

# **Formulation of Research Problem**

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# Research Background

1. The research problem
2. Studies that have addressed the problem,
3. Deficiencies in the studies,
4. The importance of the study for an audience, and
5. The purpose statement.

# Research Problem

“What is the need for this study?” or “What problem influenced the need to undertake this study?”

# Review Literatur

- Refer to the literature by summarizing groups of studies (unlike the focus on single studies in the integrated review in Chapter 2), not individual studies. The intent should be to establish broad areas of research at this juncture in the study.
- To de-emphasize single studies, place the in-text references at the end of a paragraph or at the end of a summary point about several studies.
- Review research studies that used a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approach.
- Find recent literature to summarize (such as the published in the last 10 years) unless an older study exists that has been widely cited by others.

# Research Tips

- Write an opening sentence that will stimulate reader interest as well as convey an issue to which a broad audience can relate
- As a general rule, refrain from using quotations- especially long ones- in the lead sentence because it will be difficult for readers to grasp the key idea you would like for them to see. Quotations raise many possibilities for interpretation and thus create unclear beginnings. However, as is evident in some qualitative studies, quotations can create reader interest.

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- Stay away from idiomatic expressions or trite phrases.
- Consider numeric information for impact.
- Clearly identify the research problem.
- Indicate why the problem is important by citing numerous references that justify the need to study the problem.
- Make sure that the problem is framed in manner consistent with the approach to research in the study.
- Consider and write about whether there is a single problem involved in the proposed study or multiple problems that lead to a need for the study, Often, multiple research problem are addressed in research studies.

## To review the literature related to the research problem for an introduction to proposal, consider these research tips:

- Refer to the literature by summarizing groups of studies, not individual ones. The intent should be to establish broad areas of research.
- To deemphasize single studies, place the in-text references at the end of a paragraph or at the end of a summary point about several studies.
- Review research studies that uses quantitative, qualitative or mix methods approach.
- Find recent literature to summarize, such as that published in the past 10 years. Cite older studies if they are valuable because they have been widely referenced by others.

When identifying deficiencies in the past literature, proposal developers might use the following tips:

- Cite several deficiencies to make the case even stronger for a study.
- Identify specially the deficiencies of other studies, e.g., methodological flaws, variables overlooked.
- Write about areas overlooked by past studies, including topics, special statistical treatments, significant implications, and so forth.
- Discuss how a proposed study will remedy these deficiencies and provide a unique contribution to the scholarly literature.

# A Qualitative Purpose Statement

- Use words such as purpose, intent, study aim, or objective to signal attention to this statement as the central controlling idea.
- Focus on a single phenomenon.
- Use action verbs to convey how learning will take place. Action verbs and phrases, such as, understand, develop, explore, examine the meaning of, generate, or discover, keep the inquiry open and convey an emergent design.

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- Use neutral word and phrase-non directional languages- such as exploring the “self-expression experiences of individual.” Rather than the “successful self-expression of individual.” Other words and phrases that may be problematic include useful, positive, and informing-all words that suggest a directional outcome that may or may not occur. McCracken (1998) referred to the need in qualitative interviews to let respondent describe his or her experience. Interviewers (or purpose statement writer) can easily violate the “law of non directional” (McCracken, 1988, p. 21) in qualitative research by using words that suggest a directional orientation.

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- Provide a general working definition of the central phenomenon or idea. Especially if the phenomenon is a term that is not typically understood by a broad audience. Consistent with the rhetoric of qualitative research, this definition is not rigid and set but tentative and evolving throughout a study based on information from participants.

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- Include words denoting the strategy of inquiry to be used in data collection, analysis and the process of research, such as whether the study will use an ethnographic, grounded theory, case study, phenomenological, narrative approach, or some other strategy.
- Mention the participant of the study, such as one or more individuals, a group of people, or an entire organization
- Identify the site of research, such as homes, classrooms, organization, program or events. Describe this site in enough detail so that the reader knows exactly where a study will take place.
- As a final thought in the purpose statement, include some language that delimit the scope of participation or research sites of the study