



Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture

Doing Research in Art and Media

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1



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Research Basics

2

The purpose of research

is to learn what has never been known before; to ask a significant question for which no conclusive answer has previously been found; and, by collecting and interpreting relevant data, to find an answer to that question.

Leedy & Ormrod

3

DEFINING A RESEARCH PROBLEM

FORMULATING A RESEARCH STATEMENT

FORMING A RESEARCH QUESTION

REVIEWING RELATED LITERATURE

CHOOSING A RESEARCH APPROACH

WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL/PLAN

CONDUCTING RESEARCH

WRITING A THESIS

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4

DEFINING A RESEARCH PROBLEM

5

Defining a research problem

The aim of the research process is to find “the answer” to the research problem

- only one **conclusive answer**

6

Defining a research problem

- The research problem should aim to address a **specific question**
- The question should lead to **new knowledge** in the field of study
- This could be a new way of thinking, new applications of knowledge, or further areas of research

7

Defining a research problem

- Important to **avoid** defining **certain types** of research problems
 - Those that only lead to self-learning, and don't lead to any new knowledge in the field
 - Those that don't ask the question "why?" or "how?"
 - Those that only lead to "yes" and "no" answers

8

Defining a research problem

It is also important to find a problem that is interesting, intriguing, motivating... and often challenging!

9

DEFINING A RESEARCH PROBLEM

FORMULATING A RESEARCH STATEMENT

10

Formulating a research statement

A research statement is “carefully phrased and represents a single goal of the total research effort”

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11

Formulating a research statement

- It specifies the aims and objectives of the research
- It should be clear and understandable to even non-experts
- It should consider the limitations and scope of the research
- It may be necessary to divide the research into several sub-parts

12

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FORMING A RESEARCH QUESTION

13

Forming a research question

A **research question** is formed based on the **research statement**, particularly when it is **not possible to "guess"** the answer

14

Forming a research hypothesis

Sometimes it is possible to form a hypothesis based on “a logical supposition, a reasonable guess, an educated conjecture”

Leedy & Ormrod

15

Forming a research hypothesis

- It provides a tentative answer to the research question
- It can direct research thinking and effort towards the answer
- It must be supported or not supported by the research data
- If not supported by the data, it may lead to new a hypothesis

16

Forming a research question or hypothesis

- Questions are more useful for **qualitative research** methods
- Hypotheses are more useful for **quantitative research** methods
- Either way, the research often starts with one or the other
- The aim is **to answer** a question, **or prove/disprove** a hypothesis

17

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REVIEWING RELATED LITERATURE

18

Reviewing related literature

The aim of the literature review is to provide a theoretical basis for the research

19

Reviewing related literature

- Covers the state of knowledge in the area of research
- Identifies areas that need further research
 - referred to as the knowledge gap
- Justifies the need for the proposed research question
- It is more than just a summary of existing research

20

Reviewing related literature

The main point to bear in mind is that a review should **provide the reader with a picture**, albeit limited in a short project, of the state of knowledge and of major questions in the subject.

Judith Bell

21

Reviewing related literature

It involves **questioning assumptions**, **querying claims made** for which no evidence has been provided, **considering the findings** of one researcher **compared** to those of others and **evaluating**.

Judith Bell

22

The literature review checklist

1: Evidence of reading will always be required in any research.

Though in a small study, it may not be necessary to produce a full literature review.

2: Researchers collect many facts but then must select, organize and classify findings into a coherent pattern.

The aim is to produce a critical review, not a list of everything you have read.

3: Your framework will not only provide a map of how the research will be conducted and analysed but it will also give you ideas about a structure for your review.

It will help you to draw together and summarize facts and findings.

4: Literature reviews should be succinct and, as far as is possible in a small study, should give a picture of the state of knowledge and of major questions in your topic area.

If you have been able to classify your reading into groups, categories or under headings, writing your review will be relatively straightforward.

Judith Bell

23

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24

Choosing a research approach

All research requires deciding on the appropriate **methodology** and **methods** to use

25

methodology

1. a. a **body of methods**, rules, and postulates employed by a discipline: a particular procedure or **set of procedures**
2. a. the analysis of the **principles or procedures** of inquiry in a particular field

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26

method

1. a. a procedure or process for attaining an object: such as
 1. a systematic procedure, technique, or mode of inquiry employed by or proper to a particular discipline or art
 2. ...
- b. ...
2. a. a discipline that deals with the principles and techniques of scientific inquiry

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27

Methodologies and methods

A methodology is a collection (toolkit) of different methods (tools) suitable for a particular type of research approach

28

Methodologies

Methodologies are different **approaches** used for research
- e.g. ethnography, historical research, etc.

29

Methods

Methods are different **techniques** used for research
- e.g. questionnaire, interview, observation, etc.

30

Choosing a research approach

There are many different research methodologies, each with their own suitable collection of methods

31



32

RESEARCH IN ART & DESIGN

PROCESS OF CREATIVITY

study of people

QUALITATIVE

QUANTITATIVE

APPLIED

CREATIVE OUTPUT OR ARTEFACT

study of things

QUALITATIVE

QUANTITATIVE

APPLIED

VISUAL

IMPACT OF ARTEFACTS

study of people

QUALITATIVE

QUANTITATIVE

VISUAL

33

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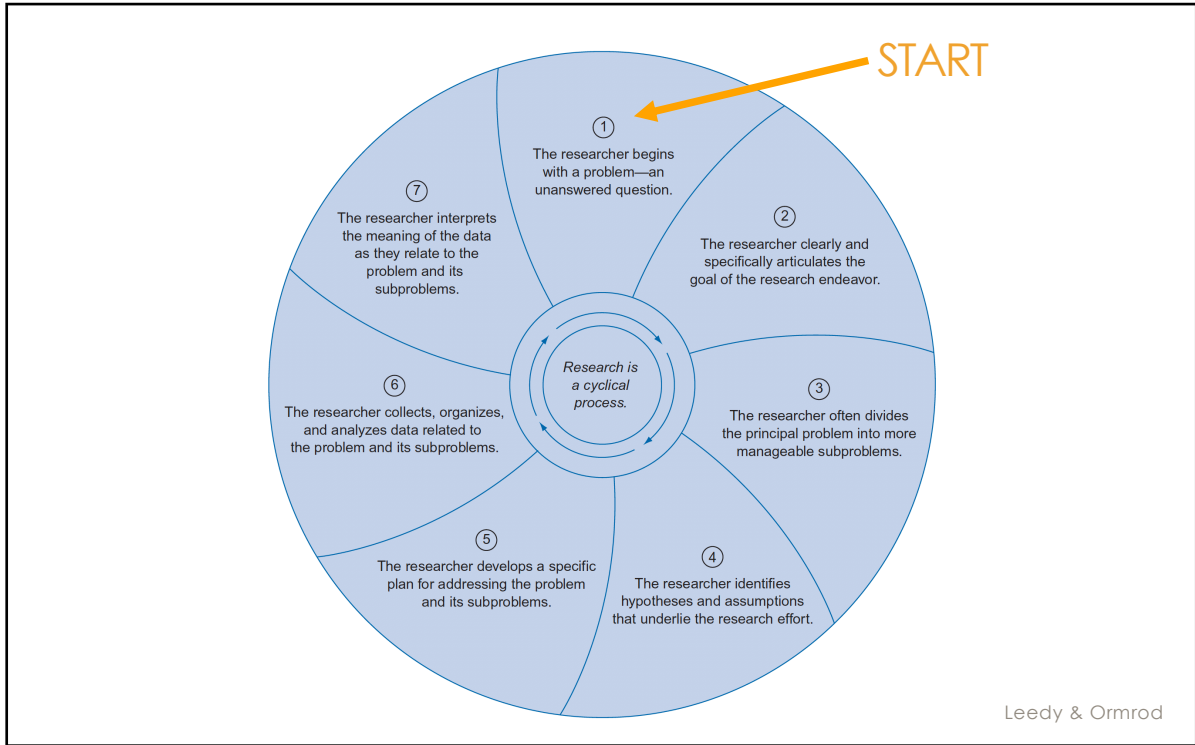
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34



35

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36



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