

Getting Started with Research

Picking a Topic

- Focus on what is to be studied
- Define the problem
- Should be of personal interest
- Considerations
 - What currently exists in literature
 - Gaps in theory or current state of art
 - Feasibility of conducting research
 - Policy implications
 - Funding available

The Purpose of Your Research

- Exploring
 - Information about something for which there is awareness, but limited knowledge
- Describing
 - Specific aspects or elements of the topic
- Explaining
 - Analyze and fully understand the concept

The Research Question

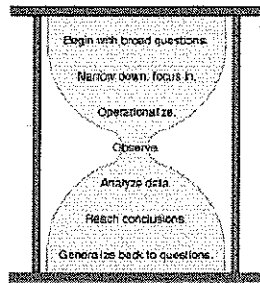
- Once topic is chosen, create the research question
- Statement to be answered through the research process
- Synonymous with research problem

Hypotheses

- Expected result or relationship between independent and dependent variables
- Research hypothesis: if X, then Y
- Null hypothesis: X has no relationship with Y
- Rival hypothesis: the more of X, the less of Y

Creating A Study

The Hourglass Metaphor for the Research Process



Key Elements

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions and references
- Stylistic elements

Key Elements

Introduction

- Statement of the problem
 - Importance and significance of problem area
 - Clear, unambiguous
- Literature review and citations
 - Appropriate, professional sources
 - From more general to specific
- Statement of constructs
- Research question or hypotheses
- Identify an applicable theory (deductive study)

The Literature Review

- Scientific literature
- Similar studies
- Major constructs
- Measurement instruments
- Common problems

Methods

- Sample or participants
 - Sampling procedure
 - Describe population and sampling frame if appropriate
- Measurement
 - Measures
 - Construction of measures
- Design and procedures
 - Design
 - Description of procedures

Results

- Statement of results
 - Relate results to questions or hypotheses
- Tables
- Figures

Conclusions and Reference Sections

- Implications of the study
 - Remaining problems
 - Limitations
- References
 - Includes all citations in correct format

Stylistic Elements

- Professional writing
 - Avoid first person
 - Unbiased and unemotional
- Sentence structure
- Spelling and word usage
- General style
