

"THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH QUESTION".

- "Having a problem makes you anxious that pushes you to exert efforts on finding a solution. There will be doubts that you are uncertain of your solutions thus conducting a research is the best thing to do. Doing a research always begins with a problem which points you to a topic to look out. Getting the background and establishing your research question that causes the problem is a hint to start knowing what your problem is all about. In this lesson you have to study the concept of research problems and research questions including its scope and delimitation, and the significance.

> Chapter I of the research paper is called The Problem and Its Background (sometimes also called The Introduction).

> It is composed of the following sections:

- Background of the Study.
- Statement of the Problem.
- Scope and Delimitation, and
- Significance of the Study.

> The Research Problem (According to Calderon & Gonzales, 1993)

> A problem is "any significant, perplexing, and challenging situation, real or artificial, the solution of which requires reflexive thinking". In research, it is known as the research topic or research title.

↳ General

- A research topic is the broad subject matter of the study. ➡ Topic Distance
- A general problem is a general issue or concern about the research that narrows the topic. ➡ Research Problem: Lack of learners' knowledge about distance in distance education
- A purpose of the study used to address the problem. ➡ Purpose Statement: To study why learners do not attend distance education classes in a community college.
- A research question narrows the purpose into specific questions that the researcher would like to answer in the study. ➡ Research Questions: Does the use of website technology in the classroom deter learners from enrolling in a distance education class?

↳ Specific

A. Background of the Study

Purpose of background of the study: a. The general definition of the topic/problem area

- b. Historical basis for the existence of the problem
- c. Efforts made towards addressing similar challenges
- d. How the efforts failed to be realized hence the need for your study

>Contents of the background of the study:

- a. Presentation of the problem - Describe the existence of an unsatisfactory condition or a problem that needs a solution
- b. Historical background of the problem - Give the historical background of the problem, if applicable
- c. Geographical conditions of the study locale - If applicable describe the geographical location of the study
- d. Rationale of the study - give the reason(s) why the study should be conducted

>The Do's and Don'ts of writing a Research Background Study

Do's:

- Explain the importance of your research topic
- Talk about the main developments and missing links and gaps in your research area
- Focus on the relevant aspects of your study explaining how it will lead to the progress of scientific knowledge
- Engage your findings in a chronological manner
- Articulate your ideas in a clear and concise manner
- Engage the readers by building a story around the central theme of your research

Don'ts:

- Write a background that is too long or short
- Be ambiguous in your writing. Disorganized and discuss unrelated subjects
- Forget the reader may not be familiar with the details of your work
- Elaborate on your background literature
- Forget to provide a historical perspective

- Forget to check your target journal's instruction for presenting the study background

B. Statement of the Problem

(Purpose Statement and Research Questions)

- A series of questions used in researching the topic.

It is composed of:

1. The general statement of the problem (the purpose statement) and

2. The specific sub-problems or sub-questions (or research questions)

1. The general statement of the problem and the research questions should be formulated first before conducting the research

2. Research questions should be stated in the interrogative, and each should be clear to avoid confusion

3. Each research question should be researchable separately from the other questions and must be based upon known facts and phenomena which is accessible to the researcher

4. Answers to each research question can be interpreted apart from the answers to the other specific questions and must contribute to the development of the whole research study.

5. The summary of the answers to all the specific questions will give a complete development of the entire study.

6. The number of research questions should be enough to cover the development of the whole research study

C. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

Scope of a Study

-It is the coverage of the research to be explored which includes the facts and theories about the subject

>Example: A research study on the impact of social networking on the attitude of senior high school learners.

- It is not possible to cover all aspects of the selected subject. The scope will have to be restricted to a specific section of the target population over a specified duration.

- In the above-cited study, a group of 40 learners in senior high school at one school would be an ideal coverage to study their attitude for five months.

- These would form the next parameter

These limitations include the following:

1. Sample size

- a. The research design and method will determine whether if it is small or large sample size.
- b. The sample size will determine the quality of data and the relationships that will be identified among the variables.

2. Lack of available and/or reliable data

- This will limit the scope of analysis and the ability of the researcher to determine meaningful trends and relationships among the data.

3. Lack of prior studies

- This will limit the effectiveness of the literature review and initial understanding of the research.

4. Chosen data collection method

- The quality of data collected must be clear to avoid erroneous answers from the respondents.

5. Nature of the information collected

- Researcher should not rely on pre-existing data

6. Access

The amount and quality of available data will depend on the ability of the researcher to access people, organizations, libraries, and documents.

6. Time period

It is advisable to select a research problem and design.

-8. Bias

- The researcher should be aware of his or her personal biases.

9. Language

- This may have an effect on data collection, especially if the researcher is involved with respondents that speak a variety of languages.
- When writing the paper, the researcher should ensure that any delimitation factor is noted down at the introduction, discussion, and conclusion sections. He or she should clarify why the study included and excluded some delimitation.

D. Significance of the Study

- The significance of the study discusses the purpose that the research will serve to society, the country, the government, the institution or agency concerned, the curriculum planners and developers, and the research community.

- Describes the contribution of the study to the existing body of knowledge.

It could be the following:

a. A form of new knowledge in the field.

b. A validation of the major findings of other studies.

c. A verification of the validity of findings in a different population.

d. Analysis of trends over time, and validation of other findings using different methodologies.

* The researcher must identify specifically the beneficiaries who will directly gain from the results of the study, mentioning them in the paper according to the significance of the result. The specific benefits must also be enumerated and explained if necessary.

>Example

The Effects of Computer-assisted Instruction in the Performance of Students in Asian History and Civilization Cuenca, 2001)

The findings of the study may provide deeper insights on how teaching can be made easier and more meaningful by the use of computer-aided instruction. The study determined the significant effects of slide presentation, a form of computer instruction on the performance of the students in the subjects Asian History and Civilization.

To the students, the results may serve as an inspiration for them to continuously improve their skills in using computers because they will realize the comfort that computer skills offer in complying with the requirements of major subjects in the coming years.

To the administrators, the results may serve as a guide in the program-planning and implementation of the IT department so that they can be of great help to the teachers of the university.

To the teachers, the results may serve as an eye opener for them. The findings of this study may encourage more of them to apply computer-aided instruction in teaching.

II. Presenting Written Statement of the Problem

1. Introduction

- States briefly the background of the study and identifies the rationale of the research problem.

- It begins with a general statement of the problem, outlines the specific problem or issue within the existing literature.

2. Statement of the Problem

- States clearly the purposes or interest of the study, poses specific questions about research problem.

3. Scope and Delimitation

- Sets the boundaries and parameters of the study, narrows the scope of the inquiry.

4. Significance of the Study

- Shows the benefits of the study to address issues and problems in improving economic and health conditions or even finding solutions to problems encountered in daily life.