

## CHAPTER 4

### IDENTIFYING THE INQUIRY AND STATING THE PROBLEM

RES1  
STEM/ABM STRANDS

In this lesson, you will:

1. Identify possible research problems.
2. Describe the different sources of research problems.
3. Discuss the considerations in the selection of research problems.



Lesson 4.1  
Possible Topics for Qualitative Research

## THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

WHAT  
WHY  
HOW

## THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

It states the **area of concern** of the research. It also sets the direction of the research as it **provides the foundation** for the research hypothesis and **defines what kind of research** is suitable to address the problem.

## SOURCES OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS

- Maybe derived from any kind of setting such as hospitals and clinics, schools, offices, homes or any part of the community.
- Can be commonly based from circumstances with the following characteristics:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS

1. It conveys a feeling of discomfort or difficulty.
2. It has a perceived difficulty in broad subjects such as family affairs, home management, and leadership system.
3. It displays a gap between theory and practice: what is said by the elders and what the students see and observe.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS

4. It utilizes a procedure requiring a technologically advanced equipment.
5. It involves the experience of any kind of individual.
6. It shows some kind of pattern or trend.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS

7. It makes use of literature reviews, continuous readings, and past studies. *The repetition of a prior research study in a different setting and time is called replication.*
8. It relates to an individual's curiosity and interest.

## CRITERIA TO MEET

A discerned problem is said to be **researchable** when the following criteria are met:

1. Solutions are available but not yet tested and not yet known by the practitioner.
2. No solutions are available to answer the gap or the problem being assessed.

### CRITERIA TO MEET

3. When the given answers or solutions, as well as the possible results, are seemingly untested or are factually contradictory with each other.
4. A phenomenon requiring an explanation has occurred.
5. There are several possible and plausible explanations for the existence of an undesirable condition.

### CONSIDERATIONS

IN FORMULATING  
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

### EXTERNAL CRITERIA

1. Novelty
2. Availability of subjects
3. Support of the academic community
4. Availability and adequacy of facilities and equipment
5. Ethical considerations

### INTERNAL CRITERIA

1. Experience, training, and qualifications of the researcher/s
2. Motivation, interest, intellectual curiosity, and perceptiveness of the researcher/s
3. Time factor
4. Costs and returns
5. Hazards, penalties, and handicaps

### Possible Aspects to be Studied Using Qualitative Research

ACCORDING TO JON AND LYN LOFLAND  
(IN BABBIE, 2005, P.296),  
FIELD RESEARCH CAN BE UTILIZED BEST  
IN STUDYING THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS:

#### 1. Practices

Habits, customs, traditions, and behaviors such as washing hands, storytelling, and tattooing.

#### 2. Episodes

Life events or scenarios such as marriage, and sickness or to societal events such as ouster, revolutions or prosperity.

#### 3. Encounters

Meetings between or among people and their interactions.

#### 4. Roles

A look into people, the "positions" they take on and "the behavior associated with those positions" such as in the family, work space or in indigenous groups.

### 5. Relationships

Action and expressions between “pairs or sets of roles” such as mother-child, politician-constituent, and supervisor-employee.

### 6. Groups

A set of people sharing a common characteristic or interest such as clubs and working groups.

### 7. Organizations

“formal organizations, such as hospitals and schools”

### 8. Settlements

Refers to smaller units of society like communities, villages and neighborhoods

### 9. Social Worlds

“ambiguous social entities” with vague boundaries and populations such as “the sports world” and “Wall Street”

### 10. Lifestyles or sub-cultures

Way of living of a certain group of people such as elites, marginalized groups or those with unique practices such as bikers, gamers or nerds

## CHOOSING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

AS A SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

### REMEMBER:

- Your **background** as a researcher is an important factor.
- You **focus** on more practical and relatable topics for research.
- Take your **track** as your guide.


### REMEMBER:

- In addition, keep in mind the following:
- The **feasibility** of the research study
  - **External support** for the study
  - The **innovative** quality of the topic should be considered.

<b>Who?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the information providers for this topic?</li> <li>Who is affected by the topic?</li> <li>Do you know the organizations affiliated with this topic?</li> </ul>	<b>What?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the major questions about this topic?</li> <li>Is there a problem about the topic?</li> <li>What are some differing viewpoints you can consider during your research?</li> </ul>
<b>Where?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what state, region, country, university or internationally?</li> <li>Are there other places that have been similarly affected by the topic you chose?</li> </ul>	<b>When?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When was or is your topic important?</li> <li>Is your topic currently relevant or does it have historical context?</li> <li>Can you envision how the topic's relevance has changed over time?</li> </ul>
<b>Why?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why did you choose this topic?</li> <li>What led to this topic for you?</li> <li>Do you have an opinion about the issues involved?</li> </ul>	

In this lesson, you will:

1. Identify a good research topic.
2. Apply the strategies in narrowing down a broad research topic.
3. Discuss the importance of a good research topic.



*Lesson 4.2  
Narrowing Down a Research Topic*

*Something to think about...*

**WHEN DO YOU KNOW IF  
YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC IS TOO  
BROAD OR TOO NARROW?**

*Answer:*

One possible indicator that your topic is too broad is when **you find yourself having too many ideas on how to investigate it.** Some of these ideas might even be contradicting each other. (University of Southern California, 2016).

*Did you know?*

**NARROWING DOWN YOUR RESEARCH TOPIC IS VERY CRUCIAL AS YOU MAY ENCOUNTER SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE COURSE OF YOUR STUDY SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 2016):**

*Difficulty #1*

Generally, it will be hard to conduct research on topic and find the answers you need within the allotted space and time.

*Difficulty #2*

You retrieve “too many information” making it hard to choose which ones are most relevant and which ones you can simply discard.

*Difficulty #3*

The information gathered are too general and it is hard to build a clear conceptual framework around them. It is also difficult to determine research methods that can analyze the topic.

*Difficulty #4*

The concepts and ideas are so varied that it is hard to integrate them together and you can get easily off-track.

*Did you know?*

TO ADDRESS A BROAD RESEARCH TOPIC,  
YOU MAY CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING  
STRATEGIES TO NARROW IT DOWN  
(UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA,  
2016):

*Strategy Number 1: ASPECT*

**Aspect**—consider just  
looking at one facet of  
the research topic.

*For example:*

Rather than researching how eating  
disorder affect one's well-being, choose a  
particular eating disorder and replace well-  
being with something more concrete.  
Investigating how anorexia nervosa affects  
one's self-confidence is an improvement  
on this topic.

*Strategy Number 2: COMPONENTS*

**Components**—see if the  
different aspects of your  
research can be made  
more specific.

*For example:*

If you would like to look into how a number  
of students deal with learning difficulties,  
you may try pinpointing a particular  
learning difficulty, such as hearing  
impairment, dyslexia or attention deficit  
hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

*Strategy Number 3: METHODOLOGY*

**Methodology**—the way  
you collect data will  
determine how you will  
conduct data analysis.

*For example:*

A one case study research  
can only yield limited  
interpretative analysis  
compared to those using  
several cases.

*Strategy Number 4: PLACE*

**Place**—consider identifying  
the particular geographic unit  
of analysis you want to look  
into in your study.

*For example:*

If you want to look at street families  
and how they have defined and built  
their lives in the street, you may think  
of choosing a specific location for your  
research, say a particular street  
or barangay.

*Strategy Number 5: RELATIONSHIP*

**Relationship**—determining the kind of relationship you would like to investigate can help you narrow down your topic. Look at how different concepts relate to one another.

*For example:*

Cause and effect, compare and contrast, contemporary or historical, or problem and solution, etc.

*Strategy Number 6: TIME*

**Time**—identify the time period of your study.

*For example:*

If you wish to look at the Philippine economy and its impact on the ordinary Filipino family, decide on a time period, say from 2010-2016 which is the length of one government administration.

*Strategy Number 6: TYPE*

**Type**—consider focusing your research on a particular type of people, places or phenomenon.

*For example:*

In looking into how information, communication, and technology have affected interpersonal relations of the family, you may simply focus on the use of mobile phones and how it affects interpersonal relations in a family.

*Strategy Number 7: COMBINATION*

**Combination**—use one or a combination of the strategies mentioned above to narrow down your topic.

In this lesson, you will:

1. Identify the characteristics of an effective research title.
2. Identify the parts of an effective research title.
3. Formulate your research title.



*Lesson 4.3  
Developing the Research Title*

*Something to think about...*

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE RESEARCH TITLES?

### Effective Research Title

Creswell (2014, p.26) compared the research title to “a major road sign in research.” He mentioned that the title is “an orienting device” which aids the researcher in focusing one’s investigation.

### And...

In addition, it helps convey to others the central idea behind your own research.

### BE GUIDED:

1. It should **summarize** the main idea of the paper.
2. It should be a **concise statement** of the main topic.
3. It should **include** the major variables of the research study.
4. It should be **self-explanatory**.
5. It should **describe** the participants of the study.

### The Research Title

DRAFTING

### Drafting a Research Title

Drafting a research title is a key task in research as this will capture the essence of what you wish to do in your inquiry. There are various ways that can help you develop one.

### Option #1:

Consider the ideas behind your research topic. Identify these main ideas and how they are related to one another. Try to inform a possible title using these main ideas.

### For example:

If your research topic is about vegetarians and their motivation behind their decision to become so. The main ideas would be vegetarians and their motivation.

### Option #2:

Completing the following sentence: “My study is about...” can also aid you in drafting a research title as it captures the essence of your research topic in one sentence.

### For example:

“My study is about how community leaders in Barangay San Luis, Caloocan City developed leadership skills.”

*For example:*

“My study is about how my school connects and garners supports from the alumni.”

*For example:*

“My study is about how DTI employees perceived the Performance-Based Incentive System.”

*Option #3:*

You may also consider mentioning several features of your research such as its purpose, approach and methods used (University of Southern California, 2016).

*Option #4:*

In addition, Wilkinson (1991, in Creswell, 2014, p.26) advised to create the research title as brief as possible and to avoid “unnecessary words.”

*For example:*

Evade using these phrases:  
“An Approach to...”  
or “A Study of...”

*Option #5:*

You may consider also developing a single title or a two-part title. The following are examples of two-part titles from Silverman (2013, p.334):

*For example:*

“Reading Castaneda:  
A Prologue to the Social Sciences”

*For example:*

Policing the Lying Patient:  
Surveillance and Self-Regulation  
in Consultations with  
Adolescent Diabetics”

*Did you know?*

The first part is a snappy phrase intended to catch audience’s attention while the second part is more descriptive the actual study.



*Did you know?*

Having a two-part title can provide the (1) additional context, (2) the temporal scope of the research, (3) the main theory, (4) approach, and (5) methodology used (University of Southern California, 2016).

*For example:*

The title on the following slides showcase these highlights:

*(1) Additional Context:*

“Lessons from Running an Enterprise: Case Studies of Four Filipino-Chinese Families”

*(2) Temporal Scope of the Research:*

“A Comparison: Human Rights Under the Corazon Aquino and Benigno Aquino II Administrations”

*(3) Main Approach Used:*

“The Feminist Approach: Therapy of Battered Wives”

*(4) Methodology Used*

“An Ethnography: Understanding a Child’s Perception of Divorce”

*Parts of Research Title*

THERE ARE THREE PARTS OF RESEARCH TITLE ACCORDING FROM MARKFULLER.COM :

*First Part:*

**A Catchy Hook**—this, the least important part of an academic title, introduces the paper in a creative way.

*Second Part:*

**Topic Keyword**—The "what" of the paper. This identifies concepts the scholar will be exploring. They and are present in the title both for humans scanning lots of articles and for search engine indexing.

*Third Part:*

**Focus Keyword**—The "where/when" of the paper. Along with "topic keyword", these more specific keywords are vital so that researchers can drill down to specific articles that pertain to their research.



KEEP  
CALM  
and formulate your  
RESEARCH  
QUESTION

For lesson handout,  
visit:

<http://jacs.weebly.com>



THANK YOU!