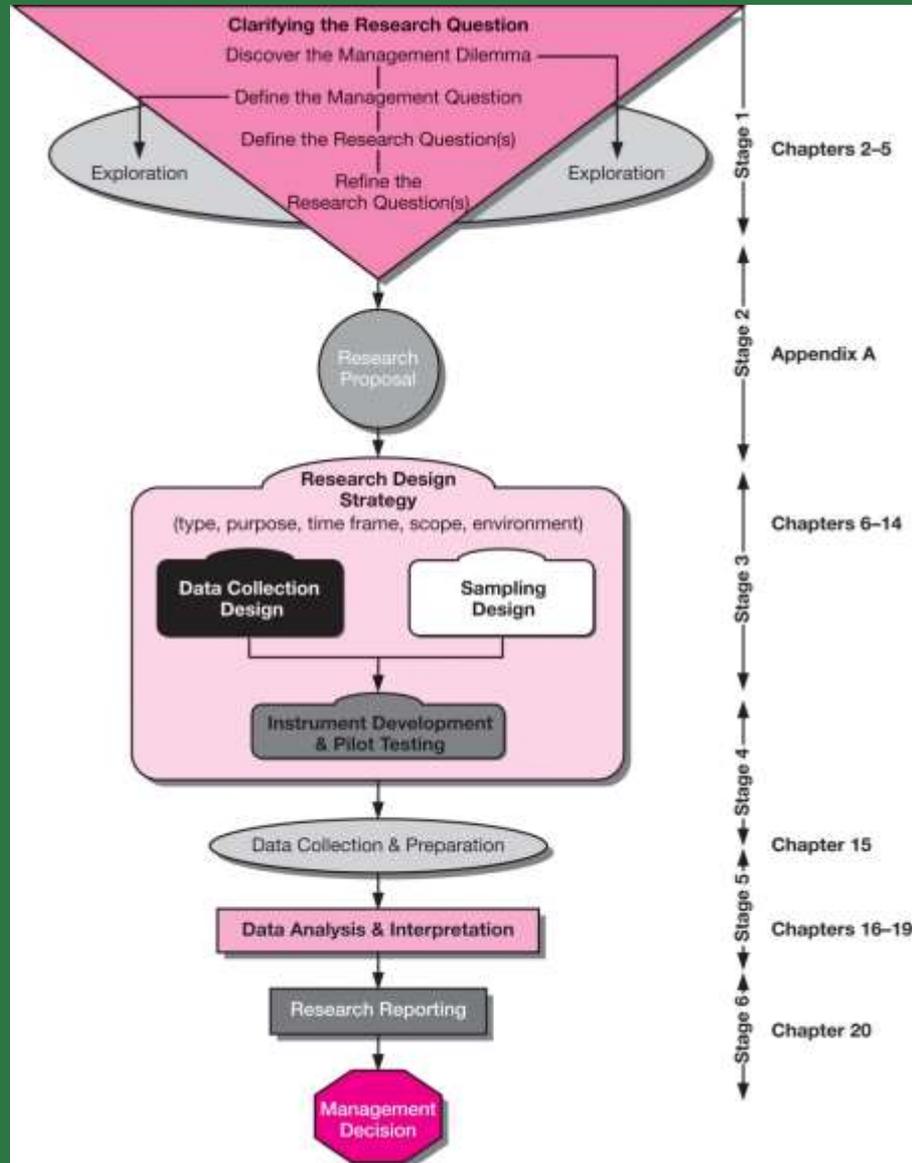
Decision Theory

Option Analysis

Prior or Interim Evaluation

Ex Post Facto Evaluation

# The Business Research Process



The sequence is just for guidance and is not necessarily one after the other.

- Recycling
- Skipping

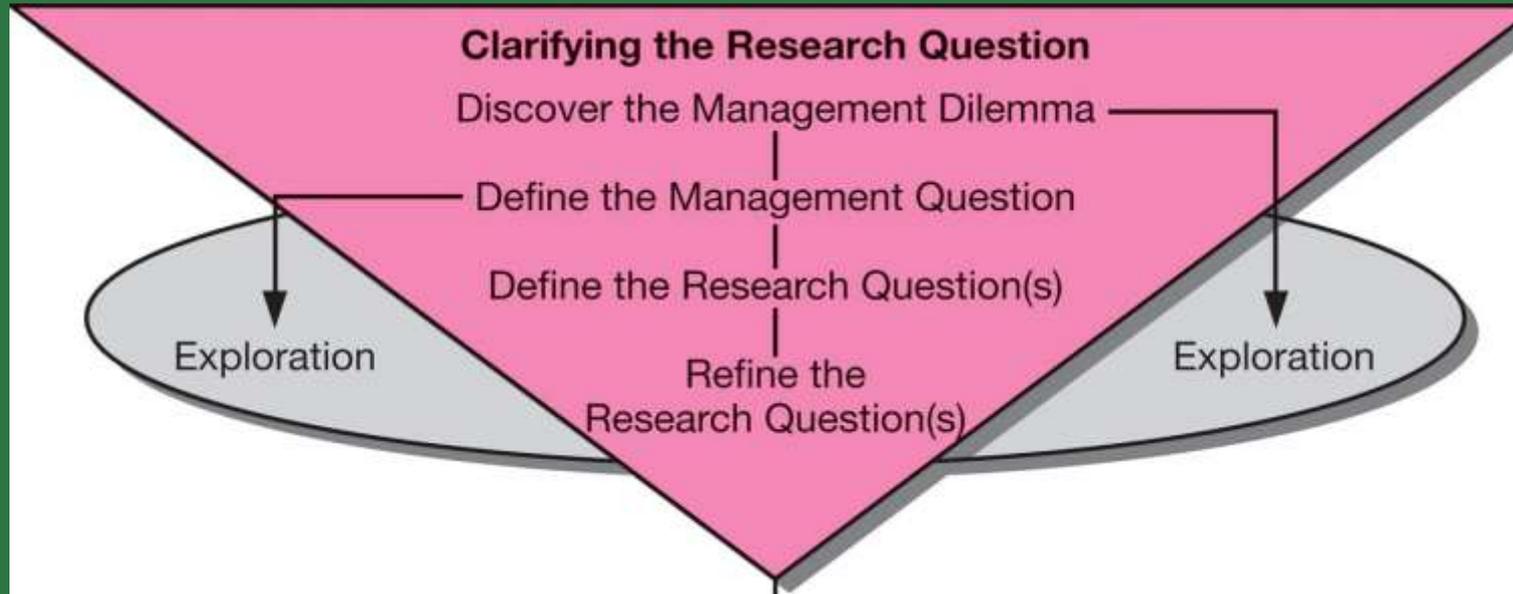


# Problem Formulation

- The formulation of a problem is far more often essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science

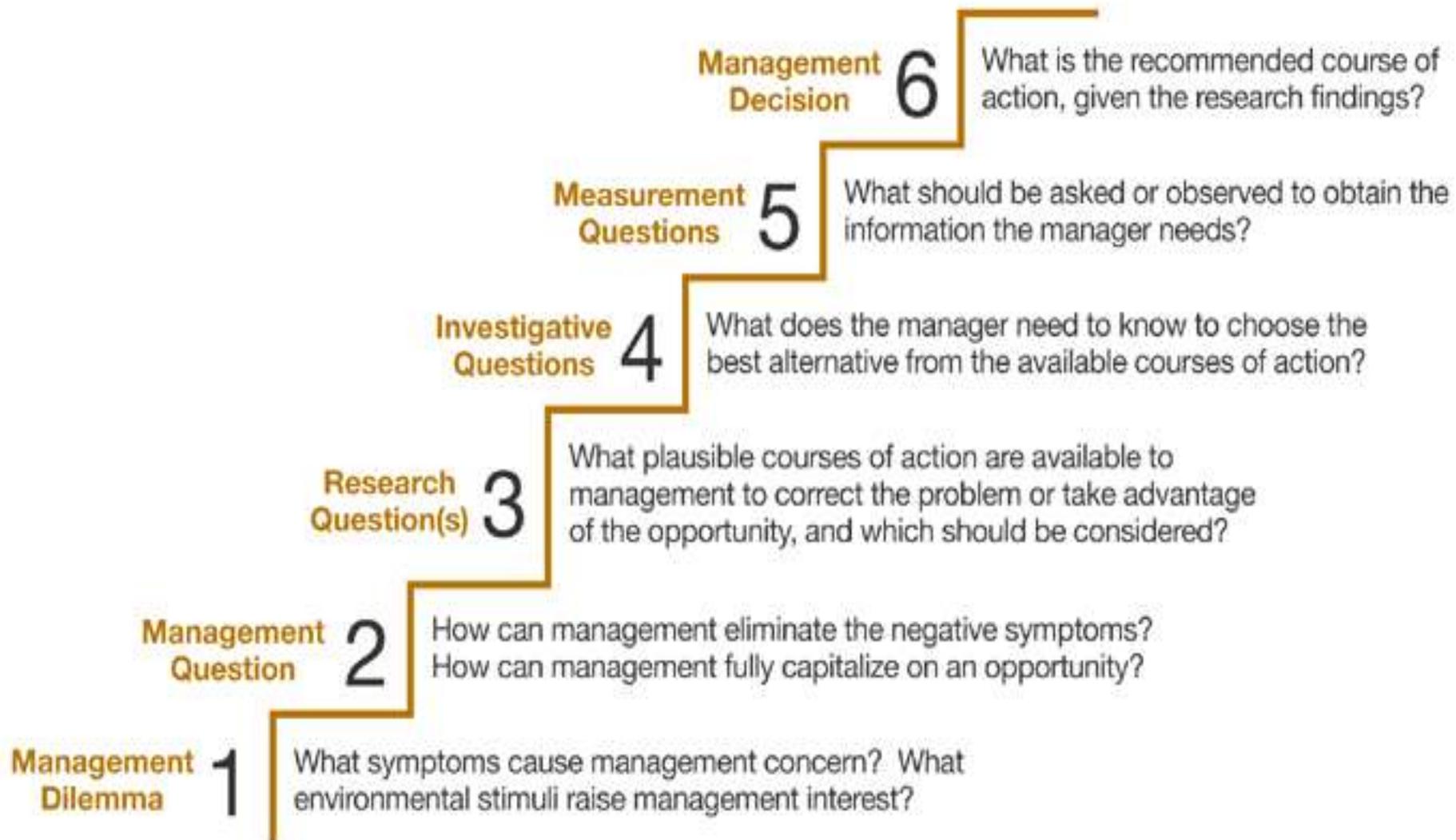
*Albert Einstein*

# Stage 1: Clarifying the Research Question



Management-research question hierarchy process begins by identifying the management dilemma

# Hierarchy



# Management Dilemma

- Symptoms of a problem
  - Increasing cost
  - Decrease in sales
  - High worker turnover
  - High defect rate
  - Increase in customer complaints
- Why is our sales in the East coast decreasing while in Sabah and Sarawak is increasing?
- Sometimes it is not very difficult to identify the dilemma but is difficult to decide which one to focus on



# Management Question

- Statement of the management dilemma in a question form
- Example:
  - How can we increase the sales in the East coast region?

# Categories of Management Questions

Categories	General Question	Sample Management Questions
<p><b>Choice of Purpose or Choice of Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we want to achieve?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should we reposition brand X as a therapeutic product from its current cosmetic positioning?</li> <li>• What goals should XYZ try to achieve in its next round of distributor negotiations?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Generalization and Evaluation of Solutions</b> (choices between concrete actions to solve problems or take advantage of opportunities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we achieve the ends that we seek?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we achieve our 5-year goal of doubling sales and profits?</li> <li>• What should be done to improve the CompleteCare program for product repairs and servicing?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Troubleshooting or Control</b> (monitoring or diagnosing ways an organization is failing to meet its goals)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well is our marketing program meeting its goals?</li> <li>• Why is our marketing program not meeting its goals?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is our product line's sales-to-promotion cost ratio?</li> <li>• Why does our department have the lowest sales-to-Web page visit ratio?</li> <li>• Why does our product line have the lowest off-shelf display occasions in the industry?</li> </ul>



# Research Questions

- Research questions are our choice hypothesis based on our objective.
- A more specific management question that needs an answer
- Facts and information collection oriented
  - Should we introduce a new commission rate?
  - Should we do an advertising campaign in the East coast?
  - Should we change the packaging format?



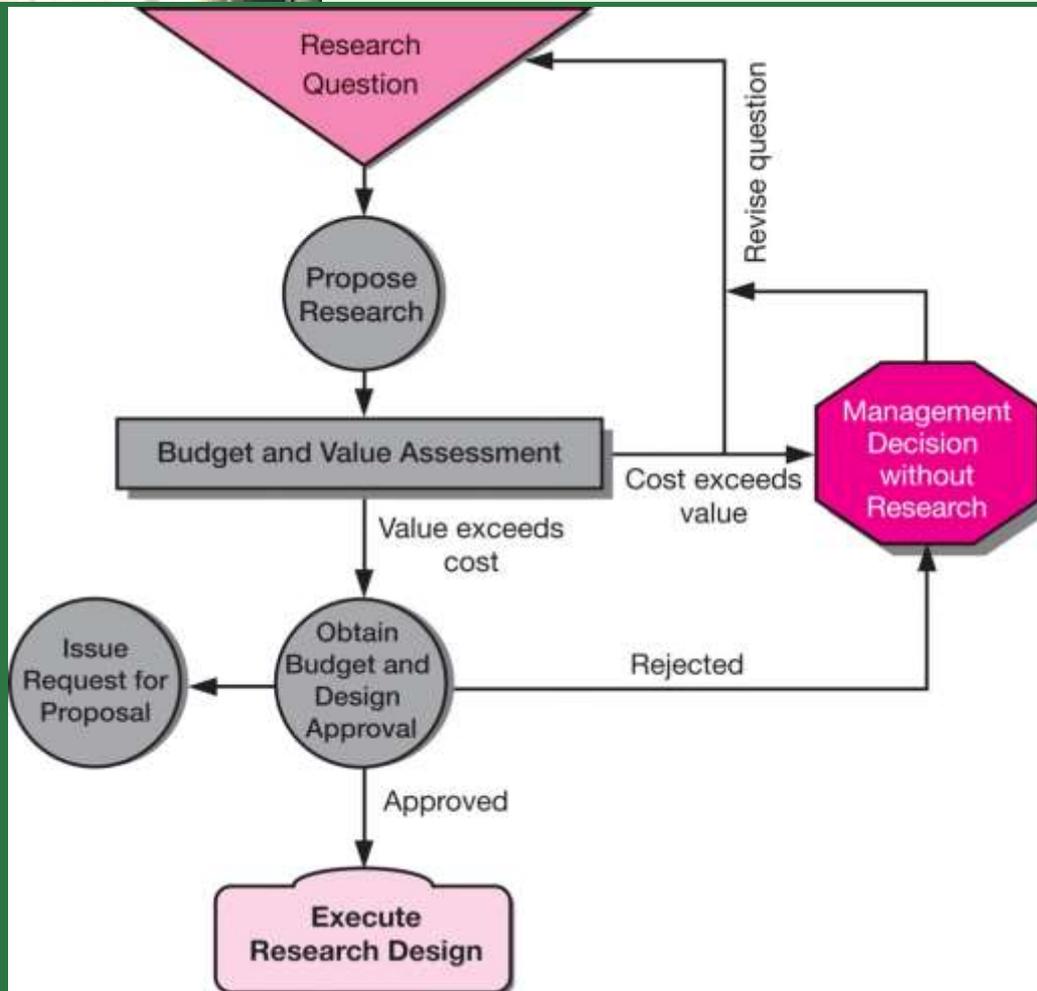
# Investigative Question

- Question that needs to be answered for the researcher to make a satisfactory conclusion about the research question
  - What is the possibility we will lose some salesmen when we introduce the new commission rate?
  - What is the possibility that the customer satisfaction in the East coast region will reduce when the new packaging format is introduced?

# Measurement Question

- The actual questions that we pose to the respondents
  - Please state your feeling based on the new commission rate that was introduced: 7 = Very worried, 4 = Not sure, 1 = Not worried at all
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Unpredictable monthly salary
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Increased internal competition for sales
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Less time for after sales service
    - \_\_\_\_\_ Less incentive to do after sales service

# Stage 2: Proposing Research



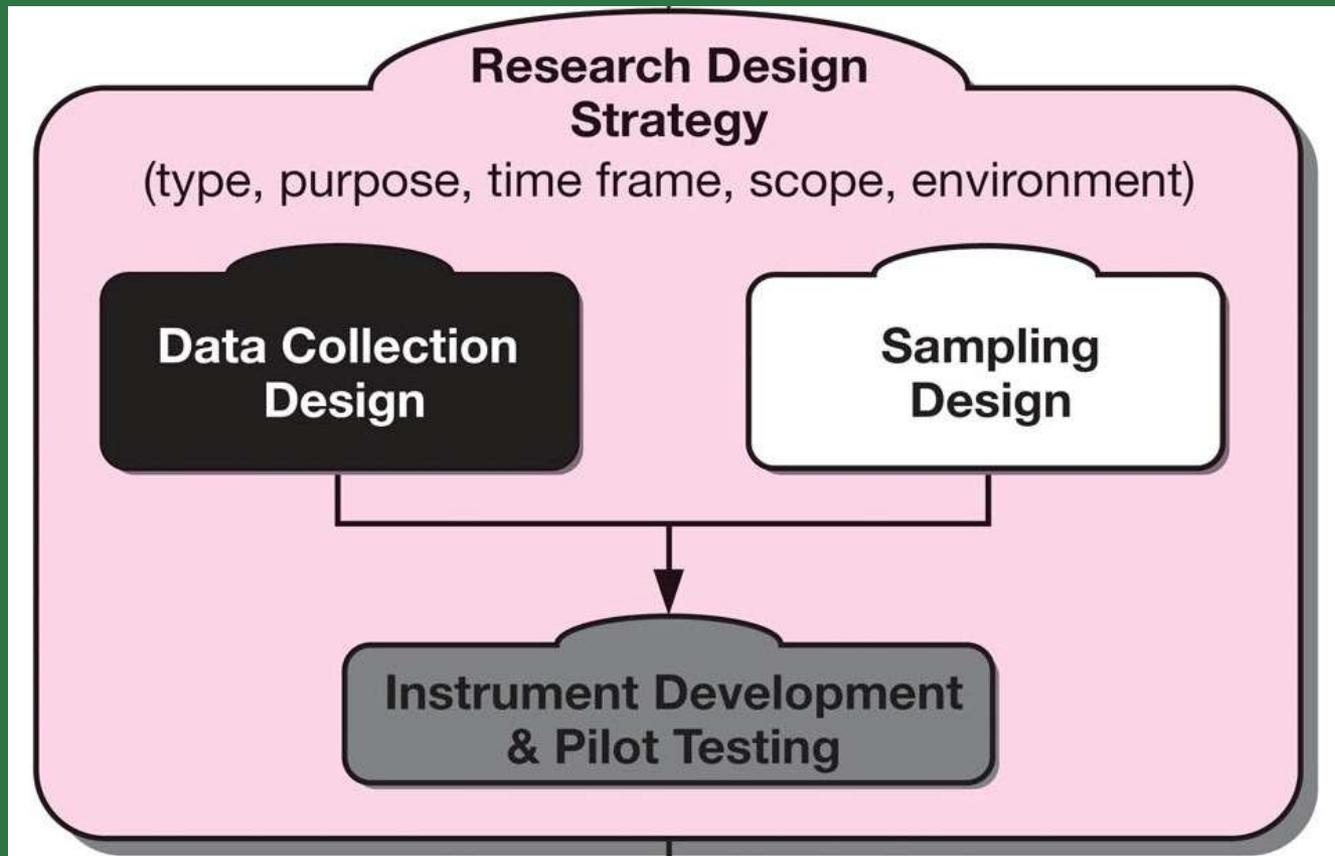
## Budget Types

- Rule-of-thumb
- Departmental
- Task

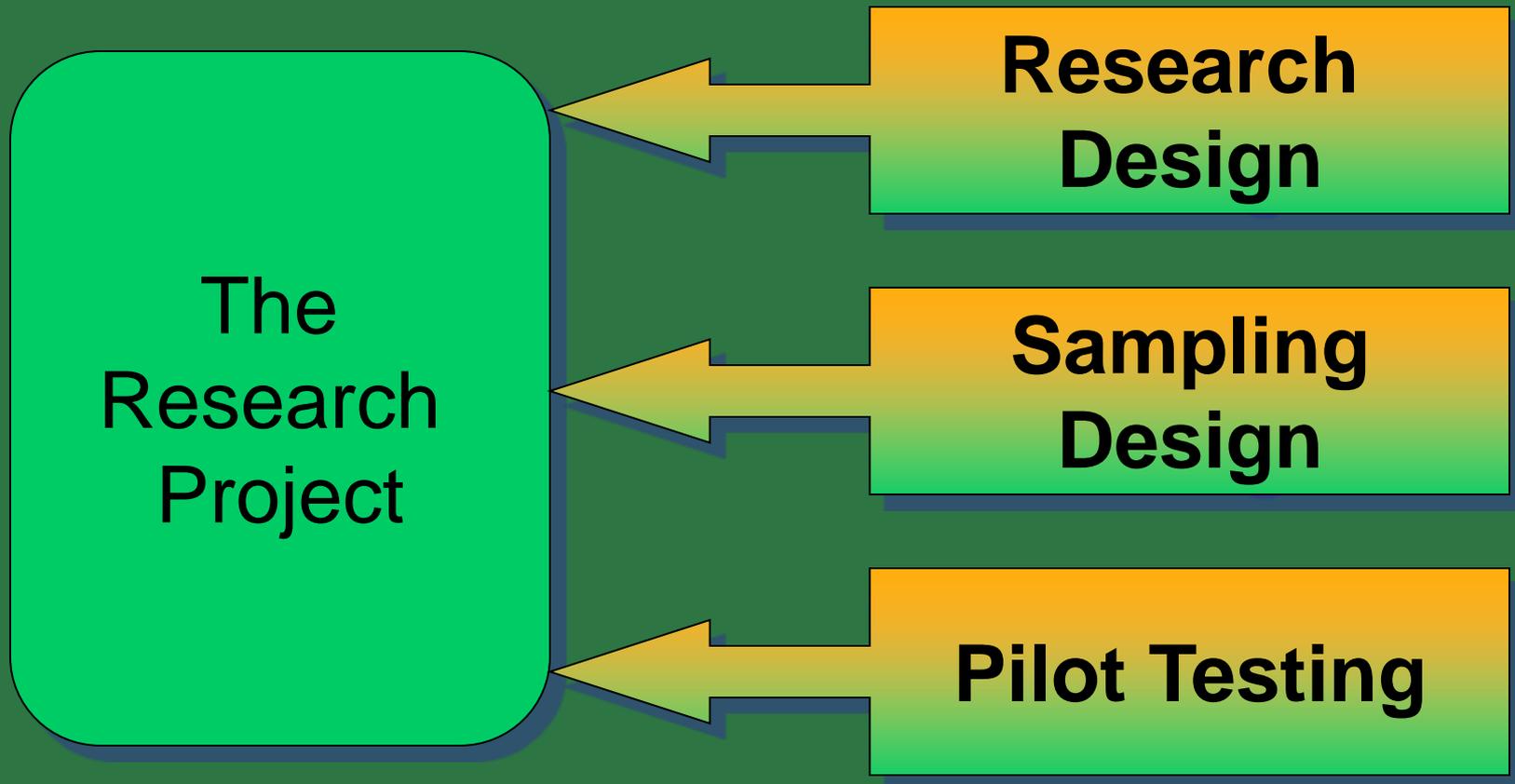
# The Research Proposal



# Stage 3: Research Design



# Stage 3: Designing the Research



# Stage 4: Data Collection



# Collecting Sensitive Data Demands Safeguards

Scotts used a healthcare management company to collect sensitive wellness data during annual health assessments to preserve participant confidentiality.

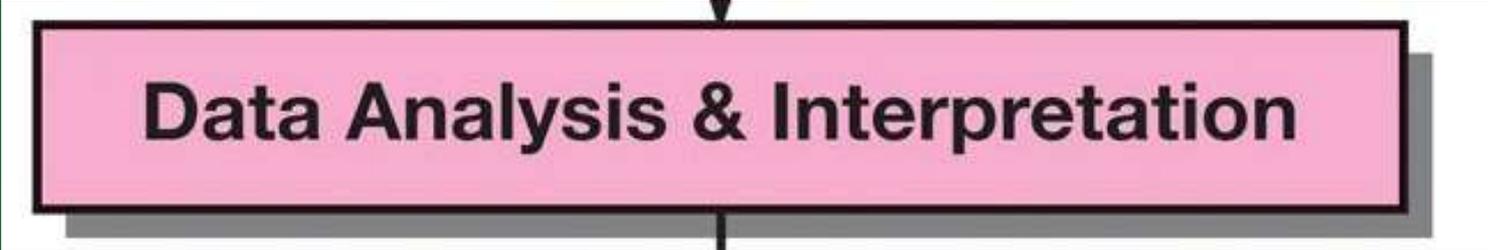


# Data Characteristics

- Abstractness
- Verifiability
- Elusiveness
- Closeness



# Stage 5: Data Analysis and Interpretation



**Data Analysis & Interpretation**

# Steps in Data Analysis and Interpretation



Reducing data to manageable size

Developing summaries

Looking for patterns

Applying statistical techniques

# Stage 6: Reporting the Results



# Parts of the Research Report



# The Research Report Overview

Problem's background

Summary of exploratory findings

Research design and procedures

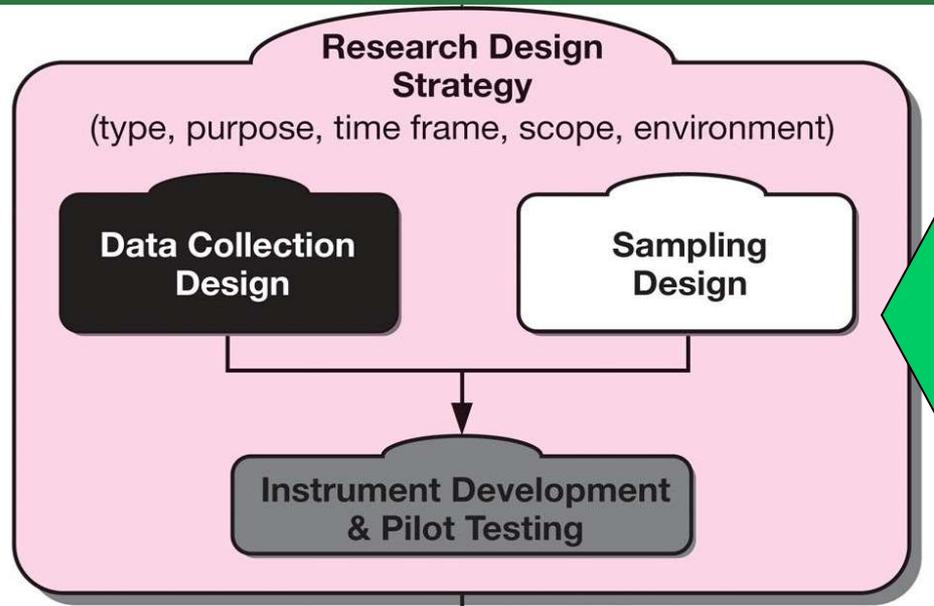
Conclusions

# Research Process Problems to Avoid



- Ill-defined management problem
- Unresearchable questions
- Politically-motivated research

# Research Process Problems to Avoid



- Company Database Strip-Mining
- The Favored-Technique Syndrome

# Research Proposal

- A formal effort to carry out research, usually written, stating the problem that will be tackled and the plan to solve the problem.



# Role of a Research Proposal

- Present the problem that is being researched and why it is important
- Discuss research efforts of others who have done research on similar issue
- To propose that data that is required to solve the problem

# Sponsors of research

All research must have a sponsor

- In the corporate sector, the management is the sponsor
- In the academic sector, the student is responsible to the teacher



# Benefits to Sponsor

- Ensure the researcher understands the problem that needs to be researched
- Acts as a control mechanism
- Allow the manager to evaluate the research method that was proposed
- Helps the management to gauge the relative value and the quality of the research being proposed



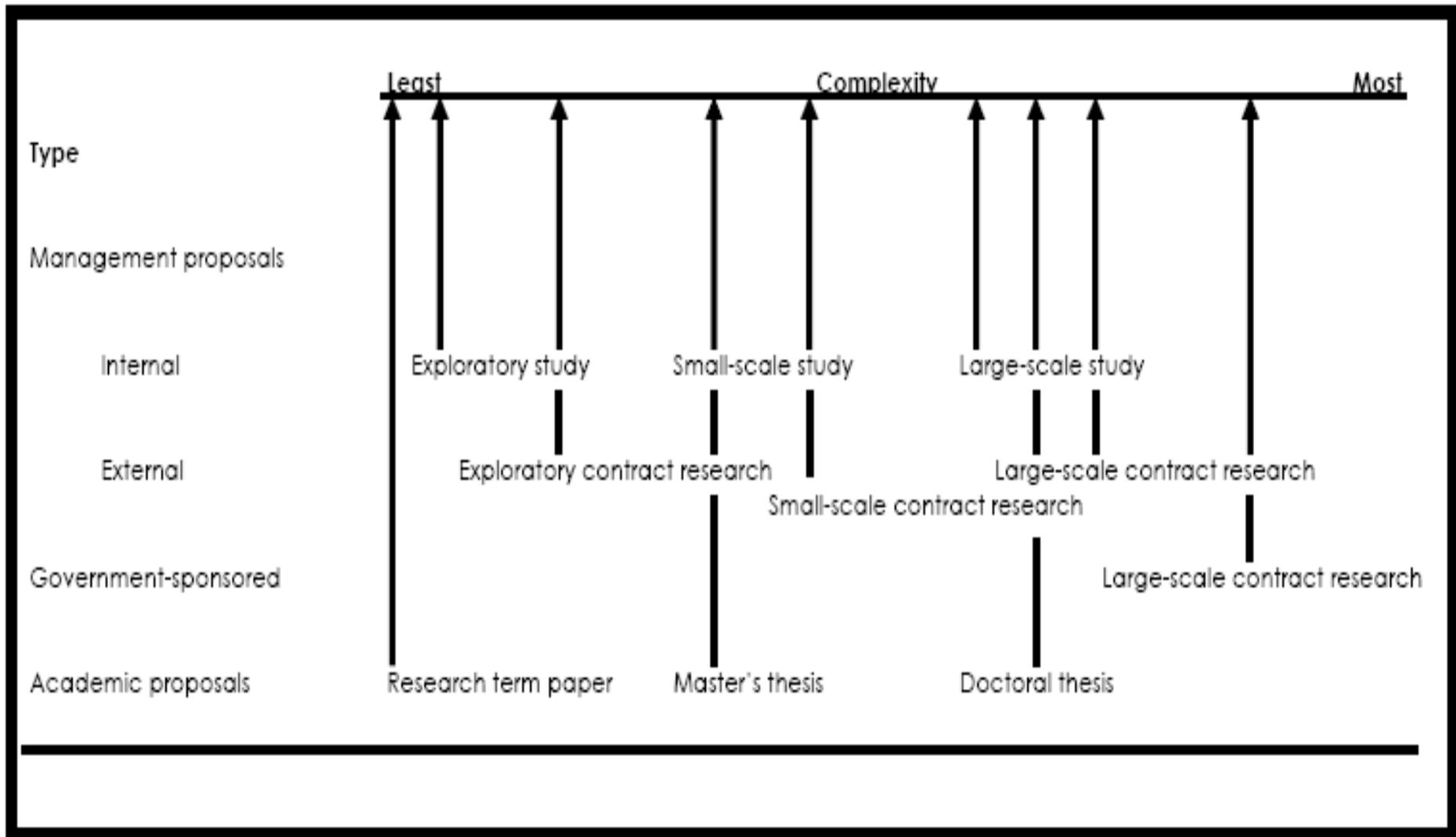
# Benefits to Researcher

- Ensure that the problem being researched is what the management wants to be researched
- Allow the researcher to plan and evaluate the steps involved in their research project
- Acts as a control mechanism for the duration of the research
- Forces an estimation of time and budget
- States the agreement between the research and the management

# Type of research proposals

- Students
- Internal
- External

# Complexity





# How to structure a research proposal?

- Develop modules
- Combine and collapse modules to suit the client

Proposal Types Proposal Modules	Management						Government	Student		
	Internal			External						
	Exploratory Study	Small-Scale Study	Large-Scale Study	Exploratory Contract	Small-Scale Contract	Large-Scale Contract	Large-Scale Contract	Term Paper	Master's Thesis	Doctoral Thesis
Executive summary		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Problem statement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research objectives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Literature review			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Importance/benefits of study			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Research design	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Data analysis						✓	✓			✓
Nature and form of results		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Qualification of researchers				✓	✓	✓	✓			
Budget		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Schedule	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Facilities and special resources			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Project management			✓			✓	✓			
Bibliography			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appendices/glossary of terms			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Measurement instrument			✓			✓	✓			✓



Daisy Fuentes

VJ, News Anchor,  
Talk Show Host,  
Model, Actress,  
Tennis Player

**TENNIS. COME OUT SWINGING.**

# Modules in a research proposal

- Executive Summary
- Problem Statement
- Research Objectives
- Literature Review
- Significance of research
- Research Design
- Data Analysis



continued ...

- Expected findings
- Researcher Qualifications
- Budget
- Schedule
- Equipment and special requirements
- Project Management
- Bibliography
- Appendices



# Executive Summary

- Allow a busy manager to understand the focus of the research
- The goal is to attract the manager's attention and to form a positive opinion
- Must include the management dilemma, management question, objectives/research questions, and the benefits of the proposed research design

# Problem statement

- Problem might only be an interest towards a particular issue where the objective is to get an answer that may help rectify the situation.
- Definition:  
***“Any situation where there is a gap between the real situation and the ideal situation”***



# Problem Statement/Definition

1. An existing problem where the manager wants to find a solution
2. Situations where it is not a problem currently but the manager feels it can be improved
3. Fields where conceptual “clarity” is needed for better development of theory
4. Situations where the researcher is interested in a particular topic and would like to answer the research question empirically

**Managers appear to be unfamiliar with personal computer processes and are unaware of what MIS offers**

# Symptom vs Problem

- A manager observes that the productivity rate is low. So he increases the piece rate, but meets with little success.
- So here low productivity is the symptom not the problem
- What maybe the problem?

# Research Objectives

- This section explains the purpose of research
- Related to the research problem module and gives the sponsor a specific and concrete goal that can be achieved
- List the objectives from general to the specific ones
- Verify consistency by evaluating whether each objective is discussed in the research design, data analysis and the discussion of findings

**Does extent of knowledge of the usefulness of MIS influence the use of MIS?**

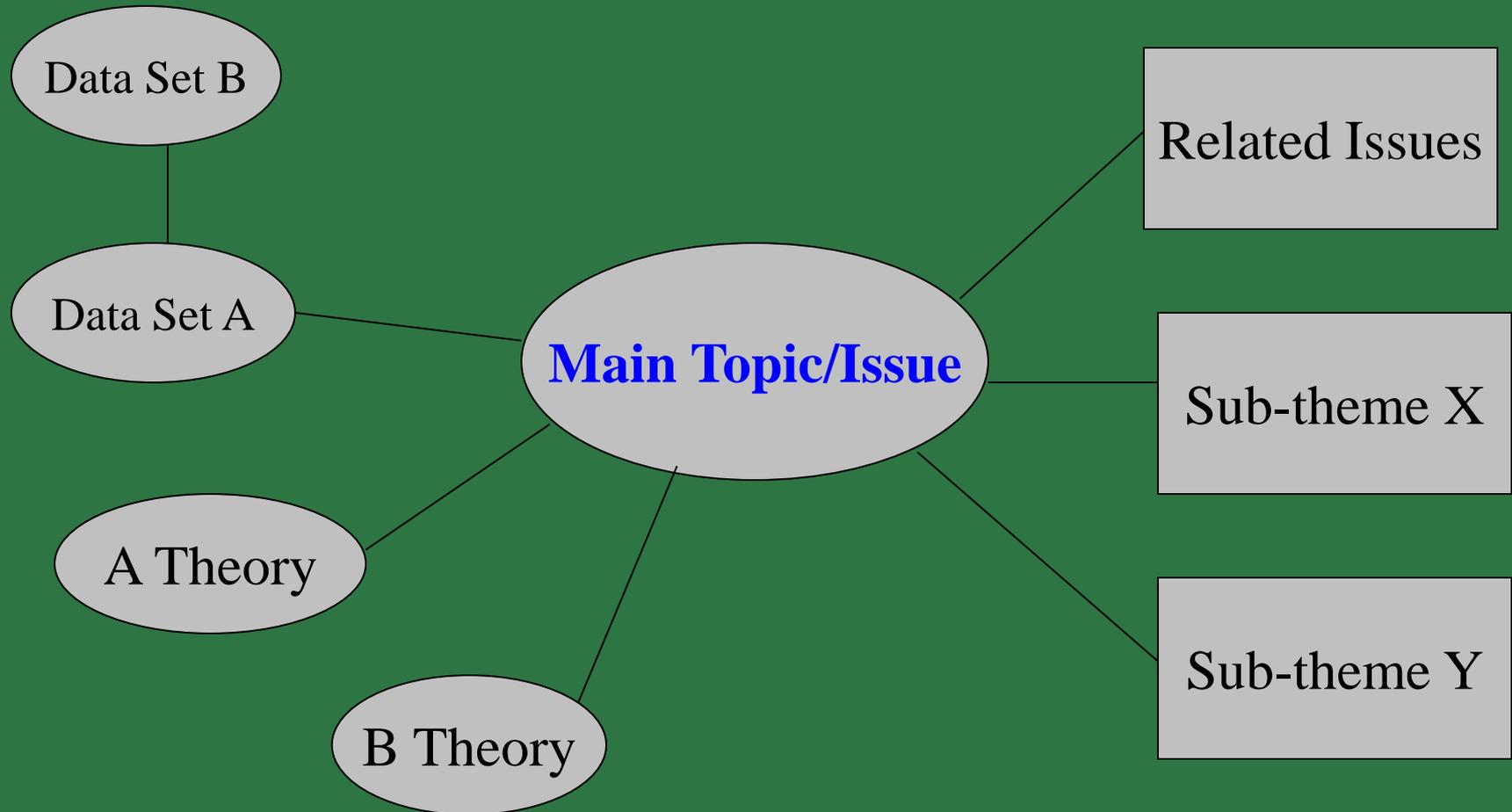
**To what extent will knowledge of the usefulness of MIS help managers to put MIS to greater use?**



# Literature Review

Literature review involves the systematic identification, search, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem

# Developing Literature Review



# Documents

- Documents inclusive of
  - \* General Sources  
Newspapers, magazines, etc
  - \* Secondary Sources  
Books, research evaluations, etc
  - \* Primary Sources  
Journal, abstract, etc



# Conducting the Literature Review

- Identify sources that are relevant
  - Bibliography databases
  - Abstract databases
  - Full text databases
- Extracting relevant materials
- Writing the literature review

# Reason for the Review

- Identify what has already been done
- Help in the planning of what needs to be done
- Gives the rationale for further research
- Identify research strategies and procedures and also specific effective measurements
- Helps to avoid mistakes done by earlier researchers and build upon their strengths
- Help in interpreting the data from the research

# Types of review

- **Inclusive**
  - Identify and list all that has been written about the issue
- **Inclusive/Evaluative**
  - Extend the first method to give commentaries about the coverage and contribution to knowledge and the understanding of the topic being researched
- **Exploratory**
  - Look for researches available to help in the solving of specific research question or issue

# Types of review

- **Instrumental**
  - Main focus is related to business issues and the review is used as idea how the research question can be answered. Also to identify the appropriate methodology.
- **Content Analysis**
  - Evaluates the content of the review.
  - Counting how many times the word “management of change” is mentioned in a review



# Consideration when writing a review

- More does not necessarily mean better
- Parts that has been extensively researched need not been focused at length
- Parts that are new needs to be focused more

# Benefits of the review

A good review ensures:

- Important variables are not left out
- A clearer idea about the research
- Replicability of the findings can be increased
- The problem statement can be stated clearly
- No time is wasted on researching something already extensively researched
- The problem being investigated has some scientific value

# Writing a review

- Read other researchers review
- Build a theme from general to specific literature
- Use a common system.
- Discussion should follow the research question
- Use a simple framework as guide.
- Practice leads to perfection

Study on: Absenteeism Nath, E. (1945)  
(Topic) Author/Year

### **Problem STT**

What factors have the greatest influence on absenteeism?

### **Variables**

Age, education, working conditions, marital status, type of job.

### **Sample**

67 mine workers from the XYZ Mine Co., Illinois. Mean age = 35; all males.

### **Data Collection**

All 67 employees were interviewed by three researchers within a period of 3 months inside the mine.

### **Data Analysis**

Correlational and multiple-regression analysis used.

### **Results**

Working conditions influenced absenteeism the most—especially toxic dust and explosions. None of the other variables was significantly related to absenteeism.

### **Conclusions**

Chemicals that would absorb the toxic dust and mechanisms for explosion danger warnings should substantially reduce absenteeism.

### **Any Other Info/Comments**

# Why is the review important?

- Shows that the researchers knows what he/she is doing
- The research framework is built based on previous literature and strengthened with new and emerging knowledge

# Sample 1

## **RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOURS AND ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES**

Managers handle risks and face uncertainties in different ways. Some of these styles are functional and others adversely affect corporate performance. Living in times of dramatic organisational change (mergers, for instance), and with company performance varying vastly in this turbulent environment, it is important to investigate the relationship between risk-taking behaviours of managers and organisational outcomes.

A vast body of knowledge exists regarding risk-taking behaviours in decision making. Some studies have shown that the context which surrounds the decision maker exerts an influence on the extent of risk the individual is prepared to take (Shapira 1995; Starbuck & Milken 1988). Other studies, such as those by Sankar (1997) and Velcher (1998), indicate that the position of the risk taker, and whether the decision is taken by an individual or is the result of group effort, account significantly for the variance in risk-taking behaviours and, ultimately, for the performance of the organisation. Schwartz (1994) argues that research carried out using subjects participating in activities in a laboratory setting shows different results compared with those found in research done in organisational settings. Additionally, MacCrimmon and Wehrung (1984, 1986, 1990) suggest that the differences in the measurement tools used in research studies account for the differences in the findings of managerial risk attitudes.

# Sample 2

## ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Organisational theorists have defined organisational effectiveness (OE) in various ways. OE has been described in terms of objectives (Georgopoulos & Tannenbaum 1957), goals (Etzioni 1960), efficiency (Katz & Kahn 1966), resource acquisition (Yuchtman & Seashore 1967), employee satisfaction (Cummings 1977), interdependence (Pfeffer 1977) and organisational vitality (Colt 1995). As Coulter (1996) remarks, there is little consensus on how to conceptualise, measure or explain OE. This should not come as a surprise since OE models are essentially a value-based classification of the construct (the values being those of the researchers), so the number of potential models that can be generated by researchers is virtually limitless. Researchers are now moving away from a single model and are adopting contingency approaches to conceptualising OE (Cameron 1996; Wernerfelt 1998; Yetley 1997). However, they are still limiting themselves to examining the impact of the dominant constituencies served and the organisation's life cycle instead of taking a broader, more dynamic approach (Dahl 1998:25).



# Significance/Benefits of research

- State the benefit of the research
- Emphasize why it should be done now
- This section needs you to understand the needs of the sponsor
- This module is important in the external research proposal as you have to convince the sponsor that your plan will fulfill their needs

# Research design

- This module explains the technical details of what you will be doing
- Gives information about design which includes, sampling, data collection technique, instruments, procedures and ethical requirements
- If there are more than one approach then you need to justify why you chose one over the other.

# Data Analysis

- Method used by the researcher (software & techniques)
- Gives the choice of techniques and their assumptions
- The most problematic module
- Very important especially in external proposals

# Expected Findings

- This section should be aligned with the management question and also the objectives
- State the data that needs to be collected and the interpretation that will be done
- Statistical conclusions, application of findings, recommendations. Action plan, models and strategic plans are examples in this module.



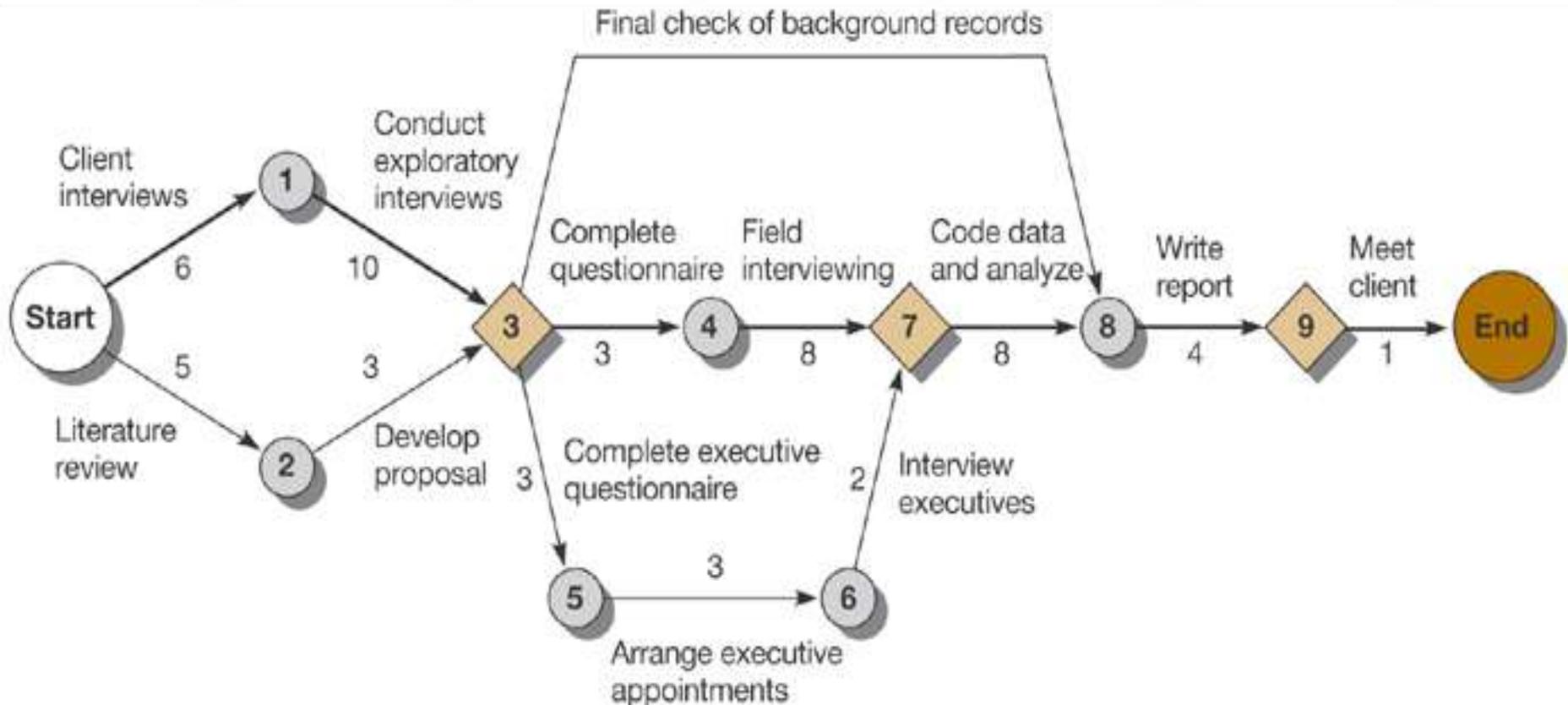
# Researchers Qualification

- Professional research experience
- Relevant managerial experience

# Budget

Budget Items	Rate	Total Days	Charge
A. Salaries			
1. Research director, Jason Henry	\$200/hr	20 hours	\$ 4,000
2. Associate	100/hr	10 hours	1,000
3. Research assistants (2)	20/hr	300 hours	6,000
4. Secretarial (1)	12/hr	100 hours	1,200
Subtotal			<u>\$12,200</u>
B. Other costs			
5. Employee services and benefits			
6. Travel			\$ 2,500
7. Office supplies			100
8. Telephone			800
9. Rent			
10. Other equipment			
11. Publication and storage costs			100
Subtotal			<u>\$ 3,500</u>
C. Total of direct costs			\$15,700
D. Overhead support			5,480
E. Total funding requested			<u>\$21,180</u>

# Critical Path Method (CPM)



## Milestones:

- 3 Proposal approval
- 7 Interviews completed
- 9 Final report completed

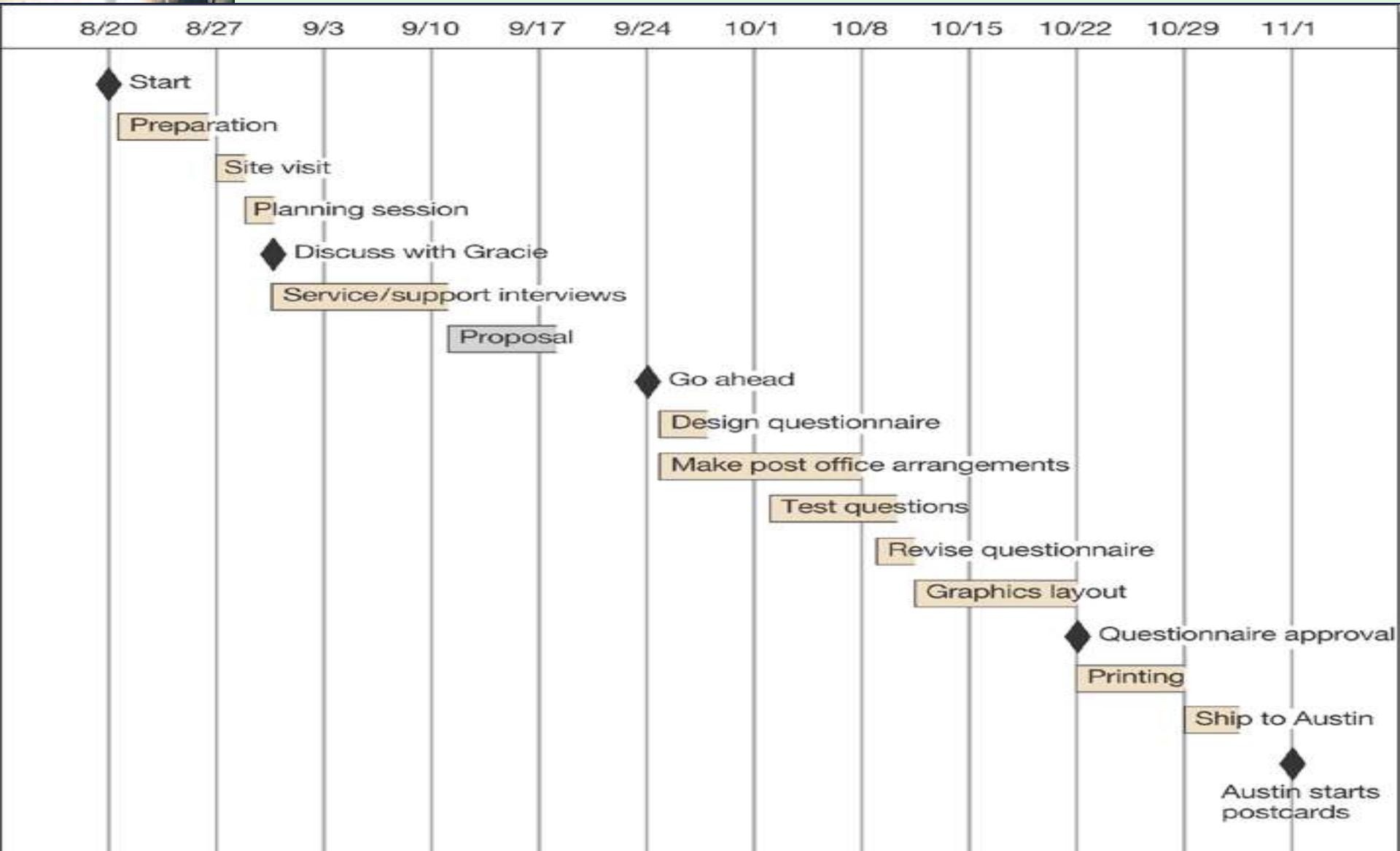
## Critical Path:

S-1-3-4-7-8-9-E

## Time to Completion:

40 working days

# Gantt Chart



# What to be included in the appendix?

- Glossary of concepts, constructs and definitions
- Sample of measurement instrument
- Other materials to reinforce the main body of research report

# Evaluating research proposals

- Must be neatly written
- Topics must be easily found and arranged logically
- Must conform to the guidelines of the sponsor
- Technical writing style should be understood by the reader



# Ten common mistakes in research proposals

1. Data collection not properly controlled
2. Weakness in research design
3. Limitations are not revealed
4. The research design cannot answer the research question
5. Unsuitable respondents selection



continued ...

6. Results not properly presented
7. Wrong analysis techniques used
8. Research paper not clearly written
9. The assumptions are not clearly explained
10. Method used is very simple or not explained

# What is important in this chapter?

- Importance of problem statement
- Hierarchy of Management-Research question
- How to evaluate the value of a research?
- Characteristics of data
- What is a research proposal?
- Reasons for writing a research proposal
- Type of research proposals
- Contents of a research proposal
- How to evaluate a research proposal?