

A research problem is a question that a researcher wants to answer or a problem that a researcher wants to solve. Identification and formulation of a research problem statement is the first step to the research process. However it is considered as one of the challenging and difficult phase of any research project. It is believed that selection of a good research problem is a discovery in itself. Selection of a research problem depends on several factors such as researcher's skills, knowledge, interest, expertise, motivation, creativity with respect to the subject of inquiry.

The problem statement actually articulates the problems to be addressed and indicates the need for a study through the development of an argument. In other words, the problem provides a rationale for the choice of topic, represents a synthesis of fact and theory and direct the selection of design.

Formulation of research problem is a complex and long process, which includes following process.

① Selection of a Research Area → Formulation of research problem begins with selection of a broad topic from personal experience, literature, previous research and theories in which researcher is interested as has significance of psychology.

FEBRUARY 2018

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Sept 2: Dissect the broad areas into subareas →

We can select any subject area from the field such as community health or consumer research and go through the dissection process. In preparing this list of subareas we should also consult others who have knowledge of the areas and literature in our subject area.

Once we have developed an exhaustive list of the subareas from various sources, we proceed to the next stage where we select what will become the basis of your enquiry.

③ Delimiting the Research topic →

In this step, researcher proceeds from a general area of interest to more specific topic of research to conduct a study.

In this stage, a researcher clearly identifies variables, population and setting of research study. Furthermore, at this stage, a researcher is quite clear about the phenomenon to be studied, where and on whom.

④ Evaluating the Research problem →

Once researcher is clear about the specific research problem, next the research problem must be carefully evaluated for its significance, researchability and feasibility. Feasibility of the

research problem should be evaluated for time, cost, availability of subjects and resources, administrative and peer support, ethical consideration and researcher's competence and interest.

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5) Formulating Final Statement of Research Problem → After establishing the significance researchability and feasibility, then researcher finally formulate a final statement of a research problem. A research statement could be in declarative or interrogative format. for example

Declarative format →

"A descriptive study on prevalence of bed sores among unconscious patients admitted in intensive care units of synergy hospital of medical science, Delhi".

Interrogative format

"What is the effect of ginger on morning sickness on pregnant women in selected urban communities of District Hissar, Haryana?"

Example of well formed research problem

"A descriptive study on the Prevalence of pin site infection among patients with ~~esp~~ external skeletal fixation admitted in orthopedic wards of shri Mahant Indresh Hospital, Dehradun".

It is an example of declarative form of the statement of problem, where it is precisely and concisely stated and includes most of the required component of a research statement which are:

⇒ Research study type → Descriptive

⇒ Variables → It has only one research variable

'Prevalence of Pin site infection'.

⇒ Population → patients with ~~esp~~ external skeletal fixation

⇒ Research setting → Orthopedic ward of shri Mahant Hospital, Dehradun.

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