

1.0 Course Work Brief

Doing a live project is the most critical step to get to know the processes and nuances of doing qualitative research. There are six parts in this document:

First, are two choices for the course work. All course work will be completed in groups. In class we will agree the size of the group. Please review the choices given below and we will discuss in class to help you arrive at a fit between the project and the group.

Second, is the brief for the first part of the project i.e., the proposal.

Third, is the brief for the second part of the project i.e., data collection and preliminary analysis

Fourth, is the brief for fourth part of the project i.e., integration of parts and presentation of a completed project

Fifth, the individual report

Sixth, group assessment

1.1 Submission

Please submit:

- Your report [group-name.pdf] by uploading to my website
- Your presentation [group-name.ppt] to <https://stanworth.cloud> (user: ncku-student / pw ncku2019) -> shares -> NCKU_qrm

1.2 Choices

The two choices are given in the following sections. These both seem fairly specific but these projects still need careful specification to allow effective execution. Please note the data collection method will be interviews. This is not as constraining as it sounds.

1.2.1 Understanding how Chinese customers think about service quality.

Topic focus

Service quality is one of the most researched topics in the domain of services. Service quality is generally understood as a form of attitude or a disposition to understand service in a particular way. Research shows that customers hold multiple dimensions in mind towards service (expectations). They then evaluate these dimensions against the service they actually receive in a psychological process known as disconfirmation. The dimension that Western customers refer to is well established in research. Emerging research, however, indicates that Chinese customers consider very different dimensions from their Western counterparts. Research in psychology also demonstrates that the way customers operate attitudes varies across cultures. This suggests that Chinese customers may not actually use a process of disconfirmation but other ways of thinking about what service quality means in context.

Issue to consider (a few)

- How are you framing your research through objectives or questions?
- What is already known about this topic? What is one paper that seems closest to how have framed your research?
- What method might you use to collect data?
- Who might your subjects be?
- How is your project going to contribute to either managerial or theoretical understanding?
- Where will be you collect data from - what practicalities does this raise?

PhD extension

I expect these individuals to emphasize positioning within the literature. You should also provide conceptual as well as practical support for the method.

1.2.2. Explaining Chinese customers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with service.

Topic

Understanding what makes customers satisfied and dissatisfied with service is critical. Satisfaction generally associates with favourable outcomes for the customers (e.g., getting what they need) and positive results for the firm (e.g., customers repeat their business). Dissatisfaction general results in the opposite outcomes as upset customers, who fail to have a good experience, defect to other service providers. A landmark study, by Bitner et al., explains causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in relation to employee behavior. In this study, however, they sample Western customers whose perspective on service is likely to be different from their Chinese counterparts.

Issue to consider (a few)

- How are you framing your research through questions or objectives?
- What is known about (dis)satisfaction generally and specifically in relation to your frame?
- What method might be used to elicit (dis)satisfactory dimensions from your respondents?
- What are practical concerns with collecting data?
- What contribution might your work make to managers?

PhD Extension

As above you should be concerned with positioning within the literature both in terms of explaining the project objectives and in reporting findings. You should also consider the methodological challenges of this project.

2.0 Brief 1 – Research proposal

2.1 Background

The first part of the project is about defining your project. The research proposal is a vehicle to do this. We will cover the detail of the proposal in class.

2.2 What should be done before class?

Please follow the guidelines I discuss in class. This will lead you to create a comprehensive, professional and *practical* style proposal for the project you intend to do. For the PhD groups you should ensure depth in the theoretical aspects. Please add your first thoughts on:

- Method
- Sample
- Time scale
- Problems you anticipate in completing the project.

You should upload the proposal for *before the presentation*. You should also prepare a PPT of c.10-15 minutes on your project. The PPT should also be uploaded to the website *before class*. The aim is for us *all* to engage with our own and others projects to maximize learning.

2.3 What should be done in class?

Please come ready to present as a group. This will be in the afternoon of class three. In class you should prepare peer reviews of other groups work. Peer review forms are found at: <https://stanworth.site> Please aim to make your comments helpful and objective. Saying, “your idea is very vague” is not as helpful as saying, “We are not clear about your research direction. Your research questions (p. 5) are confusing: question one makes sense to us but we don’t know what you mean by question two”.

NOTE: Please label these as: [targetgroupname]_[yourgroupname].docx These should be uploaded at the end of class – before leaving.

2.4 Evaluation

I will give feedback based on the presentation and proposal document. This will be posted to the web along with the peer review notes.

3.0 Brief 2

3.1 Background

The objective of this review is to:

- Explain the process of data collection (i.e., execution of *some* interviews)
- Explain the preliminary analysis

3.2 What should be done before class?

- You should prepare a detailed PowerPoint. Please upload to the website.
- NOTE: Your group should have data available for discussion (i.e., transcripts).
- During the presentation explain the theoretical as well as practical considerations in data collection.
- You also may want to highlight difficulties or problems you have had with data collection.

3.3 What should be done in class?

- Groups should prepare a presentation that can last for a maximum of 10 minutes.
- In class you should prepare peer reviews of other groups work.

3.4 Assessment

As above, feedback will be posted to the web.

4.0 Brief 3 – putting it all together as a final report

4.1 Background

The objective of this final review is to:

- Present the work on your project from objectives/questions through method to findings.
- Emphasis is on presenting qualitative findings and demonstrating quality in the process of your research.
- Integrate relevant theory to your explanations.
- Demonstrate how the project has developed through the course.
- PhD groups should attempt to fit their findings to relevant theory.

4.2 What should be done before class?

- Please submit your report and slides before class.
- You should major on the analysis process and share findings from the project. You should be using the *language* and *terms* of qualitative research.

4.3 What should be done in class?

- Groups should prepare a presentation that can last for a maximum of 10-15 minutes.
- In class you should prepare peer reviews of other groups work. Peer review forms are found at: <https://stanworth.site/> Note comments above on file names.

4.4 Assessment

- As above, feedback will be posted to the web.

5.0 Individual report

5.1 Background

The purpose of this short report is to explain what you have learned in the process of becoming a qualitative researcher.

The report should:

- Explain what you have learned as an individual. This might be more personal and informal insights.

- Highlight two or three theoretical aspects, new to you, that you have understood that you have understood from the class.
- This report is a maximum of two pages. You should format with 12 point font, single line spacing and normal margins. There is no cover page. Use headers and footers for you name, ID and page numbers.
- Save as [yourname].pdf

5.2 Assessment

I will be looking for accounts of how you as individuals have developed sensitivity to the nuances of handling qualitative data. I am also concerned with your personal understanding of the theory you have learned in and out of class.

6.0 Group assessment

Peer review involves assessing *each other* in the group. This is done using the template on my website. This will ***only*** be seen by me. It should be labeled as [yourname]_[yourgroupname].docx. This is an important mechanism for you to manage in-group discipline as I will consider these evaluations in grading.