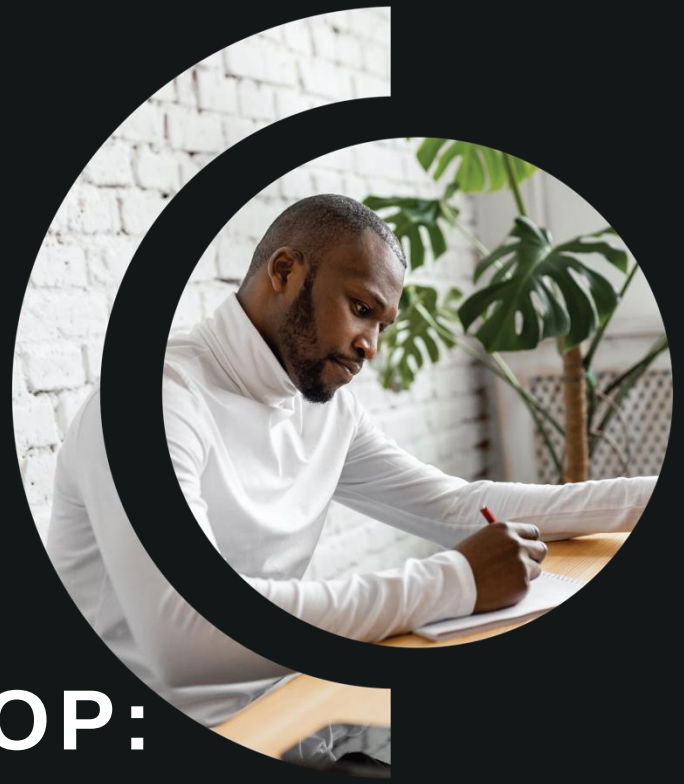

MBA/MPM
DISSERTATION WRITING WORKSHOP: CHAPTERS 1 & 2

Dr Emetia Swart

REGENESYS BUSINESS SCHOOL

AGENDA

1. WRITING CHAPTER 1 OF YOUR DISSERTATION
2. WRITING CHAPTER 2 OF YOUR DISSERTATION
3. INTERACTIVE DISCUSSIONS

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CHAPTER 1

Content:

1

- Introduction
- Background of the study
- Statement of the problem
- Research Questions and Research Objectives
- Hypotheses (for quantitative studies only)
- Significance of the study
- Motivation/rationale/justification for the study
- Assumptions of the study
- Limitations of the study
- Delimitation of the study
- Theory underlying your study (The theoretical foundation)
- Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
- Summary of the chapter

Choosing the title and developing the research question

- What topics are of interest to you?
- Has anyone done something similar before?
- Is your topic relevant to research/practice in your field?
- What is already known or understood about the topic?
- What questions do you feel have not been answered on topics so far? (the gap in knowledge)
- Are there any new or developing areas in your subject?
- Is there anything you disagree with?

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE? = READ, READ, READ

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TITLE

- Your title should be as **informative and engaging** as possible
- A title should **summarize** the main idea of the dissertation.
- It should **inform** your readers about the main topic and nature of your dissertation.
- For example: “A Qualitative Study…” OR “The relationship between organisational structure and employee performance using a qualitative approach”… OR “Developing a framework…”.
- Avoid all unnecessary words in your title
- Avoid the use of abbreviations in your title, for example, use ‘intelligence quotient’ instead of ‘IQ’ in your title

“Social interactions shaping strategy – A case study at two small South African private higher education institutions”

“The role of trauma in the persistence of anger: A Qualitative Exploration”

WRITING AN ABSTRACT: EXAMPLE

This study was conducted to address a distinct lack of knowledge regarding strategizing as a function of social interaction. Social researchers like Critchley contend that an organisation should essentially be regarded as an evolving product of people's continuous interaction resulting in shared meaning. In subscribing to Critchley's premise, and assuming that strategy inquiry is an empirically informed social science, the current study consequently set out to gain an understanding of how social interaction between practitioners shapes organisational strategizing and subsequent strategic outcomes. = WHAT THE STUDY IS ALL ABOUT/ WHY IT WAS CONDUCTED

Informed by the philosophical underpinnings of a pragmatic worldview and a qualitatively driven mixed methods approach, a case study design allowed for in-depth analyses of multiple sources of empirical data to facilitate an understanding of the research phenomena. In addition to exploring social interaction during episodes of strategy practice, the current research investigated how practitioners' motivations to interact shape and are shaped by ongoing interactions and meaning making
= METHODOLOGY

The main findings of the current research confirmed that strategizing at the two case study organisations is indeed mainly a function of social interaction. Findings indicated that the selected strategies at the two case study organisations are mostly not based on objective reasoning linked to a clear plan or vision, but rather on strategy actors' abilities in getting their ideas to be accepted by the group. Findings further suggested that the owners of the respective case study organisations strongly influence how things are done during episodes of strategy praxis.= STUDY'S FINDINGS

The intended main contribution of the current research is to facilitate an understanding of how social interaction as social mechanism shapes strategizing and resultant strategic outcomes. The findings of the current research could thus serve as a building block in accumulating social science theory regarding this unexplored avenue of interaction-driven strategy research. To this end, a conceptual framework is proffered to guide similar future studies. The current study provided a glimpse into the strategy-workings of two small private higher education providers and ultimately contributes towards the growing body of knowledge regarding private provision within the South African higher education landscape.= CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

- **Context** of the research- It introduces your topic.
- Particular **field of research**, study field, study area
- Answer the question **“why”** is the study necessary to undertake?
- It states the **purpose of the work** in the form of the hypothesis, question, or research problem
- Explains briefly the rationale and methodology to be adopted in the study.
- Describes the remaining structure of the proposal or dissertation.

INTRODUCTION EXAMPLE

This study was conducted to **address a distinct lack of knowledge** regarding Private Higher education institutions in South Africa, and the reasons why so many Private Higher Education Institutions start up and eventually have to accept defeat. Private higher education providers fulfil a pivotal role in the country as there is a continuous growing need for private higher education in South Africa. However, these private higher education institutions face numerous challenges in a tough current economic climate, which highlights the contributions that this study will make.

This research **aimed to investigate** the factors influencing a consumer's behaviour in the decision-making process when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution. As the number of private higher education institutions in South Africa are relatively high, this study aimed to support the management and stakeholders of these institutions by analysing how consumers behave when making a decision. The **theoretical constructs that will play a role in this study**, is consumer behaviour as the literature basis of this proposed study, with various internal and external influences on consumer behaviour.

After an extensive review of the literature, it is revealed that very little research has been conducted on what influences a consumer's behaviour in the decision-making process when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution. In previous literature, studies have focused on private higher education institutions, but not specifically on what influences a consumer's behaviour in the decision-making process when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution in South Africa. **This addresses a prevalent gap that this study identified**. Another reason for conducting this study was because the number of PHEI's are growing tremendously every year and the market is very competitive while there is clearly a market for private higher education. This also **highlights the importance of this study**.

Therefore, this study not only aimed to examine the current marketing literature and to **make a contribution to the current body of knowledge**, but also to provide private higher education institutions in South Africa with a deeper understanding of their market which can lead to more effective and fitting marketing strategies and policies that will enable these private higher education institutions to target a larger market.

BACKGROUND

- More **practical**.
- Background to the research problem and highlights key gaps
- International, regional, and local contexts
- Motivates why the study is necessary and give **examples/statistics/case studies** to quantify the problem and to convince your reader that a real problem exists, worth investigating.

BACKGROUND EXAMPLES

Drawing on Miller and Norton, Davis (2013:11) reports the significant failure (as high as **90%)** of organisations to execute or implement strategies**.= STATISTICS**

"The number of registered institutions by February 2021 was 98. The number of institutions that are granted provisional registration in terms of section 54(3) of the Act, because they have not fulfilled all the requirements for registration as private higher education institutions but the Registrar, however, believes that they will be able to fulfil the requirements within the period stipulated, is 33" (DHET, 2021:118-119).**= STATISTICS**

A keyword search of global scholarly writings on strategy in HE during the past fifteen years has yielded various existing studies regarding strategic activities in higher education institutions (e.g. Mazzarol & Soutar, 1999; Garnett, 2005; Richardson, 2006; Essary, 2011; Mainardes, Ferreira & Tontini, 2011; Huang & Lee, 2012; Hinton 2012, Dirkse van Schalkwyk, 2011, 2018; Davis 2013.**= OTHER STUDIES CONDUCTED**

Davis (2013) paved the way for this more in-depth investigation of strategic practitioners in HEIs in South Africa by studying the strategizing practices of middle managers at a South African public university. .**= OTHER STUDIES CONDUCTED**

The researcher could not, however, find any strategy-as-practice perspective related studies on PHEIs in South Africa. Because of their distinct differentiation from public providers in terms of their lack of government subsidising and their profit-seeking nature, PHEIs warrant investigation independently from HE in general. **= HIGHLIGHTS THE KEY GAP**

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- It points towards a **gap in research** that shows that this problem **has not been addressed**.
- Clearly formulated, with a clear need to address the problem from a practical and or theoretical perspective.

- You can start with the statement: "*The problem to be addressed through this study is…*"
  - Fill out the rest of the paragraph with the elaboration of that specific problem

    (Look for research-based evidence that it is indeed a problem).
- Next, write a paragraph explaining the consequences of NOT solving the problem.
  - Who will be affected? How will they be affected? How important is it to fix the problem?

    (Support this with evidence-based citations).
- In the final paragraph, you will explain what information (research) is needed in order to fix the problem; What isn't known about the problem?
  - What is the gap? Have other researchers investigated the issue? What has their research left unanswered?

    (Support this with evidence-based citations)

PROBLEM STATEMENT EXAMPLE

Bearing this in mind, ***the research problem to be investigated is*** that there is a lack of specific research and knowledge regarding the consumer profile and the typology of consumers using health and fitness centres. As there is not a lot of information regarding the consumer behaviour patterns of consumers in health and fitness centres, and the development of consumer typologies for this industry, in South Africa, ***a research gap has been identified***. The researcher ***aims to contribute to the body of knowledge*** on consumer membership of this industry while also to investigate why people are loath to join a gym. A survey undertaken in 2011 by Reebok Education and Boston College, revealed that as many as 64% of women made a fitness-based resolution, with approximately 60% giving up within two months, and only four percent still maintaining their regime a year later (Boston College, 2011**).** **=SHOWING THERE IS GAP HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED**

Building a relationship with a consumer is a challenging task, especially when the organization has a large number of consumers with different needs and varying levels of interactions with the organisation (Dhurup & Surujlal, 2010). Knowledge of the behaviour of the consumers ***"helps*** in effective segmentation and in creating successful service offers" (Athanasopoulou et al., 2011:1). ***It is, therefore, important*** that a business understands its consumers, their buying behaviour, and their wants and needs**.=WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIX THE PROBLEM**

In order to investigate this problem, the researcher will conduct a survey with the members of health and fitness centres in order to determine their behaviour, needs, and expectations regarding a health and fitness centre. Based on this information, the researcher will develop a consumer typology which, in effect, will help to categorise the consumers of the health and fitness centre. This will allow the centre to distinguish between their different consumers and take the necessary steps to segment their consumer base and to provide more detailed marketing strategies to fulfil the needs of these consumers. **= WHAT INFORMATION (RESEARCH) IS NEEDED IN ORDER TO FIX THE PROBLEM**

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- Highlights how your study will benefit the group/organisation you are studying
- How your study will **contribute** to solving the broader problem in your field (More applicable on Doctoral level- Good to know).

EXAMPLE

*"**No published research could be found** which, in an in-depth manner, investigates all the intricacies of social interaction within a strategizing context; and which attempts to explore the link between these interactions and the competitive position of organisations. **The current study provides new insights** regarding the above. **The current research uniquely contributes** towards the overall body of knowledge of strategy, as well as that of private higher education in South Africa".*

MOTIVATION OR RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

- Your **reason** for conducting the study.
- Should explain why the gaps you identified in the literature on your topic should be addressed

As listed in the previous section, there are many similar studies conducted within this study's literature fields, but not specifically on what influences a consumer's behaviour in the decision-making process when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution in South Africa, which highlights the importance of this study. As stated in the previous section, several reasons on the importance of these literature fields have also been outlined. The following section is a summary of reasons for conducting this study. **=GAP IDENTIFIED**

The REASONS FOR CONDUCTING THIS STUDY are:

- "210 820 students are eligible for admission to Bachelor programmes at institutions of higher learning, which translates into a representation of 36,4 percent of the total number of learners who wrote the 2020 NSC examinations and the increase in Bachelors-level passes is at 3,6 percent a year" (DBE, 2020).
- The total number of students enrolled at PHEIs in 2019 was 208 978 (DHET, 2021:26).
- "50 600 students from the 440 702 learners who achieved the NSC in 2020, are eligible for admission to study a Diploma" (DBE, 2020).
- The number of students qualifying for entry into a Bachelors programme at a university has increased from around 100 000 in the year 1994, to around 165 000 in recent years (DBE, 2020).
- New opportunities in the industry are available that have the potential to provide an increase to market share for private higher education institutions in South Africa in the coming years.
- There are no previous literature and research that has focused on this specific topic, therefore there are no recent studies conducted in the same field, and on the same constructs, especially in South Africa.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES EXAMPLES

Research Questions

1. What internal factors influence anger after trauma?
2. What external factors influence anger after trauma?
3. What is the relationship between trauma and these internal and external factors?

QUESTION MARK

Research Objectives

1. To determine the internal factors that influence anger.
2. To determine the external factors that influence anger.
3. To explore the relationship between trauma, internal and external reasons and factors that influenced victims' anger after trauma.

NO QUESTION MARK

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES EXAMPLES

Main research question

- What factors should be considered by Private Higher Education Institutions in South Africa when targeting a larger share of the market?

Sub research questions

- What influences a consumer's behaviour when considering a Private Higher Education Institution?
- What influences a consumer's decision-making process when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution?
- Is there a difference in the participant's perception regarding state and private higher education institutions?

Primary objective

- To determine the factors that should be considered by Private Higher Education Institutions in South Africa when targeting a larger share of the market.

Secondary objectives

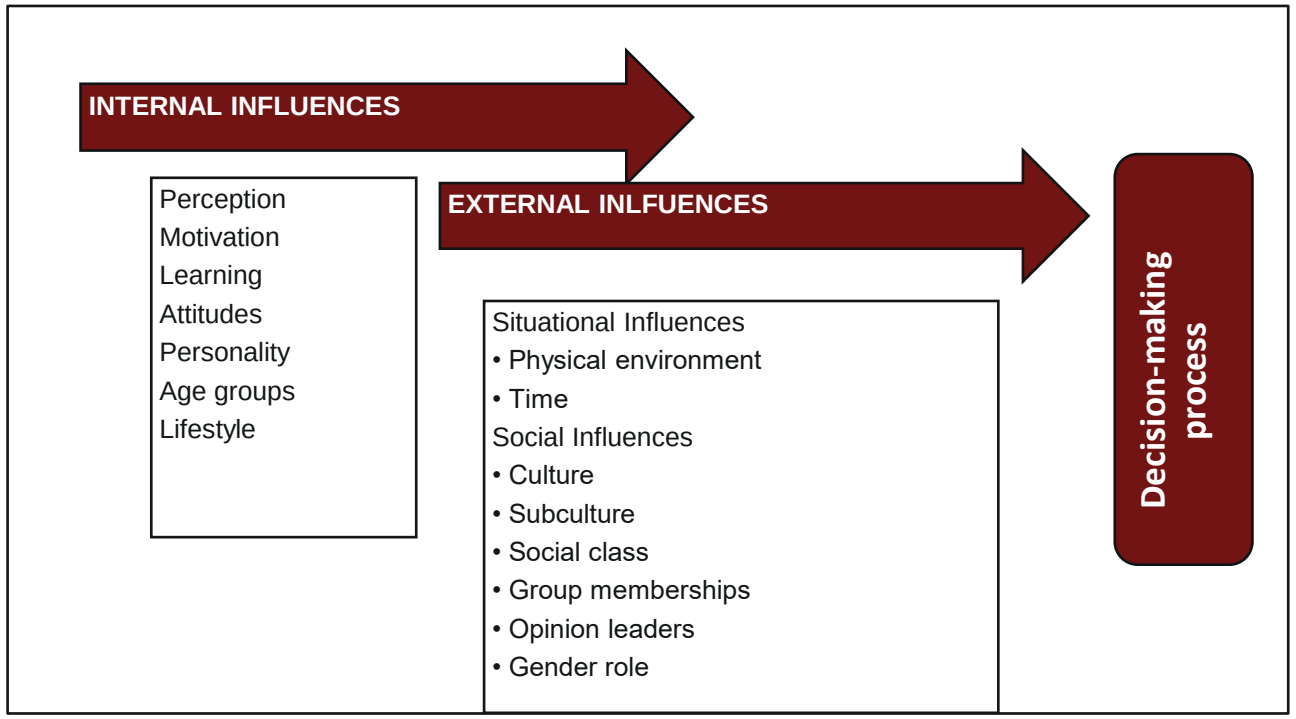
- To determine and understand what influences a consumer's behaviour when considering a Private Higher Education Institution.
- To determine and understand what influences a consumer's decision-making process when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution.
- To determine and if there is a difference in the participant's perception regarding state and private higher education institutions.

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

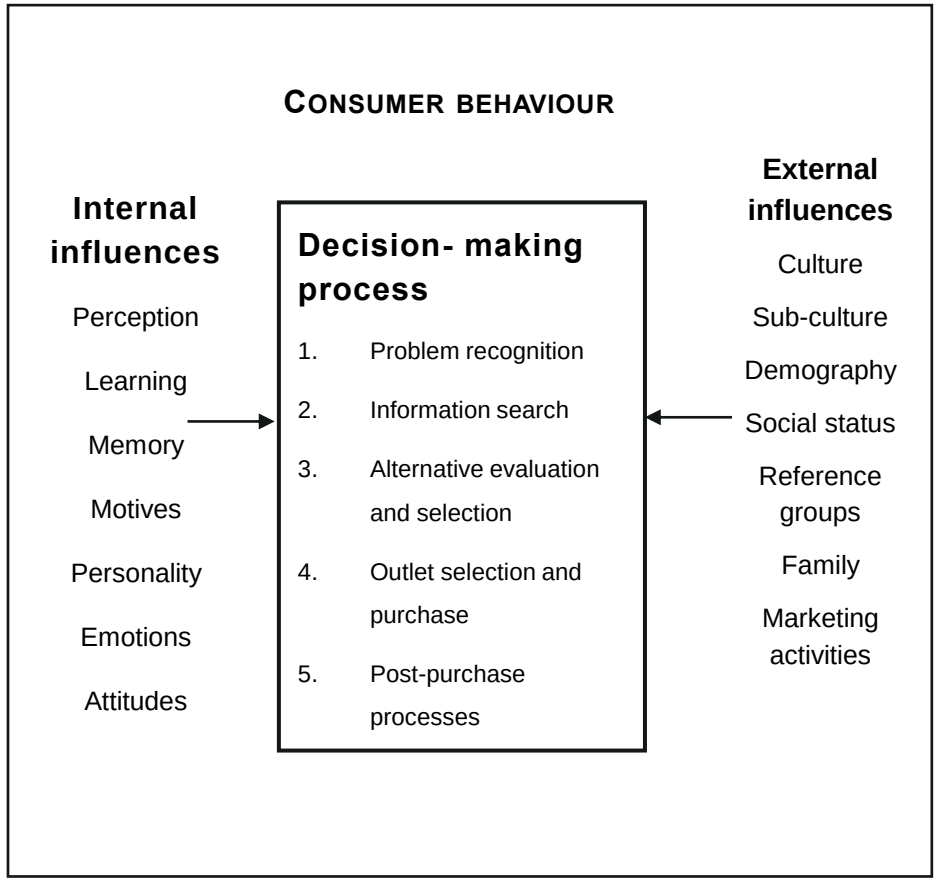
- **Theoretical model(s)** that can be used to explain the issue driving your research.
- One or more **theories** that can help you explain your study.

Mothersbaugh, Hawkins and Kleiser (2020:6) conclude that consumer behaviour is a complex process that includes several important steps, which can also be influenced by several different factors. Mothersbaugh et al. (2020:25) categorised the influences of consumer behaviour as internal and external influences

Kotler and Armstrong added their model, with the various influences on a buyer, classified as cultural, social, personal and psychological influences. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018:151) and Solomon et al. (2022:200), the consumer decision-making process consists of five steps. These steps include “problem recognition; information search; evaluation of alternatives; purchase decision and post purchase evaluation”. According to Solomon et al. (2022:200), the various influences on the decision-making process can be classified as internal or external influences. The external influences can be classified as either situational or social influences.



Source: Adopted from Solomon et al. (2022:200).



Source: Adopted from Mothersbaugh et al. (2020:25).

CHAPTER 2

- It **critically analyses existing literature** related to the chosen **research topic**.
- The aim is to **identify gaps** in current literature, and possible **contributions** (Doctoral level- Good to know).
- Clearly identify any **international, regional, and local** work already done on the identified problem (doctoral level- Good to know).
- Describes how you will **contribute to the existing body of knowledge** in the particular field of study.
- Break it up into themes that reflect the various **objectives or research questions**.
- It determines your understanding and application of the research topic- extensive literature review before starting your study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Gives a **new interpretation** of old material or combine new with old interpretations
- Traces the intellectual progression of the field, including **major debates**.
- Advises the reader on the **most pertinent/ relevant** research
- Identifies where **gaps** exist
- Identifies **new ways to interpret** prior research.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE? = READ, READ, READ

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LINKING YOUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS WITH YOUR LITERATURE REVIEW HEADINGS

Title: A framework for funding SMMEs in South Africa

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION: Are the current funding instruments meeting the needs of SMME entrepreneurs?

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What are the awareness level of entrepreneurs regarding the funding products available in the market?

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What are the criteria for SMME credit by the funding providers?

SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What are the reasons for entrepreneurial credit rejections by the funding providers?

1

Entrepreneurship

- Definition
- Role in economic growth
- Role in job creation
- Barriers

2

SMMEs

- Definition
- State organisations
- Incubation hubs
- Funding possibilities

3

Funding

- Definition
- Funding instruments
- Credit providers
- Criteria for credit

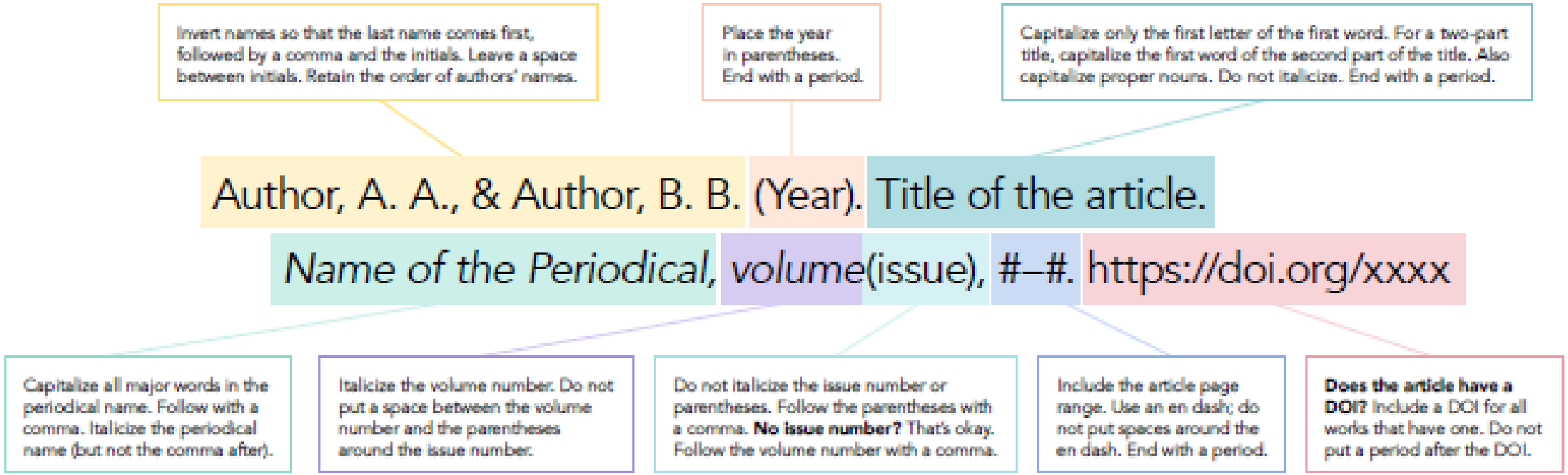
REFERENCING

APA STYLE

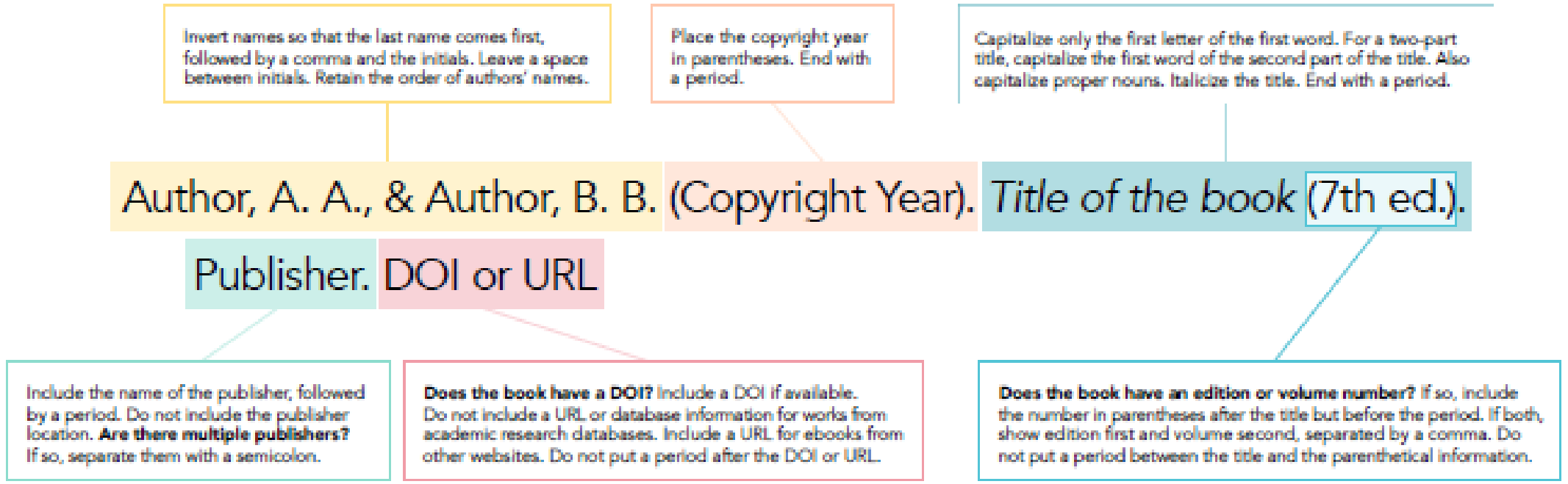
7th Edition

Reference Guide for Journal Articles, Books, and Edited Book Chapters

Journal Article



Book


Invert names so that the last name comes first, followed by a comma and the initials. Leave a space between initials. Retain the order of authors' names.
Place the copyright year in parentheses. End with a period.
Capitalize only the first letter of the first word. For a two-part title, capitalize the first word of the second part of the title. Also capitalize proper nouns. Italicize the title. End with a period.
Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Copyright Year). Title of the book (7th ed.).
Publisher. DOI or URL
Include the name of the publisher, followed by a period. Do not include the publisher location. Are there multiple publishers? If so, separate them with a semicolon.
Does the book have a DOI? Include a DOI if available. Do not include a URL or database information for works from academic research databases. Include a URL for ebooks from other websites. Do not put a period after the DOI or URL.
Does the book have an edition or volume number? If so, include the number in parentheses after the title but before the period. If both, show edition first and volume second, separated by a comma. Do not put a period between the title and the parenthetical information.

Source: ContentLieb (2021)

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CONTENTLIEB

TYPES OF LITERATURE REVIEW

01 ARGUMENTATIVE REVIEW

It is a type of review that examines and analyzes literature in order to support an argument.

02 INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

It critically reviews the literature to add new perspectives on a topic.

03 HISTORICAL REVIEW

It analyzes historical literature to show relevance with the recent developments and identify the directions for future research.

04 METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW

This type of review provides a framework for analyzing literature at different levels.

05 SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

It critically evaluates and summarizes all the existing research work to define a research problem.

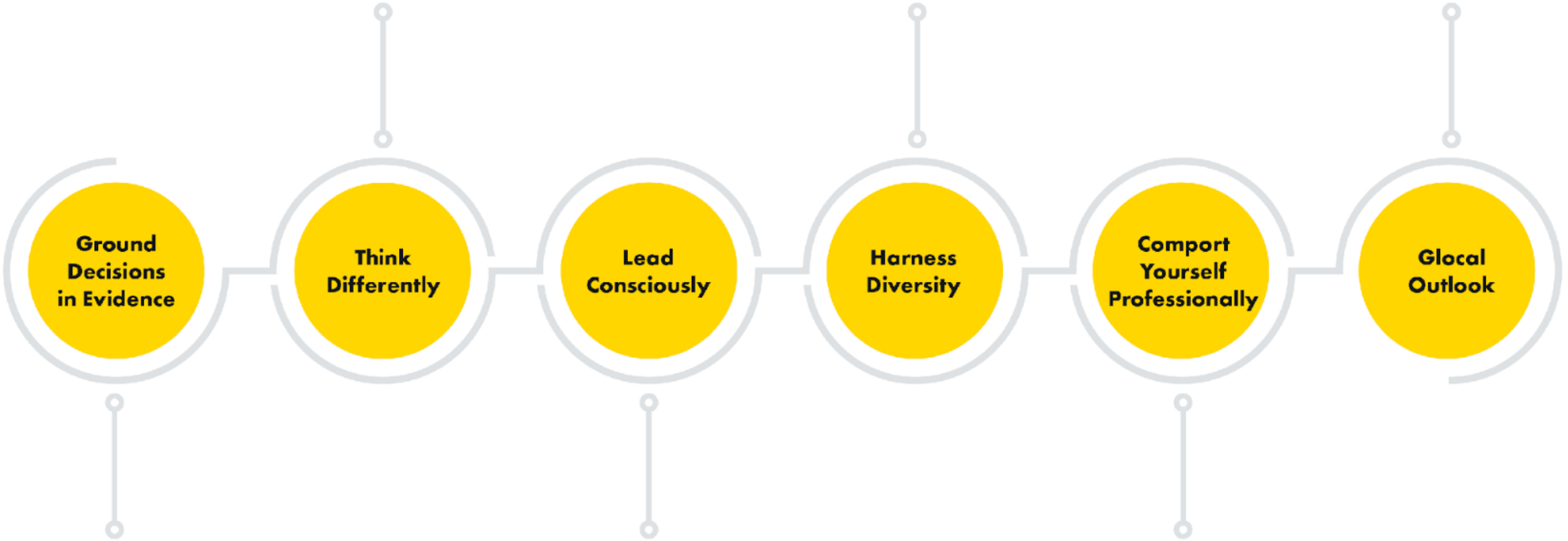
06 THEORETICAL REVIEW

This type of review is to examine the available theories and the relationship between them. Similarly, it also helps to develop a new hypothesis.

Imaginative but rational appetite for problem-solving | Incisive | Constructively critical | Curious | Analytical | Agile mind | Innovation Visionary | Open-minded | Applies knowledge across disciplines and domains

Values individual differences | Collaborative | Socially intelligent | Builds high-functioning, diverse teams | Skilled communicator | Creates connections

Adaptable | Multiculturally aware | Responsible global citizen | Understands local realities | Operates in a borderless world



Bases decisions in evidence | Well-informed | Knowledgeable | Multidisciplinary metacognitive approach | Recognises and can put aside personal bias | Takes calculated risks | Committed to research

Purpose-driven | Self-aware | Acts ethically and with integrity | Service-oriented | Agent of change | Emotionally and spiritually intelligent | Puts sustainability at the heart of business

Inspiring | Confident | Deliberate | Focused | Determined | Resilient | Disciplined | Accessible | Accountable | Models values | Observes business etiquette

DISCUSSIONS

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THANK YOU

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