

Problem framing Summary

TOPIC: Problem Framing & Problematization

SOURCE: Alvesson & Sandberg (2011) - Generating Research Questions Through Problematization

KEY CONCEPTS:

1. The Dominance of Gap-Spotting

Most management research relies on "gap-spotting" to construct research questions. This involves identifying a shortage of studies in a specific area. While safe, it often leads to incremental contributions that reinforce existing assumptions rather than challenging them.

2. Problematization as an Alternative

The authors propose "problematization" as a methodology for generating more influential research questions. This involves:

- Identifying a domain of literature.
- Identifying the underlying assumptions (in-house, root, or paradigmatic).
- Evaluating these assumptions.
- Developing an alternative assumption ground.
- Considering the audience.

3. Application

To make a significant theoretical contribution, I must move beyond simply asking "what is missing?" to asking "what is wrong with how we currently think about this?".