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**PRELIMINARY TITLE OF DISSERTATION: XYZ XYZ**  
**XYZ EFFECT ON XYZ XYZ**

(It is important to always have a title because it will help you focus on the main problem statement)

**Full Name of the Student**

[Student number]

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MSc in  
Business Administration at Católica-Lisbon School of Business & Economics

Thesis written under the supervision of [Include advisor(s) name]

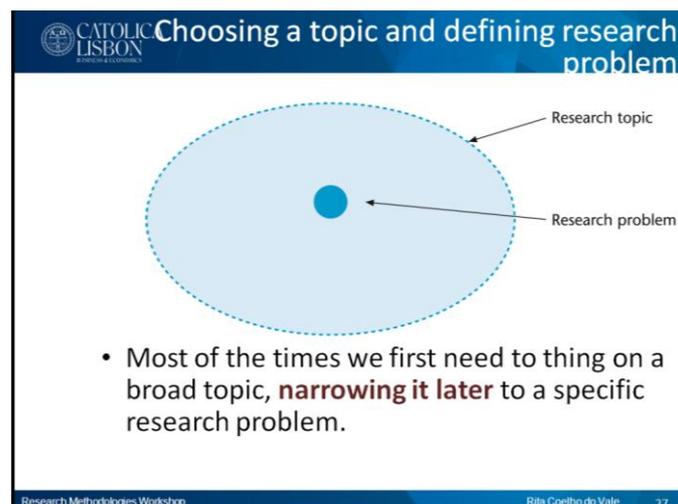
XXXXXX 2015

# DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

## Topic presentation

Here you should include a brief introduction to the broad area of research (the “big circle”). Provide citations of previous studies done on this topic in order to show your advisor you did some research and that you master main issues about the topic. Use data to explain (past studies, online reports, etc) why it is a relevant topic of analysis. Support your broad statements with some general references to the work of others.

Next, go into some more detail about your specific area of interest – the “blue ball” we discuss in the research methods workshop. Create a consistent line of reasoning explaining your specific research topic (e.g., to understand the impact of A on B). Again, support your statements with academic references you can find about the topic, preferably from top journals.



## Academic and Managerial Relevance

Here you should explain why you consider this topic to be relevant. You can use some “managerial data” to help you support the idea that is worth developing this topic. Explain why this study will be academically relevant, as also managerially relevant.

## Problem statement

After you presented in the previous section the main topic of analysis and also why it is relevant, it is time to present your specific problem statement. It will be the sentence you will

write in the “post-it” you should always have in front of you when working in your thesis. Please do not forget that your entire thesis will be dependent on the level of detail you provide in here.

Examples:

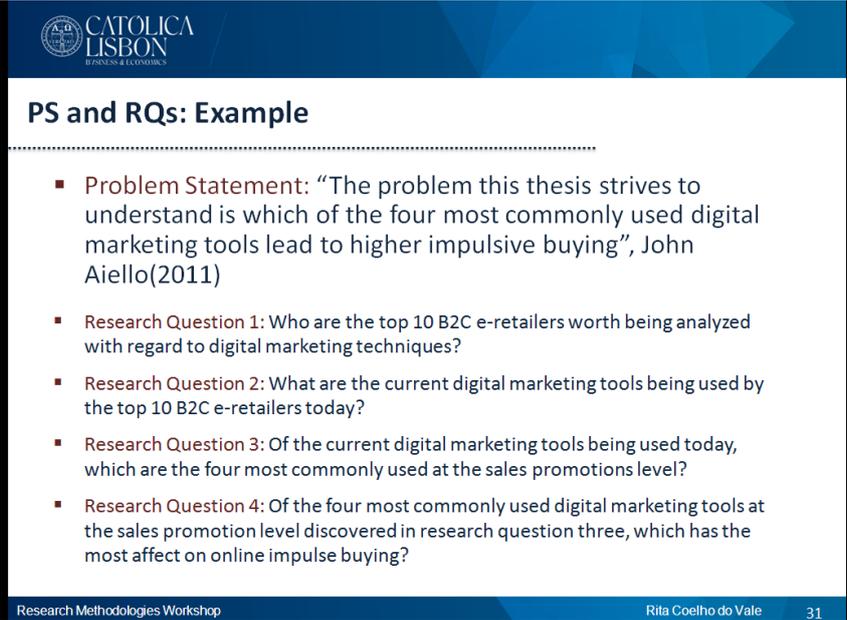
- “The problem this thesis strives to understand is which of the four most commonly used digital marketing tools lead to higher impulsive buying”, John Aiello(2011)
- “With the purpose of understanding if students would engage in an online platform with such characteristics we will focus on assessing and identifying what kind of incentives and techniques should be implemented in order to motivate students to make that information available”, Miguel Frade (2014)

### **Research questions**

After presenting the problem statement you should explain which questions need to be answered (“research questions”). Breakdown the problem statement into sub-goals, in the form of specific research questions. Please do not forget that the research questions will also have an influence in your entire thesis and need to be therefore carefully thought about.

After presenting each research question include one short paragraph where you explain in more detail what you aim to achieve when answering that specific research question.

Research Questions Examples:



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### PS and RQs: Example

- **Problem Statement:** “The problem this thesis strives to understand is which of the four most commonly used digital marketing tools lead to higher impulsive buying”, John Aiello(2011)
- **Research Question 1:** Who are the top 10 B2C e-retailers worth being analyzed with regard to digital marketing techniques?
- **Research Question 2:** What are the current digital marketing tools being used by the top 10 B2C e-retailers today?
- **Research Question 3:** Of the current digital marketing tools being used today, which are the four most commonly used at the sales promotions level?
- **Research Question 4:** Of the four most commonly used digital marketing tools at the sales promotion level discovered in research question three, which has the most affect on online impulse buying?

Research Methodologies Workshop Rita Coelho do Vale 31

## **Scope of Analysis**

In case you are planning to run your study in a specific company or industry, you should explain it in here.

E.g. “This dissertation focuses on the shopping behaviour of consumers in a particular kind of grocery store, which are large supermarkets from market leaders located in urban areas.”

E.g. “This study focuses on the third stage of a company’s internationalization process, which is entering the foreign market. Additionally, it concentrates in two main expansion strategies – concentration and diversification.”

## **Methodology**

Describe briefly the methods you are planning to develop in your thesis to research the problem identified and to answer the research questions formulated (e.g., observational study, survey method, experimental research, usage of secondary data...). Note that this does not refer to details about the data set, data collection or data analysis methods – this will be presented in chapter 3. But you should mention here whether you are planning to use primary or secondary data sources, whether you are pursuing an exploratory or descriptive approach, whether you will treat information qualitatively or quantitatively, etc. Basically you need to explain what you are planning to do.

Justify why you are planning to follow this specific method, what are its advantages and disadvantages. If you already have an idea about the object or population under study – is it companies, websites, online consumers? – also describe it in here. The higher the level of detail provided, the easier will be for your advisor to understand if this will be an interesting study or not.

All the methodological choices described here must be supported by valid arguments. That is, the methods chosen must appropriate to the area of study, to the problem identified, to the research questions formulated, etc. They should also be grounded on the methodological choices of past studies who tried to study similar phenomena.

## **Thesis organization**

Explain how your thesis will be organized, briefly explaining the content of each chapter.

### **Timeline**

Include here a timeline with all the different subtasks you need to perform in order to write your thesis. Include milestones since these will be helpful to see if you are on track during the writing process.

### **References List**

This is where you will include references from all the articles you have cited before. Ask your advisor about which referencing style he/she would like you to use. If no preferences are given, opt to use Harvard or APA style.

- Harvard System:

<http://www.usq.edu.au/library/referencing/harvard-agps-referencing-guide>

- APA Style:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/6/>

**Good luck!**