

## Research Problems, Research Questions

A **research problem** : is troubling situation that a researcher wants to address through disciplined inquiry.

The purpose of research is to “solve” the problem—or to contribute to its solution—by accumulating relevant information.

Many reports include a **statement of purpose** (or purpose statement), which is the researcher’s summary of the overall goal.

A researcher might also identify several *aims* or *objectives*—the specific accomplishments the researcher hopes to achieve by conducting the study.

The objectives include answering research questions or testing research hypotheses.

### **The difference between the problem and the purpose of the study:**

The problem statement of a study contains what will be examined by the researcher , or the content of the study. Where as the purpose statement of the study contains the why the study will be conducted.

The following statements demonstrate the difference between the purpose and the problem of the study.

- Problem of the study : before their first interaction with psychiatric client , is there a difference in the anxiety levels of nursing students who have read their client charts before interacting with them to those students who have not read their client charts before interacting with them?
- Purpose of the study : to determine a means of facilitating nursing students ‘ first interaction with clients in the psychiatric setting .

## **Sources of Research Problems**

The most common sources of ideas for nursing research problems are clinical experience, relevant literature, social issues, theory, and external suggestions.

### **1- Clinical experience.**

The nurse's everyday clinical experience is a rich source of ideas for research problems.

### **2- Nursing literature.**

Ideas for studies often come from reading the nursing literature.

Research reports may suggest problem areas indirectly by stimulating the reader's imagination and directly by clearly stating what additional research is needed.

### **3- Social issues.**

Topics are sometimes suggested by global social or political issues of relevance to the health care community.

### **4- Theories.**

Theories from nursing and other related disciplines are another source of research problems.

Researchers ask, If this theory is correct, what would I predict about people's behaviors, states, or feelings?

The predictions can then be tested through research.

### **5- Ideas from external sources.**

External sources and direct suggestions can sometimes provide the drive for a research idea.

Often, ideas for studies emerge as a result of a brainstorming session.

By discussing possible research topics with peers, advisers or mentors, or researchers with advanced skills, ideas often become clarified and sharpened or enriched and more fully developed.

Professional conferences often provide an excellent opportunity for such discussions.

Additionally, researchers who have developed a program of research on a topic area may get inspiration for "next steps" from their own findings, or from a discussion of those findings with others.

## **Research problem considerations**

Various criteria should be considered in assessing the value of a research problem.

1. Significance of the Problem, the problem should be clinically significant;  
The researcher should ask questions such as: will the health care professional benefit of the finding of this study?  
will the body of nursing knowledge increase as the result of this study? Can nurses use the results?  
If the answers of these questions are 'yes' the problem has significance to nursing.
2. Researchability of the Problem, (questions of a moral or ethical nature are inappropriate); It is the responsibility of the researcher to guarantee ,to the best of their ability that their research is ethical, they should be familiar with ethical guide lines
3. Feasibility of addressing the Problem . Feasibility involves the issues of time, cooperation of study participants and other people, availability of facilities and equipment, researcher experience, and ethical considerations
4. Interest to the Researcher, Even if the tentative problem is researchable, significant, and feasible, there is one more criterion: the researcher's own interest in the problem.

## **Problem statement criteria**

The important criteria for a research problem statement are that :

- 1-Is written in **interrogative** sentence form.
- 2- Include the population
- 3- Include the variables
- 4- Empirically tested