

Why student do what they do while selecting a research topic

DR FARIHA GUL (Assistant Professor,

School of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan)

DR MUHAMMAD SHAHID (Post-doc, NTNU, Norway)

DR BENNY LÖVSTRÖM (Docent, BTH)

INTRODUCTION

- Selection of a research topic is one of the decisive factors in successful completion of research projects
- Most popular sources to develop a research idea are considered as literature review, personal experience, and observation
- Few other factors that can contribute in working in a specific field include advisor's expertise and area of specialization, financial and time constraints, and personal interests

Conti....

- But all the factors, that can influence on selection of a topic, eventually impact on the quality of the results of research
- So it is necessary to identify the factors that are influencing more on students' choices of topic

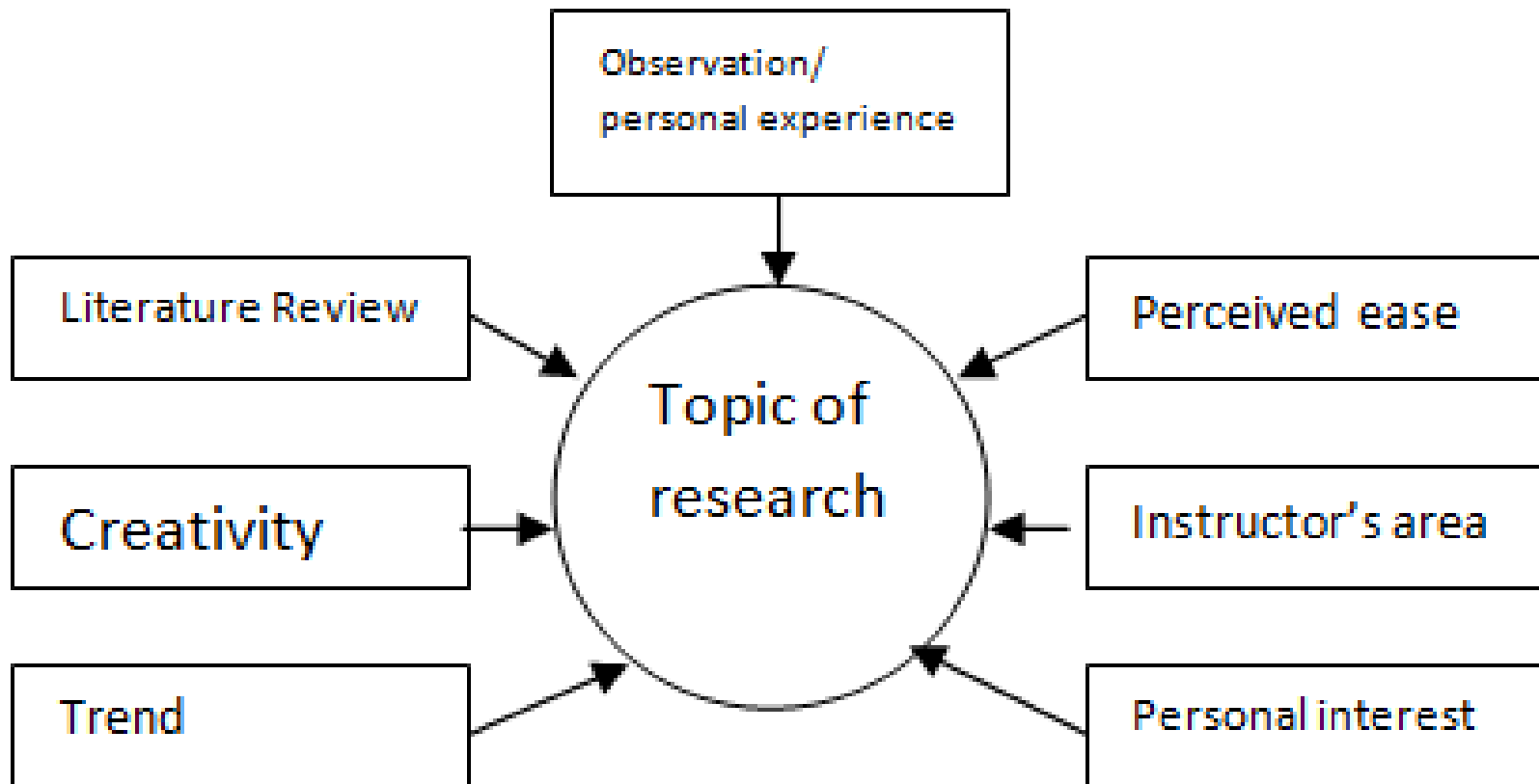
Conti....

- Academic research in the field of education has addressed a wide variety of topics ranging from research in core areas of education (including educational psychology, administration, assessment, curriculum, research) to interdisciplinary fields
- From personal experience, observation of list of theses done in previous years, and communication with teachers and colleagues clarified that there are certain areas in which flux of research is more than others
- This general observation also needs to be clarified by empirical evidences.

Aims and objectives of the study

- This study aims to identify methods of selecting a topic while planning a research project
- To identify the factors that are more preferred on selection of a certain research topic
- To identify the effect of demographic variables including gender, field of study and work experience on selection of a certain topic for research

Factors influencing selection of research topic



Methodology

- Population of the study includes all the students enrolled in faculty of social sciences in one of the largest universities of Pakistan
- The students who were doing thesis made part of the sample. As it was difficult to access all the students (due to time constraints) through using a proper sampling technique, so basically two techniques were combined to select sample; convenience and snowballing
- In total one hundred students took part in the study from a public sector university. However, only 77 survey forms were found complete and useable for data analysis

Instrument

- To achieve target of the study, a self-developed research instrument was used.
- It was developed after literature review to meet requirements of objectives following lines of theoretical framework
- It is composed of (23) statements divided in seven factors.
- The five point likert scale was used to get responses

Results

- The results indicate that the students have varied tendency to select a research topic. The mean per item for each factor indicate that mostly the students were responding towards lowest score of “ disagree”
- The table indicate that there was no significant difference among respondents based on their level of study.

Conti...

- Similarly the objective 2 of the study was to explore effect of demographic variables on selection of research topics. Independent sample t-test was applied to explore mean difference between level of students i.e., Masters, Mphil or Phd.
- The table indicate that there was no significant difference among respondents based in their level of study.

Conti...

- To examine mean difference between gender and factors that influence on selection of a research topic t-test was applied.
- It is evident from the table 2 that there was a significant difference between male and females on factor 5 ($p=.03$), factor 6 ($p=.006$) and factor 7 ($p=.023$). all other factors have no significance difference based on gender

Conclusion

- The results of study indicates that there are no preferred factors that influence on students selection of a research topic
- The results also indicate that there in not much difference based on level of study and gender on selection of a specific research topic

Future Research

- These results urge the need to dig out further about reasons of having no preferred criteria of selection of a research topic
- A qualitative research study with in-depth interviews can help to identify the factors, which can later be confirmed through quantitative analysis
- Addition of teachers' perception in study might also help to identify most preferred factors



GRACIAS

