CS3004: Research Methods

Defining the Research Question
The Problem Area

Business Research is an organized, systematic, data-based, critical, objective, scientific inquiry or investigation into a specific problem, undertaken with the purpose of finding answers or solutions to it. (Sekaran & Bougie 2010)
The Problem Area

Examples of broad problem areas that a manager could observe at the workplace:

- Training programs are not as effective as anticipated.
- The sales volume of a product is not picking up.
- The newly installed information system is not being used by the managers for whom it was primarily designed.

Entrepreneurs:

- Not sure people will buy my new product
- Not sure whether to focus on a particular market segment
- Not sure where to set up operations.

IT Developer

- A new customer database is needed and its not known whether to buy or build in-house
- One user’s PC freezes every day
- A server running multiple batch processes is crashing every night
Your Problem Area

A group of people have a new business idea but are not sure of the feasibility of their idea.
How?

The Research Process

1. Research Question
2. Literature Review
3. Research Design
4. Data Collection
5. Data Analysis
6. Write Report
7. Present
The Research Question

- Defining a clear Research Question which addresses your problem area is key to the success of your research.

- Must be answerable!
  - At this time
  - By this researcher
  - In this setting
The Research Question

- begin with one **general focus research question** that flows from your problem area:

  A group of people have a new business idea. They have funding to do research to investigate the feasibility of their idea.
Exercise 1: The Research Question/s

- This should lead to several more detailed questions

In pairs....

Write a list of more detailed questions you would want answered by the research.
Exercise 2:

- In your pairs, take 5 minutes to develop a list of topics that you need to know about in order to answer your research question.

- Team up with another pair and explain to them why you think those subject areas are relevant to your research.

- Give and receive feedback and advice.