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## Exploring Research Methods Workshop Presentation TU Dublin - An investigation of the Personality Traits That Could Identify Vulnerable Young People Who Will be Susceptible to Undue Influence by Social Media Influencers (SMIs)

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# An investigation of the personality traits that could identify vulnerable young people who will be susceptible to undue influence by social media influencers (SMIs)

Exploring Research Methods Workshop  
Technological University Dublin  
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## Introduction

This project aims to determine the specific personality traits (e.g. extraversion, agreeableness, openness to new experiences) and/or personality profiles associated with susceptibility to undue influence by social media influencers. Once this is known, a training programme will be developed to help young people enhance skills that will enable them to avoid negative consequences associated with exposure to potentially harmful social media content. A mixed-method (MM) approach will be employed, relying on both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve the main objectives in this research.

This poster intends to discuss the methodological approach that will be employed to achieve the objectives and research questions in this study.

## Research Questions & Aims

1. What personality traits or profiles are associated with susceptibility to undue influence by social media influencers?
  2. How effectively does the provision of a specifically designed training programme enable young people to recognise potentially harmful online content?
- Determine whether there is a specific personality profile that predisposes young people to undue influence by social media influencers.
  - Analyse the effectiveness of a training module at enabling young people to recognise harmful content online and avoid undue influence by SMI's.

## Methodology

- A mixed-method (MM) approach will be employed relying on both quantitative and qualitative methods. In phase one, a sample of 40 young people (20 males and 20 females) will be recruited through schools in the greater Dublin area.
- Participants in phase one will then be given a standard test of personality and will also complete a short questionnaire asking them about their online browsing habits.
- Statistical analysis will then be conducted to assess whether there are specific personality traits or personality profiles that are associated with being susceptible to undue influence i.e. to assess whether there are specific personality traits/profiles that make young people more likely to believe and to want to emulate behaviours they view online.
- The results from phase one will be employed to develop a teaching module that will be delivered to a separate sample of 40 young people (20 males and 20 females). The purpose of the module will be to develop critical thinking skills and shield against undue influence by SMIs.
- Post presentation of the module, participants will be invited to attend a semi-structured interview aiming to understand their perceptions of the module and how effective they believe it was.
- There may be some possible limitations in this study mainly in relation to issues with sample and selection, such as sample size may not be representative, and recruitment of the proposed sample will be challenging.
- The choice of MM seeks to expand the range and validity of information by triangulating and data triangulation. Therefore, giving a more complete, robust and concise analysis. Simply, MM includes collecting and integrating quantitative and qualitative data, which might result in a more accurate, detailed and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon investigated (Leavy, 2017).

## Conclusion

This research is the first of its kind and makes a unique and novel contribution to the fields of marketing and psychology. Additionally, this project relates to contemporary issues such as the influence of SMIs in young people's lives. This project has the potential to make a positive contribution towards enabling young people, both in Ireland and elsewhere, to protect themselves from undue negative influence. As this study will be the first of its kind, it also serves as a potential foundation for future research projects in this field.

REFERENCES: Leavy, P. (2017). Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches (1st ed.). The Guilford Press.

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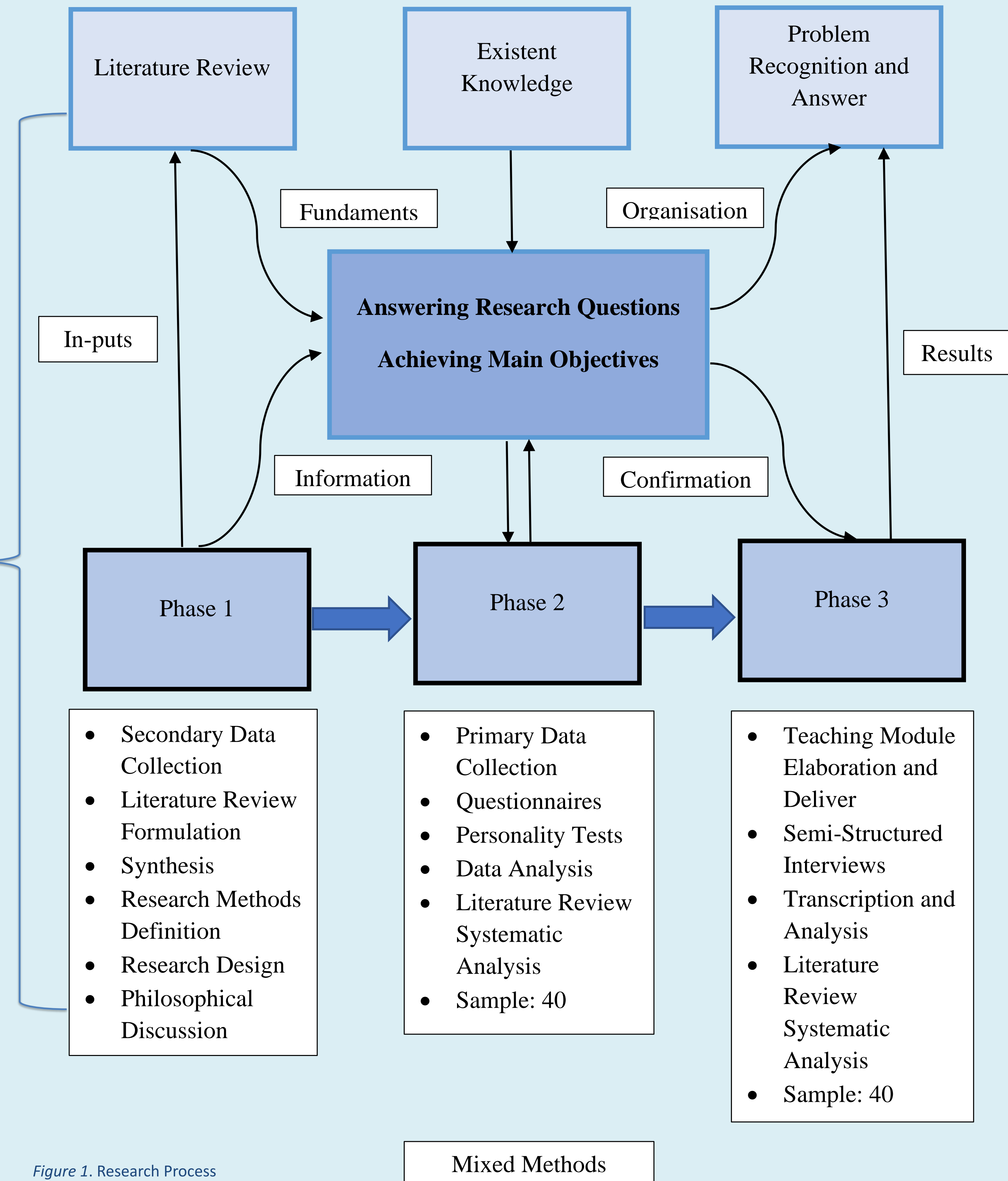


Figure 1. Research Process