

Research Methods

For

Business Students



Special Lecture

By

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GSIM

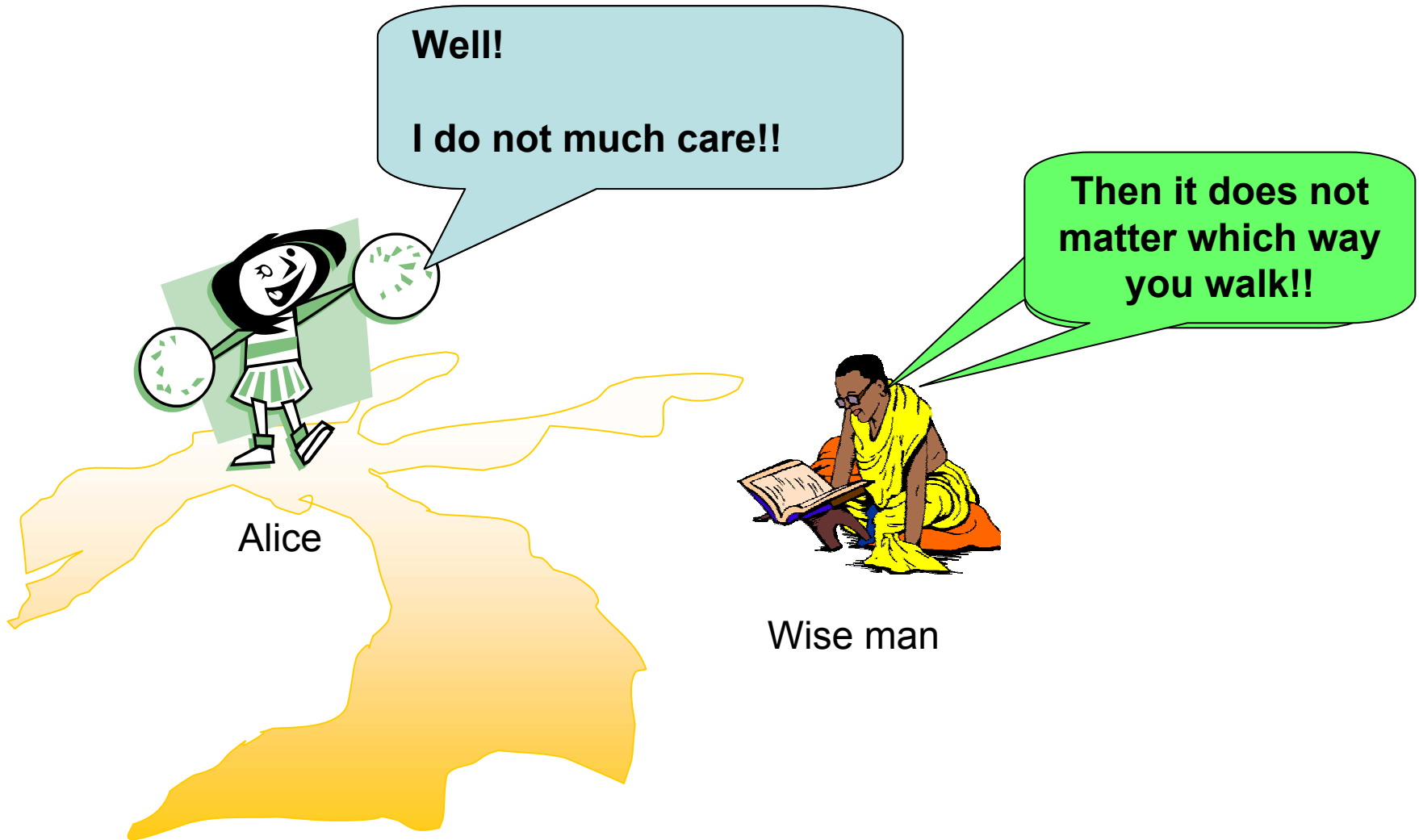
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Why do we do research?

- 1. Because at IUJ → MBA requirement**
- 2. You need to prove to yourself that you can do research**
- 3. You need to learn how to prepare a good research report**
- 4. Your company needs you to prepare a research report**

Alice in Wonderland....



Attributes of a Good Research Topic

- **Must have good objective**
- **Must have good answers**
- **Must be exciting to you**
- **Must be able to do within the time frame**
- **Must be able to collect data or access data**

How about this example topic?

Gunar's Thesis Topic:

Original Title: “The relationship Between the Number of Years at Work and Promotion to be a Manager”

Revised: “~~Exploring~~ the relationship Between the Number of Years at Work and Promotion to be a Manager”

Check List

- ✓ Do I have the necessary skills or tools to do the research?
- ✓ Can I get this done within the time frame?
- ✓ Do I know for sure that I can get the needed data for this project?
- ✓ Does my “Topic” fits well with my supervisor’s expertise?
- ✓ Can I present the material (i.e. write the Thesis) in an acceptable level, even if I miss a few goals?

Ways to Zero-in on a Good Topic



**Rational
Thinking**



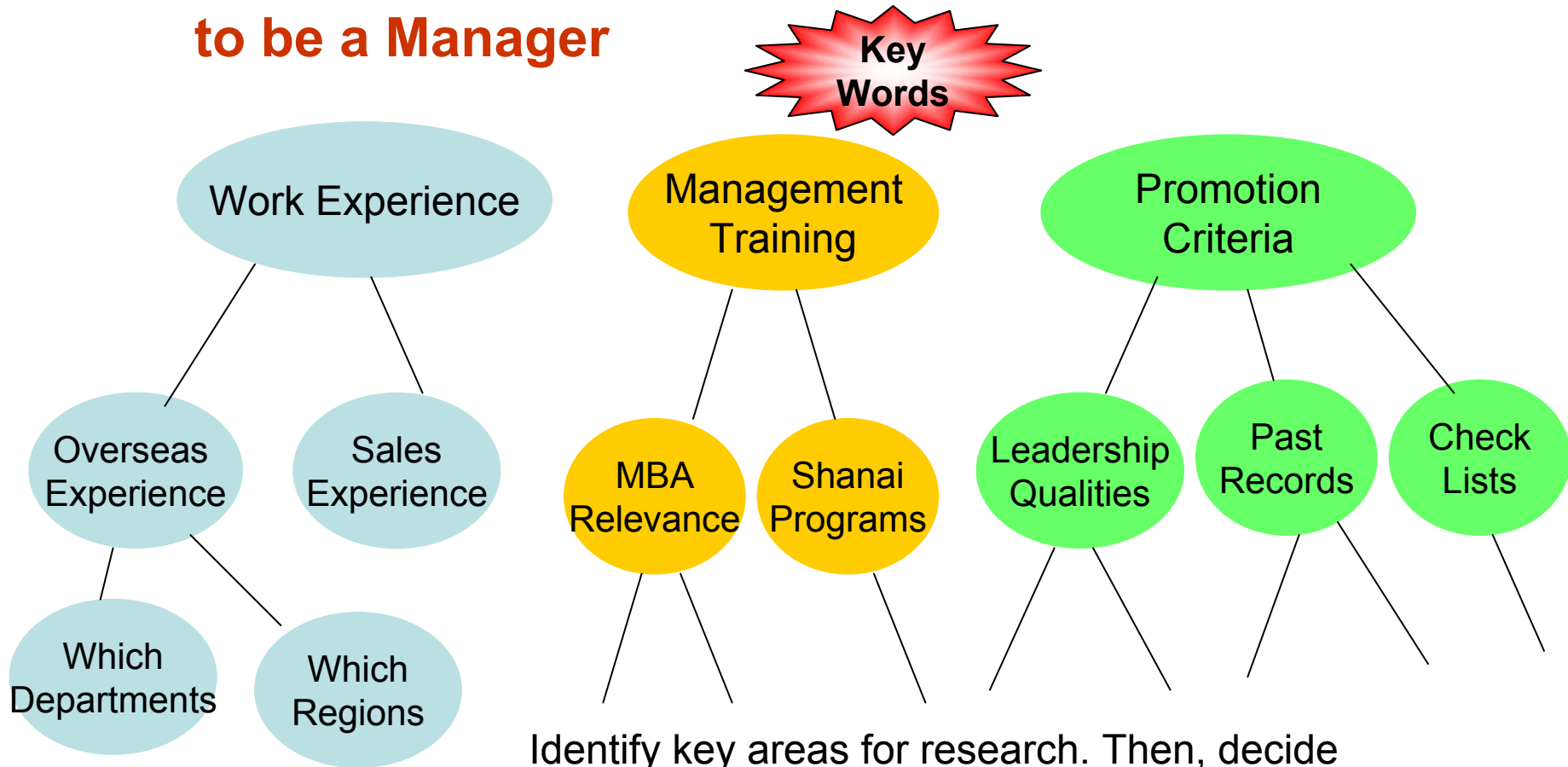
**Creative
Thinking**

- Examine own strengths
- Look at past research
- Discussion (with professors, colleagues etc)
- Search Journals, Internet, Company Reports etc.
- Keep a Notebook of Ideas
- Explore a Personal Preference (keep an area in mind..)
- Relevance Trees
- Brainstorming

**Secondary
Research done**

Relevance Tree Example

Revised: Exploring the relationship Between the **Number of Years at Work** and **Promotion to be a Manager**



Identify key areas for research. Then, decide which ones to do first etc.

Research Strategies



Positivism

- Hypothesis → Use Data to Verify
E.g. “The number of years at work is Strongly Related to be promoted to a manager level” → Use data to show

Or: “Number of Years at Work is not the major criteria” Use data to show that “Promotions had happened even without long years at work”

Research Strategies



Phenomenology

- What is happening and Why it is happening?
- Does not need large amount of data.

E.g. “The number of years at work is Strongly Related to be promoted to a manager level”

Conduct interviews. Find a few cases of where people became managers for just “being there!” (no major achievement than that)



Positivism

- Large amount of data (since survey is used)
- Clear theoretical focus (since hypothesis is set at the beginning)

Advantages



Phenomenology

- Good understanding of the phenomenon (because many real world case studies, interviews)
- Enable to change the “Objective” during the process (because more knowledge is gathered as research is progressed)



Positivism

- Inflexible (as hypothesis is set, it is hard to change after data is collected)
- Often misses “social meanings” (only data is there and sometimes data produces strange results)

Disadvantages



Phenomenology

- Time consuming (arrange interviews, plan schedules etc.)
- Generally perceived as “less credible” by academics
- Data analysis is difficult (since only few data points)

Setting Milestones

- Identify the research topic
 - Secondary Research
 - Make “to do” list
 - Write the proposal (identify thesis chapters)
- Identify the research strategy
 - Data Survey
 - Case / Interview
 - Primary Research
- Data Analysis
- Writing the Report
- Review / Revisions

Secondary Research

- Usually data available in public domains
- Row data (surveys, CD-ROMS)
- Published data (Cases, Newspaper articles, Country Reports)
- Company annual reports

Primary Research

- Usually new data
- Interviews
- Surveys

Problems with Secondary Data

- **Does not have “exactly” what you need.**
E.g. Needs “monthly orders” data, but has only “monthly sales” data
- **Sometimes “too much” data**
E.g. Needs “service company” data, but has “both manufacturing and service sectors combined”
- **In-compatible data**
E.g. “Imports from Japan to US” (recorded by US) different from “Exports to US” (recorded by Japan)

Writing Tips

- “Start writing” should not be the last stage
- “Zero-in on Research Topic” and “Relevance Tree” are good places to start writing (E.g. Literature Review)
- Allocate Time
 - Allocate by objective (i.e. “will finish introduction today”)
 - Or, Allocate by time slots (3 hours from 8am..)
 - Continuity of time slots is important (to avoid “barabara”)
- Find a good “Writing Place” (e.g. Library,...)

Structuring the Report

- Generate a Plan (“clustering method”: Start writing the main topic on the middle of a paper, then add things connected to it. Use lines and borderlines to identify key sections)
- Set the Structure:
 - Abstract or Executive Summary
 - Introduction
 - Literature Review
 - Method (i.e. what you have done, your contribution)
 - Results (i.e. what you have accomplished by using “Methods”)
 - Conclusion
 - References
 - Appendices

Web Address Referencing

- Author (published date), Publication Name (published date), Website Name (Retrieved Date). Site Address

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Best Wishes !!!