

1. GENERAL RESEARCH ISSUES

2000(31)

Subject: Questions about research factory visit

Question: A high-quality research is generalizable to other settings as stated in Chapter 1. However, a research is a very very narrow study. Is there any conflict between these two? or Is it very difficult to have a high-quality research?

Answer: There is no conflict between generalizability and narrowness. Generalizability depends on the context and variables used in the study, while narrowness refers to how small, pinpoint the focus of the study is. For example, research on the relation between competition and management controls in SOEs in Guangzhou may be generalizable to SOEs in Wuhan, Shanghai or Beijing, if you believe that competition is the main driver of management controls. The point of generalizability is the relation between two or more variables (e.g. competition and management controls) and not the level of the variables themselves (Shanghai SOEs may have higher use of management controls than Guangzhou SOEs, but competition in Shanghai may also be higher.

2000(33)

Subject: Follow up questions

Question: 1. Refer to your answer to June, do you mean that generalizability is a theory or relationship for a population and narrowness is sample? In other words, we generalize something from narrowness by our research and hence both are important. 2. Is statistic the only way for testing a hypothesis? If not, what is (are) the other method(s)?

Answer: 1. Researchers are concerned about many issues, two of which are: a) The representativeness of the sample to the population (e.g. data collected from 100 Guangzhou SOEs, are the representative of the total population of Guangzhou SOEs?). b) The generalizability of the findings to other populations (Guangzhou SOEs to Shanghai SOEs, or China SOEs to Hungary SOEs). 2. Generalizability refers to the extent to which your findings in one population will be found in another population. For example, my findings on SOE adoption of formal controls in China, can they be generalizable to other developing nation SOEs like in Hungary? Maybe, some findings are generalizable (e.g. the influence of JV experience), and not other findings (e.g. the barrier of Chinese way of doing things). In discussion of these research topics and terms it is important to see the context, or actual examples of the use of these terms to get full understanding.

2000(55)

Subject: Article about polling - Question: Is this real scientific research???

*10-18-2000 11:53:28 AM MSNBC.com Conducts Study of Online Survey Techniques With Yale Faculty; Collaboration to Improve the Quality of Online Polling
Business Editors*

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 18, 2000--MSNBC.com, the No. 1 Internet news site, and a team of researchers led by Yale faculty member John Lapinski will conduct a project dedicated to the study of online survey techniques and findings.

MSNBC.com and Lapinski's team will collaborate on the creation of an in-depth political survey surrounding the 2000 Presidential election that will be conducted online at Decision2000.MSNBC.com and through random-dial telephone calls. The main objectives of this venture will be to collect public opinions of Americans with regard to

the 2000 general election, compare the results of the Web and telephone survey to better understand the differences between the two kinds of surveys and to set a standard which will improve the scientific validity of future Web surveys.

"Internet polling is notoriously unscientific," said MSNBC.com executive editor, Michael Silberman. "This method will allow us to better understand why and how Internet polls differ from phone polling and determine methods that will turn the Web into a respected medium for evaluating public opinion."

Lapinski, who teaches political science at Yale and is director of the Yale New Media Workshop, will apply new techniques to statistically weigh the data collected from both the Web and telephone surveys. He will also use experimental methods to test question wording effects, and to determine whether web design features influence how people understand web surveys.

MSNBC.com will design and host an Internet survey that will attempt to interface with respondents in a manner that provides a statistically accurate representation of the online population as well as the population of the nation. The research conducted by Lapinski's team will provide MSNBC.com with greater accuracy to sample opinions from across different populations by asking such demographic and behavior related questions as age, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political party affiliation, whether one is registered to vote, and the likelihood of one's voting in the election.

"This election year has been very important because it is truly the first presidential race that can utilize the abilities of the Internet and other advancements in technology for weighing public opinion," said Lapinski. "For that reason, we have assembled a first rate team of individuals drawn from Yale, Stanford and Columbia Universities that will enable our research of the MSNBC.com findings to be as comprehensive and detailed as possible."

The Web and telephone surveys will be conducted simultaneously during a set period of time prior to the November election. The results from the phone and Internet survey, as well as a detailed comparison of the data will be reported on MSNBC.com.

MSNBC.com is the number one news site based on audience data tracked by the Internet measurement service Media Metrix(TM). As the leader in breaking news and original journalism on the Internet, MSNBC.com additionally delivers the best of NBC News, MSNBC Cable, CNBC and NBC Sports. MSNBC.com provides expanded content via partnerships with The Washington Post, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, ZDNet, MSN Money Central(TM), The Sporting News, Expedia(TM), E! Online, Pencil News, FEED magazine, Space.com, Science magazine, inc.com, Internet Broadcasting Systems and Pioneer Newspapers. MSNBC.com's innovative distribution includes delivery of broadband content for U.S. West, Road Runner, Excite@Home and on broadband.msnbc.com and wireless content delivery for MSN Mobile, i3 Mobile and Omnisky. In addition, MSNBC.com programs interactive content for MSNBC Cable and NBC News.

MSNBC is a 24-hour cable and Internet joint venture of Microsoft (Nasdaq:MSFT) and NBC News (NYSE:GE.)

2000(62)

Subject: About scientific research

Question: I read an article about polling in SCMP and it mentioned that there were some professional standards set by the National Council on Public Polls, an American body established in 1969, which had drawn up 20 guidelines for the public to weigh up whether a poll result is worth attention. Is it possible to conclude that the internet polling is scientific if all guidelines are met?

Answer: This is one part of the determination of scientific research - the method. But there is more.

2000(66)

Subject: Meaning of term

Question: There are two terms I don't know the exact meaning. 1. Environmental uncertainty - does it mean the economic crisis or political matters??

Answer: Environmental uncertainty: - refers to the marketplace in which the firm operates. That is, certainty about supply, demand, and can include factors that impact on suppliers, demand for products:- e.g. political risk, currency risk, economic risks. In the papers on management accounting - most researchers use a 8-10 item measuring instrument to measure the respondents perception of environmental uncertainty. The best source of information about the exact concept of environmental uncertainty a researcher is using comes from the instrument itself.

Question: 2. 'per se'

Answer: Per se:- a way of saying that the subject/term that precedes per se is all inclusive.

2000(89)

Subject: Re: Reading articles

Just some hints on reading the articles. Remember the purpose for which you are reading: a) For your literature review - apart from entering a summary into a table (like task 7) you are looking for evidence to support your motivation, theory, model, method or your findings (in the case of a complete research project). b) For an article critique - your are attempting to see if: i - Research question and motivation - whether the question is well motivated ii – Contribution Whether the contribution to theory, model or method is explained and justified - whether the theory used is appropriate, given prior literature - variable selection in the model - are there new variables, if so is this justified. - does the method fit the question and purpose of the study? iii – Explanation- Are the constructs well defined? iv – Method - Sampling described -Diagnostic tests undertaken - Is there enough information to enable you to undertake the same project yourself? - Are the statistics tests suitable for the sample? v - Results -do they support the hypotheses? - are there alternative plausible explanations? - are the results related back to prior findings in the literature (where appropriate)?

2000(107)

Subject: terminology

Question: I am not familiar with the term "Guanxi" when doing my proposal, would you explain it?

Answer: Guanxi generally means connections, relationships, but the exact meaning depends on the literature and the scope in which a researcher feels is necessary to capture the context the researcher is researching. Like many terms, you have some variance as to the actual meaning, and as a researcher you rely on the meaning used by past researchers.

2000(134)

Subject: Re: Proposal guidelines

Title: Audio-tapes in distance teaching: a New Zealand experience Author: Long, N.R., Povey, T.A. Affiliation: Massey University, New Zealand

Publication details: Journal article in Teaching at a distance, no.21, Summer 1982, pages 60-65

Publication year: 1982 **Abstract:** How should audio-tapes be used by the learner? How effective are audio-tapes in distance teaching? In this paper, the authors analyse the examination results of their off-campus psychology students at Massey University, New Zealand and conclude that use of audio-tapes significantly affects their final grades. They then study ways in which students use the tapes, and suggest a model listening sequence in which tapes are used on different occasions for different learning tasks. (Edited journal abstract) **Classification:** 06-05-10 AUDIO RECORDINGS 01-15-00 HIGHER EDUCATION - GENERAL Australasia Data entered: 02 September 1991 jb

2001(21)

Subject: Questions on 9/4 assignment

Question: how I should answer the questions given? re. Q1: What do you mean by "sourcing of inputs" in your question? re. Q2: Could you give me some hints on what I should put into my answer regarding the structure/centralization of decision authority? Do you mean whether there's only one person making all decisions in a dept or it involves lots of people or other dept? re. Q4: What area should be covered regarding the mgt style when control involves int'l interest?

Response: 1. I guess the sourcing of inputs means the seeking of inputs to the production / organization. The factors of productions might be in broad sense the finance, logistics, human resources etc. In a narrower sense, it might stand for the raw materials costs, labour costs, overheads etc. 2. please consider areas like organization structure, power distance, corporate culture, degree of internationalization etc... 3. In a local organization, I would consider the management style such as whether it is autocratic or democratic etc. But if the organization is owned by or controlled by international party, management should be more global in nature. They might think global and consider more PEST (environmental factors). Perhaps, greater compatibility problems might be encountered if they do not think or act locally.

Answer: The above response is correct. Research method is not an end in itself - knowledge of research methods is not useful if you don't use them. So I want to encourage you to think about what information you think you need to succeed in your career.

2001(119)

Subject: Thank you! *U*

Question: Look like the Hang Seng index will drop again tomorrow due to the influence from NY stock exchange market. The interest rate will decrease again, this is the 8th time this year, wonder when the economy will pick up??

Answer: The economy will pick up but very very slowly. Hong Kong has seen part of this downturn before in 1997-98. Lots of negatives around, but there are worse places than HK at the moment - look at Japan's economy - and China is still growing. i.e. keep it in perspective. Keep focused - let's ride out these times together. On the US market. Some of the US bank stocks (e.g. BAC) may hold up because of the interest rate cuts. Other sectors that were positive in the US overnight were defense (LLL) security and videoconferencing stocks (e.g. PLCM). Thanks also to Stanley for your work. I look forward to some questions and discussion about research methods. I just finished running regressions on data from China. Some good results, but much more work is required.

2001(123)

Subject: Some information share with you about our research study !

Please note the following address: www.accaglobal.com/publications/research_reports The ACCA will publish their research paper & I hope it can helpful for our study.

2001(195)

Subject: Task 5

Question: I am not quite sure what actually distinguish research question with those which are not. Must the research question start with is/are or how, what, why, etc? Besides, regarding the task of finding and reading professional articles with reference including academic articles, I can hardly find one. I have gone thru a no. of issues of HK Accountant but all of them are articles by journalist with no references. May I ask you to suggest the name of professional journal which contain those references?

Answer: who are struggling to find professional journal articles that represent their research interest. 1. Go to library, I suggest you spend time in the Library today - the librarian will show you a whole list of professional business journals. 2. Listen to my lecture I have told you what other journals are available in class last week -listen to my lecture recording again if you need to. 3. If you are finding research methods difficult - do everything I say and 5% more.

2001(203)

Subject: Re: I need your hand! ^o^

Some of you are struggling to find a topic. I strongly suggest that you set some short term tangible goals. 1. List 10-15 key criteria that you think are important for your future career development - you future desirable career (what is in your heart). Ask yourself what are the likely journal topics that would likely contribute to these criteria (I cannot help you here, because you are the only one who can determine what you want, that really satisfies your career interest). 2. Find 5 professional journal articles - task 4 3. Make a time on the weekend to visit the library to spend 4 or 5 hours at a time - both Saturday and Sunday until you find your topic. 4. Make a list of at least 20 different professional business journals found in City U library. Think of the law, tax, accounting, management, operations research, IT, small business association in each major developed country - the number of professional business journals are in the 100's. 5. Review the past 5 years of editions of 20 different business journals. That equals 100. How to find the professional journals: 1. Ask the librarian 2. Search the internet think about it, if you cannot find what you are interested in, how are you going to a) find the job you like, or b) convince your next potential employer where you want to go in his/her company. Of course, at low position levels,

you can make up anything for your interview, but in the long term, you may not be happy with a job you are not suited to. Please let me know if you think that this guidance is useful to you. Also if you have some guidance to add in addition to the above, please give us your thoughts.

2001(337)

Subject: Re: Some additional guidance! ^-^

Question: How can I differentiate professional and academic journals? Can we access both types of journal in Proquest or ELR database?

Answer: You should be able to access both on the database - but I would suggest that you spend time in the Library to flick through the professional journals as the captions, pictures and cover page may reveal more about hot issues and whether they match your research interest, or career interest. Academic journals do not have colourful cover pages, and have a scientific approach to developing a research idea and testing it. You will also notice many more references.

Response: Can I just say professional journals are compiled or edited by professional bodies such as CIMA, ACCA ... etc. Academic journals are usually published by some representative organizations. The main contributors are academists from universities and the contents of those articles are usually very long and with a prescribed format such as Abstract, scope of study ...etc.

Answer: Also Academic journals are referred, reviewed by academic peers - such that the top quality journals have a 10-15% acceptance rate. Professional journals are not normally referred so if academics want to write something and publish it, it is easy. Kind of like journalism. There is less checks and balances about the quality of the sources, the rigor of the analysis and therefore the significance of the findings.

Response: Lots of significant findings can be found in professional journals with a wider scope of hot topics. Academic journals are usually focused on some areas of interests of developing ideas on research for testing with reference to academic peers.

2001(449)

Subject: Interview with Dr. Neale on 29 Sep 2001

Question: I have summarized the findings for the interview of Neale as follow: 1. I make a big mistakes that I concentrate the implementation of management tools (ABC) in my industry, however it is not useful because I should know that what type of decision of the management technology would help. How the management tools would help the management to make the better decision. 2. The basic dimension is consider the management tools (ABC) feasible or not, not how to implement it. 3. Do not form the questions before you consider the system is feasible or not. 4. To search your building block and thinking the conceptual framework of the articles because the purpose of the conceptual framework is judge the system feasibility. 5. Read the articles which you choose to determine the independent variables for determine the management tools is feasible or not and finding the theoretical conditions and theoretical practice. 6. Remember: The Research is to try to relate what you see with the theoretical framework and based on the academic work, what do the previous researcher done, so make sure understand your theoretical framework.

Answer: 1. taking the time to visit me and discuss your project, and 2. for providing a summary to all classmates. I suggest that the most important thing for management accounting type research is identifying what type of decisions you are trying to assistant management with, by changing the management accounting system. For taxation type research, again who are you trying to help - government or taxpayer, for financial - who - shareholders, society, government

etc. You cannot do research for all of the interested parties noted above – just choose one that interests you the most.

2001(594)

Subject: Re: Exciting experience

For taxation students, here is an article for your to critically review as part of your factory visit. You need to get it from the library. Chan and Mo, "Tax Holidays and Tax Noncompliance: An Empirical Study of Corporate Tax Audits in China's Developing Economy", Accounting Review, 2000.

2001(601)

Subject: A few points for Mgt control proposal.

Question: For those who are doing Mgt control proposal: - It's important to know the purpose of control in your company. Whether it's for decision making, controlling or planning. - If it is for planning purpose, it may closely link with company's strategy. - If it is for controlling, it may related to human resources allocation, morale, etc. Does any of you can tell me more about how your company is doing the budget? Whether they're focusing on planning or controlling?

Answer: You may also conceptualize budgeting as interactive - planning purpose, and diagnostic - control purpose. See the AOS paper I upload to blackboard - Abernethy and Brownell. Relating to the local -global control tradeoff - research on this to date has focused on the diagnostic control purpose.

Response: I just want to share my experience with you. I worked in Swire as an accounts supervisor about 16 years ago. We use our budget mainly as a management controls system because: 1. We prepare budget by every function department such as production, administration, merchandising and personnel department etc. 2. In the monthly budget meeting, we compare to see what our variances are and we have to explain them to our peers and division heads the reason for the deviations, both favorable or adverse. 3. We use budget as a measurement of performance and we allocate profit and expenses on a hybrid ABC system. This is rather complicate but it is a good exercise for functional managers to learn. In short, we did both planning and controlling in using the budgetary control system.

Response: Do you remember "Control Process"? Budgeting has to be used for planning purpose at first. For example, what's the revenue and profit in next year. For control purpose: 1. To control all the figures within the budget. 2. For those things which are beyond the budget should be taken control action. For example, if revenue has been done behind the budget in first quarter, we may think are there any promotion scheme we should launch in order to get more sales and meet the revenue figures. Of course budgetary control can be in terms of profit, capital expenditure and headcount. It should co-operative with all departments in company.

2001(608)

Subject: Manufacturing profit in PRC

Question: Recently, a client of my firm intend to set up a factory in PRC, he ask me some questions about 50% apportionment of manufacturing profit in PRC (DIPN 21):-1)is the mode of establishment of PRC factory (e.g. joint venture agreement, processing agreement) affect the status to claim the apportionment? 2) If the PRC factory perform the manufacturing work for more than one HK co. Can each HK co. claim the apportionment? 3) If the production process is

in series of stages and some stages are performed in PRC (manufacturing) while some stages in HK (assemblies and packaging), can the HK co. claim apportionment? 4) If HK co. manufacture in PRC also at the same time subcontract some work to independent subcontractor, will it affect apportionment status?

Response: 1. The profits of a HK Co shall be taxable only in HK unless the Co carries on business on the Mainland through a permanent establishment. If the HK Co carries on business through a P.E. on the mainland, the profits of the enterprise may be taxed on the Mainland but only to the extent of those attributable to that P.E. 2. P.E. also includes "services, including consultancy services, furnished by an enterprise of One Side, through employees or other personnel on the other Side, provided that such services have been furnished for the same project or a connected for a period or periods exceeding in the total 6 months in any 12-month period. 3. In other words, under HK/China Double Taxation Arrangement, the HK Co. shall not constitute a P.E. if service or project continues for a period not exceeding 6 months in any 12-month period. Hope this information can help u and only from my knowledge

Response: I've came across two cases for the apportionment of manufacturing profit under DIPN21 and which has obtained the agreement from the IRD, following were some facts related to my cases, (1) One of the PRC entity was a WOFE, a wholly owned subsidiary of the HK Co., the other one is a JV owned by the management of the HK Co. and an PRC partner. (2) In my cases, all of these two PRC entities not just provide sub- contracting work to the HK Co, but also provide certain sub-contracting work to the PRC customer. I think in this area we have to consider is whether all the HK Co's goods were manufactured by the PRC entity rather than Is the PRC entity only provide sub-contracting work to the HK Co. and only those HK Co. which have an arms length relationship with the HK Co able to claim for 50:50. The PRC entity should either a subsidiary of the HK co or the HK co. can exercise an significant influence over the PRC entity, such as a company owned by the management of the HK Co. (3)I haven't came across this, but I think you can try to claim 50:50 by reference to the % of completion and the attributable profit, but seems so complicated.

(4) As mentioned in point 2, which should depends on the % of sub-contracting work carried out by the PRC entity. Based on my experience, whether the IRD accept the apportionment which mainly relies on the influence by the HK co. over the PRC entity and the **involment** of the operation of the PRC entity. Normally, it takes time for a company to obtain agreement for apportionment of manufacturing profit from IRD, one of case last for 1 1/2 years.

2001(616)

Subject: Re: New accountant magazine & website
Check out the New Accountant Magazine website!
www.NewAccountantUSA.com

2001(805)

Subject: Valuable Advice from Dr. Neale
Summarization of discussion. Interesting question. We should think of what is the interesting question of our research. We need to make it clear. An interesting question makes the motivation sound interesting. Everyone may get excited to an interesting question. Then, try to give answers to the right interesting question. Building Blocks Try to draw a table. 1. List out the independent variables of the research. 2. Find out the literature support. Which independent variables have been done by researchers in the past years. 3. Find the research proposal done by the past MAIA students in Blackboard. Which independent variables have been done by the past MAIA students.

4. Try to look at what has been done and what hasn't been done. 5. You can focus on those independent variables haven't been done by the past MAIA students, as building blocks. Variables 1. If you find that you can think of many independent variables, try to focus on some of them only, not all of the factors. 2. Concentrate on the factors according to priorities, based on your expert experience, important/ not important, your interest. 3. The best dependent variables are those that are easy to measure and that you can see a related event. Don't focus on those which cannot be measurable. Those that are difficult to measure will not have many articles that relate to. Hypothesis an answer to the theory.

2001(874)

Subject: Re: Struggling

I shaped my research topic in the following aspects:- 1) If there are too many independent variables identified, it is suggested to list a table showing which variables are identified in prior literature review and also past research proposal. Then the variables are ranked on their importance. The research doesn't have to include all variables but only the important ones. 2) It becomes more valuable to change the dependent variable from "manpower shortage" to "organizational commitment" for staff working in small to medium sized CPA firms since the boss would be more concerned with organizational commitment of staff. However, organizational commitment is more difficult to measure.

3) It has to identify the subject attributes and organizational attributes so that if both are matched, organizational commitment would increase, otherwise it would decrease the commitment 4) My research can be linked with Ken's research about small to medium sized CPA firms' survival. My part belongs to exploratory research and his part belongs to refined research.

2001(955)

Subject: Re: Getting to know each other's experience

Here is a commentary about some accounting practice at his company headquarters that may be relevant to Dr Lynn's class. LSI Logic is right in the centre of high tech business in the USA.

RealMoney.com : Herb on The Street

LSI's Logic Is Hard to Fathom

By Herb Greenberg

Senior Columnist

10/30/2001 11:01 AM EST

Tuesday's trivia:

a.. LSI's logic: When it announced earnings a week ago, LSI Logic (LSI:NYSE - news - commentary - research - analysis) took a \$50 million "excess inventory" charge to reflect what it described on its conference call as "a temporary action" caused by having more capacity than demand. By taking a charge -- as the company did in the prior quarter and will do in the next quarter -- LSI reported a smaller-than-expected loss and fatter gross margins than it would have if it had expensed the cost in question. Was the charge appropriate? In its second-quarter 10-Q, LSI explained that "a sudden and significant decrease in forecasted revenue" prompted the charge "in accordance with the company's policy, which primarily is based on inventory levels in excess of 12-month demand for each specific product."

But heck, every company in Silicon Valley could say the same thing, yet most others aren't charging off the inventory that hasn't sold or the cost of producing it. It's not like they're closing a plant or getting stuck with inventory that's obsolete. (At least not yet!) It's like they're saying, "We miscalculated so we'll just write off our mistake." The result is that an ongoing business

expense has been converted into a recurring charge as the company (it would appear) takes action to prevent production from rising above forecasted demand. One savvy hedge fund manager wonders, why they don't just take it "like a man" and take the hit to expenses?

Good question, especially when you consider that despite the accounting sleight of hand, LSI's gross margins of 28% still fell far short of previous guidance of 30% to 32%, which was down from 39% in the second quarter. "Had the full \$50 million flowed through to the cost-of-goods-sold line," the hedge fund manager says, "gross margin would have been 15%. Notwithstanding all of the above," he adds, "the company will not make money this year, next year or in 2003," according to his estimate of real, not pro forma, earnings.

2001(1177)

Subject: Research Seminar

Department of Accountancy

Faculty of Business

2001-2002 Research Seminar

Series Number 4

Earnings Management in High Investment Opportunity Firms: The Role of Good Quality Audit and Institutional Owners

Mr. Lai Kam Wah Department of Accountancy, City University of Hong Kong Date & Time: 13 November, 2001 (Tuesday), 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm Venue: SCOPE Seminar Room 2 (SRM2), Lower Ground Floor, Academic Exchange Building

Abstract: This paper provides evidence that managers of high investment opportunity firms manipulate discretionary accruals but that Big 5 auditor and high institutional shareholding constrain the manipulation. This paper studies discretionary accruals because they, unlike accounting method which is the focus of prior studies (Skinner, 1993 and Dhaliwal et al., 1999), represent a summary measure of the managers' adjustment to reported income, and positive (negative) discretionary accruals unambiguously increase (decrease) reported income. This paper also offers a more contextual testing of the monitoring effect of Big 5 auditor because high investment opportunity firms are more likely to manipulate discretionary accruals due to greater information asymmetry between the managers and the shareholders. I also report that managers take market factors into account in their provision of discretionary accruals. They are more likely to manipulate discretionary accruals when their firm's price-earnings ratio is low. Once again, the managers' incentive is dampened by Big 5 auditor.

2001(1240)

Subject: Revised proposal –

The objective of this trip is to help the Australian subsidiaries to solve corporate problems. Some outstanding issues are still pending and I need to follow up the progress here in HK. Anyway, I have a valuable experience in Sydney. In Australia, labour is well protected by law and labour union. Payroll expense is quite high after taking into account all the benefits and compensation. Other than income tax, there are many other taxes, such as goods services tax, payroll tax, fringe benefit tax, withholding tax ...etc. If you are planning to invest in Australia, you need to know the total tax exposure. Otherwise, wrong investment decision may be concluded if you miss out any one of them. I have met some accountants and lawyers and learnt some knowledge in Australian corporation act and tax law. The learning process is very excited and hard as it's not easy for me to understand the tax like GST and withholding tax because no such taxes are required in HK. As discussed with you earlier, I have changed the research topic. Revised

proposal My new topic is " Voluntary disclosure: cross-national comparison between HK and US". Recently, HKSA and Stock Exchange have revised accounting standard and listing rules to harmonize with International and US standard. When the Growth Enterprise Market (GEM) was launched in 1999, there were high hopes that it would become the Asian NASDAQ. We can say that HK and US are not that far away in terms of their financial reporting. I will focus on the comparison between HK and US voluntary disclosure.

Response: The major differences between HK and US are regarding the family control and family share dominance in many HK listed companies. It is common in HK to be family-controlled, which is a very obvious difference from the US. There are some articles in which you can refer. 1. Prof. Judy Tsui and Ferdinand A Gul. "Corporate Governance and Financial Transparencies in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China". You can find the article also in Dr. Lynn's website on Week 12 "Corporate Governance". Some useful references can be found as well. 2. Charles Chen and Bikki Jaggi. 2000. Association between Independent Non-executive Directors, Family Control and Financial Disclosures", Journal of Accounting and Public Policy.

2001(1244)

Subject: WEB Site for various Corporate Governance Best Practice
Useful for our assignment & research proposal
<http://www.worldbank.org/html/fpd/privatesector/cg/codes.htm>

2001(1320)

Subject: Re: Yes, Florence, Strive
My research question has been amended to focus on the SME in Hong Kong, I have search for some information for SME to include in the motivation part in my research proposal. For the trend and statistics for the SME in HK, please try to visit the site as below to see if it is useful or not: <http://www.sme.gcn.gov.hk/english/new/new.cfm> After going in, then go to "library", then go to "statistics" I am not sure if the information is useful for you or not, I will keep on searching other trends and statistics for SME. We can share the information to finish our proposal! OR http://www.info.gov.hk/censtatd/eng/hkstat/fas/labour/employment/labour4_index.html

2001(1430)

Subject: Re: SME
Here are some websites relating to SME: 1. HKPC-SME Centre www.smecentre.com 2. HKTDC-SME Centre www.tdctrade.com/sme/ 3. Chinese Manufacturers' Association of HK - SME Net www.sme-cma.org.hk Concerning population size, an article stated the following sources: 1. Dun's Market Guide 2. Member Information of SME Centre Shirley

2001(1574)

Subject: Re: Question on Revised Research Proposal
Question: Thanks for your care. As mentioned in my previous mail a day before. I've a problem in getting the data of tax revenue from e-commerce in Hong Kong and no statistics performed in the taxation of e-commerce. Alternatively, comparison between Hong Kong and other countries

performed instead. Also the trend of e-commerce in major countries is used to support the growing impact of e-commerce tax revenue. I don't what is your means of AOS formatting?

Response: Your proposal must be prepared in the format of the journal articles in "Accounting, Organizations and Society"

2001(1610)

Subject: Re: Final Proposal

The exactly web-site of the AOS format guild line is below:

www.elsevier.com/inca/publications/store/4/8/6/index.htm and also I make a "word format" for your easy reference. To be consistence of both proposal, it should be important. 1.Page numbers (at bottom and centre) 2.Correct heading format (Bold heading & Left hand side (refer to Dr. Neale Article & articles from AOS) 3.Font size (AOS require 12 pt or 10pt (Good quality printouts with a font size of 12 or 10 pt are required) . but our manual emphasis font size 11 !!!) 4.Correct figure headings 5.Correct table headings (class the example of AOS format of table & figure should be : Table 1 Motivation of the research (left hand side) In Dr. Neale's article "The diffusion of management....." the format is Table 1: Case Study Result (centre label) in the manual, it emphasis centre label! follow Dr. Neale's article) 6.Full stops(be careful) 7.No Cap letters in middle of sentence (I believe exclude special item e.g. Hong Kong / Hong Kong & name of the author .) 8 Spelling 9.No use of bullet points

2002(913)

Subject: Re: Being a reviewer for a journal

I was recently asked to review a manuscript for a journal (basically do a critique and recommend accept, reject or revision. See the response below to my request for how the editor (whom I haven't met before) came to know me and send the manuscript for me to review. Part of our job as academics is to do reviews for journals. Each of these reviews takes about 5-6 hours. For this review I sought out 3 articles from colleagues in the area of information sharing. I briefly read these and used this information and my other knowledge to make a judgment on the paper. being a reviewer is a challenging task. But it is also a responsible and satisfying task. It requires you to be up to date in the area of your research interest. Regards Neale

Dear Dr. O'Connor, Thank you for your review of the manuscript. Regarding your request for anonymity, we used a double-blind review process, so I assure you that your name will be removed from the materials sent to the authors. And regarding your question about how you were chosen, I noticed that the authors cited your work in their manuscript, and a search on the web located your web site which indicates that you have an active research program.

Regards,
Editor

2002(10)

Subject: Chapter one overview –

Chapter 1 - The Role and Importance of Research

Tips for Success

1. Define and give examples of each of the following key terms: Applied research, Basic research, Correlational research, Descriptive research, Generalization, Historical research, Hypothesis, Qualitative research Quasi-experimental research, Replication, Scientific method,

Theory, True experimental research 2. Do not memorize the examples, instead, concentrate on trying to understand the goals of each method, and the techniques that are used within that method. 3. Ask yourself what material you must understand from this chapter when reading the next. 4. Find a newspaper article that summarizes or discusses a research finding in some area of psychology. Try to identify or list each of the eight steps in figure 1.1 that the researchers might have gone through in conducting their research. 5. Try to formulate a different hypothesis relating the effects of television on behavior with each of the factors listed on page 7 in the section "Identifying Important Factors." For example, a hypothesis relating age of the child to television and behavior might be: "Children younger than 8 years-of-age are more likely to prefer cartoons than are children over 8 years-of-age."

2002(141)

Subject: Classification of Journal Articles

I have an idea on the classification of professional and academic journal articles as follows: Professional Journal articles - published by some professional bodies, like as HKSA or ACCA, etc. Academic journal articles - publication is based on the research on theory done by a people from a college or university.

Response A: May I add one more point on it. Professional articles, articles are targeted to be read by professionals, such as accountant. Academic articles, articles are targeted to be ready by general public, such as potential investor.

Response B: I agree professional articles are mainly for updating the knowledge and information to profession, but I think that academic article is based on research of theory as a basis and reference for academic people to process further study (Building blocks approach).

Response A: I agree that academic article is based on research of theory. However, I think it is not only for academics to process their further study but also to contribute to the society. I feel the researches on medical development are a good example because it is not mainly for researchers' own benefit but to contribute the knowledge to the public.

Answer: Academic articles are not targeted for retail (professional, investor) consumption. They are one step further up the knowledge supply chain. Findings from Academic articles are usually disseminated through professional journal articles.

Response B's definition is correct. But the public do not read medical research, doctors (the practitioners) do.

2002(162)

Subject: Re: Locating academic articles

Class, One idea for locating academic articles is to look at the references at the back of the professional journal articles. Then you achieve a direct connection between you real interest in the topic discussed in the professional journal (plus you understanding of potential value you're your career) and the building blocks constructed under this topic in the academic article. My point is that you should first make the linkage between the professional journal article and the academic article - do this first, before doing a separate search for a relevant academic article.

2002(199)

Subject: Task 5b

I have a question with Task 5b that I don't know how to fill in the column of "Specific Statistic of Interest". What does it means?

Answer: The answer to your question is in an example taken from one of my working papers (attached) as follows (see the bold print): 1. Introduction and Overview This study explores the

influences on Chinese state-owned-enterprises' (SOEs') adoption of "Western" management accounting/control practices. This topic is important because the modernization and restructuring of SOEs is a central part of China's current economic reforms (Lee, 2001). Reports to China's People's Congress by two consecutive premiers, Li Peng and Zhu Rongji, both pointed to the restructuring of SOEs as being the most important task for their economic policies (Lee, 2001). Lee (2001, p. 673) notes that 'the restructuring of SOEs includes changing the firm from (being a) quasi-government agency to a profit-oriented corporation, converting the financial statements from the cash-based Soviet style fund accounting to the accrual-based Western style financial accounting, and identifying a vehicle for building a new ownership structure and corporate governance.' Understanding the factors that influence SOEs' adoption of Western management accounting/controls can enhance the success with which such practices are disseminated, in turn influencing the SOEs' economic performance, thus the speed of China's economic development and the livelihood of millions of its citizens. This expectation is premised on "Western" management accounting/controls being useful for increasing efficiency and effectiveness, reducing manager error, enhancing learning (Bruns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Shields & Shields, 1998), as well as for helping to contain corruption (Perrow, 1986). See how I have quoted the words of Chinese leaders. These are quotations of key stakeholders. You can show statistics in many ways - this way is directly from the mouth of a stakeholder.

2002(209)

Subject: Re: Broadband services

Question: I'm still trying to search academic articles concerning with my topic of interest: accounting standards and their implications on valuation of firm value, i.e. goodwill and intangible assets. The elimination of pooling of interest accounting by FASB has raised great concerns on accounting for business combinations and intangible assets, and I'm interested in proceeding further in this issue. The problem I encounter is that I can easily obtain a number of professional articles but I find it quite hard to get relevant academic articles. May I have your suggestions?

Answer: I first need to see: a) your research question b) Your stakeholder of interest c) The list of academic articles that are referred to in the back of relevant professional journal articles.

2002(216)

Subject: Re: Questions about research methods

Question: After reading your handouts of "Structuring a research proposal", Please advise if my understanding is correct or not before the assignment: 1. It's better for us to ask ourselves a basic research question which is based on our topic interest, am I correct? Does the question be more specific or a general one will do?

Answer: Start in a general way - then make it a simple one - like one that you can answer with a YES/NO or a list of factors.

Question: 2. By reading through our chosen professional journal articles, we should be able to find out the key stakeholder of interest which the articles try to inspire. Then list down the specific statistics that support the stakeholder interest.

Answer: YES - and that statistic can be a quotation, a number something that is evidence of stakeholder interest

Question: 3. For the literature review, I don't quite understand what does it mean. Could you elaborate more and provide some examples? How can it motivate the answer of my research question? From your handouts, there are 3 ways to review the literature of the articles, theory, model and method, is it so? I have to read the academic articles and think of the literature behind base on these 3 ways, right?

Answer: YES that is correct - there are two parts to the literature review – Part one is the simple summary of what was studied and what was found. Part two is the area of weakness, or gap in the literature that your proposal is aiming to fix. That gap can be in the theory, model (variables) or method (experiment or survey - each has its problems).

2002(244)

Subject: Publication from Big 4 CPA firms

Question: There are publications from the Big 4 CPA firms. Can I treat them as professional articles? If yes, then I will use the articles from the e-Library of Deloitte as my professional articles. I can even find research papers there; refer this URL.

<http://www.deloitte.com/vc/0,1029,cid=4213,00.html> Should I treat previous research papers as academic articles?

Answer: Yes you can use these as professional journal publications.

2002(265)

Subject: Re: Now is the time to join forces to help each other

Question: What group is corporate governance classified into?

Answer: Financial

Question: Then how about transfer pricing? Is it under taxation or management accounting?

Answer: It can be both - but broader issues (including tax) associated with transfer pricing are covered under Management Accounting

2002(283)

Subject: Re: Agency theory

Suggestion: I have just click in web site of google, & search for the Definition of Theory. Can you image how many related web is found? 699 for "Definition of Theory". No one will wonder about powerfulness of www. & I just brief here & add onto the blackboard for the 2 most useful one, (1) meaning of Theory ... There is no exact definition of "theory" so here are a number of definitions: "A theory is a statement that purports to account for or characterize some ... www.assets.scotcit.ac.uk/hospiweb/lectures/theory.shtml - 12k - [Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#) (2) a HTML file defining & structuring about the terms "Theory", "Concept" and "Definition". Even it's talking about a nursing topic; it can be easily understood & precisely defined the terms & relationship.

Response A: I also found some useful info for u which not only concern about the definition of theory but also the research method. <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/y/yangy/145Ch2.htm>
http://www.orst.edu/dept/pol_sci/fac/steel/cl/ps400/textbook/chap2.htm

2002(321)

Subject: Questions about class

Question: 1. I can't understand so well about evidence development?

Answer: Fantastic question - I really love this question. When you read academic articles you will find that some of them have data that is used to test hypotheses, while others have theory development.

Question: 2. How to use evidence development in literature review and research study?

Answer: See the attached revision of the two pages in your manual

Question: 3. My stakeholder interest is in management accounting? How to find the specific theory in this field?

Answer: See my previous email that had an attachment of Barringer and Milkovich - in this article there are several theories described. These are enough for you to work with for now. Your stakeholder is most likely to be management of the company. Also see the description of stages of model development in the manual - provide an example for management accounting (see the four box diagrams).

Question: 1. You introduced there are 3 parts in Agency theory in class, they are: A. Adverse selection B. Modeling C. Signaling behavior I am sorry that I can't catch all of their meanings during class. Would you kindly explain again? 2. What's the meaning of diagnostic test?

Response A: I have no idea about Q.1. may be I didn't come to class yet. Regarding to Q.2, please refer to Task 10. Diagnostic test refer to Reliability & Validity. Reliability means whether the data we collect are reliable so that we may base on the result to support the hypotheses. Validity means whether the data we collect are valid for the hypotheses. Sometimes, data can be reliable but not valid to our research. Details may refer to Ch5 of our text book.

2002(393)

Subject: Research proposal

Question: Would you please give us a outline for the steps how to prepare our research proposal?

Response A: The tasks we have done every week is actually the guideline how to prepare our research proposal. u may also refer to the answers posted by Neale in message #250 and the PowerPoint presentation of last year's students which posted by Neale in Blackboard. I feel more comfortable after reading such materials (although some uncertainty still exists). But actually we are started to learn from uncomfortable, right?

Answer: There are parts of your proposal that you can check yourself and there are parts that I can be of more help. I am going to teach you how to determine whether you are correct with the following parts of your proposal? a) Stakeholder and motivation - have you got statistics to show that a key stakeholder is interested in your question? Yes/No (I think that you can determine this. b) Dependent variable - Is there sufficient variance in this variable for you to see differences in it depending on the levels or presence or absence of particular independent variables? c) Which part of the prior academic literature are you building on - what is the gap - model, theory or method? This is a start

Answer: Let us do two things: a) Check off on each of the first three parts - then post this check off to yahoo groups. You can also help others with their first three parts. b) This will leave me room to provide guidance for your theory choice and development. Good idea?

Response B: You are right; (a) is relatively easier to handle. May I clarify some points on (b) & (c). For part (b), should a research identify ONLY 1 dependent variable but >1 independent variables? For part (c), how should i understand the word 'gap'? Should it be something insufficient in former articles?

Response C: Why do you consider that there should be only ONE dependent variable in a research?

Answer: MAIAs, One dependent variable is enough to start with. What I mean is that there is variation in the dependent variable. For example I asked one classmate to consider the factors that influence the type of contracting undertaken by foreign investors in China. Then contracting in the dependent variable and the range of the dependent variable is a) Wholly owned subsidiary b) joint venture c) franchise d) license. These are just a few types of contracts. You could also just look at JV contracting only and ask what factors cause the level of equity ownership - here the range is the level of equity ownership (100% to 0%). That is what I mean.

Response D: Per discussion with Dr. Neale tonight, your research area may be narrowed or more specific. There have four perspectives on balanced scorecard approach, I think you can select one of perspectives e.g. customer or financial measures. In the case of ABC, you can choose one

business sector, manufacturing or services industry in specific country, HK or China for adopting this approach.

Question: Refer to your previous mail about the three things that we should check on ourselves, I have the following questions:- 1. Are professional articles just helping us to find out what is the key stakeholder? But we have to find statistics, like newspaper or anything that we can find, to prove the interest? 2. We have to build on prior academic literature. Can we just focus on one gap? Coz I think model or method is more easily to build on but theory is more difficult. If we have to build on theory, then we have to apply a theory in our research that we did not find during our literature review. Is that right?

2002(540)

Subject: Re: Ernst and Young Web cast

Class, I have found a great web site for listening to various accounting issues - see: www.brainlid.com and the top centre link to Ernst and Young Thought Centre multimedia presentation. I am currently listening to the latest standard on accounting for goodwill.

2002(662)

Subject: Question about Chapter 5

Question: After reading Chapter 5, I still do not fully understand what are Criterion Validity and Construct Validity. Questions about Criterion Validity: - 1. Is criterion the dependent variable (DV)? 2. Is the test the independent variable (IV)? 3. Is criterion validity the correlation between DV & IV? Moreover, I find it difficult to catch the meaning of Construct Validity. Can somebody help?

Answer: Good questions. I will answer the criterion validity. It refers to the predictive ability of the measure - for example a performance test is supposed to be a predictor of your capability of performing some task. Such validity is important for human resource managers who use various measures to help select the right employees for their company. How is that - does this make sense? Second question - okay I give a chance for someone to find the answer.

Response A: I try to answer yr question about Construct Validity. To achieve high level of construct validity, the result must be related to the underlying theory we are interested. The result can be related only if we have chosen the variables related to theory for our testing. Like what the textbook mentions: For an intelligence test, we will choose memory, logical thinking, reasoning as the variables because they are related to intelligence. If we choose say weight or height, we may get a result which is not related to our theory. Then, the construct validity is low. What do U think? I'm not quite sure, comment is welcome.

Response B: I have some diff view, not sure whether it is correct but just a try. "Construct validity examines whether test performance reflects an underlying construct or set of related variables." by using the example in text book, if intelligence is what we actually want to measure, it is quite difficult to measure the intelligence itself. Instead, we'll establish a test to measure memory, comprehension, logical thinking, spatial skills and reasoning that they are a group of variables consist intelligence (theory of intelligence). Construct validity examines whether such components reflect the contents of the construct (or hypotheses). We will often use a matrix and more than one method measuring more than one trait to establish construct validity. What Neale & classmates think?

Answer: Construct validity. I suggest that each of your learn what this term means as separate words: For example: Construct = A variable that is defined by theory and not measured. Therefore you can say that each of you in your proposals are attempting to measure constructs (variables). But once you have measured them - the measures represent variables. Construct validity is how close your measure matches the theoretical definition (construct) of the variable. How is that?

Answer: Response A's explanation is correct. Validity is - are you measuring what you want to measure. Construct validity then is - is your empirical measuring instrument measuring your theoretical concept of the variable.

2002(758)

Subject: Re: Topics on tonight class

During the class, one classmate shared with us her findings on sample Journal Article Reference. Textbook p.264 You can't miss it. Dr Neale said LOGIC is the most important part of a research. That's why he always ask us to use his four boxes framework. Then, he can easily find out whether our logic is correct or not without influencing by our English standard. He also asked us spend some time to think about Figure 12 "Locating your research in the literature" in our notes distributed in class. He defined Abstract & Conclusion: - Abstract is something for someone to read if they do not have time to read any other parts of the article. What was done? (Very briefly)How was done? What were the results? Conclusion is in more detail what the results of the study are. What do they mean? and What is the real contribution of the study? The two most important questions in this class are: - What kind of method you will choose in your proposal? 1. Archival (is a database that is available about a population but you have no saying how was collected and you do not have a choice about are they represented the population) 2. Survey (you have a choice about how you collect from the population) 3. Experiment How to fit our proposal into the different stages of research life cycle? Refer Figure 10 in our notes.

2002(855)

Subject: Re: Research proposal

Question: I haven't yet changed my idea on writing a dissertation as the elective. But, I lack of any background in this type of work. Experienced researchers can, on one hand, help to figure out the area of content of my research paper; & on the other hand, minimize the risk on identifying an UNWORKABLE topic (most worried).

Answer: You are doing the right things "C that is doing your best to attend and complete each task (to the best of your ability). We cannot ask for more than that, and we would not expect you or other MAIAs at this stage of the course (half way through the first semester) to have a) confidence and or b) certainty, about doing the dissertation. I will be happy to arrange for further discussion of the dissertation later in the semester. In the past I have helped students find their way on the structure of the dissertation. For those students who have chosen management accounting dissertation, I have emphasized that the students do something that is related to their work "C e.g. a case study of their company or something like that. Then I was able to help with the structure. By the way none of my students (or anyone else I know of) has ever failed this subject. Generally, you get full guidance early on if you undertake a dissertation. This occurs in two ways: a) You get to discuss your interests and ideas with a potential supervisor. He/she can advise you early on if your topic is unworkable. b) The program is designed so that you can opt out of the dissertation half way and still obtain a coursework credit for the proposal stage and complete the program by taking other electives. In this way you will be in a better position to decide whether to go on and undertake the full dissertation. You are most welcome to discuss your ideas further with me or with other colleagues or MAIA students who are undertaking the dissertation option.

2002(944)

Subject: Research Proposal outline

I have posted the SPSS exercise in blackboard. I am not sure the result is significant. How can we know that the relationship is 2-tailed (+/- sign) or 1-tailed?

Response A: I'd like to answer your question regarding SPSSx. The one-tailed test is performed if the results are interesting only if they turn out in a particular direction. The two-tailed test is performed if the results would be interesting in either direction. For example, if you look for the relationship between 2 variables, A & B. A can be either positively or negatively affect B, then it is a 2-tailed test. 1-tailed means you look for 1 direction only. That is A can only be positively affect B and NOT negatively or vice versa. Hope this may clear your query.

2002(968)

Subject: Re: Research proposal comments for everyone

Class, I have had a look at several of the proposals. Among all of the previous comments on other proposals - I suggest that you check the following: a) Motivation - You need to supply more references to support your motivation. At least three references that are less than 2 years old. b) Literature review - Table required c) Method - explanation for the method chosen, plus sources of the items used for a questionnaire. Failure to check and fix these essential items will not be appreciated. Good luck Neale

Question: Is it enough for me to put Task 5b-Stakeholder Interests (with references) to support my motivation?

Answer: Yes. But write out the motivation in a short paragraph with some of the references.

2002(1007)

Subject: Re: Tonight's presentation

I drop down some points to be care about in our proposal, (1) in good logic (very important), (2) clear motivation (quote at least 3 articles w/i 3 years in the first 2 pages) (3) consistent referencing (be careful of the Chinese-style & western style) (4) don't underlying the title (5) with strong theory (6) at least one reference to support your theory application (7) hypothesis should come after theory in proving theory application & relationship (8) Hypothesis should support your framework (9) Hypothesis NOT a fact, it must be related to Research Question (10) insert table for literature review to enhance readers understanding (11) method be explained for reason of adoption (12) title all tables & figures (13) format all heading (14) of course, check against the guideline that distributed tonight Thank you Dr. Neale let us have a look of last year students' proposal, it really help to improve ours. Hope u can benefit from my list.

2002(1098)

Subject: Re: It's a wonderful night

Dear Class I am so pleased to be able to teach the basics of research methods. It is risky to teach this topic because it is so different from other topics. Research methods is different because it is about a method of knowledge acquisition, rather than knowledge itself. Most people are not acquainted with this subject. New ways of knowledge acquisition take time to learn and at first - "Why is the teacher teaching us this process?" How does it relate to my work? "Will I ever be able to benefit from this process?" – are questions of the students' mind. I can assure you that you will begin to appreciate this process even more as you study next semester and each semester thereafter. In the long term you will see the value. This is why I love to teach this subject - not for the immediate returns of teaching you new knowledge, but for the long term return of teaching you how to fish for knowledge. For me - I really enjoyed teaching you this semester. I look forward very much to seeing you next year. Thanks for being my partner in learning this semester.

Response A: I agree with you education should be long term. We've got knowledge of research methods immediately from this semester. Besides, I believe that I've also learned some other valuable things (e.g. the way of thinking), which I may not realize in this moment. In the future, I think many of us can harvest from what you've taught us. Thanks for teaching us!

2003(284)

Subject: re: further guidance to help you step by step in putting your proposal together

Question: I am the student who said who interest in narrative reporting and voluntary disclosure in last class, and you see me that I have no excitement in my eyes. Actually, when I see the narrative reporting and news about OFR in the professional journal, I really enlighten. However, when I get more in depth understanding, I thought by myself that all this disclosure and narrative reporting is not useful for the investment decision in the inefficient market. They are more likely the devices for brand name contribution for the big companies in my opinion. And I fell frustrated and think - should I find another topic or take a research to prove what I think is right and try to let the professionals to think a more realistic way to protect the shareholders. To be honest, the first article that attracts me is not relating the narrative reporting, it titled 'Pricing for the profit', It said that many companies pricing decision do not involve the accounting managers opinion. Also, another article titled Management: what skills?" which relating to the current accounting managers think the textbook knowledge don't help much in the real world. Both articles make me think that many companies in the real world (esp. the SMEs) not really adopt what we learn in the textbook, and why? Can I do a research on it?

Answer: Yes you can do research on this. Your dependent variable can be something like "range of management accounting practices used by SMEs in Hong Kong" and the independent variable can be something like "size", "growth", "networking" things that focus the managers on getting on with creating opportunities rather than too much analysing.

Question: However, I stop later, there are several reasons: I don't very familiar to the MA and my job is auditing and do not have similar experience. So, I choose to stay in my comfortable area.

Answer: This is your personal challenge

Question: Second reason is that, the related academic articles are hard to find, there are very few topic related and make me think that what I think is not sensible.

Answer: Many academics do not know what is really happening in the real world of Hong Kong business. So don't worry too much about the uncertainty of academic articles.

Question: The third reason is regarding to theory development. Can I say that those companies can make high profit even do not adopt any management accounting technique are grounded on the theory "Survival for the fitness", it seems amazing! Or just grounded on simple law of demand?

Answer: This theory is related to economics. I can work with you to find suitable theories.

Question: Actually, these questions are in my mind for many days, after receive your message and I try to express what I think in these days.

Answer: I am glad you took this step. This is what research methods is about. Once you have a very interesting topic then you will be interested in learning the methods that are required to examine this topic.

Response A: Thanks for sharing the difficult. What happens to you is exactly what happened when I choosing between the topics Goodwill (more articles and theory) vs. Differential Reporting (smaller articles but more interesting). I take Neale's advice and chose the area I interested in. I suggest you to change the topics if you really find interest in it, don't stay in your comfort area. Neale and other classmates may have more input in the theoretical areas. On the face of the information, several questions come to my mind: "Do accounting add value to management decision making of SME?" "What is the role of accounting manager in pricing decisions in SME?" "Is financial analysis a critical factors in pricing decision of SME?"

Answer: I like Response A's suggestions. I would even suggest that you take a more exploratory approach – e.g. have a range of practices as the dependent variable (see my AOS paper just published).

2003(451)

Subject: Re: Seek advice on research proposal

Question: I don't clearly know what balanced-scorecard is. Would you tell me what it functions?

Response A: I am also doing Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and hope I can give you an overview picture of BSC. BSC is a performance measure tools which incorporates (1) growth, (2) customer, (3) internal business process and (4) financial one. In addition of traditional measure that mainly concern to financial indicator (a lag indicator which cannot reflect future needs), the BSC take a balance point to several other perspective, which usually have some casual-relationship to company strategic goal and critical success factor that lead the company to success in future. Dr. Neale has passed me a BSC simulation game which is very useful for understanding the BSC. I advise you can try it and you will have a deeper understanding for BSC. If I have missed some important points, Dr. Neale and our classmates please feel free to add on it or correct me.

Answer: Since so many of you are interested in the balanced scorecard I want to share with you a project that I am currently working on - that is the costs and benefits of information systems. I am fascinated with boiling down the real attributes of a system that cause costs, and how these attributes provide benefits to management. When you know these then you are in a strong position to predict organization design, including the balanced scorecard. I am really excited about this potential insight.

Response B: There is a website about the knowledge management. The link is in www.brainlid.com. In this web-site, I also find that it contained many article and new thinking about the balance scorecard. Please try the amazing web-site. I also find one article "Implementing KM - a balance score card approach" in the journal of knowledge management, v6(3), 2002. Can I share some view about the Balance Scorecard? "What you measure? What you get?" Robert Kaplan. From his point of view, when management try to measure something that is important for decision-making or something else. The employee will work endeavour toward it in no matter what cost. It seems to be that if the management wants to improve cost, they may find that they sacrifice quality or something that is important to customer. Or the management may try to improve sales turnover, it turn out sales increase but the profit suffer. Therefore, Rober Kaplan introduces the Balance Scorecard that the management should have a balance view about the company or organization at a whole. This may eliminate the myopia to achieve goal concurrent. The most important part in the model, it is the perspective about the financial and non-financial. Please place more attention on the perspective view, perspective means the view from the outsider to look at the organization inside. In traditional organization, they always look insider the organization first. That mean, they concern they first, not their customers. Customers - I mean both inside and outside customers.

Response C: I would like to share some experience in my company. In the past, my company is not concern customers feeling and feedback. It is because customers have no choice. They must use the service of my company. 1995 onwards, the structure of my company has been re-design. A new business group for customers has been set up. The main reason is we need to prepare for future. In future, we may not the only one supplier for customers, just like PCCW. Management knows that we cannot maintain or improve our profit without retention existing customers or attraction new customers. Besides, we cannot do that if no high quality of human resources. For my company, it spends a lot of money on employees' development. PMS of my company is also adopting concept of BSC. I think it would be more companies may use BSC in the future.

Answer: Response C's study appears to be more exploratory with the focus that you first need to understand which purpose is Balanced scorecard is being used for first.

Response D: The idea for putting the "using of balance scorecard" as an independent variable will make the research become a refined one. Therefore, "the use of balance scorecard" (accounting variable) is better to be set as a dependent variable for an exploratory research purpose.

Answer: There are three things about the balanced scorecard that you should know. (i) The balanced scorecard is a fancy name for a performance measurement system (ii) You need to think how does management benefit from it? – see the file I recently posted (about characteristics of information - costs and benefits of management information system) to IMA yahoo group. This is a great document (I am excited about this creation) (iii) What independent variable increases these benefits to management?

2003(559)

Subject: Re: Dr. Poole's lecture

Question: My proposed title is "should the self-regulation system in accounting profession be abolished?" I don't know how to replace the word "should" as you questioned about. Please kindly advise.

Answer: classmates who want to use should in their research question, You can only use should when: a) You are familiar with the context, literature, and have an understanding of what normative research is - i.e. you have to do more reading (see your research method textbook and my short summary in the manual, and b) you have specific evidence that this question as actually and is actively being considered by the stakeholder concerned. So please use the word, but do check off on a and b above. The burden of proof is on you to learn a. and to justify b.

2003(616)

Subject: Funny Research Question – Neale

Question: Research Question: What factors will affect Dr. Neale to adjust his speed of teaching?

Dependent Variables: Students' working and studying pressure,

Independent Variables: Time available to the students, Family problem to the students

Stakeholders: Students, Lecturers, Husband, Wife, Son and Daughter (Mother, father, boyfriend and girlfriend if the students are not yet married)

Introduction: Every student who enrolls this course with naive thinking that one can easily obtain this master degree after two years' studying does feel that MAIA is a part-time course. In fact, our lecturers prove to us that a student has ONLY 8 hours' working but HAS 16 hours' studying time. Therefore, the lecturers will make well use of our 16 hours' studying time to give us so many assignments and articles. As a result, the student will become PART-TIME WORKING and FULL-TIME STUDYING. The young beautiful girls will become SMART LADY THINKING but ROPY LOOK!

Motivation: I am very eager to probe the meaning of part-time course. How to extend 24 hours a day? Maybe we can employ company's resources at office hours to do our own business! How to allocate our time in studying, working and family in order that we can satisfy all parties concerned?

Hypothesis:

H1: The extension of 24 hours a day can alleviate the student's pressure.

H2: Living, bathing, eating, studying and working in the university can lessen the students' pressure.

Theory: ? Theory

Methodology: Sample can be selected from all MAIA students. Questionnaire and interview can be carried as well.

Response A: Good question but I want to change a little bit. Research Question: What factors affect the acceptability and adaptation of Dr. Neal's speed of teaching by the students? Dependent variable: the extent of acceptability and adaptation of student Dependent variables: 1) value of the life of the student 2) value of the MAIA to value of the life of the student 3) satisfaction from overcoming the difficulties 4) time constraint 5) family and boy/girl friend pressure. Stakeholders 1) student 2) student's family and boy/girl friends

H1: More value of MAIA brought to the student, more acceptability and adaptation.

H2: Move satisfaction the student gained from the MAIA courses, more acceptability and adaptation.

H3: Move pressure from family and boy/girl friend, less acceptability and adaptation.

H4: Better time management of the student, more acceptability and adaptation.

Theory: 1) life is not easy, the difficult you face in classroom is same in outside world 2) we can get reward from our hardworking Data sources: No. of students completing the whole course without getting up.

My Comment: 1) The value of this MAIA for me is not the master degree as it will not bring me any immediate monetary reward. 2) The value of this course is how to change my thinking method and learn how to face difficult, co-operate with others for achieving target. (Elbe, I still remember you said that you take 10 years for completing ACCA. I tell you, I take 16 years to complete. What I learnt from the process is that I was too much stick to my "principle" and did not want to change.) 3) I have also difficulties: not from family (because my mother always let me go) and girl friend (still looking/waiting? for), not from my boss (as I am self-employed). Problem is if I still take so much of my time on study, I will earn less and will go bankruptcy in due course. So I have to learn how to allocate my time more productively and effectively. I don't know whether I can succeed or not, but I will try to do so. 4) The frustration I feel from your message is same for me also. But I want to insist and continue because I want to make some change to my life and to see how I manage myself, my time and my life.

Response B: For the Hypothesis 1 (above): "The extension of 24 hours a day can alleviate the student's pressure." My answer is no. No matter how many hours extend a day, we still use it for the assignments, the pressure can't be alleviated. H2: Living, bathing, eating, studying and working in the university can lessen the students' pressure. My answer is yes. But it should include our family member.... :-> In the past few weeks, I also felt pressure / stress in studying the MAIA course. I was wondering if I could finish the course, because of my ability. Actually, I am a part-time student and have to work in the daytime, just like most of our classmates, the workload for studying two courses are heavy for me and no fun at all. Now I know I have to well allocate my time: working, studying, and family life. However, as Dr Neale mentioned in Week 1, maybe some uncomfortable feeling can push us to success. (Learning something from the course) And I feel better now as I am not the only one.

Answer: Let me share something with you that is very powerful. "We don't normally see the value in something until we really need it" 1. Trying to stay ahead on the big things. The aim in managing many activities in life is to try and "stay ahead" of your needs. Most of us do this by working 6-7 days a week and studying in our free time. We do not want to end up on the bottom end of society - so we keep doing things just to avoid that situation - e.g. where we "need" to depend on others (e.g. government, family) for help. We seem to do this subconsciously because it becomes a habit and we get set in our ways. 2. How to stay ahead on the more intangible things What is interesting is that we have difficulty in applying this idea to learning because it is difficult to look beyond "what we don't know" to see what we may need in the future in terms of our knowledge. It is only when we are faced with deadlines that we tend to focus our learning better - which can be good or bad. These pressures can force us to look for better solutions for managing the learning process. Institutions offer courses (universities, vocational training institutes, internet, professional accounting bodies etc) which people pay for because students see the learning structure (in courses, subjects) and the recognition that is associated with it (degree, ACCA, CPA) as the future outcome. Thus they are able to determine some value in undertaking this learning activity. What is interesting is that we can have difficulty in thinking for ourselves about the value of managing our learning, until we have experienced time pressure. For example, we I asked you to get an IC recorder in the first class, what did you think? There was uncertainty about why you should buy one - it was hard to see the need, the value - you had to trust me. I didn't expect that everyone will trust a person they have met for the first time the night before. But now that you have experienced some pressure - it is possible to see a greater need for it, then you see greater value in purchasing such machine (i.e. if you can use it to help you save time in revising and during travel). In summary - we rely on a lot of cues, support from institutions in this

world to help us find value in things. It is more difficult to work out for yourself independently the real value, and for many of us this may not occur until you experience a real need for that something (EG the IC recorder).

2003(882)

Subject: Problem in searching AOS Format

Question: There is problem in searching the AOS Format for my proposal. Would you please give me some help?

Response A: AOS format are as follows (for the reference): 1) Journal: the layout is name, date, title of article, title of journal, volume number, part number, inclusive page numbers. Birnber, J. G., Shields, M.D., & Young, S.M. (1990). The case for multiple methods in empirical management accounting research (with an illustration from budget setting). *Journal of Management Accounting Research* (should be in the format - italic), 2, 33-36 2) Book: the layout is name, date, title, where published: publisher. Cheng, S. (2001). *Studies on economic reforms and development in China* (should be in the format - italic). New York: Oxford.

Answer: AOS format means the exact same format that is followed by my articles that have been published in AOS. When you read these articles you will learn the format that has to be followed. Also see the article (Shields and Shields - AOS 1998) for further guidance on format with an example of a literature review table (Yes a real literature review table). We are fortunate that AOS is in electronic version and is available in the CityU library ;V online ;V thus you can quickly access any article (including the one referred to above).

2003(149)

Subject: Professional articles

Question: I can obtain some issues about financial accounting in newspaper (SCMP) and Fortune, etc. Please let me know whether they can be recognised as professional articles for research purpose because they are not written by the professional accountants.

Answer: Yes you can use these sources.

2003(131)

Subject: Professional & Academic Articles

Question: In the process of searching, I find that it is very difficult to gain the relevant information especially when I'm looking for the professional articles. I'm not sure whether my approach is correct or not as I search for those professional organisations first in order to find whether there are relevant articles. However, when I start to search for the journal or newsletters, the search engine is most probably not efficient enough or there are not sufficient information or even sometimes it needs to be subscribed. Whether some of you also have such experience, welcome for anyone to give me some tips because I want to search more for I can have sufficient material for my coursework

Response A: The difficulties you and some other classmates encountered in searching journals and articles, especially academic ones, are more or less the same what I had experienced before. Indeed, it really takes time to search the journals and articles appropriate for your research topic and there is no shortcut to do it. What I suggest to you is to look at the reference lists of the academic articles you already get. There should be a number of relevant articles published by other researchers. Try to find out which articles are suitable and available for download. Then look at the reference lists and repeat the above again and again.

Answer: Yes it is difficult to scan the professional journal articles. Remember you can also scan the newspapers, business week, fortune, far eastern economic review, asiaweek (now closed) any Hong Kong business magazine. These are also relevant sources of current issues that we should be researching. Remember - 1. Your interest - what issue is in your heart? 2. What is being published about this issue recently in professional journal articles or in newspapers, business magazines etc? 3. What is in the academic literature? In that order only. I will not help you with 3. Until you convince me that you are reasonably sure about 1. and 2. If you skip 1. or 2. you will likely loose interest, and you will be studying research methods for the wrong purpose. And I don't want this to be the case.

Response B: When I am looking to the journal search, I also encounter your problems. However, I think the following the guideline will be helpful 1) After deciding your topic, you may find a relevant recent textbooks in relate to the topic. 2 Move on to the reference/bibliography section of the textbook 3) In this section you can find several specialist articles in professional journals, refereed journal 4) Check through subject abstracts and subject bibliographies for summaries of articles which may be relevant I don't know whether the above approach is effective? I think Neale may give some advices.

2003(266)

Subject: Articles related to Balanced Scorecard

Question: My interest is on "Balanced Scorecard". My research question is "Is it benefit for a company to implement balanced scorecard as management control tools?" I have tried to search articles on this topic. It is not many articles on this topic. I remember that you have some articles on this topic. Would you mind tell me where can I find these articles?

Answer: First you need to revise the manual about whether you want to take an exploratory approach or refined approach (see the manual we have covered this. You should not do the latter. But your question suggests this. So change the question and read more widely about the balanced scorecard - see all of the Australian professional accounting journals - most of them have all mentioned the balanced scorecard in the last 2 years. I do not have these articles - you have to find them.

2003(562)

Subject: Corporate Governance Information & Materials

Suggestion: Classmate choosing Corporate Governance related topics: I note in there are some posting in the Companies Registry websites <http://www.info.gov.hk/cr/scclr/index.htm> that may be useful for your proposals:1) Corporate Governance Review by The Standing Committee on Company Law Reform - A Consultation Paper on proposals made in Phase II of the Review (June 2003) (Acrobat Format)

http://www.info.gov.hk/cr/download/scclr/cgr2_e.pdf 2) Related reports mentioned in the Consultation Paper on proposals made in Phase II of the Corporate Governance Review by The Standing Committee on Company Law Reform : a) A comparative survey and analysis of the development of corporate governance standards in other jurisdictions (Acrobat Format) http://www.info.gov.hk/cr/download/scclr/comparative_e.pdf b) An economic analysis correlating the performance of listed companies with their shareholders' profile (Acrobat Format) http://www.info.gov.hk/cr/download/scclr/economics_e.pdf c) A survey of the attitudes of international institutional investors towards corporate governance standards in Hong Kong (Acrobat Format) http://www.info.gov.hk/cr/download/scclr/attitude_e.pdf d)The roles and functions of audit, nomination and remuneration committees (Acrobat Format) http://www.info.gov.hk/cr/download/scclr/role_e.pdf

2003(621)

Subject: Taxation - Useful link

Suggestion: Dr.Grant Richardson has suggested few links to search much more info on taxation. I have tried and find www.oecd.org is very useful. Many related articles can be found. Quickly access to the web now!

2003(646)

Subject: Useful website

Suggestion: I find the following website may contain some information useful to you in respect of financial accounting information: <http://www.ifad.net>

Response: Thanks for your information. I especially interest in the GAAP 2001 survey that compare IAS with GAAP in different countries... very useful. 651

Suggestion: You can visit www.kpmg.com.hk for more details about the HK GAAP and IAS.

2003(729)

Subject: Article Search

Suggestion: When you search for articles, you had better choose "By Title" rather than "By subject" because "By subject" you can often find "the abstract" only and has a few full text articles. But "By Title" you can easily find so many full text articles which are very relevant and useful to our research proposal. But remember to tick two buttons "Journal and Text".

2003(715)

Subject: My research publications list

Suggestion: Please see details of my publications in the following page in brainlid.com <http://fbstaff.cityu.edu.hk/acno/Bioresearch.htm>

2003(337)

Subject: Re: Research proposal work - seeking advices

Question: The paper of the professor seems long & high level for me, many statistic equations & analysis..., it needs time to digest, are there other papers from him ? I'm afraid that I can't get use of the interview if I don't fully understand the research area.

Answer: 1. Factory visit - first objective is to meet another researcher and to understand his motivation. Why doesn't he/she work in industry instead - what is special about the job that the research finds so interesting? Second is to look at the article supplied by the researcher - but you don't have to understand it all - in fact the researcher may help you to understand it better. This is normally the case. See with professional journal articles - it is easy to follow because of the terminology and the focus is on the practical application. In contrast the academic articles require you to understand the building blocks - what was written before on this topic. So since this is a weakness of the beginning researcher - having the academic research explain the article to you should make it a bit more interesting than it normally is. 2. You can also ask questions about your own topic of interest if you like.

Response A: Articles for the factory visit : I think the main purpose of the factory visit is to :- a) sharing experience with a research (Task 12) b) a practice on literature review on a academic articles (Task 14) identifying research question, motivation, dependent vs. independent etc. I

suppose we only need to know the result of the statistical data and no need to understand and digest it.

Response B: The main point of the article for the factory visit is only to understand the motivation, insight of the article, the research question, identify the IV and DV

Response C: Poison Pills as the professor explains are management option of Top Management act as ANTI-TAKEOVER plans to minimize the risk of Merger & Acquisition, protect and some times. In U.S.A., the TOP MANAGEMENT incl. CEO, CFO is appointed by the Board of Directors of the company, and the member of the board act as the agent (agency theory) of the so-called major shareholders (mostly just 5 or 10% shareholding), and a number of the major shareholders maybe passive mutual fund. In case, wide spread of shareholding sometimes exercise weak control of the Top Management. Indeed, some "Top Management" highly concerns their high pay job (Over One Million U.S. Dollars) and introduction some ANTI-TAKEOVER plans to punish the unexpected potential or existing investor. For example, Page 22-23 of the professor's Article listed two typical plans for ANTI- TAKEOVER or so-called POISON PILLS in U.S.A. Indeed, many investors may replace the Top Management, partially or wholly after acquiring the controlling Interest of a company.

Question: Besides, my interest topic is ' provision for contingent lia. ', which is my concern/interest area 3 yrs ago, as it comes across with my job, I really hope that there'll be some contribution in that IAS37. My proposed question is "What are the concerns in recognition & reversal of provision for contingent lia.? ", please give me some advice if it's ok or not, is it financial area? I'm still finding the academic/professional articles for more information, but I'm considering how to do in the sections of sampling, stat., analysis?

Response A: The topic of contingent liabilities is interested in financial accounting aspect, why does an event classified as contingent liabilities instead of being a accrual or provision? I have seen some articles in this area when I doing the search for my topics. Further search in library database will help.

Response B: As to the data collection and analysis parts, I think it is early in this stage to understanding the SPSS. It is better to focus on the result of the statistic. In the conclusion and recommendation, you may find some helpful tips to interpretation the articles itself.

2003(322)

Subject: Task 8

Question: I just wonder that the difference between the diagrams of the proposed framework (1) and the framework (3) of proposal. What components should they include?

Answer: There are two basic frameworks: a) motivation framework - question, stakeholders, recent data from professional journal articles b) model of independent and dependent variable - that can also specify the theory that links these two. But of course we all will be revising the theory part so don't worry too much about getting it perfect. Just get the variables as perfect and clear as possible.

2003(854)

Subject: Re: Class - do you want more critiques?

After several quick scan of the articles and your critiques, I have some questions as follows: 1) From the article, page 1 line 30, the words as "organisation" and from page 2 line 8, the words as "organization". There seem to be that the author inconsistent follow the US or UK style of English. I don't know whether it is important for us to follow one style of English, or it doesn't matter that I can use whatever style I want. 2) After reading several journal articles, I found that some of it using the words - I and we - in the articles that make tone informal. Is it better to avoid informal tone to formal one? 3) From the article, page 12 line 36, the author use a present tense - suggest. Is it better to use a past tense - suggested? As writing our research proposal, what tense

we should use? Is it better to use past tense in the literature reviews and method part? How about the abstract? Any suggestion on this, Classmate? 4) Dr. Neale, from your critiques, you mention many time of the creation of content analysis. From your AOS articles – Western management accounting/controls, there are a table about content analysis of on-site interviews (Table 2). Your meaning is that the author should create a similar content analysis table for the convenience of the reader. What is the importance of the content analysis?

Response A: In my opinion, it is better for us to follow the same style of English for our proposal. As journal articles are serious one, we need to use formal tone. For the abstract, we need to use present tense. For literature reviews and method parts, we need to use past tense. It is because they are happen on the past.

Response B: My experience is that the article should be written in present tense in reflection of the research that is done in current timing. Any reference to the analysis of data published in the past should be done in past tense. Using US or UK style is not important as long as it is consistently applied throughout the whole article. Content analysis in the form of table is to provide readers a clear analysis of the relationship and correlation between the factors or hypothesis and the interview data/results. It is used as an objective analysis to prove or support or turn down the hypothesis derived from the independent variables for the purpose of concluding the degree of acceptability of the dependent variables.

Answer: Response B, Grateful for your thoughts. I too have trouble in getting the tense correct - I know this because Dr Mike Poole is always correcting this in the papers I send to him for editing. But generally - your comment is correct about writing the article in present tense. When in doubt use present tense. Yes there are journals published in different countries that require different standards. I think that AOS although it is published in the UK, follows largely US style of writing. So it is a matter for the writer to consult the individual journal that he/she is intending to submit to.

2. TOPIC OF INTEREST

2000(31)

Subject: Questions about research factory visit

Question: As I known you have interested in psychological or behavior research but psychology itself is abstract, the accuracy of data collected from the questionnaire could not be verified. Is it still worthwhile to carry out these types of research?

Answer: 1. Psychological or behavioral research can be abstract at the macros or sometimes organizational level, but not at the individual level. Many functions of management call for knowledge about core **competences**, and selection of managers that fit particular psychological types is an important part of human resource decisions. Remember, the focus of management (accounting) research is the process of management itself. You must be able to relate the research question to some function of management. 2. Questionnaire is worthwhile, but the researcher must be aware of the limitations - verifiability of the responses - and attempt to mitigate them with multiple responses, multiple questions on the same topic, or multiple methods (combine survey with site visits).

2000(52)

Subject: Assignment of Task 6 & 7

Question: I think the behavioral accounting research in management accounting is an interest topic. Therefore I went to the library and read book about the 'Behavioral Accounting Research'. However, I am now struggling with whether should I read the book and get a foundation in Behavioural Accounting Research before I start or I just follow your approach - find and read the research article which I was interested in and select a topic amongst the articles which I have read.

Answer: I suggest that you take the second approach. Furthermore (and this is for everyone) I suggest that you get some articles that have been done in the Asia context, and use these to help motivate your interest in a topic.

2000(54)

Subject: Finding a topic - another idea

Instead of search through the Library search facilities, try looking through the table of contents of Asian Journals. I suggest you look at: 1. Asia pacific journal of management and other journals published out of National University of Singapore. 2. Look at the local professional journals for interesting debates on accounting issues. These ideas are a repeat of the ideas mentioned under finding a topic in the manual. Don't worry if you are still struggling, it is a very time consuming task to find a topic that you are interested in. For most of you the topic will not jump out at you. You have to spend hours searching. This is time well spent. This time is part of your learning in research methods, so do not think it is a waste of time.

2000(64)

Subject: Re: Research idea: Stock options in HK Companies

See the article below, for those interested in a research proposal concerning the use of stock options in HK companies. This is a management accounting type study.

10/28 04:35

CyberWorks to Give HKT Staff Options to Boost Morale (Update1) By David Saunder Hong Kong, Oct. 28 (Bloomberg) -- Pacific Century CyberWorks Ltd. said it will issue options to 14,000 employees who joined the company when it merged with Cable & Wireless HKT Ltd., as part of a plan to boost morale at the telecommunications company. The company, which has seen its shares lose two-thirds of their value since early August, said the handout was to help retain staff following the merger in the same month. "Richard Li wants to spark entrepreneur spirit among all of the staff," said Joan Wagner, spokeswoman for Cyberworks. "It's also part of our integration to offer the same benefit to all the staff." The options will be issued at a strike price of HK\$4.872 (62 U.S. cents). Each former HKT employee will be granted an option for between 3,800 and 28,000 shares, to be exercised over the next three years, the paper said. Staff will be able to exercise up to one-third of their options each year. Employees will also be able to subscribe to additional options, also at HK\$4.872, by foregoing up to 20 percent of their monthly salary. The options will represent about 1 percent of the company's fully diluted issued capital, the company said. Cyberworks shares have fallen from a high of HK\$17.70 on Aug. 7 on investor concerns about the company's earnings prospects from its Internet business. They closed yesterday at HK\$6. The company, which is seeking funds to repay about HK\$4 billion in debt, said Wednesday it will reduce the scale of its Internet business to focus on telecommunications.

2001(59)

Subject: Re: Active contributions to the course

Question: Though I have interest in Management Accounting (like budgeting in different organizations. Activity Based Costing, etc), how can I know my topic is a good one and feasible and workable to make a research proposal or project?

2001(193)

Subject: potential research topic

Question: I've studied some articles and came up a preliminary idea relating to SME of HK and e-commerce. For instance, the extent of SMEs' preparation or difficulties in dealing with e-commerce. Is it a feasible research topic/scope? Will there be any more interesting area pertaining to SME and e-commerce?

Answer: Your topic seems to be interesting and on the right track. The next thing is to break the topic down into a small part and formulate a research question about that part.

2001(452)

Subject: Re: potential research topic

Question: After reviewing some literature, I note that the extent of using internet / e-commerce is influenced by several factors: resources, learning style, finance, external support, employee skills etc. Previous studies were performed in various nations (Irish, UK) or sectors (manufacturing, services). Based on the above, can I set up such a research question: "What factors affect HK SMEs in adopting e-commerce?" Motivation: Several articles support that SMEs play an important part in community employment rate and total revenue. Their pace of involvement in e-commerce, hence growth in the cyberspace, is critical. But I have no idea what "theory" should the research be based on.

2001(206)

Subject: Research topic

Question: What are the problems facing expansions in SMEs of Hong Kong and China? I don't know how to structure the question better and I think I need to ask my self the motivation and scope of study I want to have. Factors for me to consider might be: The reason for expansion? - increase competitive advantage, how to do it? Consider areas: Cash flow size and structure of expansion human resources enough business to cope with Controls during expansion legal environment affecting expansion market / product change H1: The expansion of SMEs in Hong Kong and China depends very much on the performance of their customers' market. H2: The expansion of SMEs in Hong Kong and China depends very much on the availability of cash flow. H3: The expansion of SMEs in Hong Kong and China depends very much on the availability of competent staff / experts. H4: The expansion of SMEs in Hong Kong and China depends very much on the desire of the entrepreneur to acquire competitive advantage. I don't know whether I am in the right direction of structuring a research proposal.

Answer: Choose a single nation if you are exploring factors, and if knowledge of these is interesting to know for better business management. Choose two nations only if you want to do a comparison. I suggest you try to identify the institutional, environmental, organizational and individual factors, but that you just focus on one of these levels. The topic needs to be narrower. At present there may already be dozens of articles written on the economic development of SMEs in Hong Kong, and you will need to build on these (consult the working papers in the depts. in our faculty of business).

Response: I agree that SME is very interesting research topic, especially some time ago there is a hot discussion whether the government should help SME. There are both pros and cons of the government to subsidy SME. What are other classmates' opinions about that?

2001(227)

Subject: Re: Research topic

Question: In one HKSA's seminar sometime ago, I was told that SME represents about 80% of the firm population in Hong Kong. From this perspective, it is good to have the government to subsidies SMEs in order to boost the economy. However, it is very hard to control over these subsidies as we can hardly know how the SMEs gonna apply their funds. If there is any misappropriation, the original aim will be spoilt. A further SME loan funding for about 1.1 billion is in the process of being approved, (or already approved - I'm sorry I lost the update information) I don't know how great this help to Hong Kong's economy. Though, how SME raise finance, debt or equity might be an interesting topic for research.

Response: Referring to the research topic, I have an idea after I suggested the topic "SME" in last lecture. It is the fund rising of SME in China. I have another idea in the changing of management accounting system in SME. Can anyone have any comment or same interest in this topic?

Response: For the control of the usage of subsidy money, I think the SME has to submit regular report to the government listing out the where the money has used, just like those organization seeking Social Welfare Department funding. I think the CPA can play an important role in this matter. Do you agree?

Answer: Others interested in SMEs I suggest that you may want to focus on the role of network incubators in Hong Kong in promoting their growth.

2001(224)

Subject: Good Luck in the quiz!

Question: Now I have the little idea of my research question about the "Activity based costing". "The successful factors of implementation of activity based costing in Hotel industry in China". Do you feel any problem of the question? I'm the accountant of one hotel in Hong Kong. I choose the Hotel industry in China since many China hotel is owned by Hong Kong enterprise. e.g., Cheungkong, New World, Regent etc. Hypothesis: the activity based costing is the best cost allocation method in Hotel Industry in China. Is it the suitable hypothesis?

Response: May I dare to rephrase your research topic to read as: Hypothesis: the activity based costing is the most popular cost allocation method in Hotel Industry in China. I think this is easier to proof the most popular than the best. You might use a sampling method.

Answer: A research question is not useful until you have some evidence, articles proving that the subject is causing some inefficiency or can be used more effectively. Who is going to benefit by your answering the question?

Response: I choose this topic because I feel that ABC only suitable for manufacturing industry, I would like to know that is it suitable for hotel industry?

2001(410)

Subject: Research project

Question: I have 2 ideas on the project. One is on China Taxation system. (1. What is the current in the tax system?? 2. How can the current system be improved? , etc) The other is on Sales Tax (is sales tax a good choice for Hong Kong?)

Answer: I am not convinced on these two topics. 1. I need to see that these are important as presented in the professional journals 2. Previous students have asked this question - you need to do something better.

2001(411)

Subject: Re: Guidance on Research Topic

Question: I'm now working in a multinational company & have branches in East Asia, I think that a good control system is very important but difficult to implement. I just decided to do a research on "What factors affect the control system in a multinational company?" I would like to seek some advice from you. 1. Can it be a research topic? 2. Is it related to the Management Accounting or Auditing?

Answer: Yes, this relates to both auditing and management accounting, but more so management accounting. This is on the right track.

2001(469)

Subject: Topics select for factory visit

Question: As I'll be doing budgeting for next yr in my office very soon, I would like to use budgetary control as a starting point for the topics I select for our mgt a/c group factory visit. Will that be ok? Since mgt a/c may have a broad area of topics to choose of, each member of the group may have their own area of interest. Will that be fine to you where we have various different focuses during our visit? I'll treat the visit as a brain storming and info gathering section if I'm correct. What factors determining the effectiveness of a budgetary control? Shall we apply the same principles in China office due to cultural differences, etc? That's probably the area I would like to focus at this moment.

Answer: Your topic seems okay. You can use the factory visit both as a brainstorming device as well as a focusing device (for a topic you already have).

2001(809)

Subject: Re: Valuable Advice from Dr. Neale

Question: I've changed the topic from "Auditing" to "Disclosure of Annual Report". I'm interested in studying the disclosure requirements of Annual Report as I am responsible for the preparation of the annual reports and interim reports. Cross countries comparison is a very interesting topic.

2002(1108)

Subject: Research proposal

Question: I refer to my Value for money (VFM) audit research proposal and follow up the interpretation of the definition of VFM audit by the Audit Commission of HK and NAO of UK as follows: "Economy" is concerned with minimising the cost of resources used for an activity, having regard to appropriate quality. "Efficiency" is concerned with the relationship between output and inputs in terms of goods, services or other results, and the resources used to produce them. "Effectiveness" is concerned with the extent to which objectives have been achieved and the relationship between the intended impact and the actual impact of an activity. Regarding possible overlap between "Economy" and the others, NAO of UK opined that it could most definitely be argued that by examining efficiency, one is also examining economy but using a wider definition of the latter term. While HK Audit Commission said that although in principle they may be pursued separately, but in practice, distinctions between these three elements are not always clear cut and they often overlap and examined during a VFM audit. Hope this may give a clearer idea about the meaning of "Economy" of VFM audit in principle and in practice.

2002(1126)

Question: I am now studying International Taxation and I would like to do the research proposal again. Therefore, I would like to have your professional advice about my 1st proposal and my weakness point so that I can improve in my 2nd proposal. As part of the class will also do the proposal, I think it will be benefit to all the class if you can give us comments.

Answer: I am concerned that you may think I avoid your question on transfer pricing and taxation. I did a quick search of the literature and = came up with the following article. Have a look at this article first.

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Impact of Competition and Taxes on Responsibility Center Organization and Transfer Prices

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Abstract: We show that a firm can use its decentralized organizational structure and transfer price as commitment devices to obtain strategic advantage in the product market only when there are

nonstrategic reasons to decentralize and to distort transfer prices away from marginal costs, such as the sales office's local knowledge about market conditions and the presence of tax rate differentials across the two tax jurisdictions. Surprisingly, an increase in the sales office's tax rates may help a firm increase overall profits. An increase in the sales office's tax rates causes the firm to increase its transfer price, which in turn dampens the sales office's competition and may more than offset the effect of increased tax rates on the firm's overall profits. References:

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2002(251)

Subject: Re: New file uploaded to ResearchMethod-2002

Dr. Neale, Thank you for your reply; basically, I don't have any background on topic of research (maybe, the whole class), everything seem mystery. Referring to the ans., is it meant that the approach / steps on doing a research has been changed in the decades? If we try to compare the research done in the first generation vs. today's', should we learn there's a big difference on developing a research paper between two? See attached question below.

(1) Do the motivation (stakeholder interest & literature review) only be proved by the published professional & academic articles? But, there must be a starter for any kind of topic; then what did the starter do?"

Answer: Tricky question – In the early stage of an area of research there may be little written in the professional journals a) because in the early 20th century there were less professional journals around. Then there was more space for academic articles to discuss in a grounded theory type of way, the topic of interest. These days, the number of professional journals and academic journals has grown – so have their specific area of focus, such that in the past there was more overlap between the two groups of literature, now there is greater separation between the two. Does this make sense?

2002(950)

Subject: Re: Research Proposal outline

Comment: After reviewing your proposal outline, I have the following ideas but not sure whether they are useful or not. In Motivation, you mentioned that when comparing with US and UK companies, HK listed companies are less concerned with the corporate governance. What type of US and UK companies are used in the comparison? Those are listed but under family control or those are listed but not under family control? Lack of communication between investors and management? - HK listed companies under family control contain some investors, who are also the members of the senior management. Research question - generally, creditors are more concerned with liquidity than investors while the latter is likely to place their focus on earnings. Stakeholder interest - Dr. Neale has advised us that we only need to list one party in the stakeholder interest. Hypothesis - Same as stakeholder interest, Dr. Neale also required us to state one hypothesis only to make things less complicated. Independent variable - suggest to include 1) history; 2) industry; and 3) auditors reports.

Response: Thank you for your comment. It helps me to have more idea in my proposal and make improvement! I understand that creditors are more concern with the liquidity than investor. However, I am interested in the study of the view of investor. Refer to the UK and US companies, they are more concern with corporate governance than Hong Kong in general (not only compared the family owned).

2003(61)

Subject: Re: Deadline for task - finding a topic

Question: Time is tight to obtain articles, especially the academic one. Can you give me some info on that? My interested topic is 'Are there really more business opportunities in HK after the Mainland China has joined the WTO?' Is this okay?

Response A: The followings are derived from my past experience and hope that they can answer your questions. What you are required to do in the meantime is to select a topic but no need to draft your research question too hurry. The "topic" you mentioned in your last message seems more like a research question. Since we are engaged in an Accounting course, I recommend you to specify your topic relating to accounting issues. It would be easier to get partners in the factory visit and to let others give you a hand when encountering problems in doing your research proposal. In the last year, our classmates' topics are generally divided into 2 streams: 1) financial accounting and 2) management accounting. Secondly, being green to research, I dare not to attempt those areas with great uncertainty. In addition, in searching articles, you may try using the advanced search of: <http://www.google.com.hk/>

Response B: Let me add some points, (1) listen to week 1 voice file & re-pick any idea neglect, (2) figure out our own strengths & weaknesses, (3) walk around your company, see any life case available for studying, (any motivation of study on a topic there) (4) try more searching in the internet. I am highly recommended this web site to you www.ingenta.com you can find many academic articles there, but, pay more patience on it cos/ you can hardly find a free-of-charge paper. (5) In my own opinion (not a professional one), your research question is too general. You need to get it more specific. (6) Basically, in my own experience, I would like to say a good research method paper requires much work on reading (literature written by others), organizing & THINKING (paper established from your own thought). 'Read more, think more' - it can help you in figuring out your own paper.

Response C: Don't worry about your research proposal, Dr. Neale has well organized all task exercises to let you on track to complete your proposal on time. In this time, you shall think about which area you are interesting in. I suggest that the accounting related areas are more appropriate, for examples, management accounting, financial accounting, taxation or corporate governance, etc. After this step, you can define your research topic more specific, just like management accounting - balanced scorecard or activity based costing that you want to study. Try to simplify your research question let you more easily to do. After the topic has been defined, you can search the relevant academic and professional articles from Internet or library's resources more easily.

Answer: Please read the advice given about developing your own interest (1. what's in your heart?). The second year students give you great advice. Right now your missing step is the professional journal articles or business newspaper clippings. Without these (2. Your understanding of what is the stakeholder interest?) you will lose focus on what academic articles are relevant to your topic. As Response A said - use www.google.com and Response B said - use ingenta - and you can speed up your search process outside of the library – so you can meet the deadline.

Question: Response B said that the research topic be more specific. Can you give me some examples of how specific it should be?

Response B: It's a difficult question; I'm still learning it in my second year study. Asking a good research question is the most difficult part in writing a research paper. Anyway, let me try to solve your problem. I think when you ask, "Are there really more business opportunities in HK after the Mainland China has joined the WTO" - more business opportunities is too general. Is it more specific if asking, "What factors caused HK servicing industry benefit from China's WTO accession?" (I'm not sure whether or not I'm correct) However, it's not an accounting paper; or you can write something about taxation (if you are interest in that field of study). Actually, I write some on WTO & PRC taxation for my international taxation course.

Answer: Response B advice is spot on.

2003(85)

Subject: Research Topic

Question: I am interested in the topics about set up an appropriate Incentive and Compensation System OR how to motivate of employees in an organization. I also think 2 Project Titles as follows: 1) Plan, develop and implement an appropriate Incentive and Compensation Systems in an organisation. 2) Identification of key factors in the motivation of employees in an organisation. I'm not sure whether the first topic is part of the second topic. Could you give me some advice?

Response A: for a research beginner, a more specific research question is better. Think about: 1) How many dependant variables are for your R.Q.? 2) How many independent variables are for your R.Q.? Don't make your scope of work too broad. Otherwise, it is not easy to handle.

Answer: And thanks Response A for your spot on guidance. In terms of how many - always try and keep your dependent variable to one only, while independent variables can be more than one. Always keep in mind that there are two paths of your learning in research methods: a) Terminology - this takes time b) Your individual project - this takes strategy, time and perseverance. So for your individual project - you need to invest a lot of time in the first few weeks so that you get onto a track (topic) that you are going to enjoy more working in. You have to find this track and that can take a lot of time - but it is worth it later on in the semester, as there is not much time to change your track half way once you get started.

2003(440)

Subject: Research Topic – FA

Dear FA group members, I would like to share more of my experience with you. The topic I selected in last year is relating to the accounting methods for acquisitions used by managers in the U.S., i.e. the pooling method and the purchase method. The research question, the theory employed, and the stakeholder interest stated in my proposal are very different from what I initially defined. Before finalizing, I have made numerous modifications on all of the above under Neale's comments and from referring to those academic articles I had spent many many hours in searching.

2003(294)

Subject: seek advice on revised proposal question

Response: note that someone has recently raised the issue of lack of a genuine interest in her research topic. My experience is that the level of interest may go up or down when one starts working on the project. From a practical point of view, it may not be advisable to keep changing the topic given the limited time we have. Perhaps we should shift our focus to the research process itself and enjoy it.

3. MOTIVATION + QUESTION

2000(45)

Subject: What is a good research question

Question: There are two criteria. a. Can you answer the question with yes or no? b. Can you answer the question with a list of factors? I would like to know what is meant by the second criteria. I think the big variance of our vote for good questions in Task 6 (6 to 34 good questions) is because we do not really know the meaning of the second criteria.

Answer: I think the second criteria can be used with some more scope than what some groups did, but there is not a hard and fast rule. The research community out there that reviews the work I do is like the groups in our class, some groups interpret the same thing differently from others. Like some reviewers did not like my research proposal while other reviewers liked it. Some groups applied a stronger test of how the question should be written in English. For example, if a statement that reads like a question doesn't have a question mark at the end of it then it is not a question (this was the case for some of the statements). While more than half of the statements are not research questions. The point of the exercise is a) not to know the correct answer, but to think how each statement can be made more correct. Every statement in task 6 can be improved. b) You should make clear as possible what your research is about.

Question: I am also interested in applying what I learnt in finding whether your research proposal of "the measurement and structuring of formal incentive systems in Chinese State-owned Enterprises" is a good research question or not. I cannot answer the question with yes or no. Does your research question fulfill the second criteria? Moreover, is it the same for the research title and research question? I would like to have a clear idea which I and my classmates can set a good research question and have a good start.

Answer: Formally, my research proposal has a complex question - there are three sets of factors involved -- environmental, organizational factors, measurement factors and incentive factors. Ideally, it is better if your research title is a question - this is for you as a research student. You can see that most academics don't do this, but I encourage you to do this for the sake of clarity and focus.

2000(47)

Subject:

Question: I was quite surprised that a good research topic needs to be in question form. Is my understanding right? I have read many research topics in accounting journals which are not in question form (in fact, many are in statement form), Are those bad researches? (To be moderate, not so good!)

Answer: 1. Many articles state the research question, many don't. 2. For those articles which don't state a research question, they are not bad, just that the authors preferred not to communicate in

clear terms what their research is about. You should be able to find the research question. 3. If you don't have a research question, there is nothing to research.

2001(153)

Subject: Re: Blackboard

Question: what means for "key issues"? Does it means summarizing the research contents/theme/scope of study?

Response: I think that the key issue is the main point of the article.

Response: I think the key issues are what the thesis is mainly concerned of. You need to go through the sections regarding context of the study and motivation etc. inside the introduction chapter of each paper.

Response: I think Key Issues refer to the point of view e.g. the Research question, literature/academic theory etc and argument/hypothesis of the study.

Answer: Key issues means: The theme, the research question and scope of the study.

2001(178)

Subject: My late response

Question: I would like to ask is that why the research topic must be expressed in research question. I have seen some study paper which the topic was expressed as "The feasibility study on implementation of....." The approach is identifying the pros and cons of the issues by using the relevant theories in support and then makes a conclusion from those findings. Was it a research also?

Response: I think the topic you stated is also a good and valid research question but it is an explanatory or comparison type of research. We also have hypothesis type of researches in using empirical or behavioral research methods etc.

Response: I give you one more example. One of the thesis " The Influence of bargaining power on structure of FDI in China" I think the type of the question is "What" type, we can express to "What is the influence of bargaining power....." the research should study the influence of the bargaining power, the merits & demerits of the power from the finds. So when thinking the research question, consider what do you want to know in the topic.

Answer: Research is about finding answers to something. You only need an answer when you have a question. Many studies like feasibility studies don't tell you what the question is, but they all have a question, you can work it out. EG - What are the net benefits to Cox or society of implementing a new technology, new practices etc?

2001(233)

Subject: research motivation

Question: The question is "how could I know that my research has not proved by somebody else before?" Apart from researching previous articles in the same field or topic or inquiring to academist, are there any central registrations?

Answer: You just have to search thoroughly the literature and present you paper in the public domain and know the major researchers in your field.

Question: I think it can hardly avoid someone doing the same research topic as you are doing since there is no "copyright" for research topic except plagiarism. However, I cannot search around all articles first before starting a research. So can anyone suggest what should I do?

2001(274)

Subject: Re: Group 4 Task 5

Question: The second question may be we can rephrase as What arrangement can avoid double taxation on income between China and HKSAR? To shift the emphasis of the research question to finding what arrangements exist and whether these are workable to avoid double taxation. My suggestion focuses on the factors driving to the arrangement(s). I have no particular preference on which one to post for our group. The second question may be we can rephrase as What arrangement can avoid double taxation on income between China and HKSAR?

Response: Here are my suggestions for our group: - 28. What are the differences between HK and Singapore listed companies in executive compensation? 35. What actions HK companies take to avoid double taxation on income between China & HKSAR?

Response: I'd no objection to Q28. Re Q35, Is it referring to "HK Company"? As the co registered in HK, profit tax will be charged if it is derive in HK & determine the source of profit. Also income may refer to personal income instead of profit of the co. Do U agree?

2001(415)

Subject: Research topic

Question: I am in the education field (business). Recently, it happen that bank, CPA firm lay off staffs of various level. So, some may need to find opportunity in China. The research carried out by ASCPA showed that most of the graduates of Universities in H.K. didn't show their interest of working in China. I have thought of a research topic of "What are the qualities of being a successful manager working in China?" Motivation: The research result are useful reference information for (i) educator or government to formulate curriculum if they want to train business graduates to serve the motherland in China. (ii) those who plan to work in China.

Response: My question is "What are the key success factors for Hong Kong SMEs' expansion of their business in China?" I planned to focus my research at the organizational level of analysis. I think your topic also can be set at individual, organizational and societal levels. Although you might need to re-structure your question a little bit if you extend it from individual to a higher level. I gathered some articles for this area and I would like to share them if you like to.

Answer: This question is reasonable. Try to make it specific to accounting profession if you can.

2001(420)

Subject: Make-up class & Research topic

Question: My search question is "What are the comparative advantages between Shanghai and Hong Kong for MNC??" I am interested in this topic because of WTO and the Olympic will be held in China in 2008. I will read more articles to find out my area of interest.

Response: Do you mean "What are the comparative advantage between Shanghai and Hong Kong for MNC to consider when making their investment decision? Or some other decisions?" Sorry, I just want to clarify because it also relates somewhat to my interest. Although this time you look at the "what factor" from other MNC who has interest in investing in Hong Kong or

Shanghai whereas mine look at Hong Kong firm who has interest in investing in China. Yours seem to be a comparative analysis, mine seem to be an exploratory and explanatory.

Answer: I still think about your research proposal as being a tough one, only if you do not identify 1. Who are you doing the research for? 2. How do you know whether this is a real issue - see professional journals, internet, trend data etc. 3. What kind of answer do you think you are looking for? - A yes or no answer to setting up in HK or Shanghai, or it depends answer - e.g. here are the factors that make HK more attractive, and here are the factors that make Shanghai more attractive.

Response: I have revised my research question, narrow down my scope to the advantages for setting up their Asian head office in Hong Kong. I wanted to concentrate on one location rather than doing a comparison for a research proposal. Identify the factors first and how would the existing management rank each of the factors. I would like to do my research for potential foreign and Chinese investors, of course I would also be benefit from all my readings. Recently, I have found couple books and some professional articles from the web site of TDC which talk about direct investment, setting up head office in H.K. and the role of H.K. after China being a member of WTO. Actually, it is a board and hot topic, the more I read the more I could find. Although, this topic is not related to my work at all, if more companies invest in H.K. then it would reduce the employment rate, boost up the economy.

2001(526)

Subject: Research question

Question: Research question: What factors affect the success in implementing consumption tax in HK? Motivation: Gov't is preparing to implement consumption tax in HK in coming few years, it is the clear messages from the Gov't. Implementation problems are expected, this study aims to examine the success factors for the benefit of HK citizens so as to minimise the costs. Methodology: 1. Access the most suitable category of consumption tax applied in HK 2. Compare to other countries experience for implementing consumption, e.g. Singapore, Australia, or other countries. (The analysis will be on point 2) I am not sure whether it is workable or not. I need time to search and read for more articles on this topic to have more ideas. After that I will seek for your personal advice. But now with some uncertainty, please comment on my direction.

Answer: You first need to find another article on this topic - before you can do it. See some of the work by the second year MAIAs. Ask them tonight when you are in Dr Lynn's class. This is your chance to break through the barrier and ask a potential stranger about something that helps you. MAIAs - don't avoid the second year students - they are a great source of knowledge and most of them have done proposals on topics you are interested in. - i suggest that you also find a second year student who has written something on taxation.

Answer: For others doing taxation. I am not expert in the area. As I said in my factory visit when one student asked me about seeking Hong Kong manager perceptions on the balanced scorecard. Well it is a bit difficult to seek perceptions on something that people haven't experienced. The same goes for sales tax. It is not here (in a form that academics write about) and no one in Hong Kong can tell you what exactly it is going to look like. I suggest you research something that we can already see, and not what may or may not be in the future. You can still do the topic, but because it is something that doesn't exist it is very difficult. Taxation students - if you are really interested in taxation, then you must do the reading of economics of taxation - see public finance theory (go to the library).

2001(576)

Subject: hot topic - corporate governance

Dear Dr, Neale and classmates, My Research Topic is Corporate Governance. My research question will probably be "What factors affect the extent of voluntary disclosures on Corporate Governance?"

Comment: I would cut out the word corporate governance from the research question as it is redundant. Need to make clear the intuitional context -Hong Kong? E.g. What factors affect corporate disclosure amongst Hong Kong blue chip companies? Need to make clear of the stakeholder you are researching for - regulators, shareholders, society, other?

Why I choose this topic? - Interests for exploring more knowledge in this area. - Valuable study for my ongoing future career. - I am now a member of Audit Committee of my company, so it's valuable & worthwhile for me.

Comment: If you are a member of an audit committee then you have great insight to pursue some angle not that apparent to outsiders. Voluntary disclosures on Corporate Governance are very hot issue for both the regulators in the Finance Market & the professional bodies from all over the world, etc.....

In the factory visit with my group-mates, I have sought some advice from the professor for the source of data collection, such as annual reports, disclosures database. He has given us advice on research design for our research proposal. Consider what the variables, the effects of variables, control variables are. Neale: I hope to talk with you more for your valuable guidance on writing a good research on my topic. I believe that I will earn more value-added ideas from you.

Comment: Your topic is great and the most researched topic in our department. I suggest that you review the articles written by Prof Tsui. You can see her research on the department's web site. The various independent variables raised by Prof Tsui in her research are clear - family connections on board, growth opportunities and some more. But you want to think about one aspect of disclosure – say environmental and social disclosure. There is an excellent article in the Canadian accountant journal on this.

2001(705)

Subject: Re: Feeling about learning interactively

Question: My motivation for the research. A member of the HKSARG and from an individual perspective, I am driven to know more about the impact of adopting accrual accounting in government. Likewise, my colleagues in the same profession would also be interested in the topic as the more we understand, the better we can cope with the change. From the perspective of the HKSARG (so the motivation is at an institutional level), the Administration would incline to report its annual accounts on an accrual basis so as to show the public the government is doing something to enhance its productivity. Moreover, the use of accrual accounting is a global trend, it is claimed a form of New Public Financial Management. I would like to reframe my research question as: Is accrual accounting a superior tool than cash accounting in the context of public sector accounting? With this question, I can then talk about the pros and cons of cash accounting and accrual accounting and the extent of use in other countries. I can then make comparisons between the two methods and find out why more countries are using method A and why less countries using B. Dependent variables may be benefits such as accountability, transparency, value for money, performance measurement etc. Independent variables may be the two methods used. Hypothesis: Accrual accounting is superior to cash accounting (the word superior needs to be defined) Testing of the hypothesis would be based on a mixture of review of past literature and survey of views from the accounting professions.

Response: About the hypothesis, it is an educated guess, set of statements for testing the variables. Good hypothesis show the relationship between the variables. It is quite a difficult task to write out a good hypothesis of the research topic. Because a lot of brainstorming and searching

for information. So, keep it clear to test the relationship between variables. My suggestion for your hypothesis would be like this: Accrual accounting is more superior to effective performance measurement. For each of your independent variables, the hypothesis can be stated in the way that the relationship of variables is clearly shown for which it is testable. You have to brainstorming this relationship.

Answer: Your motivation for the research question is one aspect. The second aspect is the HKSARG's preference. The third aspect is the global trend. These three aspects are sufficient for you to do your proposal. In writing up the proposal, you need to clarify the first aspect a little more. Is it only you that is driven, or is there some sense that a greater population group (e.g. gov accountants, private accountants, government tenders, government contractors etc) would be concerned if they knew the consequences?

2001(821)

Subject: Re: 2000 Research Proposal

Question: For the case study, do we need to concentrate on one company only when doing the case study. I take a whole week to search for the article and also scan all the past MAIA's proposals but actually I can't get one. May I have one from you about the topic "Conflict between power and culture" tonight?

Answer: There is unlikely to be an article on the exact topic you are working on. For now you must think about the theory that is relevant and find articles on the relevant theory.

2001(1264)

Subject: Re: Visiting Australia

Question: I made an amendment on my research question. You pointed out the motivation of research question is not clear. After reading Harrison & Mckinnon's article, most likely the culture occurs in the international company. It is far away from the problems of the company I work. Also, I only find little articles related to budget setting. Is it too late to make this amendment?

Answer: It is not too late to change the research question to one that has a stronger motivation. As long as you are confident with the stronger motivation.

2001(1496)

Subject: Re: Comments on revised research proposal by Dr. O'Connor

Question: You've mentioned that the hypothetical case study was not appropriate for methodology. You advised that the research question should be directed to focus on the factors enable the implementation of GST. I think the cost effective should be one of the factors. Thus, the hypothetical case would enable me to collect the data of the govt revenue if GST was imposed. Am I correct in thinking this? I think the imposition of a new type of tax must be opposed by the people and I emphasized on the govt view to see if such new type of tax is feasible, I did not place great concern in people's view. Am I correct or should I add more in respect of this aspect. You've mentioned about I should relate the research question in the area of public finance.

Answer: Try and first understand the context of your research question. If I can reword the directions to fit your area: 1. The government wants to introduce something new. 2. There are parties that don't like it because it conflicts with their objectives. They don't always tell you they

don't like it, they just end up behaving differently after the event. E.g. they spend less, they invest elsewhere, or in the context of introducing new technology in companies, they pour honey over the keyboard (true!). 3. If the government implements something without consideration of the various parties the implementation will not be successful. The problem with your and other similar proposals is that you haven't told me the objective of these other parties. If there are no parties affected, then the government can introduce the tax and raise revenue and not change any of the behavior of society. If this is the case then there maybe no research to do. So you have to convince me that this is not the case. Who may be affected, and why? If you don't have academic survey data from previous research to show this (e.g. data from similar implementations in other countries), then you should provide a theory to support your reasoning of how other parties may be affected. You can do a hypothetical case study, but only after you first demonstrate understanding of the issues above. You need state what the purpose of the hypothetical case study is?

2001(1461)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Question: What factors affect the adoption of western style management control system= in Asia Pacific Region? Is it more specific & clear? Additional relevant articles from AOS will be included to my final proposal

Answer: The article is Shields, Chow and Wu. Please read this before going further.

Question: I'd got two articles fm AOS The importance of national culture in design of Mgt Control- Chee W Chow 1= 999 Cultural influence on informal information sharing Chee W Chow 1999 Are these 2 relevant to my revised question?

2001(1481)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Question: my research question is: What factors affects the structure of international tax planning in MNC? What do you think about this research question? It seems that I have difficulty to find out the trend data. For tax planning topic, it is hard to find out those figures. Does anyone of you have such information or website that can provide to me as for my reference? Also I have difficulty to set up the hypothesis statement on tax planning topic, may I have your idea on how to set it?

Answer: Further your research question is still not clear enough. What does structure of international tax planning mean? It is too broad. The problem with your and other proposals is with the research question. For example your should choose one aspect of international tax planning. E.g. transfer pricing. What factors affect transfer pricing of Macs operating in Hong Kong and China? You can find trend data on from the academic literature on transfer pricing. But you need to read and think about your research question more.

Response: I think you question is too wide, Tax planning including many aspect ^-^. Will you narrow the tax planning on some special area e.g. tax planning for Subsidiaries? like my company, The Holding company is Sun Hung Kai & there planning is make the loss of all hotel subsidiaries and try to reduce the tax payment by the ultimate holding.

2001(1487)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Question: Here's part of my revised research proposal would like to have your comment: My revised research question is: What factors are driving the reduction of business risk of FDI in Mainland China? I've found the components of business risk and list the 3 most important components that relate the China. Then, I'll revise the motivation of the study and rewrite hypothesis to be more specific.

2001(1493)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Question: I get the problem in collect the fact data of tax revenue from e-commerce. Maybe I need to change my study to focus on the tax legislation system development and compare to other Asia country with e-commerce system. Is my study would become descriptive study and not valuable, no hypothesis?

2001(1546)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780.

Question: Research question: What factors impact MNCs to structure the remuneration package of their expatriates working in China? For the collecting trend data to support my motivation, I still could not locate the latest data (say from year 1995 to 1999) re the increasing proportion of tax revenue collected from foreign individuals that explains more and more foreigners are now working in China. Could anyone please teach me how to search?

Answer: Yes the question seems okay but make the logic of "structure the remuneration package" clear. How many categories are there? Which category is most popular in terms of theory? While category do we see out there in the real world? Your research question can then focus on why a particular category is chosen, when theory dictates that another category should be used. Your research question would be more focused like what are the factors that influence the greater monetary/greater local benefits/greater non-monetary/long term etc structuring of remuneration packages of expatriates in China. Please choose the categories that are 1. Most interesting 2. Have more literature support

2001(1531)

Subject: Proposal

Question: Research question: What factors affect the success in implementing consumption tax in HK? 1. My focus would be on tax design for Gov't to implement sales tax smoothly. 2. There is much concern e.g. regressive, affect domestic consumption, affect tourism etc. All of which will be discuss in my literature review part. 3. I will focus on one area: affect tourism for my research proposal. 4. That is: Dependent variable: No. of visiting in HK of foreigner Independent variable of tax design: 1. exempt the tax, 2. refund the tax 3. zero tax rate 5.As per Dr. O'Connor's comment, I will discuss the affected parties, e.g. retailer (less consumption due to tax on tourists), hotel etc. 6. try to find some data from other countries regarding Tourism and Sales Tax,

2001(1549)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Question: You rephrase my research question - What factors impact on set up and implement a budget control system in Hong Kong Medium-sized manufacturing companies? I have same problem with another student. I do not know how to collect the trend data to support my motivation. I try to get some indices from Hong Kong Government & access web-site from SME. It seems I can not get comfortable to support my motivation. Moreover, is there little research which related to set up budget control?

Answer: MAIAs, LOGIC, LOGIC, LOGIC is critical to your proposal. See Shirley and Kelvin for further details.

2001(1552)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Question: my revised research question is: What factors for HK SMEs to select and choose NON-BIG 5? I have expressed my concern of the difficulty of finding the relevant data to support the motivation, e.g. percentage of HK SMEs to choose Big 5 and non-Big 5.

2001(1469)

Subject: My final research question

Question: I finalize my research proposal question that "What are the purposes of Activity Based Costing for performance measurement in Hotel Industry? –A Case Study" A classmate already ask me that "Heterogeneous Products and activities" is most important. Now you mention again, I will consider what the impact of the sentence is.

Answer: If two people mention the same thing, then you must act on including it in your proposal. Read the Cooper article.

2001(1538)

Subject: Need Help on final proposal

Question: My research question: 1. My research question is: What factors enhance the usefulness of budgeting as a diagnostic tool for senior mgt in measuring function units' performance? Is it ok with this question setting as I can't hear very well from the voice file? 2. You mentioned that I can refer to journal articles published by Margaret & Peter Brownell in Acts organisation and Society. However, there are lots of volume and issues there. Could you specific which issue I should refer to regarding: Budget as a diagnostic tool? By taking a glance on some of the issues, I don't seem to find a suitable one. 3. I'm still not sure about what kind of theory that should apply to my proposal. Is it some facts that exist in current budgetary process in my organisation? Or some areas that haven't been explored that drives out the research question and Hypothesis? 4. I have included two Hypothesis in my last rev proposed framework. Any amendment I need to make on those Hypothesis or I can still use them for my final proposal? 5. Regarding the independent variable, if I'm talking about the usefulness of budget, should it link to good/bad performance of functional units rather than focusing on the satisfaction of mgr with the budget control system?

2001(1551)

Subject: Research Proposal: e-business

Question: I have refined my research question to " What are the factors which cause small enterprises to use Internet in their business" because I noted from the literatures that most of small businesses in Hong Kong and USA are in the initial stage of e-business only i.e. using Internet and also most of the firms in Hong Kong are small enterprises. I have some doubt on the trend data. If I have already found two set of statistics on adoption of e-business in 1999 and 2001. These data have already showed the trend in the adoption of e-business, does it represent the trend data? Where can I find more data in this area?

Answer: In response to your final question. Please add comments on the last proposal

2002(280)

Subject: Research Question

Question: Thanks for your comment on my research question "What affect investors' reliance on the disclosure of PRC enterprises". I have revised my research question as "What motivate the PRC enterprises to enhance the credibility of finance statement to foreign investors". Shall I specify the stakeholder "foreign investors" in the question or I can delete it from my question?

Answer: Your question can be simpler. Try again to make it less complex.

Response A: SUPRISING!! Your research question is quite similar to mine. What areas u want to focus?

Question: I want to join the group of financial management but I am not sure whether it relate to my research question or not. I want to focus on the factors that lead to changes in the PRC enterprises such as the need to raise international fund, the change in accounting/auditing professional requirement, the listing requirement and may be the intention of the Central Government. It seems too broad and may be I should focus on one or two field only. What about yours? Now I have to reconsider my Revised Question and try to make it less complex as suggested by Professor Neale. Can you give me some advice?

Response A: I joined FA group already. i also think your focus is too board & it is hard to define which group u should join :- FM - raise int'l fund -FA - accounting professional requirement, listing requirement -AU - auditing requirement?? - intention of Central Gov't it seems it is ok (and required) to specify the stakeholder - FI. Neale also advise me to define in terms of a particular stakeholder - Chinese Investors or FI. I'll focus on FI. I'll try to revise my research question as "What factors may enhance FI's reliance on financial statements in China?" my focuses will mainly on the preparation of f/s and corporate governance. I also try to discuss something about auditing standard before but it seems out of the scope. Can my revised research question give u some idea? I'm not sure whether it is a proper research question, may Neale give me some advice?

Answer: First ask yourself who the key stakeholder is that you most are interested in helping. Go from there.

Question: I have rewrote my research question again as "Do PRC enterprises listed in HK adopt IAS on the preparation of financial statement?" I think this question is simpler and I can focus on the adoption of IAS by PRC enterprises listed in HK.

Answer: You question is too simple - it is a factual question - you go to the stock exchange and can answer the question without developing expectations with guidance from theory. I suggest a question that allows you to test some expectation as guided by theory. Eg what are the characteristics of companies that adopt one type of standard over another? You are on the right track - keep going and don't give up.

2002(293)

Subject: Research Question

Question: I want to change my research topic and question as "What factors motivate the adoption of Balanced Scorecard Approach in manufacturing organization". Please comment.

Answer: Yes your question is fine - but you need to make clear what you mean by balanced scorecard. In the Asia context you will need to focus on an attribute or attributes of the balanced scorecard - as these attributes may not yet be clearly identified as the balanced scorecard. So remove the word balanced scorecard and replace it with an attribute (s).

Question: Can I replace "balanced scorecard" by "non-financial measures" in my research question, then it to be re-written as "What factors motivate the adoption of non-financial measures in manufacturing organization". Please advise.

Answer: Yes - that is a great move.

2002(298)

Subject: Research Question posted

Question: My question is: "What practical difficulties may the multinational corporations face when they adopt transfer pricing policy and how could they resolve?" Could you please comment whether it is a simple and feasible type question? Please advise if I need to re-write it.

Answer: Your question is very straightforward - one does not need to do a proposal on it - instead one can go to the library and find out the answer by reading the latest professional journal on doing business in China. Try and build some logic around your question - e.g. What factors explain the variance in transfer pricing practices of MNCs with subsidiaries in China? This requires you to outline all of the different transfer pricing factors and then to think about how difference structural characteristics of the MNCs may be related to each of the transfer pricing practices you believe to be most common. Keep going you are on the right track. Don't give up.

Question: Thank for your valuable comment but in fact I want to focus my research proposal more internationally. So I have revised my research question as follows: "What factors are driving the tax authorities to perform intensive investigation over MNCs' transfer pricing transactions?" Could you please provide me some advice on this?

Answer: My suggested question is better. If you want to do something different - like the one you suggested - then I need to see the independent variable, the dependent variable and you need to identify the key stakeholder first.

2002(295)

Subject: Change of Research Question

Question: I would like to change my research question to "What factors are driving the companies to set up the internal audit committee?" Please kindly advise whether this is a simple research question.

Response A: May I have some suggestions? I think you have to define the stakeholders of interest, e.g. management, investors...etc. you may also need to limit your scope to HK listed companies, foreign companies...etc. otherwise, your work will be quite hard as different companies may have different characteristics, don't you think so?

Question: Thanks for your comment. I consider my research question should be rewritten as "What factors are driving the HK Listed companies to set up the internal audit committee?"

Response B: Enclosed with the extract from the code of the best practice issued by the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. I think it is useful for you. 14. This board should establish an audit committee with written terms of reference which deal clearly with its authority and duties. Amongst the committee's principal duties should be the review and supervision of the issuer's financial reporting process and internal controls. For further guidance on establishing an audit committee listed issuers may refer to "A Guide for the Formation of an Audit Committee" published by the Hong Kong Society of Accountants in December 1997. Listed issuers may adopt the terms of reference set out in that guide, except that the committee may have a minimum of

two members, or they may adopt any other comparable terms of reference for the implementation of audit committees. The committee should be appointed from amongst the non- executive directors and a majority of the non-executive directors should be independent.

Answer: Your revised question is excellent.

Question: After searched and read some articles, I decided to change my research question to "What factors affect the effectiveness of the audit committee of HK listed companies?"

Response A: I personally feel your revised question is very good. Since a lot of HK listed companies are controlled by a single substantial shareholder / family members / related person. The effectiveness of audit committee function has been questioned by many other stakeholders. Your research study will benefit a lot of those stakeholders (but you have to define who your targeted stakeholders are).

2002(319)

Subject: Comment on revised research question

Question: Would u give me your valuable comment on my revised research question? "What factors affect Foreign Investors' reliance on financial statements of PRC enterprises?" I'm interested in finding a way which PRC enterprises may increase the credibility of its f/s for a particular users group - FIs.

Answer: This is a good improvement to your question. I would also suggest that your framework include a range of other sources of information that foreign investors seek, and use this to help compare these sources with the source of financial statements. This is one approach.

2002(324)

Subject: Re: Comment on my Research Question

Question: Would you kindly give me some valuable comment on my research question:" What factors affect the accounting treatment for Goodwill?" Do I need to rewrite it?

Answer: Your research question is fine.

2002(328)

Subject: Re: Comment on my Research Question

Question: Please comment on my revised research question as follows: "What factors affect the liquidity analysis of listed companies in Hong Kong?" Should this topic classified as financial accounting or managerial accounting? Thank you for your assistance!

Response A: I think it can be both cases. It all depends on what u are focusing. If u focus on management's concern about the liquidity of their company (e.g. future planning, fund management...etc), it should be classified as MA. If u focus on potential investors / shareholders / creditors' concern about the liquidity (going concern), it should be classified as FA. What other classmates think?

Question: I am trying to investigate what investors or creditor concern about the liquidity of listed companies. After reviewed the related journals, cash flow statement with reference to financial statements and disclosure can identify the liquidity problem of company. It depends on whether a company presents a creativity accounting in the financial statements. I also find difficult to identify the theory in my research topic. Should we show an existing theory such as agency theory in our research topic or develop a new theory through our study? Can anyone help me?

Response A: I think it is very good if we may understand the theory exists in research area. It is very hard to develop new theory thru our study (even impossible for myself as a research beginner). may be we can do so later, who knows! May Neale give us some advice?

Response B: According to the research question, I think that it trend to focus on investors, shareholders or creditor's point of view. Because management as an insider of a company has thorough information to understand and analysis it's liquidity level.

Follow-up Question/Response: Thank you for your reply. I think I am interested in focusing on the benefit of investor and creditor. That is classified as financial accounting.

Answer: You are on the right track. I think Response A has given you same great advice. He is right - who are you interested in helping with your research (stakeholder). If you focus on investors or creditors, then I suggest that you have a question like: Do creditors and investors evaluate the liquidity of a listed company differently? This is a great question to begin with. Theory - please see my previous emails about theory. The theory must capture the main difference between investors and creditors - a) their expertise (agency theory perhaps b) their stake in the company (agency theory perhaps)

Follow-up Question/Response: With your guidance, I identify the following for your suggested research question: Stakeholders: creditors and investors Dependent variable: creditors and investors evaluate the listed co's liquidity differently Independent variable: creditors concern net current asset and investors concern profit of the company. Should I think at the right track?

2002(378)

Subject: Re: Proposal

My research question is "What are the factors influencing the success of Value for Money (VFM) audit in the public sector of HK?" For the meaning of success, I interpret it as (i) the financial savings arising from the acceptance of the suggested improvements made by the VFM audit reports; or (ii) the proportion of recommendations in VFM audit accepted by the audited bodies The stakeholders involved are VFM auditors, Project managers of the public sector, the Accounting professions, the public, the media etc. Does this research question work? If not, what can be made to improve it?

2002(356)

Subject: Change of research question-trying to be more focus

Question: Revised question: What factors attract high technology company invest in China? Stakeholders: China Government Shareholders of MNCs Dependent Variable: Investment in China high technology sector Independent Variables: Government Regulation (open door policy), China Taxation Policy (tax holiday), Market Trend (globalization) Original question: Is FDI in developing countries generates more economic growth?

Response A: Per discussion with Dr. Neale tonight, I think that your research is a study for some factors affect the management of high technology companies to make decision on invest into China, or affect their forms of contracting for the investment, e.g. joint venture or wholly- owned.

2002(377)

Subject: Re: Task 6b

I've revised my research question to "What factors affect the accounting for business combinations?", I would be grateful if you could kindly give me a better suggestion of my research question.

2002(371)

Subject: Revised research question

Question: The original question is: Pooling vs. Purchase: Do the methods of accounting for business combinations determine the subsequent corporate earnings and stock prices? The revised question is: What are the factors driving firms Preferring pooling in acquisitions in U.S.?

2002(375)

Subject: Re: Financial Accounting Research Group

Question: I've changed my research question to "What factors affect the accounting for business combinations? (it previously was What factors affect the accounting treatment for Goodwill?)", but I am not sure whether I am on the right track. Anyway, my research question is very similar to yours, shall we discuss the work together?!

Response A: It seems that we are standing on the same line. I have once considered drafting my research question similar to yours but I am worried that the scope of area may be too broad. I concentrate in the area of firms' concerns on adopting either pooling or purchase method in acquisitions (subject to Dr. Neale's comments).

2002(384)

Subject: Research question

Question: I have revised my research question to: "What factors influence the multinational transfer pricing?"

Answer: Great question. But offer another question that is more specific. For example, for MNCs expanding into emerging markets. Also be more specific with the model and the stakeholder.

2002(392)

Subject: My research question

Question: My original research question is: What factors are adopting management accounting in an organization? Do you think this topic is too broad? If I change to one area in management accounting, such as: What factors are adopting Activity-Based Costing in an organization? What factors are adopting Balance Scorecard in an organization? Is it better?

Answer: Your questions are on the right track. The second one is the best one out of the three.

2002(487)

Subject: Revised Research Question

My revised research question for your comments: "What are factors to affect transparency of corporate disclosures?" I would focus on the non-financial data and corporate governance issue. The stakeholders are investors, especially for minority shareholders. Theory: Agency theory

2002(495)

Subject: Re: Revised Research Question

Question: After considering your comments about my research question, I decide to revise it as: "What factors affect foreign investors in making decision for investment in HK Listed companies?" Stakeholder: Management Independent variable: Factors, like company size, financial performance, corporate governance ... etc. Dependent variable: Decision of foreign investors Theory: Agency Theory Appreciate if you could comment on my question.

Question: I think my research question should be belongs to Management accounting. About my research question content, do you think it is suitable for research or need to improve? Thank you for both of you and welcome for any further comment.

Answer: You mean management of the HK listed companies? Then your question is fine.

Answer: Your reasoning below seem possible. But generally, management are assumed to act in the interests of the shareholder - so from the management accounting point of view - this is not a major management accounting issue - it becomes a financial reporting issues - For example, the hiring of management consultants has been put forward as a signal by management to the shareholder that they are interested in improving the efficiency of the firm, or they use the consultants to hide their opportunism.

2002(468)

Subject: Re: Financial Accounting Research Group

My research question is "Do creditors and investors evaluate the liquidity in listed company differently?" This question is quite different from those consider the IAS and disclosure in FA. My question is concern about the view of creditors and investors to evaluate company's performance. May be their topic can let me think about how creditor and investor evaluate company's performance different! Right?

Answer: Be careful with your question. I think your question makes you focus on the information required for different decisions: a) Shareholders invest in a company on the basis of the level and/growth of free cash flow. b) Creditors deal with a company on the basis of its ability to repay. This will likely include some security for the loan given - in the case of a bank. Keep going.

2002(546)

Subject: Re: Fty Visit - Management Accounting Group

Question: I'm still struggling on my research question. Don't know whether to use Dr. Neale's suggestion or not. Maybe you can give me some comments on which research questions is better (also very welcome other classmates' opinion) My research question: "What factors are driving the tax authorities to perform intensive investigation over MNCs' transfer pricing transactions?" Neale's suggestion: "What factors explain the variance in transfer pricing practices of MNCs with subsidiaries in China?"

Response A: From my opinion, Dr Neale's question seems to be an exploratory one. But your question seems to be a refined one. Maybe you should write down your independent & dependent variables; then, you will have a clearer picture.

Question: Could you please elaborate further on what's meant by Refined? Do you mean that my question covers more company-specific view points than Dr Neale's suggestion?

Response A: You can refer our manual P33. I just remember Dr Neale said if we choose an exploratory question. It would be easier to do the research. He wouldn't fail us if we choose a refined question but we have to do more work. If the independent variables are Accounting Variables like Auditing, Tax and the dependent variables are Outcome Variables like individual, organization or market performance, then the question is refine. If the independent variables are Exogenous Variables, like Environment, Institutional, Market and the dependent variables are Accounting Variables like Auditing, Tax, etc., then the question is exploratory. So, maybe you should write down your independent and dependent variables first.

Response B: An exploratory type questions is easier than refined type. it is better u list out what is the ind. var & dep. var in your question and what is the IV & DV in Neale's suggestion. If u may list the var. out, u may identify what source of information u need to obtain for your research. then see what kind of information u are more interested in. I'm not going to influence your decision but if u follow the step suggested by Response A, u will have a clear picture. Try it first and ask the remaining uncertainty.

Follow-up Question/Response: Thanks very much indeed for your valuable comments. After last night's class, I got much more understanding on the choice of my research question. My question would be something like never-ending story, this make my work very difficult. I also noticed that an exploratory type research question is easier to work on than a refined type. So here to make myself more comfortable, I'd like to change my research question to what Dr Neale suggested, i.e. "What factors explain the variance in transfer pricing practices of MNCs with subsidiaries in China?" Key stakeholder = Management of MNCs who have subsidiaries in PRC. Later I will define the D.V. and I.V. respectively and continue to work on this question.

2003(294)

Subject: seek advice on revised proposal question

Question: When I last consulted you, you have agreed on my proposed topic "Company failure: audit failure or lack of corporate governance?" After further deliberation, I now intend to change it to "What are the barriers to good practice in corporate governance?" From Enron, WorldCom and the dotcom illusion, it is evident that free access to reliable and complete data is vital in the business world nowadays. Good corporate governance is more important than ever, especially to the shareholders and investors. However, we still see companies collapse because of poor corporate governance e.g. 周正毅 (Zhou Zheng Yi). I find it interesting to examine the factors affecting a company's corporate governance and to identify the obstacles to good practice in this respect. The barriers are the independent variables and the good practice in corporate governance is the dependent variable. Grateful if you would let me you're your comments on my revised topic.

2003(312)

Subject: Re: seek advice on revised proposal question

Question: I would like to revise my question to "What are the barriers to good practice in corporate governance?" Please kindly give me some advice.

Answer: I need to see what you dependent variable is first - it cannot be corporate governance - that is too too broad. Be very specific. Then have a look at my article I just published in AOS - where I talk about barriers as an antecedent - this is a difficult approach to take since there is an assumption about the negative impact of the IV and may not capture (control for) the positive factors that impact on corporate governance. This is my first thinking. Please get back with a focused dependent variable -and which institutional context are you taking about.

2003(299)

Subject: Re: Research Method

Question: I hope to seek some advices on my research topic on "performance appraisal". Why it becomes my interested topic is because it is part of my life as working in human resources department. However, there is no implementation of performance appraisal in my company. Therefore, I would like to write a proposal that focus on the usefulness on performance appraisal in achieving both organizational and personal goals in SME (Small to Medium size Enterprise). Can I construct the research question like this: "Does the implementation of performance appraisal contribute to the success in achieving both organization and personal goals in SME?"

Answer: You need to take one step back - you describe a refined proposal and I ask that everyone do an exploratory proposal. This is partly why you are having trouble. Please reassess the framework in the manual and repost your refined thoughts.

Question: I'm still struggling whether to focus on "Performance Management System" or just on the "Performance appraisal". Can you give me some comments on these two?

Answer: I think that performance management system is a broader concept and includes performance appraisal (see my paper that I posted on political control in Chinese SOEs). You should work on the subset of performance management like performance appraisal if that suits your interest. But do have a look at my paper - in it I talk about the 3 legged stool one of the legs is performance appraisal. The paper is an exciting paper to read!

2003(334)

Subject: Question about research question

Question: If my research topic is the "The factors affect the quality of listed company in Hong Kong". I want to know whether the topic is too wide or not.

Answer: This can be wide because you use a very wide and subjective term - quality. Instead use a term that means what it says.

Question: I want to know whether I can perform my research from several angles or not.

Answer: No, stick to the best angle that interests you

Question: It is because I want to do this research topic from the following two directions: 1. The disclosure requirements (i.e. the SSAP theories, listing rules and etc); 2. The Corporate governance (i.e. professional journal, case studies and etc). Could you mind to give me advice?

Answer: Let me know which angle interests you and use terms that are self defining (quality and corporate governance to too general.)

2003(335)

Subject: Research proposal work - seeking advices

Question: My research interest is about knowledge management. After finished the task 4a about searching the professional and academic journal articles, I found 4 from professional and 5 from academic. In these articles, I realized that the stakeholders were interest in how KM can be a source of competitive advantages and what factors driving the successful implementation of KM (task 5b). Therefore, I focus my work on this area and set my topic as follows: Topic: A comparison studies on the implementation of knowledge management system in electronic companies: Case studies on China Context. (Task 5a)

Answer: Rewrite according to the simple qualities of a research question - we discussed in class and as set out in the manual - the topic is okay but the question needs to be simple and specific.

Question: The following is also the variable, theory and method (task 6a&b) Dependent variable: successful implementation of KM system.

Answer: Successful is too general and subjective - use a term that is clear and precise (e.g. higher or lower use)

Question: Independent variable: Strategy, commitment, organization structure, organization culture, technology.

Theory: Economic theory, resource-based strategy theory, Porter, knowledge. Method: case study with structure interview with a sample of two or three electronic company with factory in China.

Answer: Be clear as to which of these variables are organization level and which are subunit or individual level (e.g. commitment) and do not mix the two.

Question: Whether it seen possible for me to proceed the research proposal?

Answer: Of course you can study this area - but first simplify as per my comments above.

2003(349)

Subject: Re: Research proposal work - seeking advices

Question: I would like to revised the Topic, IV and DV as follows as per your comment: Topic: Establishing knowledge management system for sustaining competitive advantage in electronic industry on china context. Independent variable: sustainable competitive advantage (Is it too wide). Dependent variable: Corporate vision and strategy, corporate culture, organization structure, information and communication technology (technology infrastructure), knowledge policy.

Answer: This is a bit wide. However I perceive that you have chosen these as they directly relate to your work. Then for now work on an exploratory topic - factors that facilitate or inhibit the development of good knowledge management - will be fine. I suggest that you carefully read the paper that I published in AOS. I mean carefully read it in addition to the other one I gave you. This will take time but it will be worthwhile.

2003(463)

Subject: Re: Seek advice on research proposal

Question: I still have no idea how to shorten the question. My Research Question is "What factors the Top Management of the MNC will consider before they determine to decentralize authority to the lower level managers who are recruited in PRC"

Response A: Can the question be: "What factors affect the localization of MNC in PRC?" Hopefully this will not change the original meanings much.

Question: Though I think they are different issues, you really trigger me to think more about my topic with different angles. Now I try to define them as follows: Decentralization of authority is a kind of management control strategy describing the delegation of the decision power from top to middle or operating level of management within an organisation. Localization is a business strategy when an organisation is expanding. It is more general and broad as it can be localization of product and services which means customization of products and services for a particular market. But I think what you mentioned should be localization of personnel which may be closer to my topic but not my original idea since Decentralization of authority deems to be more specific. But I think that the IV for both may be quite similar such as culture, organisation size etc. If I have got any mistake in defining the above, please let me know.

Response A: You are right. Localization of personnel is not = decentralization of authority. Your question already brings out this problem. MNC already recruits local managers (localization already done) but hesitate to delegate authority to them. So may be "What factors affect the localization of middle level decision making process of MNC in PRC?" seems to be more appropriate but not 100% fit.

Answer: You must think and decide the level of analysis. Is it the individual level whereby the education and socialization of the local impedes delegation, or organization level, whereby there is not enough organization support (to build up capability in the locals) or monitoring (to make sure that they do the right thing) to support higher delegation. This needs to be made very clear.

Response B: I think yr topic is something like the extent of decision right delegated to your staff in PRC. Maybe you have to consider the decision right given "recruitment, project investment, vendors sourcing, design of incentives scheme etc..." That is, what factors affect the extent of d.right delegated to the staff in PRC.. Btw, thanks for yr advice in theory.

Answer: Have a look at Nagar's article in TAR (2001). It is a very neat article about what delegation is and what factors impact on it. Also see the Luft and Shields article (AOS, 2003) in which the cause maps of over 200 articles are summarised. Delegation or decentralization (see what Luft and Shields call it) will be in the first four appendices.

Response C: My suggestion: "Factors that drive the decentralization decision of the MNC in China context."

Response D: I come up with an idea, how about "What factors affect the use of decentralization in PRC by the top management of MNC?". Then "the use of decentralization in PRC" becomes an dependent variable. The independent variables can be political, cultural, liberation force, power distance, structure, size....etc.

2003(434)

Subject: Request advice on research proposal

Question: My revised research question is "Will the elimination of pooling accounting alternative have impacts on merger and acquisition activities? Is it preferable?"

Answer: Your revision reads correct.

Question: After re-think the independent variables, I reset my research question as "What are the factors that affect the mergers & acquisitions activities?" My hypothesis tests can expand on the increase of market share, solidation of business and bargain purchase price opportunity as the independent variables. They will be more interesting to explain whether the volume of M&A activities are effected?

Answer: Probably need to define that nature of M&A - thus your question is what factors affect the number, size, quality, or a particular type of M&A.

2003(437)

Subject: seek advice on revised research proposal

Question 1: I have revised my research question to "What factors affect the role of audit committee of a listed company in Hong Kong?" As you advised me last Thursday, I have to define the role of audit committee. Then, I read some articles regarding the role of audit committee and summarize it as follows: 1 handle auditor activity 2 address any risk 3 review financial reporting. Dependent variable: Role of audit committee. Independent variable: No. of member, expertise, incentive. Theory: Agency theory, transaction cost theory. Stakeholder interest: Shareholder. Grateful if you would let me have your comments on my revised research question.

Question 2: I have the same question on my proposal - is the dependent variable should be easier to measure? After that, I check with the manual and on P.80 it states "how the variables be measured?" – Appropriateness – Manageability – Validity – Reliability I think that the manual point out the variable can be measured by the above aspects and not just mere in my idea - only quantitative. Am I correct?

Response A: I think the most difficult part of Question1 is to explain the relationship between independent variable: e.g. No. of member vs. dependent variable: e.g. handle auditor activity. Say: Increase in No. of member of audit committee ==> better to handle auditor activity. Question: how to measure better? If we want to study the relationship between the pre-set variables, I think quantitative measurement is required. If our study to find out the factors, then the factors are unknown to us until after the study ==> quantitative measurement is not important. Come to my mind is that you (re: Question 1) may need to limit the scope the role of audit committee, e.g. (may be I am wrong) DV: to prevent fraud. IV: number of audit committee. Relationship expected to find out: If number of audit committee increase, less fraud in the company. Quantitative measurement: Compare the audit committee of the co with fraud vs. audit committee of other companies.

Follow-up Question/Response: As I have seen some professional articles, some of the dependent variable is qualitative, not quantitative. So I have some confusion about the dependent variable of my research question. Can I still use the role of audit committee as dependent variable or change it to "prevent fraud" as suggested by Response A?

Response A: Qualitative variables can be measured. So we may be better use the term "measurable". Back to your Dependent variable, I think that it can be measured in following way by referring to the definition of the role: 1) handle auditor activity (measured by reduction of audit fee) 2) address any risk (measured by prevention of fraud) 3) review financial reporting (measured by satisfaction of the financial statement users) By relate the independent variables to DV, we have H1: increase number of member => reduction of audit fee H2 : increase number of

member => less fraud H3 : increase number of member => more satisfaction from users H4 : more expertise => reduction of audit fee H5... H6 ... H7..... What I suggest is to limit the scope of the DV (only to prevention of fraud) so as to reduce the analysis (because I'm quite lazy). Conclusion: In my opinion, your (re: Question 1) research question is OK.

Response B: From my understanding, both qualitative and quantitative variable can be used, but the qualitative variable may be too difficult to measure. If the research still insists to use the qualitative variable, I think it is better to have a specific definition about the variable. The narrower of the definition of the variable, the easier of the researcher to measure it. The best dependent variable is the one that is sensitive to changes in the different levels of the independent variable. Otherwise, even if the treatment had an effect, you would never know it! (Textbook Page 26)

Answer: Your (re: Question 1) question can be improved - define role in term of what is the most important role that is expected by the shareholders (your stakeholder right). Find this from the professional journal articles.

Answer: You (re: Question 2) are correct. But do not worry too much about the measurement at this stage. Getting the conceptual model correct in terms of well motivated and good logic and clear question is most important.

Answer: Response A is correct. You should define the role more clearly, and then when you ask people in a survey or interview it is easier for them to answer.

Answer: Response A, Best to refer to the literature to see in what way the role of auditor has been conceived and measured. Use some search terms in google and see what comes up.

Response C: In my opinion, if the variables cannot be measured, i.e., qualitative, you can still use it as you have to define the term first. For example, define the term "reliability". Am I right?

Response D: I think the those qualitative variables can be measured with Likert scale in Attitude tests as shown in p. 134 - 137 on Exploring Research book. I hope it is useful to you.

Questioner2: After reading it, I find those methods are used to measure personal behaviour / opinion / feeling. It is useful as I can see some new knowledge / approach.

Answer: Your (re: Question 1) advice is correct. Measurement is another issue. Get that conceptual model right first.

2003(476)

Subject: Seek advice on my revised research proposal

Question: I revise my research proposal to "The factors affect the quality of disclosure in Hong Kong listed companies". I want to know this topic is possible or not.

Answer: This revision appears to be reasonable. Be sure to have support from professional journal articles.

2003(658)

Subject: Advice on my research proposal

Question: I want to know the problem in my research question title and my motivation. My proposed research title is: "The factors affect the quality of disclosure in Hong Kong listed companies". I want to know how to improve and make it clearer. Please give me comment/advice.

Response A: It looks the problem is in the word "quality". If I understand your question correctly, it is more appropriate to change the research question to "What are the factors affecting the level of accounting disclosures by companies listed in Hong Kong?" The auditors in Hong Kong require their clients to disclose in accordance with the accounting standard anyway. It is the level of disclosures leading to the problem because the disclosures could be full or just the bear-minimum in numbers, explanations and background information. As a good corporate citizen, full disclosure of all relevant details means good quality. Partial or bear-minimum disclosures may be

classified as less quality and will provide misleading financial information to the stakeholders in making their decisions. The revised question is my suggestion only.

Response B: Based on the advice given by my previous supervisor, the scope of the research study should be more clearly and concise. I think your questions are quite more general and the scope of this study is very larger. There are a lot of financial statements users, e.g. shareholders, money-lenders, government, etc. As the financial statements are intentionally principally presented to the shareholders of the companies, I would make the following: "The disclosure factors affecting the shareholders in assessing the financial performance and position of the companies" Please kindly advise me if I wrongly understand your ideas.

Answer: It is good practice to set out what comments have been made on your proposal in the past and what changes you have made to these - otherwise you are asking to the class to try and recall what advice they gave you last time. Not knowing the exact detail of what I have told you in the past - I suggest that you should read as many disclosure papers as possible so that you can learn the different dimensions of disclosure (e.g. the social dimension that Response A is working on). Don't hesitate to communicate more with those who are working on similar projects - this save you both time. You are on the right track.

2003(627)

Subject: Pls advise

Question: I have revised my question to : " Can IAS 37 prohibits companies to use 'provision' to window dress the accounts ? " stakeholders - investors (misleading by the fin. data) DV - level of reversal on provision in subsequent yrs, IV - nature of obligation, measurement basis, future events, probabilities of an outflow of resources. Can you give me some advice? I don't know whether I can go on or not, thanks.

Response A: In my opinion, your title can revise as "The effect of IAS 37 on prohibit the companies to use 'provision' to window dress the accounts?" Do you think feasible or not. Thank for your attention.

Answer: The design of your study is like an event study - researchers are interested in whether a particular event has an influence on behaviour - does a new regulation change the behaviour towards the intention of the policy that has been adopted? I like the fact that you have other IVs that will differentiate firms that change more and those that change less after the adoption of the new standard. You probably have to use size (even as a control variable) in addition to the other variables you have identified. Good luck you are on the right track.

2003(502)

Subject: Re: Members of Dr. Gopal - for Dr. Poole's comment

Question: I have completed and submitted my report and my topic has been changed as "should the self-regulation system in the accounting profession in Hong Kong be abolished?" What about you? Do you have any comment or new idea about this?

Response: In the class, I remembered Neale's comment that it would not be a very good idea to use the word "should", too normative for a research and you mean adding outside members to the investigation committee or setting up a new public body to govern us?

2003(697)

Subject: research question and hypothesis

Question: It is taught in the class that research question and hypothesis, though related, are different. However, is it common that a researcher names hypothesis as research question and test it?

Answer: You are right - some research can consolidate both the research question and hypotheses. But I have never done this in the articles that I have published and I see that more research keeps them separate for the following reason - normally the purpose of the research question is to tell the reader the prime motivation for doing the research, while the hypotheses (and there can be more than one of them) set out the very specific expectations of relationships between the variables - thus the hypotheses are the half-way point between the very general question and the very specific data analysis.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

2000(94)

Subject: Questions about literature review

Question: 1. In last lecture, you said some journals are first-tier while some are second-tier. Then, how to define them? Is the quality of the articles in first-tier better than that in second-tier? Can you give us some examples of first-tier accounting journals and second-tier accounting journals?

Answer: I will send copies of lists of journals as ranked by a) Department of Accountancy. First tier is better than second tier journals (see grade A and grade B journals in the attached Accounting list.

Question: 2. By searching the Pro-Quest, the result is usually articles related to US. But as our program is International Accounting, I would like to know how to obtain some research articles related to Australia or Europe or Hong Kong.

Answer: Best to go to local journals for a greater supply of relatively lower quality work that has been done (Asia Pacific Journal of Accounting, Asia Pacific Journal of Management, Hong Kong Journal of business Management). Higher quality work is normally sent to USA or European journals to maximise the payback for the academic.

Question: Also, I know many researchers in local universities conduct accounting researches related to Hong Kong and discuss their results in form of research seminars. How can I know what they have done? Are there any databases or directories about their work? How can I obtain a copy of their articles?

Answer: Go to their individual website and look up their publication or working paper list. Also most departments in the local universities have a list of working papers put together by their faculty.

Question: 3. When I reviewed the reference section of an article, I found that one of the reference article was not from a journal and the source was "Working Paper". What is "Working Paper"? Is it a draft or preliminary version or small research?

Answer: This is correct!

2001(1221)

Date: Sat Nov 17, 2001 6:06 pm

Subject: E-commerce facts and trends

Response: I have found a book showing the trend of e-commerce in Hong Kong including SME. The book mentioned that a survey was conducted every quarter jointly by Hong Kong Productivity Council and IBM on the adoption of e-commerce in Hong Kong SME. I think you may access to the website of Hong Kong Productivity Council to search the required information.

Response: access to the Digitalhongkong.com to find information on e-business.

2001(1271)

Subject: Re: Copy for corporate governance

Question: In Prof Tsui's OCED article, it refer to another article about CEO dominance and voluntary corporate disclosure strategies of HK co. Unfortunately, I don't know to source where to find the article. Do you have some idea?

2001(1269)

Subject: Some reference to you ^^

Useful book for assignment. "Information, Corporate Governance, and Institutional Diversity" HB99.5.A6 2000

2001(1366)

Subject: Useful source related to corporate governance in HK - AC5711

Following were some useful information related to statute requirements of corporate governance in HK.

www.hksa.org.hk/publications

2001(1463)

Subject: Research Proposal

Question: I remember that once you said organizational commitment and socialization is more or less equivalent meaning. However for the literature review, it seems the articles refer to org. commitment different from socialization. Please explain this. Also, should I focus more on socialization or org. commitment? For the trend and data of staff turnover rate of big-5 and small firm, can I use my personal impression if actual data not available?

2001(1505)

Subject: Latest issue of tax journal

Useful article: "Business Attitudes arden against New Taxes" by Ian K Perkin, Chief Economist of The HK General Chamber of Commerce.

2001(1710)

Subject: Re:

Please read: 1. Ch. 1-3 Strategy and management accounting 2. Davila - AOS 2000. 3. Balanced scorecard article. The aim is to get a theoretical feel for management accounting - why it exists.

2002(223)

Subject: Re: Questions about research methods

Question: I still have many problems in doing a Literature Review for following, (1) how should I define the term "Type of study" - is it talking about the area of study of accounting, such as financial accounting, cost accounting, & so on? If it is, this column will be the same for all articles listed. Since only a topic of interest is related. (2) Should I identify the time & place of survey done? Does the forth column 'Sample' relate to this information? (3) related to one of the articles I tried to complete a literature review, can I conclude the result as "The basic

problem with goodwill remains; & there is still no way for the analyst to know for any given company what the mix of those item is...'

2002(760)

Subject: Questions on MA article

Question: Hi Dr Neale, After reading your MA article "Management Controls in US-Sino Joint Ventures", I have the following questions on my mind. In page 6, the 6th row of the second paragraph, "Killing, Lecraw and Yan find a positive correlation between ownership and control, although Mjoen and Tallman (1997) do not." Why you have to point out something unfavourable?

Answer: Great question - you need to do this to show the reader that more research is needed to understand what is going on in the organizations you are researching.

Question: In page 18, the 1st paragraph, "We mailed a pilot sample of 20 questionnaires" Is this common practice to send out pilot samples? When we should use pilot sample?

Answer: Yes this is good practice but unfortunately not common practice. You do not have to do this for your proposal.

Question: In page 23 & 24, the money incentive for the US partners and Chinese partners are USD8 and USD4 respectively. Why you make such a bias?

Answer: This reflects the different living standards of the two types of respondents. What is important is that you have the same influence on their motivation to complete the survey

Question: From your study, the response rates are US partners 49% and China partners 32%. It seems that the higher the money incentive, the higher the response rate. Should both partners enjoy the same money incentive?

Answer: This is a possible linkage - but very difficult to prove that this was the reason.

Question: This survey has been carried out five years ago, refer page23. Will this affect the quality of this research paper if published?

Answer: Often this will not affect the quality of the research as long as the topic is still current and the research builds on the current literature.

Question: In page 23, "we removed all references to the foreign source of project. The cover letters and return envelopes indicated that this was a China project undertaken by a management professor at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics." Is that a lie??

Answer: This is a white lie! But accepted practice - same as when I placed different patterns of stamps on the return envelopes when I collected data in Singapore and SK.

Question: In page 31, the last row of the 1st paragraph, "Whilst this reduces the likelihood of sample bias, the findings remain limited to the samples that were studied." I do not really understand. Do you mean that the results of this study cannot be generalisable to the population?

Answer: Yes that is what I mean.

2002(651)

Subject: Article for MA group

I have read the article and would like to share my findings: Research Question: What is the effects of ownership structure, relative partner knowledge and asset-specific contributions on the adoption of management controls in US-Sino joint ventures? -Theory Applied: Integrates equity, Resource dependency, Transaction cost. Dependent Variable: Broad set of management control mechanisms. Method: Site visit together with well-designed questionnaire Independent Variable: Knowledge contribution, Asset specific investments, Equity ownership, Governance Decision control, Incentives, Socialisation, communication. Sampling: From American Chamber of Commerce Directory of companies that to business in China Please comment if anything from the above.

Response A: I have a supplement on your findings: Method The purpose of site visit is to ensure the validity and reliability of a survey. Through the site visits, the researcher can identify some more specific terms had been used in US-Sino JV and the needs to revise the survey instrument. Samples Except for drawing US partners' samples, the researchers also had drew the Chinese sample from a list of US-Sino JVs at the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics.

2003(412)

Subject: Articles on Stakeholder theory
Academy of Management Review
Volume 24
Number 2
April 1999
ARTICLES Presidential Address: Our Shrinking Earth
William H. Starbuck
Stakeholder Influence Strategies
Jeff Frooman
Convergent Stakeholder Theory
Thomas M. Jones and Andrew C. Wicks
Response: The Stakeholder Research Tradition:
Converging
Theorists--Not Convergent Theory
Linda Klebe Trevi 纛 and Gary R. Weaver
Response: Practicability, Paradigms, and Problems in
Stakeholder
Theorizing
Dennis A. Gioia
Response: Divergent Stakeholder Theory
R. Edward Freeman
Response: Making Stakeholder Theory Whole
Thomas Donaldson

2003(413)

Subject: Article on transactions costs and institutional theory
Academy of Management Review
Apr 97 V22 No2
Integrating Transaction Cost and Institutional
Theories: Toward a Constrained Efficiency
Framework for Understanding Organizational Design
Adoption
Peter W. Roberts and Royston Greenwood

2003(414)

Subject: Article on stewardship theory
Academy of Management Review
Jan 97 V22 No1
Toward a Stewardship Theory of Management
James H. Davis, F. David Schoorman, and Lex Donaldson

2003(415)

Subject: Articles on Knowledge, bargaining power and transactions costs theory
Academy of Management Review - 1997

Knowledge, Bargaining Power, and the Instability of
International Joint Ventures

Andrew C. Inkpen and Paul W. Beamish

Toward Understanding Joint Venture Performance and
Survival: A Bargaining and Influence Approach to
Transaction Cost Theory

Robert J. Pearce

5. THEORY + MODEL

2000(113)

Subject: Re: Brief research proposal

I re-look at your diagram of independent (environment), dependent (disclosure) and outcome variables (business effectiveness) (the later two names are used to differentiate between the two). A general comment: I always suggest that students focus on the relationship between two sets of variables, not three (as in your case). For example- environment and disclosure, or disclosure and business effectiveness. There is not enough time to build up the case for expected relationships between the three sets, nor understand all of the parts of the model. Hope this clarifies some of my messages given to all students this semester.

2001(1459)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

To hypothesize what factors make SMEs successful (better performed) when they expand to China. What an exciting tasks! I need to use my present independent variables (IV) to rationalize the relationship between IV and DV (Dependent variable(s) – duration of expansion). May be I need to include in my method for the possibility of using regression analysis.

2001(1470)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Question: In fact I've already got a number of them and I'll incorporate them in the framework of study in my final proposal. My research question is: What factors are more likely to facilitate the full adoption of accrual accounting by the Government of the HKSAR as opposed to the phased adoption approach? (or vice versa). Regarding the dependent (i.e. full accrual accounting and phased approach accrual accounting) and independent (i.e. costs and benefits) variables, although I can identify their relationship, I don't know how to link them together. Do I need to come up with some hypotheses and test them or should my research be considered as an exploratory one since this is the first time the HKG has decided to adopt accrual accounting in 2002-03.

Answer: 1. First establish why full adoption is more consistent with the goals of the adopter. e.g. - government want to save taxpayers money - so full adoption is more cost beneficial - costs of implementation are lower (e.g. economics of implementation) or. government want to show the taxpayer that they are serious about transparency - so that they increase public confidence, better debt rating etc. (economics of signaling. 2. Second, is there anything that may slow down, or impede this objective/s? List them - link them with a theory. EG - see Chua (1996) for article on the politics of implementing cost based funding in NSW (Australia) hospitals. Maybe institutional theory - there are people in government that don't want to change, or such change interferes with their objective (see my Chow and Wu working paper for rundown on institutional theory. Identify these. 3. When you have done 1 and 2, you then have your proposal.

Response: in fact the Government has decided to adopt the phased approach of accrual accounting instead of full accrual basis of accounting due to the resources involved in implementation and the valuation problems (The Government need to take stock of its assets and this process will be time consuming). According to the articles I've read, most of the other countries (like New Zealand, Australia, Canada, UK or even USA) took a modified approach (say with only some designated government departments initially) to accrual accounting before the government accounts are on full accrual basis. So I think full accrual accounting is the ultimate goal but because of the restrictions or other limitations, governments preferred a phased

approach. Thank you very much for your guidance. I hope I could make out an acceptable proposal.

2001(1511)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

Think of the logic of your proposal. Does one thing lead to the next to the next and so on? I think that is the key. For example - Herbert's proposal - Your proposal is a good one as long as you communicate a logical flow. 1. Situation – Hotel 2.- MA Tool – ABC 3. Purpose - Performance evaluation 4. Drivers of the costs and benefits behind the tool achieving its purpose - Theory discussed by Cooper 5. Do the drivers exist in your situation? ????? 6. Is there a gap between 4 and 5???? Yes - identify a new driver not found in theory No - theory predicts. This is shown in the diagram in the manual - the diagram appears twice in the manual, but so far not many students have referred to the logic behind it.

2001(1527)

Subject: Re: Sharing on proposals for 5780

My research question ("RQ") is not clear enough. My previous RQ is "What is the tax implication for MNC, which has expatriates working in the PRC ?" I haven't stated clearly what the meaning of "tax implication" is. I would like to have this opportunity to share the background information of my research proposal. My interest focuses on this area because this topic relates to my career. I've worked in a subsidiary an ALCATEL / THOMSON multimedia Joint Venture Company, which engaged in trading of telecommunication products and has a WFOE (R & D Centre) in GZ. Our H/Q is in Paris. In order to establish and expand our Group's Asian presence, an influx of expatriates into the PRC (GZ office) is required to set up & run the new venture. Parts of the said expatriates (US & Singapore) are employed by our inter-company (US & Singapore) and are assigned to work in our GZ office. Their salary costs are re-charged from our inter-co to our HK office. Part of the said expatriates (HK) are employed by our HK office and seconded to our GZ office. All their employment contracts could be structured by my HK office. Hence, under the tax equalization policy, my Co. is responsible for the tax costs in excess of the amt of tax the expatriates employees would have paid in the home country. They are all top level mgt and attract the highest category of the progressive Individual Income Tax ("IIT") rate of 45% in the PRC (relatively high salary tax rate in Asia). Manpower cost is a substantial portion of our Co. A&G exp (say HK\$2.8m out of HK\$9m per month) whereas salary tax cost esp. IIT is one of the major portions of the manpower cost (say HK\$100K out of HK\$2.8m per month). Therefore, in order to minimize the employees' salary tax burden (esp. PRC IIT exposure) of my Co. (so as to have cost saving) , effective and efficient tax planning is required to structure the expatriates' remuneration package and other related factors. After having Dr. Neale & Dr. Alan Davis's advice, I would re-structure my RQ as follows: - What factors impact MNCs to structure the remuneration package of their expatriates working in China? Target: MNC (taxpayer) Purpose: Use tax planning to help taxpayer in their international business (to give MNC practical advice in structuring & delivery expatriate compensation in the PRC so as to minimize employers cost & maximize employee satisfaction) Independent Variables: 5 categories of tax planning techniques: (1) tax benefits available under local IIT tax law (2) tax treaty benefits (3) foreign-source income (4) timing receipt of income (5) location of the payroll Dependent Variables: Tax burden of the taxpayer (cost to the MNC) Main literature that guides the path of my current proposal: (1) Lam, "Individual income tax for foreign expatriates working in China", Asia-Pacific Journal of Taxation (2) Cho & Ho, "Income tax considerations for U.S. Expatriates in the PRC", The

International Tax Journal (3) Ho, "The tax implications for expatriates working in the PRC", The International Tax Journal (4) Cho & Ho, "PRC individual income tax reform: changes and implications from the perspective of professional accountants.", The Hong Kong Accountant (5) Lim, "PRC individual income tax reforms", The China Law Journal (6) Ng, "Country survey-China: clampdown on individual income tax compliance", Tax Planning International Review (7) Ho, " Tax significance of the double taxation arrangement between mainland China and Hong Kong", The International Tax Journal (8) Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International, " Research report – The Asia-Pacific expatriate taxation guide", The Economic Intelligence Unit Dr. Neale, am I follow the right direction / approach to conduct my research proposal ? Could you pls advise whether I formulate the specific RQ or not? By the way, I am searching for the facts and figures that support the motivation of my study. I found the trend data for the increasing foreign direct investment in the PRC that explains a growing no. of expatriates employees starting & managing business in the PRC. However, I found difficulties in finding the latest data regarding to the increasing proportion of tax revenue collected from foreign individuals that explains more and more foreigners are now working in China. I only got the data for the period from year 1981 to 1990 from Encyclopedia of China Taxation. But I could not find the latest data, for example, from yr 1995 to 1999.

2001(1531)

Subject: Proposal

Question: Research question: What factors affect the success in implementing consumption tax in HK? 1. My focus would be on tax design for Gov't to implement sales tax smoothly. 2. There is much concern e.g. regressive, affect domestic consumption, affect tourism etc. All of which will be discuss in my literature review part. 3. I will focus on one area: affect tourism for my research proposal. 4. That is: Dependent variable: No. of visiting in HK of foreigner Independent variable of tax design: 1. exempt the tax, 2. refund the tax 3. zero tax rate 5.As per Dr. O'Connor's comment, I will discuss the affected parties, e.g. retailer (less consumption due to tax on tourists), hotel etc. 6. try to find some data from other countries regarding Tourism and Sales Tax

2001(1463)

Subject: Research Proposal

Question: You mention about the org leaning theory and resource based theory, what are they exactly?

2001(1559)

Subject: Question on Revised Research Proposal

My research question was changed to " What factors affect transfer pricing to be adopted by MNCs?" Kindly advise whether the research question is clear or not. The purpose of this research is tried to help the MNCs to set up the correct transfer pricing policy which is suitable for its organization and it can also view as a profit reduction technique to reduce the total tax liability. Also, I have defined some variables relating to the transfer pricing decision. Details are as following: Dependent variables: 1. Transfer Pricing decision depends on the situation and the direction of the organization. 2. Profit reduction technique depends on transfer pricing strategy. Intervening variables: 1. Organization types: Cooperative, Collaborative, Collective and Competitive 2. Transfer Pricing Policy: Centralization vs. decentralization, Profit maximization

vs. profit satisfaction, one set of books vs. multiple sets and the letter of the law vs. its intent.
Independent variables:

1. Transfer Pricing Methods: Resale price method, cost plus method, profit split method etc. 2. Transfer Pricing Problems: Performance problems, Interpersonal disputes, Power imbalance, Demand fluctuation and Product pricing.

Answer: The question is still not clear. You really need to understand what you want to research - by reading professional journal articles on the issue and then academic articles. You must start here. Further you didn't follow all of the advice I gave you in my previous email. The answer is in there. Please read them again. Also I repeat, you need to reread the advice of Alan Davis. Further, why did you choose transfer pricing? Is this close to your heart of interest? Has it been raised as a special issue given lots of attention by MNCs - need references.

2001(1571)

Subject: Re: Question on Revised Research Proposal

Question: 1. Research Question: What factor affects Hong Kong SME trading firms' successful expansion of their business to China? 2. The independent variables should be inspired (referred) by literatures reviewed. 3. Instead of doing a comparison between industries (labour intensive industry (to save wages) Vs market expansion in China (retailing), I listed my client portfolio with ventures in China for the purpose of interviewing them for the case study. 4. I used rate of return on assets as a measurement of performance instead of duration of expansion - more difficult to measure (Ahmed Riahi-Belkaoui, 2001, The effects of the degree of internationalization on firm performance).

Answer: Your structure looks okay, since it fits with the data you can get access to. I think you need to specify the independent variables, and how they relate to a specific type of contracting. You may keep the business risk categories constant or the type of contracting constant. Or I can see how type of contracting may be an independent variable along with other factors. But make this clear. Your proposal must discuss contract either as a constant (for example, assume you are only evaluating the success of those SMEs that JV in China only) or as an independent variable (compare JV, Licensing, franchise and wholly-owned subsidiary).

2001(1583)

Subject: Final Proposal

Question: you said it is not clear why I focus the target jurisdictions between HK, Singapore, Philippine and Indonesia and I must cut out and choose any two of them say either HK & Singapore or Philippine and Indonesia. So if I only choose Singapore & HK as my target jurisdiction, I am afraid the information is not enough as the taxation system is quite similar between them. It seems that the tax planning technique that I mention before is quite board and not logic enough. That's why I only choose one aspect of international tax planning and focus on transfer pricing as the management tools for tax planning.

Answer: You should not choose any countries for comparison unless you first have an interesting research question, and to answer it requires a comparison of countries that highlights the specific tax issue you are trying to research. Indonesia is not a valid comparison with Hong Kong because there are too many non-tax factors for MNS to consider when deciding to invest in each. The choice of these countries shows that you need to read more and understand more about international business - when are tax issues relevant and not - versus other non-tax issues. You need to control for the other non-tax issues in order to infer changes in your dependent variable to tax issues. That is part of the logic.

2002(259)

Subject: Definition of Theory

Question: May I try to clarify the theory that is use to explain or describe the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. Is it correct?

Answer: You are correct for your first question.

Question: And also what is the meaning of resources dependent theory?

Answer: Type the theory into google and see the papers you get that explain what this theory means - it related to the nature of the bargaining power between parties based on the respective resource they contribute to a partnership.

2002(301)

Subject: Re: Responses to questions

Question 1: How to identify the theory which is linked with variables and to classify what type of the theory is?

Answer: You begin with identifying the stakeholder - next you must think about what is the best theory that describes the way the stakeholder behaves. Management in most cases behaves in self interest and also for maximising efficiency - that is why you see many articles using economic theories (that have these assumptions about management behaviour) to predict management behaviour.

Question 2: After attending the last night class, I have a better understanding on the term 'theory'. However, I still have great uncertainty in identifying the theory of each of my academic articles since I do not know which categories of theory I should address and my knowledge in theory is limited

Answer: Our knowledge is limited. One step at a time. The best theory is one that has assumptions that most closely match the behaviour and interests of the stakeholder.

Question 3: How can I identify a theory is wrongly (suitably) applied?

Answer: Begin with the stakeholder. If the stakeholder is the government (tax) then you must read about public finance to understand the theory of taxation. This theory can guide you on the assumptions of how the government is to behave. EG government should introduce fair, equitable taxes, plus should have distributional qualities (take from rich and give a little to the poor). Taxes should also be efficient - this is a theory of public finance if your stakeholder is the government and you are researching the implementation of a new tax (e.g. sales tax).

Follow-up Question/Response: (re: question 3) I'm still feeling confused. Is it meant the correct application of any theory can only be proved by practice? & refer to answer of Question2, is it meant we can hardly ensure the correct identification of a theory from an article? i.e. no formula can be found; but only experience work.

Follow-up Question/Response: (re: question 3) Referring to your recommendation, I try to re-work on my "Research Question"; & do I make a correct move for the revised qn, Revised: Does 'Intellectual Capital' value at costs a generally accepted reporting standards for NASDA-listed companies? Old: What are the components in calculating (determining) the value of intangible assets?

Follow-up Question/Response: (re: question 3) Does mine encounter the same problem? too simple... if I further revised it as follow, What factors drive NASDAQ-list companies valued their "Intellectual Capital" at costs as the tangible assets held?

Answer: Yours is fine as long as there is variance in the dependent variable i.e. there is a range of practices with respect to the accounting for intangibles. You may also want to reword the question as it is not clear what the dependent variable is it the method of accounting for intangibles? Keep going you are the right track.

2002(368)

Subject: Re: Task 6b

We can search "agency theory" by choosing search in "citations and abstracts" as those words may be hidden in abstract. I've tried searching "Auditor independence and Agency theory" and I get 2 articles - better than nothing! See if this can help U to search other theories.

2003(290)

Subject: Theories

Question: I am structuring my research proposal and one of my hypotheses is going to be based on Hofstede's theory. However the culture value has been established for over 10 years and later research, though still used this theory, pin-point its weakness. I have searched for many researches, but all of them based on Hofstede's theory for culture differences. I don't know how to judge if those research are good or bad, but will my research be weak if my theory based is old and not perfect in many ways? Again, there are opposing views regarding the theory I will based for my second research question. When there are conflicting findings about the theories, should I structure a non-directional hypothesis? Is directional regarded as better than non-directional?

Answer: 1. I need to know your research question and the dependent variable. 2. it does not matter if there are opposing views - that means you can set your proposal up to seek further understanding of when one view is stronger than the other - e.g. look at my second China SOE paper in which we contrast agency and political costs theory.

2003(366)

Subject: Theory

Question 1: I have some problems in choosing the theory as I am not familiar with that. For example, I have no ideas of: resource-based theory, institutional theory, XYZ theory that were mentioned yesterday from the class. Will there be any information/resources readily available from the web? I believe the access of those information do help in my project and in understanding the presentation from the class.

Question 2: I have similar problems in choosing the theories/ methods in the research method. There are many theories in the economic environment. What I have learn and familiar with is only very little of them. My question is (1) How can I access these theories quickly? (2) How can we judge whether it is relevant to our topic? (3) How many theories are sufficient to support the arguments? Pls give me some hints/ advices about this. Thanks.

Response A: I have the some problem as yours (re: Question 1) that It is very difficult to choose the suitable theories. For your information, you can find the theories you mentioned from the textbooks which are talking about Management Strategy. As I have seen the Theory XYZ from them. Maybe I can try to copy those parts for you.

Response B: Yes, choosing theory is the hardest part to overcome in the research proposal. For your (re: Question 2) second question, I think if the theory you choose can support the hypothesis that you set, which is the suitable theory.

Question 2: Sometimes, I feel that the theory I selected / applied would be too subjective. In order to make the research more impressive and persuasive, I might choose my favorable theories in my proposal. So, the argument would be stronger. It seems that it is not objective enough or well consider. Did you think so?

Response C: I don't agree with yr point. I think that theory is quite an objective one - as it is no much judgment should be exercised. But I think that we find difficult is only because we do not familiar with /understand the theory.

Response B: In my opinion, theory is objective itself, but hypothesis is subjective. In order to make the hypothesis more objective, it had better to find a good theory that can explain it. I think the most difficult part is that whether the theory we used to explain the hypothesis is sensible. So, I think many of us are stick to the same problem. Actually, I also doubt about whether the theory I use in my proposal is correct or not!

Answer: The web is available to all. I main task last night was to take you to the next step. In fact I gave you the names of theories - now all you have to do is to spend the hours to search, read and understand these. I cannot do the understanding for you - you need to take the time to do this yourself. Use Google to search, read and then summarise. There are no shortcuts. If you want further guidance, perhaps some of the other class members can help. I'm sorry.

Answer: Your (re: Question 2) right - don't worry about that for now - choose the theory that you understand more.

Answer: Yes theory is the hardest part. Just choose one theory. You can see that my paper in AOS 1995 used cross-culture theory, whereas my paper in 2003 AOS uses agency and institutional (and a bit of political costs theory. My newer China paper uses agency and political costs theory. My other JV paper uses transactions costs theory. Most of you will be using one of these theories.

2003(395)

Subject: Re: Theory

Question: Can you advise us the reference materials about the "theory"? I am still unsure the type of the theory (e.g. game theory as you already mentioned).

Answer: Further to your request for guidance on theory: 1. I have updated a few links in Brainlid.com - see business research page and the other sub pages - e.g. economics, management, accounting where there are specific sites devoted to telling you about economics theories, management theories and of course agency theory (see the economic page I list several key sites). 2. Please check out this website for your knowledge management. <http://www.kmnetwork.com> 3. For further discussion of assumptions of behavioural and economic theories - see the work by Kathren Eisenhardt at Stanford University (you need to check the spelling). Use the search engine or library search to find her bibliography, and then look for her seminal articles on agency theory and one in which she compares behavioural and agency theory - I think there are at least two of them. Let me know if any of these sites/articles are helpful to you. Let me know if any of these ideas are helpful to you...

2003(464)

Subject: Theory

Question: Topic - Decentralization of Authority. Theory: I find that it is the most difficult part up to this stage. You have mentioned that I should emphasize on the Agency Theory. This theory supposedly gives "yes" to my question. If I want to have another theory which may give "no", what should I use? Or I just simply use one theory?

Response A: You may consider the Agency theory and Institutional theory. The agency theory is related to the performance of employee and employer. The institutional theory concern about the governance structure and controls. Please advices if I go wrong?

Answer: Great question. Greater delegation increases agency costs and reduces knowledge transfer costs - naturally each cancels each other out. But it is not that simple - the rate of increase and that rate of decrease can be different thus causing some firms to delegate more and others to delegate

less. You have to identify the factors, characteristics at the individual, sub unit or organization level that impact on this rate of increase and rate of decrease that I mention above.

2003(406)

Subject: Theory

Question: It's very nice that you have posted the summary of the various theories. It's great. Do you have further details for each one? Or can you give us the web sites that we can visit to understand a little bit further?

Answer: Yes there are many many websites. Learning many theories takes years of reading, so try and work with one or two for now. See the links under business research in Brainlid.com. Many of the sites listed are enough for now. There are several good ones on agency theory and stakeholder theory (I think).

2003(670)

Subject: Re: Meaning of theory

Suggestion 1: I would like to tell something about theory. As a beginner, the most commonly used theories are, - Game Theory- Agency Theory (a branch of game theory) - Political cost theory- Transaction costs theory- Positive accounting theory. Info. available on www.google.com or www.ingenta.com or you can take a look of this book (it's excellent & my favorite). It logically explains some of the above theories. Scott, William R. 2003. Financial Accounting Theory, 3rd Edition. University of Waterloo.

Suggestion 2: As the Third Edition published on 2003, 6 years after the Second Edition. Purchase a copy some months earlier, not just help for the glance of theory in advance, but also a good preparation for later.

2003(876)

Subject: Theories for taxation.

Suggestion: This is a website for Theories of taxation:

<http://www.info.gov.hk/archive/consult/2001/condoc-e.pdf>

2003(317)

Subject: My proposal – Taxation

Question: Research Question: Higher tax rate, higher tax evasion. Dependent Variable : Tax Revenue, Independent Variables : Tax rate, Numbers of kinds of taxation, tax payer's education, tax payer's culture, tax payer's age, tax payer's gender, tax payer's nationality, government's tax penalty, government's advertisement, government's education, government's tax system, government's tax collection loophole, society's attitude toward taxation, society's responsibility toward taxation. Stakeholders: Taxpayers, Government, Tax consultants. Whether it is possible for me to proceed this proposal. And what I should follow on the next steps?

Answer: Your model looks okay. Next step is to fill in the gaps - all of the tasks that you have not yet done properly between 4 and 8.

Response A: I think you research question that it might be what are level of effects of relationships between higher tax and higher tax evasion. May I give some suggestions for you. You should select who are the most important stakeholders for your direction in the proposal. Usually, I think it could be Government. If you have one direction you will understand what to do.

2003(447)

Subject: Seek advice on research proposal

Question: I have revised my research proposal as follows: Question: Does Balanced Scorecard help decision facilitating and decision influencing? Independent variables: Organization size, Culture, Geographic Location, Activities. Dependent variable: Use Balanced Scorecard. Model: Agency Theory and Transaction Cost. Please advise whether this is right approach or not.

Response A: How about "What factors affect the use of balanced scorecard?"

Response B: I agreed that may be you need to change the question or your variables a little bit because your questions make me feel that: independent variable = using of balanced scorecard dependent variable = more efficiency in decision facilitating and decision influencing. Some suggestion: What factors leading to the use of balanced scorecard for decision facilitating? Or what factors leading to the use of balanced scorecard for decision influencing?

Response C: The idea for putting the "using of balance scorecard" as an independent variable will make the research become a refined one. Therefore, "the use of balance scorecard" (accounting variable) is better to be set as a dependent variable for an exploratory research purpose.

Response D: In your original topic, there are two functions that Balance Scorecard can be done - decision facilitating and/or decision influencing? I suggest you choose one. It is much focusing your work on one area that doesn't waste your time? As to the dependent variable, it must be the outcome or result of the using of the Balance Scorecard. Please consider the cost effective or improvement of profit margin. The independent variable, I think what you quote in your original is seen good. (Culture, Strategy and structure and size) Please advice me if it is wrong?

Response E: I think it is easier to focus on either decision facilitating or decision influencing. Or can it be re-written as "Does the BSC affect the decision making of the management?"

Answer: This approach is okay. Perhaps this is one question - another question could be What factors influence the way in which the balanced scorecard is used in Hong Kong (decision influencing and/or decision facilitating)?

Answer: Response C is correct.

Answer: Response B is correct. I suggest that perhaps you can do both have two dependent variables if you are comfortable and eager enough to understand the theory that supports each (one is agency theory, the other is knowledge transfer costs and systems theory). See my paper on political control for further elaboration of agency and knowledge transfer costs theory. Of course you should begin with the role that you are most comfortable with. But I was thinking that this choice of role should be guided by what the prof journal articles are saying about the initial use of the balanced scorecard in Hong Kong firms so far. Does one role dominate the initial use of the balanced scorecard?

2003(376)

Question: Following is my draft proposal, I would like to have your comment. Pls advice. Topic: What are the factors attributes to brand value? Stakeholder: Shareholder / individual investor. Independent Variables: Size of the organization, Business environment. Market segment - i.e. customer's age / education level / income level...Product nature - necessity / luxury good. Dependent variable: Brand value. Theory: Porter's Model, Transaction cost theory. => my query: as I remember, Neale told us that the dependent variable should be measurable, if the value of brand may not have a definite valuation method, it is still doable for this dependent variable? Or I need to change it?

Response A: I have two questions about your Research Topic: 1.) Brand building seems unlikely to measure. In turns, it makes the topic difficult to answer. 2.) Is the Porter's five model a strategy or a theory? I'm not sure about it. Please comments.

Follow-up Question/Response: I've checked the manual and see P. 57 - Porter, 1985 should be stated as strategic planning. Is it correct?

Response B: Define brand value some more - do you mean that which is mentioned in financial statements? Make this clear.

Answer: Response A is absolutely right. Move away from Porters model - even I do not fully understand it as a useful predictor (theory).

2003(416)

Subject: Request advice on research proposal

Question: After the last Thur class, I know that the dependent variable were setting too board, Thus I will specific it into budgeting or profit analysis and I will get some idea in the MA reference book before the final decision. Could you please let me know whether there is any advice on the independent variables, theories and hypothesis those I set in my proposal?

Answer: What decisions are you focusing on? Choose either the role of management accounting that (i) facilitates decision making (operating, product pricing decisions etc - this is the resource allocation decisions side of the equation) or (ii) influences decision making (control decisions - this is the performance evaluation and incentive side of things - agency theory) - that is provided by the accounting system. You can choose both but the theories that relate to each can be different. If you are not sure then simplify and focus. Which stakeholder are you focusing one - choose one? The hypotheses look good at this early stage. Class - when you are unsure - simplify and focus.

Question: I decide to change my research question to "What factors lead to greater using of budgetary control by SMEs in Hong Kong?" Is that OK?

Answer: I am excited about your new focus on budgetary control. Please see the article by Shields, Deng and Kato (AOS, 1999 – I think). This article breaks down budgetary control into smaller components, like standard tightness, participation, incentive power etc. All of these factors are components of budgetary control. When you read this article - you will be excited too!

2003(453)

Subject: Seek advice on research proposal

Question: My research question is "What factors affect the extent of corporate disclosure in HK after the Sarbanes Oxley Act 2002?" Stakeholders are: Investors & shareholders. Independent Variables (1) Family share ownership (2) Ethical behavior of CFO (3) Internal auditors (4) Management's relationship with external auditor (5) Culture of company - Western style culture - Chinese style culture - Mixture of both or international. Dependent Variable: Extent of Corporate Disclosure. Theory = Agency theory. As I did not have the chance to have your comment last Thursday, so would u please give me some advice on this research question?

Response A: After reading your message, I would like to ask two questions – Why choosing HK instead of US? Are there any changes and responses from our local accounting body regarding the Sarbanes Oxley Act 2002? I'm quite interested in your topic area - corporate governance but know little about it.

Follow-up Question/Response: Your question is very good instead. Actually, Neale asked me HK or US before. I choose HK because I think that it would give me narrower idea and I am more familiar with the HK market rather than the US. However, do u think I should choose US instead because of more available articles on the internet in regarding to this Act? Please comment.

Response B: As I understand that Sarbanes Oxley Act is U.S. law, which apply to all companies listed on U.S. exchange market in order to enforce the corporate governance after Enron and Worldcom cases. Hence, I think that this law is more relevant to U.S. companies than H.K. companies.

Response C: That's what I mean. Since the Act is executed in the U.S., it should be much easier to search relevant information and articles if your target to be examined is the U.S. companies.

Response D: I am not familiar with Sarbane-Oxley Act. Just some comments come to my mind:
a) Choice between HK and US. I suggest: up to your interest. I myself will choose HK. There are more articles on US (for DV side) but when I study the IV sides, there will be more HK information that I am familiar with and that can explain the relationship between DV and IV. If you choose HK, your research question is something like: "What factors affect the adoption of the Corporate disclosure as required by Sarbane-Oxley Act in HK Listed Co's Financial Reports? I suppose you are then studying the factors (those IV) affect 1) the HK list Co to adopt those disclosure requirements voluntarily and 2) the enforcement of them by the HK Regulatory Bodies. b) DV: extent of corporate disclosure of HK Co. I think you have already got the information on the corporate disclosure requirement of Sarbane-Oxley Act. Otherwise you may consider other effect of the Act such as impact on public accountants, auditors and directors etc. as your DV. Sorry the above don't help much.

Follow-up Question/Response: I have decided to change from HK companies to US companies to make the question simpler and easier to do.

Question: Do u think I should change the research question from HK to US --- "What factors affect the extent of corporate disclosure in US after the Sarbanes Oxley Act 2002?" I think this will give me more room to write on the research proposal as well as there are more article in relation to US than in HK . Thanks for your advice.

Response E: To my limited knowledge, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act introduces three fundamental impacts: 1. require the CEO and CFO to certify the financial statements of the public companies; 2. penalize the misconduct auditors; and regulate the auditing profession.

2003(456)

Subject: Seek Advice on Research Proposal - Balanced Scorecard

Question: I would like to seek your comment/suggestions for my research proposal. Following is my draft. (A) Research Question: What are the factors that encourage Hong Kong small or medium enterprise (SME) to adopt Balanced Scorecard (BSC) in performance management system? (B) Stakeholders: 1.Managers / Management, especially those in SME 2.Employees 3.Shareholders (C) Variables: Dept Var - Extent of willingness to adopt BSC in SME, Indept Var - Cultural (western or Chinese or HK)- Strategic goal- industry environment (competitiveness, product nature)- Management style (family business or not, long established company or new starter) (D) Theory (Tentatively - still searching for)- Agency theory- Transaction (E) Method- Questionnaire- statistical Analysis (association, regression)

Response A: It is difficult to measure the extent of willingness to adopt BSC in SME. Do you have any idea on this?

Questioner: Is it better to change the DV as "the use of BSC in SME".

Answer: You probably just have to conduct interviews. Like what I did in the recent AOS article.

Answer: Your framework and identification of the variables looks okay. Now I ask you to read about attributes of information, agency theory, knowledge transfer costs so that you get a richer understanding of why the balanced scorecard can benefit firms that have certain attributes and not benefit others that do not have these attributes (e.g. the independent variables you mentioned).

2003(472)

Subject: research question

Question: My research question is "should the Hong Kong Tax system be reformed to eliminate the budget deficit? Is it acceptable? The Independent variables are tax base, structural deficit, direct tax, indirect tax. the dependent variables are: Tax reform, no tax reform. The stakeholders are government, taxpayers, investors, fund managers, shareholders, employees, and employers.

Motivation-narrow tax base, -structural deficit-, party politics favoured more spending and fewer taxed to the popularity of political parties. Literature review -academic journal, -professional journal, -newspapers. Methodological purpose of the research, -questionnaires, -interview.
Answer: This question is reasonable. But do you have sufficient evidence from the professional journals to support this question? Also consider the latest government announcements etc (e.g. the gov has already said that they will reform the tax system, you're your question is redundant. The next obvious question is where to reform (we know this - sales tax), and how (we do not yet know this). See my point - you must begin with the most up to date situation with gov policy if you intend to do research that adds value to such policy.

2003(474)

Subject: seek advice?

Question: Research Question: What factors affect the adoption of transfer pricing in E-commerce organization? Stakeholder interests: - Management, - Shareholders, - Tax authority. Independent variables: - Performance evaluation method, - Organisation structure & Business form, - Gov't policies on E-com., - Tax rate. Dependent variables: - Max. profit, - Saving cost, - reduce tax burden, - Pricing. My question is which one DV I should focus on?

Question: In addition, I'm not quite sure whether there is any problem on questions, Stakeholder interests and IV. Pls feel free to discuss and let me know your comment.

Response A: 1/ For stakeholder: should be chosen either a/management/ shareholders or b/ Tax authority. => two different stream and different point of view (I think should be chosen one only and it make more clear direction on your proposal). 2/ DV: based on 1/ and see whether you choose a/ or b/ and to choose a/ DV will be:-max profit / saving cost (same meaning?), -reduce tax (one of cost saving), -price setting, b/ DV will be: -effect on revenue (tax avoidance)

Response B: I'm not quite familiar with transfer pricing, but I think you can choose the one which interests you most among those dependent variables. If you want to carry out an exploratory research, the dependent variable needed to be an "accounting variable" (i.e. the adoption of transfer pricing").

Response C: I also have the same feeling as Response B. From your research question, you look like to do the exploratory perspective. As such, it is better to treat whether the firm adopts transfer pricing as independent variable. Further, you may consider to put cost saving as dependent variable to see whether such cost saving is a relevant factors for adopting the transfer price policy in a firm or not.

Response D: I agree with Response B and Response C. More simple if your dependent Variable is "adoption of transfer pricing". Some of your DV e.g. reduction of tax burden, max. profit will now become IV i.e. reasons why the co adopt transfer pricing.

Response C: Sorry that I have miss-matched the indept var and dept var in my last message. For summarize, my suggestion is DV: firm adopt transfer pricing. IDV: cost saving. Further I suggest you can think of a more specific kind of transfer pricing policy and consider the stakeholder you want to study, in order to develop and choose the relevant and interest independent variables.

Response E: I think there are two different fundamental issues, transfer pricing and e-commerce organisation. An e-commerce organisation, it is in attempt to use ERP system to run the business. In the current practice in Hong Kong, the e-commerce organisations use the locality of profits concept to reduce the tax liability whereas some traders/manufacturers use the transfer pricing to do so (see DIPN 21 and 39). Therefore, I am unclear whether there is a relationship between the transfer pricing and e-commerce organisation. Please advise me if I misunderstand your idea.

Response F: E-commerce organization is one using the Internet technology doing their business. An ecommerce company can set his company somewhere in the world. Please consider the following: A US based company has a web server located outside US. Whether the US based company suffers the US tax or tax rules where the server based? If the US based company still suffer the US tax, whether the firm can use transfer pricing to lower the tax burden? Therefore, I think the relationship between transfer pricing and ecommerce existed.

Response D: Response E has pointed out a factor for an E-commerce organization to consider whether to use transfer price from view point of tax avoidance. DV: adoption of transfer pricing. IV: to reduce tax burden. If to reduce tax burden (IV) affect the adoption of transfer pricing (DV), then for e-commerce organization, they may choice not to do so if the arrangement is ineffective for tax reduction purpose. So you can prove that there is relationship between DV and IV.

Response E: I know that there is a relationship between the transfer pricing and e-commerce organisation, but I think such relationship is too remote. First, non-ecommerce business can use transfer pricing whereas e-commerce business can use other tools to reduce the tax liabilities in U.S. Second, the tax principle in U.S. would treat the profit-booked entity as "deemed resident in U.S." and tax it unless it can be proved that such entity sells or manufacture in its mother country. Therefore, there would imply other unexpected factors in this study.

Follow-up Question/Response: As e-com. is something invisible nature, I think the traditional concept of locality of profit may be a bit variance with traditional manufacturing/ trading business. Actually, I'm not familiar with tax rules on e-com business. However, in matured market, say US, e-com business still try to use diff. ways to get rid of the tax net. e.g. establishment of PE, cost sharing, profit repatriation. I think they all related to transfer pricing technique. Many large MNC have make use of this in order to yield higher profit/ lesser tax. My focus is mainly on large size cross boarder e-com. organisation. Response E, I'm not sure whether I can answer your question or not. Pls share me your thinking. In addition, apart from the point of tax view, is it possible to view it as another angle?

Response E: What about the population of your study, HK, PRC or US companies?

Response D: According to my understanding, there are other reasons for adoption of transfer price. (E.g. inter-department pricing to aim for maximization of profit of total company.)(Sorry for my poor mgt accounting so I can't quote more) What you have put as DV before may be a factor for a company to adopt transfer pricing so I consider them as IV (not DV).

Question: It seems that there is not much articles talking about this issue in HK. I cannot find much about it in HK. Broad view would probably give me more thinking in the topic. Did you have any related material? Could you share me some of this topic, if any?

Response E: I only have DIPN 21 and 39, downloaded from www.info.gov.hk/ird , and other from textbooks.

Response F: You may try to look at the International Journal of Information Management. In this journal, I think you can find many useful articles related to your topic. e.g. Ndubizu, G and Arinze, B. (2002) Legal determinants of the global spread of e-commerce, International Journal of Information Management, v22, 181-194.

2003(417)

Subject: Is my theory in the Proposal Logical???

Question: Research question: Do we need any set of accounting standards for the SME in Hong Kong? Dependent variable: the extent of using of SSAPs in financial statements by SME (i.e. full, partly or nothing if we have a choice to use SSAPs). Independent variables : the information needs of the stakeholders of SME on the financial statements, I identify the main ones for SME are : a) shareholders; Need : income and performance measurement b) financial providers :bankers and investors : Need : on liquidity and ability to repay c) tax authorities : Need : correct statement of profit. Theory: Stakeholder theory (my preliminary understanding) – internal and external stakeholders can exert their influence on the decision of a firm. I assume this includes the choice of accounting standards. So if we know their users need and find that the present SSAPs can't meet their need => we need another sets of SSAP for SME. Question: 1) Do the application of theory stated above sound logical? 2) What will be the direction of the study? Is it: a) to be a research to find out who are the stakeholders and the needs of their stakeholders, then test present SSAPs suit their needs; or b) assume we have identified what the stakeholders are and their needs and doing research to study whether the existing SSAPs suit these needs => if not suit => another set of accounting standards required. My approach now is b).

Answer: Your question should be - Do we need a separate set of accounting standards..... This is good - I suggest that you set up the expectations from the viewpoint of two stakeholders, or two theories one which says no (agency theory) and one which says yes (transactions costs theory).

Question: See whether I get your points: Next step I need to do is to develop the expectations/hypotheses on the behavior of independent variables (user need) vs. independent variables (extent of using SSAPs) and the theories (agency and transactions cost) can explain the relationships of these variables. For example: H1 : The more cost-consciousness of the SME shareholders, the less they will adopt SSAPs in financial statements. (Yes to my research question) H2 : The credibility of the financial statements from the point view of banker will be reduced if the SME adopt less SSAPs. (No to my research question).

Answer: First get your thinking (the theme) about your research question correct. I sense a similar logic to the one that your classmate is dealing with. He is asking about the influence of Sabines Oxley act and I asked him to compare large with small companies - because size is directly related to political costs theory which is best to use in understanding the propensity of firms to adopt new regulations. For you - your logic is to argue that the burden of smaller SMEs in adopting a certain standard is quite burdensome - then you need to explain why this is the case - someone may argue that with the technology we have these days, and everything is ERP, then it should not be burdensome - thus find something to prove this point to begin with. This will then establish a case for greater transactions costs that the smaller SOEs face - thus bring your from your motivation to your model which will be logically based on transactions costs theory.

2003(336)

Subject: Task 8

Question: I have prepared my draft research proposal. The detail is as follows:

Topic: Does Balanced Scorecard facilitate companies to make decision on performance management? Stakeholders: Shareholders, management, employees, customers. Independent Variables: 1) Financial Perspective 2) Customer Perspective 3) Internal Business 4) Process Perspective. Dependent Variables: Performance Management (communicating, controlling). Method: 1) Interview 2) Questionnaires 3) Sampling.

I'm not sure whether my approach is correct. Could you mind to give me some advices?

Answer: Your approach is refined. I suggest that you take an exploratory approach - it will be easier and more interesting for you to understand how to link the theory to the IV and DV in your model.

2003(488)

Subject: Re: Members of Dr. Gopal

Question: I would like to confirm with you about the proposal, the independent variable is the one that I want to test the relationship with the dependent variable, the factors that I found in professional articles are the literature review.

Response A: I understand that the independent variables are the causes and the dependent variables are the effects about the phenomenon what we note in the professional articles. We have to measure the change of DV with respect to the change of IV in the test.

Response B: If you use the wording 'change', please indicated 2 time period so that to compare the situation and test the relationship.

Response C: Under practice note of listing rules of Hong Kong, audit "committee's principal duties should be the review and supervision of the issuer" financial reporting process and internal controls. For further guidance on establishing an audit committee listed issuers may refer to "A Guide For The Formation Of An Audit Committee" published by the Hong Kong Society of Accountants in December 1997". So for the role audit committee should play, you would refer to these practice notes. Instead of "the role, you may want to consider "the extent of the role"? I

believe from the Guide For The Formation Of An Audit Committee, you may be able to find some insight regarding the extent of the role of the audit committee. The dependent variable depends on the independent variable. I believe thru the literature review, one finds out the missing block and builds up their research and literature review should include academic journal.

2003(908)

Subject: Budgeting discussion with my colleagues

Colleagues, Just want to share some thoughts on the theoretical reasons for Budgeting and how these map onto the practical reasons for the same - in relation to a case study that my post graduate students are doing. Their case study on a Hong Kong MNC with Taiwan subsidiary go me thinking about the limits of budgeting as practiced in Asia. What is budgeting? Budgeting is a mechanism, a formal set of rules, an informal contract between parties within the firm (if you like).

2. Theory - plenty of articles How best can we fit budgeting into economic and behavioural frameworks? Shields, Evans and another colleague have a nice paper coming out in JMAR about the economic, social and psychological angles of budgeting research. There are plenty of other articles too (Shields and Shields, AOS 1998; Shields, Deng and Kato, AOS 2000 and the one mentioned above). The list of articles is not the problem.

3. Why does Budgeting exist? Examining why budgeting exists in the first place is a good start.

a) Contracting - Motivation (targets) - decision influencing in a decentralized decision making context.

b) Information sharing (information asymmetry) for planning purposes - decision facilitating in a centralized decision making context.

c) Control by fiat (centralized decision making context).

4. Does budgeting's role change over time? Does the role of budgeting change due to the various stakeholders playing the budgeting game? For example, my friend in China cut out budget targets from the firms incentive system because there was too much game playing.

5. Case study in Asian context - How many of the above ideas apply? Budgeting in a multinational - HK head office and Taiwan subsidiary. So I ask my students

a) Why did budgeting exist in the organization? -- Control costs (decision relating to spending) b) What is the process of budget setting? HK asks Taiwan office to suggest a target, then HK revises (sometime up to 20% lower)

c) Where is the problem? -- Hong Kong office is frustrated at the game playing by Taiwan office. i.e. the target setting becomes meaningless because of the more centralized approach to budget revisions by the head office - right?

Solutions/thoughts

a) Relevant theory - game theory - how relevant is this when the head office is not using budgeting for the purposes of motivation (reasonable target setting etc)?

b) Hofstede (1968) said that budgeting is a Western game. Thus when it is used in a centralized manner - there maybe little benefit other than control by fiat. Budgeting ceases to provide a range of benefits that we regularly talk about in textbooks and teach in class. Some random thoughts because I haven't got all of the solutions yet - still learning. Any discussing or comments are welcome.

6. METHOD

2000(79)

Subject: Brief research proposal

Question: 1. Regarding your research proposal of 'The influence of organizational culture on the usefulness of budget participation by Singapore-Chinese managers, the data were directly collected from the middle-level managements via survey questionnaire. However, it is realized that some research studies are going to collect the data from their students (MBA students-convenience sampling??) by carrying out quasi-experimental method. The question is - is there any preference in selecting the method when conducting the research other than the cost, i.e. a kind of method will demonstrate a more reliable result than the other? eliminating the extraneous variance? 2. My research proposal is going to study the effect in the cultural management - uncertainty avoidance. However, from the research article I have found, most of them are talking about the other aspects of culture dimension - Power distance or Individualism/Collectivism. Would you please give me some suggestions what good articles should I read in that relevant topic in order to gain some in-depth understanding. 3. Further to my research proposal, I can only think of the aspect of 'budgetary participation' and 'role ambiguity' as the measurement item. Are there any other items I have overlooked?

Answer: There is no problem with these two variables, but the motivation is likely to be weak. I suggest you see Danny Lee's paper for the variables he studied.

2000(112)

Subject: Reliability analysis on 27.11.2000

Question: Why were some antecedent variables have two alphas as stated in Table 2 in the handout on 27.11.2000?

Answer: The two sets of alphas for some variables are those in which the alpha for the entire set of items relating to those variables was very low. I attempted to separate the items into two groups based on theoretical reasoning. For example, promotion (as we did in class) was split into two groups of three items -- one relating to Chinese way of promoting - age seniority, relationship) the other relating to capitalistic, or modern market methods (performance etc), and the alpha's recomputed for each group. Further, I wanted to combine these two groups in some way that was meaningful, and in a way that would minimise response set, so dividing one set of items by another set of items helps solve this problem (I suggest you reread the article I handed out in class - the one by O'Connor and Ekanyarke is an excellent article for explaining the reasoning about why you should divide one group by another when constructing a variable. I think that all MAIAs should look at this article, in preparation for the quiz next week. For those variables in Table 2 with two alphas, the first alpha column represents the numerator and the second alpha column represents the denominator. Still the result wasn't perfect, so I need to do some more work on this.

2000(119)

Subject: R square

Question: From reading the literature review articles, in the statistics analysis part, the authors usually use R square to describe or analyse the data. Could you describe the meaning of R square, the purpose of using R square and the meaning of with a result of high R square or low R square?

Answer: A. The R square indicates how close the variability of the independent variables is to the dependent variable. For every unit of movement in the independent variable, the dependent variable will move in r square proportion to that movement. If the r square is .60 then a single unit of

movement in an independent variable results in a .66 of a unit movement in the dependent variable. R square can also be expressed in percentage terms. High r square is necessary for predicting the weather or sales forecasts, but is not necessary to testing hypotheses, although you want to have a reasonable r square (say at least .1) so can work with a significant model (i.e. model significance of less than .05). B. Also your requested an example of AOS format. I suggest one example is the O'Connor Chow and Wu article that you all reviewed for task 16. You must include all tables and figure in the text.

2001(622)

Subject: Re: Research data collection

Question: Here are some interesting and relevant issues for the changing nature of research data collection. 1. Anonymity - There needs to be some guarantee of anonymity – can responses be traced. 2. Transactions costs - Researchers are now effectively imposing the data entry cost onto the respondent - this results in a lower response rate because the respondent has no choice but use the computer. I see a proliferation of the use of the internet for survey completion – without consideration of the respondent. For example, a) the respondent should have a choice of where they complete the survey - say over a coffee at a local coffee shop. b) the respondent should be protected against losing data - Last April I spent 20 minutes doing a survey on the computer. After completing the survey I clicked enter and there was an error. All of my efforts were lost. Maybe there should be an icon for the survey to be printed out and sent through snail mail as a backup. What do you think? There may be other issues to consider.

Response: I think that the anonymity is most important when the respondent want to given you the real opinions because they do not need to worry about loss of their personnel information, however, is it really anonymity and can you guarantee to do it? I also think that the survey reply in the computer is not useful. For example, I will fill the survey of my friend but I never respond the survey which I don't know who is the sender (although sometimes the survey will mention that you will have a lucky draw) in the internet. I prefer to reply the survey on the telephone or face to face, I feel that I can choose to answer any question & I can ask question when I'm not understand, this feeling is better, I feel that the researcher will consider my feeling & immediate respond. Sometimes, the respondents unwilling to reply the survey since the survey contain most of words. The better design of the survey should be consider, e.g. short & clear question, compare question, the question only give the marks from 1 to 5 or true & false, yes or no etc. The best is the researcher asks some question on the survey to the respondents & fills to the survey immediately.

2001(647)

Subject: Research Proposal

Question: I think the methodology section of the research proposal is the hardest part now.

Response: especially when we have relatively less knowledge in the statistics.

We need to consider which method should be choose, I only have two ideas, 1. Survey questionnaire and 2. the interview with the management (I think it is most difficult). In addition, what data should we collect is another critical problem.

2001(810)

Subject: Re: 2000 Research Proposal

Question: I always think that the research method is the method to collect the data for analysis, such as sending the questionnaire and interview with manager, however I find that "Case study" mention as one of research method in the past research proposal. Is it really?

Answer: You can propose to do a case study. I suggest your proposal will be a case study.

2001(1154)

Subject: Methodology

Question: In our research proposal, most of us have planned to use questionnaire, interview or case study in the method section. From the comments in the CD, Dr. Neale gave me some advice to focus on one of the methods in my research topic, instead of both questionnaire and interview. I think the purpose is to make the research proposal more specific in focusing on the result of one method. At the beginning, I have thought about that both questionnaire and interview fit my research question. So, I plan to use both methods. In some sense, interview may be more useful as you can directly communicate with the right person, whereas questionnaire may not be directed to the right person. In other side, questionnaire is more useful to let the respondent to express their ideas freely. We should think of the most suitable method that fit our research question and purpose of our study. Is your method suitable to your research?

2001(1202)

Subject: Project proposals and poor motivation - additional ppt slides requested.

A. Motivating your proposals -In revising your project proposals - You need to spell out and name the author and dates of professional journal articles that tell you what you are doing is of interest to the profession at large. You need to quote references of professional journal articles that highlight the issue you are studying. You also need to quote some trend data that shows what you are studying is getting more and more important. We need facts, not little comments taken from South China Morning Post. The trend data is very important especially for those studying macro issues like e-commerce, taxation and stock options. In summary - No academic quotes, No facts and figures = No motivation= No proposal.

2001(1248)

Subject: Re: Task 14

Question: We are required to write six questionnaires in the same area as our research proposal. I am now designing these questionnaires by following the format under task 14, i.e. Question, Scale and instructions. But I am not very clear what the "instructions" meant? Is it referring to the procedures to be followed by the interviewees in completing the questionnaire?

Answer: Instructions are usually to help the respondent do the survey correctly. Please see the instructions that accompany each of questions on the surveys.

Response: I think your understanding on the "instruction" is correct. It is the instruction for the interviewee to follow on completing the questionnaire.

2001(1311)

Subject: Re: Research Proposal

Question: I need to clarify that research instrument required in the appendix section stands for "Questionnaire" or "interview plan" etc.

Answer: The interview plan includes questionnaire and details of how and who you are going to interview. Only the questionnaire part is to be put in the appendix. Keep the best part of what you have to say in the first ten pages. I will stop reading after ten. The reader loses interest after that - kind of like the presentations. You need some good stuff to go the extra pages.

Response: Research instrument refers to the questionnaire we design or interview, etc., i.e. the tool we use to collect data. You may add in the appendix with all other instrument you plan to use in your research.

2001(1573)

Subject: Re: Question on Revised Research Proposal

Question: my hypothesis regarding entry mode, I tried not to compare different impacts from each of the various mode as it is rather difficult. H7: Upon expansion of the Hong Kong SME trading firm to China, the simpler of the entry mode (such as sole ownership instead of joint ventures), the better the performance of the firm would be after expansion. So, only sole ownership and others will be considered.

2002(888)

Subject: SPSS for Window

Hi All, We attended the "Introduction of SPSS for Window" in CSC this morning. Basically SPSS is a powerful statistical analysis and data management system. We learnt how to create a data file by entering all the variables with different criterion in a spreadsheet-like Data Editor Window. And then we learnt how to transform (analyze) the data in the most useful manner for analysis or reporting needs. E.g. create a categorical variable from a scale variable, combine several response categories into a single category or create a new average score of a number of existing variables. If we want to analyze the data collected from the questionnaires we distributed, SPSS can be a tool for us. We can obtain statistics such as totals, means, median or even correlation between variables among our data by clicking certain buttons. Moreover, SPSS will provide us with some tables, graph or charts etc of the analyzed information. After the class, I think it will be of some help when we start Neale's lecture on SPSS. I hope the other attendees would have the same thoughts as mine.

2002(930)

Subject: Re: SPSS Exercise

Question: Dear Dr Neale and all, would you pls advise how to "decode" the coding system for dependent variables, which Dr Neale show us on Tue class for the homework, stand for?? Pls advise whether my concept is correct or not? 5 Dependent Variables are : Formal Procedures, Approval Procedures, TQC Procedures, Budget Targets and Performance Targets 9 Independent variables are : Contracting terms, Listing or preparation for listing on SE, Overseas competition, Partnership with JV, Govt influence, Size, Chinese Mgt Practice, Age and Training. The SPSS exercise is to find out the relationship and story on result on one of DV and IDV??

Answer: The codes I showed you in the database on Tuesday night represent levels of change in each of the five control dependent variables. There are three types of change for each control. Choose one of these. The rest of your description is correct. It will help a lot if you read the working paper I sent you on Wednesday.

2003(686)

Subject: – Measurement tradeoffs between field-based and archival-based research

Question: During that evening I introduced you to method which is initially divided into (i) measurement and (ii) sampling. **Method:** I think that the first of these two issues is exciting because we deal with measurement every day. For example, accounting is measurement of economic events. **Reliability and validity:** Researchers want to measure the variables that they have set into their model. The real issue is to measure these variables with reliable measuring instruments (e.g. questionnaire) and that the measures thus made are valid (validity). But to be sure these issues are a little different for those who focus on the use of panel data (archival, audited data, e.g. financial reports) because this data tends to be ratio scale and we tend to agree that the data is reliable and valid. However there is a weakness of the archival type research and that is in the use of proxies for the true score of what the research wants to measure. Since archival researchers do not design the measuring instrument they are stuck with the measures that underpin the data in the archival database. In contrast, the real problem for the field-based type research is with reliability of the measuring instrument that has been designed to measure the construct in the researcher's model. Figure 1 depicts the tradeoff between field-based type research in which case the measuring instrument is design by the researcher and the archival based research in which case the measuring instrument is already set in stone.

7. FEEDBACK

2000(50)

Subject: Re: Please participate in the two polls I organized through egroups

Question: I think that there will be some different between full-time and part-time students when you teach them. (a) Both type of students will keep silent in the classroom, do you think so? That is not your problem, but the distinguish feature of Hong Kong students behavior. Therefore, we may try to speak less, and let them do their group exercise or discussion, then present the solutions to you so that you can know what they have learnt. (b) You may find that you will rather easily to push full-time students to do what you want, than part-time students. I am not going to speak for the part-time students, but it is a true view that part-time students are quite exhaust when they have gone a whole day work. Therefore, less home work and test/quiz is expected. However, you can stimulate their interest in the classroom through group discussion or presentations. It is totally different to the full-time students who are full time for studies so that tests and quiz, or even examinations can be employed to monitor their performance. What part-time students can contribute to the class is the participation rate and their presentations which will show their willingness to learn.

Answer: You and other classmates are always most welcome to express your views. And thanks for your comments. They are interesting and worth mentioning. 1. Both full-time and part-time students have their advantages and disadvantages for learning. 2. I focus on a) knowing the level of knowledge the students already have, and then b) attempt to bring the knowledge higher toward the learning objective. Right now your main objective is to get to know more of the literature in your topic area. Let me know how I can be of more help.

2001(153)

Subject: Re: Blackboard

Same as other classmates' feedback, the video served a good way to demonstrate what was a research, the approach adopted, identification of different variables and the contribution of research findings. We grasped more ideas on how to start and how to do a research. However, the critical point is that I will learn less if I still haven't made up mind what my interest is. I'm still struggling and have to spend time scanning more journals/articles. By the way, hope my classmates can find out their interests shortly.

2001(1100)

Subject: Re: Factory Visit –

I suggest that you relate some aspect of a finding in the article to you own work experience, and I am sure that we will be very interested to hear the result. Keep the presentation simple.

Response: I would say the article we pick is not so bore. It did tell us some of the facts about the mgt style of Singaporean-Chinese mgt and we can make comparison with HK situation. And it did tell us some of the techniques if we need to do a research on our own. The fact is when we as a third party reading a research article done by someone else, we may not be able to understand every part of it.

Response: I find it is interesting for me to understand why the culture gives effect to the budget setting and budget participation. Especially for the high power distinct country - Singapore. I think the main reason should be the theories (building block) to be applied for research. It is a academic article, it seems a gap. I didn't know what the result come up with the previous research and then link with the present research.

Response: When I read the research individually, I can't find the most important point in each part of the research. Luckily, I've the wonderful team members. Each of us has different strengths. In last pre-meeting, each of us has contributed what they got from the research. It can help us to think critically. Also, I find that all of us have well prepared before the meeting. Some of them even prepared a written report in accordance with the questions in Task 9. I very appreciate their attitude towards the study and hard working. When Dr O'Connor asked us "What we have learnt"I just want to say: 1. Have fun in research, and 2. Trust and friendship between team members

2001(1348)

Subject: Some thought

One of my "Actions in Progress" last week was to put my boss' new idea of doing business in some kind of model for presentation in the top management meeting. This project was done by me and a colleague recruited in China who has studied aboard with a MBA degree. We worked together efficiently and completed the project in two days time. Interestingly, our different background and training made us complementary to each other as a team. Basically, I work out the content while my colleague packaged it for presentation. I start to understand why business people often love to work with MBA rather than accountant. The former are better in selling their idea in the way appealing and understandable by layman. It reminds me the urgency of upgrading myself as there are so many smart people with good qualification out there. My friends, keep up our hard work.

Answer: About MBA - Many of the modules you will learn in the MAIA are also taught in the MBA, if not here, then at other universities.

Response: As a professional accountant, you should have other knowledge in the management & business rather than only in the accounting. Now we have study the Master degree major in accounting (MAIA) we can learn more in this aspect. I really think that it is the difficult course than MBA (as discuss with my friends that the work load in MAIA is heavy than MBA). Don't stop at the current stage & we need to learn & to growth. I think if you doing your task by your heart, the result will be excellent. Why the MBA can do it in two days, I think every can do it!!!! Just do you want to do? It's my habit that never give up to learn in any task and always present my ability in my job.

Response: For me, I have recently been assigned to negotiate a deal for acquiring a garment business on behalf of my client. The garment factory is only around 250 workers but has been running with huge accumulated debts (around 10 million). It is interesting for me to learn that a lot of entrepreneur in Hong Kong failed when they expand their business in China. Even there is a lot of advantages (such as low wages, more spacious factory and better supply of labour etc.) to open a factory in China. It is definitely an interesting topic for research.

Response: All of us should keep up our hard work and upgrade ourselves in this competitive world. Through the assignments in the courses, I hope I can learn and explore new knowledge through studying the materials. I think that every bit of new knowledge can help me in doing my jobs better and enhance my analytical thinking. For example, through studying all the materials relating to Corporate Governance, I will try to think whether my firm has a good structure of Corporate Governance and how it can improve. All the concepts can enlighten me with new ideas, in which I may give some recommendations to the audit committees. So, I really find that my research and the assignments are a stepping stone for me to my advancement. I hope that every one of us can learn differently from MAIA and explore some new knowledge useful for our life. I was also enlightened by Dr. Neale to do things in a different way. From my previous study, I had not thought in this way. And now, I will try to think in a different angle and how every bit of new knowledge can help me to upgrade myself with competence. We should be more

competent than others, no matter they are studying MBA or from other universities. And I find that every one of you can give me some other valuable ideas, in which I can learn from your experience as well.

2001(1403)

Subject: Re: SPSSX exercise

Question: I think using SPSSx is not that difficult and won't be a problem so long you have sufficient practice. What's more important and difficult is to tell the story behind the answers you get from SPSSx and explain the variance between the answers and your expectations. We should also learn to make use of the features available in SPSSx package to help. Just like what we did last night, computing the reverse statistics of a variable so as to eliminate bias so as to have a more balanced view when our original questionnaire design was somewhat deficient in this respect. May be we should have more time for practice. What do you think, guys?

Response: SPSSX is not quite difficult as I thought and it should be more interesting if you have more and more time to practice and explore. The other important point is the story you have to tell about the statistical results you found. That's true, nobody will waste anytime to find some statistic results and don't really know why s/he had to do it. Comparing SPSSX with Excel, you can see that most of the computation like regression, mean, standard deviation etc. can also be performed by EXCEL, but you will soon find that SPSSX is a far more sophisticated tool designed to manipulate and process statistical requirements.

Response: SPSSx is a sophisticated statistical package and it is not difficult to use. As long as we have more practice, we can be more familiar with the application and how to interpret the results. Last night, I find that SPSSx is useful to perform statistical application. We can perform the calculation of mean, reliability analysis, factor and regression analysis within 5-10 minutes. But, we need some time to think how to tell the story and the relationships between the variables (more practice is desired and would be much more interesting). I hope to learn other functions of SPSSx if more time is available.

Response: I find that SPSS is a useful tool for analysis. It is not so difficult to use the software. But we must practice more to become familiar with it. Besides, I think that we have just explored a small part of SPSS that we have to learn more by following the guidance in the "help" function or by reading relevant materials. I think that the most difficult part is to interpret the result and tell the story.

Response: I would look at it at a step back. I think the most difficult task is designing a questionnaire and data gathering. After all tell a story about the relationship between variables may not that difficult it is just a matter of time to think. Of course, I couldn't think of the relationship immediately, just because it was a new stuff to me I haven't get used to it yet. It was another great opportunity, everyone is helping each other out.

Response: the design the questionnaire for the interview is most important. If the questionnaire is poor & irrelevant, the result of the SPSS is misleading.

Response: I find the fantastic and close relationship between the variables (either dependent / independent). We try to understand the story which behind the research. Most of us aware the powerful Statistics program after using SPSSx. And try to think more before we write the research question.

2001(1752)

Subject: Feedback on research methods

Question: I have a few new ideas I wish to implement in research methods in the next coming semester: a) have the IMA students present their case study proposals to the new intake students. b) factory visits with prior MAIA students who have completed independent studies or major projects. c) library visit d) quizzes e) hiking (at least one hike across Lamma Island - in which second years are invited to join also). I know I must organize class time more efficiently. Apart from this, please give me some feedback on how to do better. a) any suggestions? b) what about the textbook - was it useful in your learning the research concepts? Should I change the textbook?
Regards Neale

Response: My comments are: a) Only one presentation from old student is suggested if it's desirable. Should give new students more chance for presentation. b) Better invite more professors to provide visit of their factories. This is an invaluable chance for students to meet professors. c) Library visit and CSC too. d) Quizzes are most exciting and fun. Award prize every time (WOW!!) e) Hiking is good for exercise as well as relationship building, please notice well upfront in order to catch more people to join. Other Suggestions: There are seldom any comments from the audience for the presentation. I suggest a one presenter to around 5 audiences is scheduled in every session of presentation so that the 5 audience can concentrate on the presenter and give their feedbacks. The rest of the classmates can prepare themselves for their own turn of presentation. Otherwise, they just worry during the whole time about their own presentation going to make instead of learning from watching the other's presentation.

Response: Since class time is precious, may I suggest the new intakes be given our past presentation video to watch at home.

2003(902)

Subject: Feedback on Questionnaire -

Feedback: I look at the following list of questions that is part of your task 15 submission. Overall it is good. Okay - how to improve.

a) Design so that you can test for reliability - Think of multiple items that can help you gauge one aspect of brand value - e.g. functionality and then ask the respondent to indicate the degree of agreement / disagreement. When you have multiple responses on the same concept then you can test for the level of reliability in the measure.

b) Design to make clear the response - here for are asking a yes/no question followed by an if/then/else controller - thus you can do what I do and have a 0 = No and 1 to 5 indicating the level of agreement with Yes.

2003(904)

Subject: Feedback on Questionnaire -

Feedback: Here are some of my comments on your questionnaire for you and for the benefit of the class.

1. Context: Is this Hong Kong, China, Singapore? Give the respondent a brief overview of the context. For example, paint a picture as follows" When considering your location of head office in Asia - out of the four or five different Cities (assuming that these are all relevant) - Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai and Japan etc.

2. Instructions: Next provide an opening sentence instructing the respondent what to do. "Please consider each of the following types of incentives and indicate your response in terms of..."

3. Clear and specific items: These are clearer now if you have a nice introduction as above. But if you fail to do this (introduction) then you should provide extra detail in the items. This is the tradeoff. Detail in introduction versus detail in the items. The former is generally better if you can make the introduction clear and unambiguous.

4. No more than 7 items response scale. And try and identify at least three of the items (eg the middle item = indifferent, not relevant etc).

- (1) Decrease 5% of profit tax rate for first 5 years 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (2) 2 years tax holiday 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (3) 50% deduction of income tax for the first 3 years 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (4) 100% capital allowance for the first 5 years 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (5) Provide special location for setting up office with lower rent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (6) Provide recruiting service for specialist and expertise 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (7) Provide subsidy on certain expenditure, say R & D 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (8) Provide low interest loan 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- (9) Increase incentive on Import & Export declaration 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Question: For the response scale, what I want to get from the respondents is their preference by ranking item 1 to 9. 9 items with 9 ranking, is that okay?

2003(910)

Subject: Comments on questionnaires

Question: Below is some of my questionnaire in relation to my proposal, please give some of your comments if possible:

- 1) Do u agree to have the Sarbane Oxley Act sep up?
- 2) Do u agree investors will benefit from this Act?
- 3) Do u agree the Act give lots of pressure to the accounting professional?
- 4) Do u agree the Act will encourage all the accounting professional to work more closely on corporate governance?
- 5) Do u agree that the Act provide a more strictly penalty for corporate wrong doing is good to potential investors?

The above questionnaire are tentative, please comment.

2003(912)

Subject: Feedback –

Feedback: Class

- 1. Questionnaires must have instructions
- 2. Should have a response scale
- 3. Keep the words simple - or explain what they mean (eg performance measurement system - what function, what level are you referring to - if you are focusing on one part of the firms operations.). The rest of the wording looks okay.

Questionnaire:

- 1. Do you consider using Balanced Scorecard in Performance Management System?
- 2. Do you agree using BSC will be let employees know clearly their responsibilities?
- 3. Do you agree using BSC will link employees' performance with company's Business Plan?
- 4. Do you agree using BSC in PMS will enhance communication the strategic plan to employee?
- 5. Do you agree using BSC in PMS will enhance management control?
- 6. Do you agree using BSC in PMS will improve the company's performance?
- 7. Do you agree employees' knowledge on BSC will affect the acceptance of using it in PMS?

2003(913)

Subject: Feedback –

Feedback:

- 1. Word document not excel.

2. Instructions need more elaboration
3. At least five items.

The two items that you mentioned may fit, but I am not sure whether you are focusing on budget setting, strategic planning or something else.

2003(915)

Subject: Feedback –

Feedback: Class, I have received that was a little different from previous questionnaires. He defined what each of the numbers was at the top and then just listed the numbers underneath his items. This is good - as long as there are not too many items (no more than 6). Some of the items are too ambiguous - see my previous feedback. E.g. item 4 says "adequate disclosure" can you simplify this? Item 1 is not clear perhaps change it to "Disclosure requirements are adequate for HK listed companies" Then I think that you should define disclosure (the context of annual reports, what about internet?) These should be made clear in the instructions.

Research Question: "What factors affect the quality of disclosure in Hong Kong listed companies?"

Section A: From question 1 to 5, please select the appropriate answer: (5 -Strongly agree; 4 – Agree; 3 - No opinion; 2 – Disagree; 1 - Strongly disagree)

- (1) The disclosure requirement is adequacy in listed company of Hong Kong. 5 4 3 2 1
- (2) The quality of the listed company is directly related to the quality of disclosure. 5 4 3 2 1
- (3) The financial information in the annual report or announcement of the listed companies is sufficient for the investor to make decision. 5 4 3 2 1
- (4) The auditor can make adequate disclosure to the shareholders. 5 4 3 2 1
- (5) The top management is an intention to disclose as few as possible. 5 4 3 2 1

2003(916)

Subject: Feedback –

Feedback: Hi Class, What can we learn from this questionnaire?

1. More instructions required
2. Statements of relationships between items - you appear to ask the respondent to indicate about the impact of various relationships between various items - try and keep the number of dependent variables to one - As it is there is not enough consistency in the items - stick to a similar topic so that the respondent can follow. For example - you can ask several questions about work experience or aspects of judgment accuracy.

2003(750)

Subject: Task 6a and Task 6b - Literature review – Feedback

Dear class, I have carefully gone over those task submissions that were submitted before midnight before the class last Thursday. I am generally impressed and excited about the work that has been submitted. For the purpose of giving feedback to the whole class I have taken time to list and give examples (reference to student submissions) of several good points and bad points associated with the tasks that were submitted. I suggest that you look at these for guidance for how you should improve your literature review. Remember - there is no one special way to do the literature review, but there are some core issues that should be addressed in each of task 6a and task 6b. While I may not make specific comments on every submission I find that there is a lot of overlap in term of the things that= everyone can work on to make a better literature review. There is ample guidance given below for everyone to follow ;V with examples of various student submissions for you to work on. Most important ;V whether your study is mentioned here or not

you should (i) not seek to change only those things that I specifically say are incomplete or missing, and (ii) focus on learning examples of what makes up a good literature review. This is the real real real learning objective here. Good points on task 6 submissions:

1. Include sample details - who and how many? The Task should include more details of the sample for each article. Sample size numbers should be provided.
2. Use the author date system (see AOS format) in all references including references in the table - full details of the article will be provided in a list of references at the end of the paper - so it is not necessary to include full reference details in the table.
3. The task - highlighting the independent and dependent variables that have been studied.
4. Task 6b - Linking of theories to models. You should set out the different theories that are used in the literature - in the Theory column and then preceded to show in the next corresponding column (in each row) the relevant variables that were studied by prior research. This approach is very informative and gives the reader a very clear perspective on the size of the wall (building blocks) of research. Set out clearly the independent and dependent variables. What new insights are provided by the literature? What gaps exist (e.g. in the measurement of brand value)?
5. Task 6b variables yet to be studied You can go one step further by highlighting the variables that have yet to be studied - with respect to the relevant theory. Put these details in = the Model column.
6. Do not use Excel. I know that Excel is more convenient for using Tables - but ultimately Word is more user friendly especially when you distribute your writing to others for comment and ultimately for review.

2003(899)

Subject: Task 15 questionnaire

Here is my feedback for you and the tax group.

1. Question 5 is a double barrel question - never ever have two points of decision (consumption tax and budget deficit).
2. Questions 6, 7 and 8 the concepts of fairness and equity are theoretical constructs, thus you cannot (should not) ask a respondent to comment on a construct (variable) that they are unlikely to fully understand. The better way is to break down a particular construct into several items that refer to common language that the respondent understands. In addition (if you want to go further) you should refer to prior building blocks of how such constructs were measured by other researchers.

Extract from questionnaire:

1. Do you agree Hong Kong's tax base is narrow
2. Do you agree the tax department should introduce new tax regime
3. Do you agree the tax department should introduce Broad-based New Taxes
4. Do you agree the tax department should introduce Consumption tax
5. Do you agree the Consumption tax should be important to solve the deficit of budget
6. Do you agree Consumption tax should be fairness
7. Do you agree Consumption tax should be equity
8. Do you agree Consumption tax should not levied more 5% to items

Response A: Thanks of you give me comments for my task 15 quickly. I think it is important and valuable to me learn how to set up the questionnaire. That I need to take care the respondent's knowledge and use to common language. These make easy understanding and making a good quality of question.

2003(864)

Subject: Feedback

Feedback:

1. The inconsistency is a very simple one - there was a full stop at the end of point a) and c) but not at the end of point b).
2. Factory visit - we have come a long way since the first factory visit presentation over 3 years ago - see the video of one of these presentations (also note the very small classroom and lack of computer facilities).
http://fbstaff.cityu.edu.hk/acno/RealVideo/ResearchMethod/rm_final1.rm Again - see the video of the factory visit that was recorded over three years ago. Your factory visit presentations are so much better due to many reasons (including your effort and my guidance).
3. Further details of writing - consistency is more important than anything else. If you write in present tense then do this all of the time. Past tense - then do it all of the time. Consistency is most important. See my guidance note on page 71 of the research methods manual.
4. More focused class in the final three weeks - and task 15. Yes we will focus on the SPSSx and some basic statistics. But I also want you to try putting a simple set of questions together as per the task 15. Try not to copy anything that has been done in the past. I will spend a short time in the next class to point out the good points of those questionnaires that are submitted 24 hours before the class.

2003(871)

Subject: Re: Feedback

My professional Articles are

- (A) Stuart Turley & Mahbub Zaman 2003, Higgs and Smith: what difference will they really make?
- (B) Richard Nurmi & Shawn Wang 2003, The Sarbanes-Oxley Act and its impact on the CFO.
- (C) John Lyngaas 2003, Corporate Governance: Will Asia Buy it?

My Academic Articles are (A) Chenchuramaiah T. Bathala & Ramesh P. Rao 1995, The determinants of Board Composition: An Agency Theory Perspective.

- (B) Elisabeth Dedman 2002, The Cadbury Committee recommendations on corporate governance - a review of compliance and performance impacts.
- (C) Annie Pye and Gillian Camm 2003, Non-Executive Directors: Moving beyond the 'One-size-fits-all' View.

2003(891)

Subject: Re: Feedback

After reviewing the presentation over 3 year ago, let share my personal feeling,

- 1/ I find that there was full of fun - just like us - all the classmates enjoyed the lecture very much.
- 2/ They did not get much facilities as us - no computer, no microphone etc... Only in a very small classroom.
- 3/ The quality of video was very bad - the resolution was too low and the sound recorded was also unclear. The volume was suddenly very high (when the whole class laughing) and suddenly very low (when all class was quiet and only one student/Dr. Neale speaking). It is difficult to hear what they said. I need to tune the volume all the time.
- 4/ The content of the presentation - I find that our class is really excellent as we are very cooperative, interactive. Our presentation is very interesting.

8. FACTORY VISIT

2001(579)

Subject: Re: Factory visit article to critique

You requested guidance on the factory visit article to Critique. Management accounting - the paper I presented to my department on 9th October 2001, the O'Connor, Deng and Tan working paper and any of the management accounting dissertations. Taxation - Either dissertation written by Patricia Chan and Peggy Financial - Charles Chen and Xijia Su's article in Accounting Horizons - 2000 - Auditing - MAIA Dissertation on auditor perceptions in China. A different paper for each group please. I suggest four groups for management accounting, two groups for each of taxation and financial.

2002(671)

Subject: Re: Factory Visit - Auditing Team Members

Suggestion: I've also found difficulties in reading those statistical expressions in the paper. The research questions and the hypothesis are quite easy to understand. I suggest than we can set aside those equations and focus on the research questions, dependent and independent variables, and the results. Maybe we can find something new!

Answer: You are doing a great job. Don't worry too much about the statistics in the paper for the factory visit. Just try your best to understand the research question, part of the literature, theory, model and method steps of the proposal - in the paper for the factory visit.

2002(700)

Subject: Feedback on MA Group Factory Visit

Dear classmates, we have a very good experience on our factory visit with Dr. Neale tonight, because Dr Neale has shared the experience on his research work with us and provided us some knowledge and techniques of research process. There have some points share with you: 1. The literature review is find out the problems had raised by any past literatures for supporting the question that the researcher want to study, so the purpose of his research study can be emphasized. 2. In our research proposal, we can select one of between theory, model and method consider that is missing or weak in the previous research, so we want to building on. 3. The research study can be combined with strong theory and weak method, or weak theory and strong method. So if a research is comprised strong theory with strong method, then it may be top grade research paper. Hope that is useful for you.

2002(710)

Subject: Factory visit - Elaine from MA group

Dear Classmates, I had a short but very helpful factory visit with Dr. Neale on Tuesday night. I would like to share my question with all of you: 1. How to find the right theory? You can find the theory through Preponderance of evidence : - Empirical - Academic agreement - Stakeholder behavior =>Expectations – Context There are two main types of theory : Economic-----
-----Social - Individual - Resource - Resource - G.F. - S.I. dependency based - G/Collective - Game =>B.P. =>Org. – Cooperative - Agency capability – Game

2002(537)

Subject: Re: Appointment of Factory Visit

Class, I will try and get some articles to you for the factory visit preparation tomorrow night. Remember from the manual the details are as follows: Also - the visit may take longer than 20 minutes - I asked my colleagues to prepare for up to one hour (but no longer).

Structure of the factory visit

1. Phase One – Visit- Initial interview with a chosen active researcher (about 20 minutes). Likely matched with students that have a preference for a certain area in Accounting (but may not be necessary). Questions - The focus of his or her research interests - Why he or she is interested in this area - What the most exciting part of the research is, - What the least exciting part of the research is, and - What impact the result of the research may have on his or her particular discipline. 2. Phase Two - Article critique Review of working paper or published article - Obtain a working paper or published article from the active researcher - What is the primary question posed by the study? - What important factors are identified? - Is there a hypothesis stated? If so, what is it, what are they? - Describe the way the information was collected - How do the results support the original proposed hypothesis?

2003(541)

Subject: Factory visit –Taxation

Question: Please give comments to suggestion of question for the factory visit. We would ask for some questions as follows:

- (1) Why the professor interest in the influence of corruption on national taxation systems/ income taxes on the use of debt held by publicly listed Australian Corporations?
- (2) What is the most exciting part of the research? (Both article)
- (3) Do you think corruption of taxation system is serious in Hong Kong? Such as the former Commissioner of Inland Revenue (tax administrators)
- (4) What is influence on level of corruption in Hong Kong after changing the Chinese Government? (Chinese basic)

Question: During the factory visit, I will ask the professor about the following questions:

1. Is it necessary for us to apply any theory to our proposal each time because it is very difficult for us to find theories in taxation especially which is suitable to our research question? 2. The statistical method used in the professor articles is very hard for me to understand in the present level of knowledge. Is it necessary for us to learn it in our course? Are there any alternative research methods which are simpler than that used in the academic's articles in order that the readers can find it easier to comprehend their research method and the suitability of this method to the research question? Finally, I will remind our group members to complete "the questionnaire on compliance with Taxation Regulation" and return it to the professor when visiting him.

2003(279)

Subject: Draft questions for the Factory visit

Question: I would like to submit my draft preparation as follows:

Question: The adoption of Western management accounting/controls in China's state-owned enterprises during economic transition. Theory: Institutional and Agency theory (Since the world is so large and it is full of theory, how do I know or find an appropriate theory to fit to my research study. In the middle/end of the research, I find I choose the wrong theory, because most of the hypothesis (educated guesses) I develop is based on the theory, that means what I have done is worthless. My question is: Are there any process or procedure that I can use to examine the appropriation of picking the theory and hypothesis in the earliest part of my research study?)

Hypothesis

H1: SOE's use of Western management accounting/controls increases with their use of limited-term employment contracts.

H2: SOEs that face higher market competition make greater use of Western management accounting/controls.

H3: SOEs with joint venture experience make greater use of Western management accounting/controls.

H4: Listing on stock exchanges increases SOEs' use of Western management accounting/controls.

H5: SOEs' use of Western management accounting/controls decreases with their extent of being subject to government influence.

H6: SOEs' use of Western management accounting/controls decreases with their size.

H7: SOEs' use of Western management accounting/controls decreases with the presence of Chinese management norms.

H8: SOEs' use of Western management accounting/controls decreases with their age.

H9: SOEs' use of Western management accounting/controls increases with the availability of training. (Same as the above section)

Method: Two stage data collection approach:

1) Interview at 4 SOEs and two their JV partners with structure questionnaire. The advantages of taking an interview approach was that the interviewer could explain and probe, thereby gaining a greater depth of understanding and clarify any misunderstandings on the spot. This method also provided the opportunity for developing new and relative data that may have been unforeseen during the interview questions design stage. On consideration these advantages and benefits influenced the choice of using structured interviews over that of a questionnaire for the data gathering exercise. This study was used to develop a focus for the investigation and to establish a greater understanding and insight into the topic area. These insights were incorporated into the next stage survey instrument in order to carry out hypothesis testing.

2) The survey instruments were sent to 5 industries to one senior and one functional level manager of the total sample of 82 SOEs which was organized by the MFERT. As to the prior data collection in stage one, the closed-ended questionnaire was designed into three parts ;V organizational characteristics, management accounting/control mechanisms, and influences on change. (How important is the stage one questionnaire? I found that most of the conclusion was drawn based on the survey questionnaire?)

3) As to the survey sample, there were a total of 117 respondents (65 were from functional manager). In the article, it pinpoints that the selection of the samples were under thorough consideration. The senior manager could give a holistic view of the SOEs and the functional manager reflected the operational view of the SOEs. The use of two responses was a check on the validation to each other. (In the way of doing the design and analysis stages, what is the critical factor to drive you to select the present method to handle the study? Why not to try the qualitative method or something else?)

Data analysis: In this study, it included a high extent of statistic technique to analysis the data. (Sorry, I am not quite familiar with the statistic.) (My question is as follows: If I don't keen on the mathematic ;V statistic, there is any other alternative choice for me to do the research ;V to qualitative research?)

Conclusions: Findings from both interviews indicate that China's SOEs had increased their use of management accounting/controls in the recent period. The first interview was revealed that the implementation of Western accounting/controls were to improve decision-making and to increase performance accountability. From the interview it also identified several barriers to change, including government decision rights, managers' lack of ability, and individual employees' resistance to erosion in job security and the ability to rely on informal business relationships. The second stage survey was found to confront with the previous study that it was increasing the use of Western management accounting/controls.

Generalization: The finding of this study could use to support a cross border boundaries in the use of management accounting practices and could be helpful to the management for the policy-setter and decision maker. (In accordance with the textbook, the generalization is seemed to be the important part of the research because it avoided the researcher to focus on too small fact or truth.

If it is true, what are the factors that the researcher to consider their work done can be used to explain other similar situation?)

Limitation: The study was only based on managers' perceptions and there was a risk that the manager of the SOEs had chosen to reveal what they wanted the researcher to know. The next limitation was that the access of the internal documents and procedure of the SOEs were declined by the management of the SOEs. (As a researcher, what was your feeling to understand that some of the significant process of the researches was rejected internal documents and procedure?)

Future study: The future research should consider a larger sample size and range of industries covered. It was better to get more variables rather than 9 in this study. The author also suggested the future researchers of using a multi-methods approach that could refine a better research quality.

Response A: I understand that many of our teammates have some confusion for the statistical part. For all of you information, I hope my following explanation can help all of you to have a better understanding for the method employed by the paper.

Data Analysis: For the paper, 2 main statistical techniques (Factor Analysis & Regression) are employed + some ad hoc one (like descriptive statistics, correlation). 1. Factor Analysis (FA) FA attempts to identify underlying variables, or factors, that explain the pattern of correlations within a set of observed variables. FA is often used in data reduction to identify a small number of factors that explain most of the variance observed in a much larger number of manifest variables. In our case, FA design to measure the perception (underlying variables, or factors) of the respondents, i.e. the functional manager and the SM. This is a technique always used by psychologists to measure some concepts (i.e. self-concept) that cannot be directly measured in an effective manner. 2. Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) Just like the simple regression you may come across in your HKCEE examination ($Y = a + bX$). MLR is a more sophisticated one, expanding the one independent variable X into several more (i.e. $Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \dots + b_9 X_9$). By employing t-test, the paper examine the coefficient b (i.e. b_1, b_2, \dots, b_9), whether it is significant or not, to determine whether the corresponding factors X (i.e. X_1, X_2, \dots, X_9) has effects to the dependent variables Y. Here X represent each interest in the hypothesis (i.e. firm age, market competition).
