

## Chapter 3

### Planning of Research

#### Essentials of A Good Research Problem

##### 1. Question Mark?

The research problem can be in a declarative or in a question form. We recommend you to formulate your research problem as a question.

##### 2. Possibility to Respond

Some questions are impossible to answer in a scientific way, for example: 'how beautiful is the color yellow'. We don't have the scientifically justified instruments to answer this question. It must also be possible to answer the question in a practical way so it must be researchable, meaning you have to be able to collect evidence that will answer the question.

##### 3. Attainability

The problem must be one that can be solved during the amount of time you have. So it can't be too broad (ex: 'How can we have world peace?'). But it also can't be too narrow (ex: How does my neighbor think about Indians?).

##### 4. Open Question

The research problem should be an open question. That means it cannot be answered by "yes" or "no". But also, with open questions you should watch out for the possibility of a shallow answer.

##### 5. Unmistakability

Your research problem must be clear and there has to be only one way to interpret it. For example: The question 'What do you think about the West?' is un mistakable because it is not clear what is meant by 'the West', it can be a lot of things.

##### 6. Punctuality

The problem must be clearly specified. For example: Don't write 'How can prejudices against Americans be combated?' if you mean: 'How can prejudices that live among jazan students for Americans be combated?'

#### Sources of Research Problems

##### a). Research Problem from Expert

The simplest source of a problem to solve is to have it given to you as a class assignment, as a directed research project, or as a task while you are an apprentice in someone's lab. You are told what problem to research and how to do it.

##### b). Research Problem from Insight

Sometimes people research an issue simply because it occurred to them and it seemed important. The systematic development of the idea is lacking. It is risky because you may not be able to get other researchers to understand why the research is important.

### c). Research Problem from **Informal Discussion**

This is a research problem that some discussion group feels is interesting. Discussion among friends can often spark our interest in a problem or provides us with the reinforces for pursuing a question.

### d). Research Problem from **Knowledge of Techniques and Apparatus**

This is the selection of a research topic based on your special knowledge outside the field. A technique or apparatus with which you are familiar can offer the potential for a major advance in the field of psychology. Sometimes we realize that we can apply a new technique or apparatus to an area to which it has not yet been applied.

### e). Research Problem from **Reading the Literature**

These are research problems which capture your interest while reading. While reading you will often wonder why, or will disagree, or will realize that you have a better idea than the original author.

### f). Research Problem Deduced from **Paradigms or Theories**

Researchers who propose theoretical accounts for phenomena cannot think through every possible ramification. As you come to understand a theory, potential errors or extensions become apparent. This type of research tests the implications of theories to confirm or reject them. This is classic deductive “normal” science.

## **Factors Affecting Selection of Research Problem**

A problem for the purpose of study must be selected only after considering certain factors or criteria. The criteria can be broadly grouped into two groups:

- a). Internal factors
- b). External factors

### 1. **Internal Factors**

The internal factors include personal interest of the researcher, competence of the researcher, and the resources available.

- **Researcher's Interest:** The researcher should be deeply interested in the problem. He should be determined to find solution to the problem.
- **Researcher's Competence:** It is not enough for the researcher to have dedication to research work, but there should be proper application or competence on the part of the researcher. The researcher should have the knowledge, ability and skills to handle the research activity.
- **Availability of Resources:** A more significant internal factor affecting problem selection is the availability of resources. The researcher should have adequate time and money to handle the research activity.

### 2. **External Factors**

- **Quality of Research Problem:** The research problem should of substance. There is no sense to study a research problem if it would not serve any purpose. One should not waste one's time and efforts on a problem studied thoroughly by others.

- **Availability of Facilities:** Research requires certain facilities such as appropriate library facilities, data processing facilities, etc. Therefore, the researcher must consider the availability of external facilities to make the research study effective.
- **Social Relevance:** The research should be socially relevant. It should serve some purpose to the society or to the organization that conducts the research. The factors of social relevance is especially important in the case of higher-level academic research and sponsored research.
- **Research Personnel:** At times, research activity requires a good deal of research personnel to undertake field interviews and other related activities. Therefore, the researchers should consider the availability of competent research personnel to assist him in research work. If necessary, the research personnel need to be provided with necessary guidance and training to undertake the research activities effectively.
- **Urgency and Importance of the Problem:** Business organizations and other institutions face a number of problems. They should list out the problems in the order of their urgency and importance. The more urgent and important problems should be researched first, as they are vital to the success of the organization and/or such problems if solved at the earliest may help to avert major crisis.
- **Feasibility of the Research:** Most of all, the researcher should consider the feasibility of the research. He should find well in advance whether or not he would be able to:
  - ✓ Collect the relevant data from the right sources.
  - ✓ Obtain proper responses from the respondents.
  - ✓ Get the required cooperation and guidance from concerned authorities in providing data or accessing the records. There are some organizations, such as private organizations, do not easily allow researchers to access their records.
  - ✓ Complete the research activity within the available time.