

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Information technology projects fail at a higher rate than projects in other industries (Standish Group, 2007). The high rate of failed or incomplete information technology projects negatively impacts organizational performance, costing organizations more than \$55 billion in losses (Kappelman et al., 2006; Standish Group, 2007; Stanleigh, 2006).

PURPOSE STATEMENT: The purpose of the proposed exploratory quantitative correlational study is to determine what factors are most influential in determining project success or failure.

There are several possible approaches to this study.

1. **First approach:** the researcher identified the study as "exploratory", "quantitative", and "correlational". This indicates that the **dependent variable** in the study is "**project success/failure**". So the researcher must clearly identify what the definition of 'success' and 'failure' are. Any project that cannot be clearly put in one category or another should be eliminated from the sample. The researcher can then identify a number of variables other researchers have listed in the research and include these as **independent variables**. The researcher would then measure all variables and determine which IVs are most highly correlated with the DV.
2. **Second approach:** If, after a thorough review of the literature, the researcher does not have any idea what factors are significantly related, then a qualitative study might be more appropriate, looking to identify potential factors. **The purpose statement would then become:** The purpose of the proposed **qualitative study** is to determine what factors project leaders believe are related project success or failure. (Note the word "significant" has been removed from the purpose statement. Now the purpose of the study is to identify potential factors that would then be tested quantitatively later).
3. **Third approach:** A more likely scenario would be identifying the factors mentioned most often in the research literature (provide citations!) and measure each of these factors. If the research literature includes lists of factors, then there is no need for the exploratory study in the second approach). The more factors included, the larger the sample size should be. Because the researcher wants to know which factors are MORE influential than others, simple correlation is not sufficient. Path analysis might be appropriate.
4. **Fourth approach:** the researcher might consider reviewing the literature, identifying which factors are mentioned most often by other researchers, then rewriting the purpose statement, incorporating those specific factors into the new purpose (Example: The purpose of the proposed quantitative correlational study is to determine if the effect of project leadership on project success is mediated by (a) level of cooperation among team members, (b) technical competence of the team, and (c) availability of necessary resources.)