

# Writing a Bachelor's Thesis in Cognitive and Decision Sciences

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# From Topic to Proposal

- The goal of your proposal is to give a summary of the thesis that you plan to write.
  - It concretizes the topic
  - It shows how the research question is assessed
  - It allows me to give early feedback

# From Topic to Proposal

- Structure of the proposal
  - Working title
  - Concrete research question in a few words (abstract)
  - A short introduction of all essential concepts
  - A preliminary heading structure. (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> order headers. Short content description under lowest header level.
  - Preliminary reference list
  - 2-3 pages
  - Already follow APA

# From Topic to Proposal

- Write correct and complete sentences (not just keywords)
- Only presume to working out your thesis after a positive feedback on your proposal

# How to Choose a Topic

- Which part of the field of cognitive and decision sciences or which questions interests me most?
  - (text)books you read
  - Scientific literature you read
  - Remarkable news item
- Literature search
- Role of your teacher
  - Advice on choosing a research question
  - Advice on narrowing your topic
  - Suggestions for themes

# What's a Good Topic?

- Clear research question
- Academically interesting, and/but practically relevant
- The research question should be answered at the end of your thesis
- Really!

# Exercise on Topic Choice

- Each of you, think of something you find interesting in the field of cognitive and decision sciences
- Write down a possible research question

# Exercise on Topic Choice

- Present the research questions to each other and give feedback



# The Research Questions you proposed

- How do people choose which meal they are going to eat?
- How does attention influence:
  - What information is taken into account for
  - How info is integrated for
  - How fast people make
  - How happy people are with
- a food decision?

# The Research Questions you proposed

- For what kind of situations is the social proof heuristic...
  - useful?
  - used?
- How can we best describe emergency behavior.
  - is it likely to be used in emergency situations?

# The Research Questions you proposed

- What is the difference between a
  - Job decision
  - Friends
  - Buy
- with and without black and white schemas?

# The Research Questions you proposed

- Are people really doing it wrong when ignoring base rates or do they just act from experience?
- Are people behaving suboptimally or does it make sense to ignore/underweigh base rates
- How does experience influence the use of base rates.

# “Homework”

- Concretize what is good and bad about your currently proposed research question(s).
- Find at least 1 relevant paper that informs you about the feasibility of your research question(s).
- Very likely, the most useful papers at this point are review papers.