

THE GENERAL FORMAT OF A POSTGRADUATE THESIS PROPOSAL (QUALITATIVE)

DR. SHAMSUDDIN L. TAYA
LECTURER
COLLEGE OF LAW, GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (COLGIS)
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA (UUM)

SELECTING A TOPIC

- Before embarking upon writing a research proposal, a student has to be engaged in, what they call invention (Huckin and Olsen, 1991).
- Invention refers to the task of discovering and recovering useful materials housed in memory.
- In plain language, it means to identify and decide upon a topic or problem to be investigated.

- Problem can be identified through observing social phenomena, through discussion with peers and scholars and through studying various reports (Attig and Winichagoon, 1993:23-43).
- One useful device to generate topic is known as a brainstorming. It allows the student to uncover both ideas stored in memory and useful association among those ideas.

- **Criteria of the topic**
 - It must be appealing to the researcher
 - It must also be of interest to other scholars in the field (especially student's supervisor and examiners).
 - It should be doable/manageable
 - Student must be sensitive to the ethical consideration associated with the research. Conducting research is an extension of one's personal actions (Shively, 1990: 10).
- Types of topic that most supervisors advise their students to avoid:
 - Student must avoid controversial topic.
 - Student must stay away from theory-generating type research.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- Logically, the first step in any research is to formulate one's questions **CLEARLY** and **UNAMBIGUOUSLY**.
- Such questions might be concerned with description, correlation or explanation or all of them.
- A problem may be stated in terms of a **verbal statement** (e.g. **The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze....** OR in the form of question (e.g. **Why did Israel attack Gaza?** The most important thing is to state the central, major theme clearly and stick with it.

- For a qualitative study, it is suggested that research questions be made as broad as possible because researcher usually does not have extensive knowledge about the setting in which the research is to take place.
- A narrowed question may turn out to be inappropriate for the setting and hence the entire project might have to be discarded.
- Setting research in a broad manner is also in conformity with the relatively open and unstructured research strategy which most qualitative researchers prefer.

CHAPTERIZATION

REFERENCE/BIBLIOGRAPHY

THANK YOU