

What are the key characteristics of a statement of the problem?

1. A good research problem should have the following characteristics:
2. It should address a gap in knowledge.
3. It should be significant enough to contribute to the existing body of research
4. It should lead to further research
5. The problem should render itself to investigation through collection of data
6. It should be of interest to the researcher and suit his/her skills, time, and resources
7. The approach towards solving the problem should be ethical

What is the format for writing a statement of the problem?

A persuasive statement of problem is usually written in three parts:

Part A (The ideal): Describes a desired goal or ideal situation; explains how things should be.

Part B (The reality): Describes a condition that prevents the goal, state, or value in Part A from being achieved or realized at this time; explains how the current situation falls short of the goal or ideal.

Part C (The consequences): Identifies the way you propose to improve the current situation and move it closer to the goal or ideal.

Here is an example:

Example 1

Part A: According to the XY university mission statement, the university seeks to provide students with a safe, healthy learning environment. Dormitories are one important aspect of that learning environment, since 55% of XY students live in campus dorms and most of these students spend a significant amount of time working in their dorm rooms.

However,

Part B: Students living in dorms A B C, and D currently do not have air conditioning units, and during the hot seasons, it is common for room temperatures to exceed 80 degrees F. Many students report that they are unable to do homework in their dorm rooms. Others report having problems

sleeping because of the humidity and temperature. The rooms are not only unhealthy, but they inhibit student productivity and academic achievement.

Part C: In response to this problem, our study proposes to investigate several options for making the dorms more hospitable. We plan to carry out an all-inclusive participatory investigation into options for purchasing air conditioners (university-funded; student-subsidized) and different types of air conditioning systems. We will also consider less expensive ways to mitigate some or all of the problems noted above (such as creating climate-controlled dorm lounges and equipping them with better study areas and computing space).

Here is a simple four-step guide to writing a statement of the problem:

Step 1 (Statement 1): Describe a goal or desired state of a given situation, phenomenon etc. This will build the ideal situation (what should be, what is expected or desired)

Step 2 (Statement 2): Describe a condition that prevents the goal, state, or value discussed in Step 1 from being achieved or realized at the present time. This will build the reality or the situation as it is and establish a gap between what ought to be and what is.

Step 3: Connect steps 1 and 2 using a connecting term such as "but," "however," "unfortunately," or "in spite of."

Step 4 (Statement 3): Using specific details, show how the situation in step 2 contains little promise of improvement unless something is done. Then emphasize the benefits of research by projecting the consequences of possible solutions.

Here are some examples of how you can write a statement of the problem using the steps mentioned above:

Example 2

Step 1 (Statement 1)

The government of Kenya has a goal to industrialize the nation by the year 2030 (quote). In this regard it has encouraged growth-oriented micro and small enterprises (MSEs) that should

graduate into medium and large enterprises capable of contributing to the industrialization goal. There are several sessional papers (quote/cite) that contain specific measures to encourage and support MSEs.

Step 2 and 3 (Statement 2)

Despite the said government efforts, there is slow growth of micro into small enterprises and even slower growth of small into medium scale enterprises (quote, show statistics). The government has officially acknowledged that there exists a “missing middle” in Kenya meaning that there is a gap between small and large enterprises in the country (cite, quote).

Step 4 (Statement 3)

Should the “missing middle” gap persist, the industrialization goal may be difficult to achieve. A need therefore arises to investigate why there is a persistent “missing middle” despite government efforts.

Example 3

Statement 1

In order to accomplish their missions, public universities need motivated workforces.

Statement 2

There are, however, frequent and severe disciplinary actions, absenteeism, as well as various forms of unrest in public universities which affect the accomplishment of the set missions. Our preliminary investigation reveals that both non-management and management staff are under motivated.

Statement 3

Without effective motivational packages and procedures, the said vices are likely to continue and retard the achievement of the universities’ missions.

Thus, there is a need to examine the public universities’ motivation systems and procedures, which is the aim of the proposed research.

Example 4

Statement 1

The Ministry of Youth is dedicated to allocating enterprise development funds to both the youth and women. These funds are made available in order to start entrepreneurial ventures that create and expand employment. (Provide relevant statistics and quote)

Statement 2

One of the main focuses of the ministry is consistency. Unfortunately, consistency in allocating funds to the next generation of recipients requires prior knowledge of previous allocations and established practices. The current continuous disbursement method does not allow for adequate analysis of previous disbursements before a current disbursement is done.

Statement 3

Continuing with this current disbursement method prevents consistency and causes decisions to become grossly political, which in turn inhibits the achievement of the goals of the funds. Developing a more informed disbursement system could help better implement the consistency focus of the ministry and at the same time help the ministry better monitor and evaluate its funds. This proposed research aspires to explore options for a new funds disbursement system that would focus on consistency. To do this, the researcher will carry out a full stakeholder analysis and use it to propose appropriate policy interventions.