

Formulating Objectives from the General to the Specific

Key Terms

Understanding the different terms and how they relate:

Term	Definition
Problem Statement	<p>A statement that provides the general objective, purpose or aim of the research project. It is a researchable problem that is to be investigated.</p> <p>For example: <i>To investigate factors associated with violence against female employees in the hotel industry.</i></p> <p>It can be written as a question:</p> <p><i>Does income influence the eating patterns of students in a named high school?</i></p>
Statement of the Problem	<p>An expansion of the Problem Statement, where the variables and relationships are explained. It acts as a guide for the researcher and the readers, so that they can see the direction that the research is taking, and it shows what is being investigated and what is not.</p> <p>From the Statement of the Problem, you are able to formulate the Research Objectives and/or Questions.</p>
Research Objectives	<p>These are precise statements specifying the key issues that will be the focus of the research project. Generally, a research project has a general objective and several specific research objectives.</p> <p>General Objective example:</p> <p><i>To examine whether limited gender laws are associated with increased violence against female hotel employees.</i></p> <p>Research objectives can also be framed as research questions.</p>
Research Questions	<p>Instead of providing research objectives, the researcher can use research questions. The major difference is that the key issues to be focused on are stated in the form of questions, for example:</p> <p><i>Has the lack of gender laws contributed to increased violence against female hotel employees?</i></p> <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <p><i>Have gender laws been enacted in the country in the past 10 years?</i></p> <p><i>What are the violent acts committed against female hotel employees?</i></p> <p><i>Is there a connection between female workers feeling unprotected legally and the acts of violence committed against them in the hotel industry?</i></p>
Research Hypotheses	<p>Research objectives can also be stated in the form of hypotheses. A hypothesis is the prediction of an association between two or more variables, usually predicting the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable.</p> <p>Independent variables are measurable and are not influenced by the other variables that are being measured, while dependent variables depend on the independent variables.</p> <p>For example: <i>Increased violence (independent variable) against female hotel employees is associated with the lack of gender laws (dependent variable).</i></p>

Criteria for the Selection and Use of Sources of Information

When selecting sources, each needs to be specifically examined and assessed in terms of relevance, degree of validity and adequacy for purpose.

Table 1.1 Selection and use of sources of information

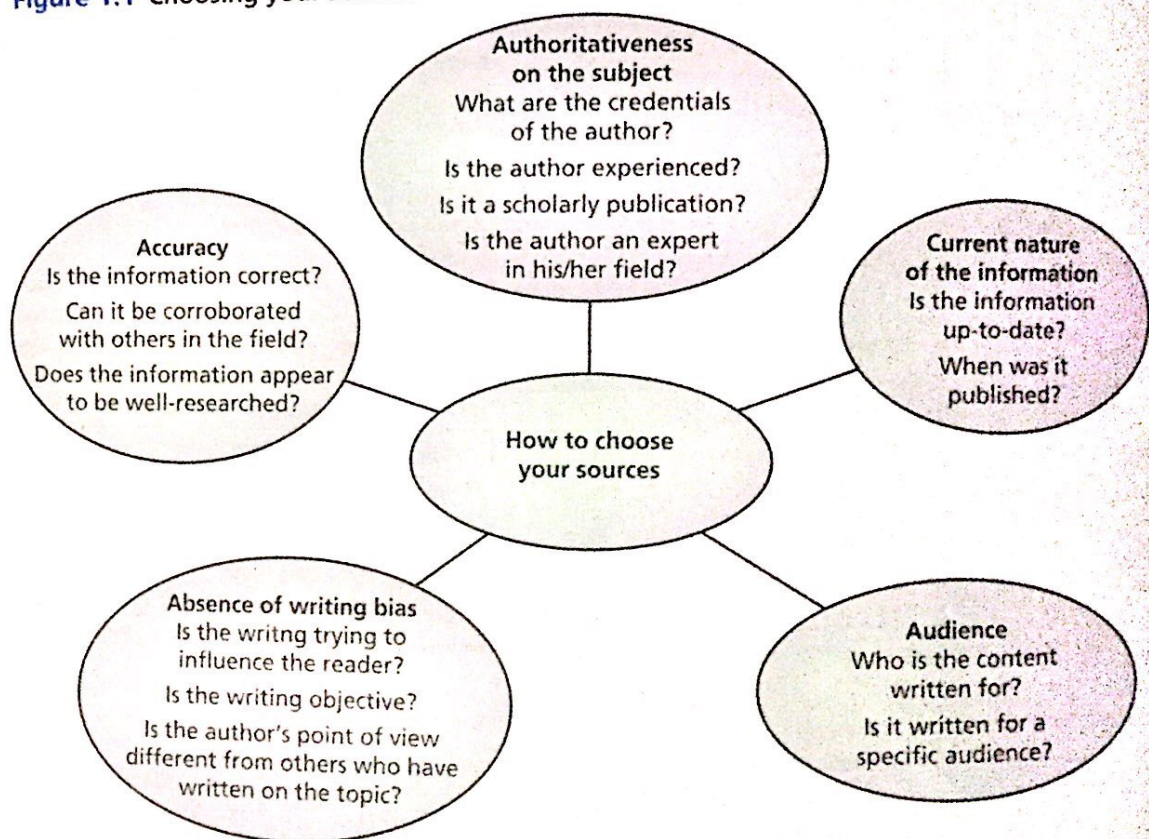
Source	Types	Selection criteria	When to use	Disadvantages
Archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government agencies' public records Research organisations Businesses and commercial organisations Hospitals and healthcare providers News media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance to research topic Availability of the source as the main element of research Availability of the needed data Creation of other areas of focus Completeness of format and preparation Clarification it brings to the research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is the need to make comparisons with similar populations To get a complete picture of a phenomena To present information about past activities To identify areas of need and concern They present information from the source When time and resources are constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data may not be up-to-date (archives are usually updated every five years) Data usually based on a large population sample May be time consuming to search for relevant/necessary information
Existing literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books Ebooks Scholarly articles Peer-reviewed journals Statistical and other reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of background information Stability of the information Depth of coverage on a topic Date of publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To get background information about a topic To get an overview of main ideas To get historical facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time to write and print a book can cause information to be outdated Facts can be incorrect The information is revised, leading to change in content
Internet sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Databases Websites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current nature and accuracy of information Current nature of content and links Reviewed information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the information lays the foundation for deeper analysis When the information has not been tampered with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is at risk of being biased, inaccurate and incomplete Difficult to establish credibility of sources
Minutes of meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbatim minutes Action minutes Closed-door meeting minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording of events Availability of factual and chronological events Recording of motions and actions Provision of trends over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together information about actions taken To collect data on attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lengthy discussions not included Records may be incomplete May contain classified information which cannot be made public
Newspaper reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local news National news International news Commentary Epaper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance to the topic being researched When summaries of key studies are needed Presents key facts about an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They provide information that can lead you to other sources They provide recommendations for reform and problem-solving strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not provide detailed study results Some newspapers require a fee to access their information Can sensationalise events or facts to create a 'good story'

(continued)

Table 1.1 continued

Source	Types	Selection criteria	When to use	Disadvantages
Oral histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio recordings • Video recordings • Transcripts • Eyewitness accounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untapped perspectives shared in historical record • Quality of evidence for understanding about people's past • Provision of viewpoints on changes and constancy in values and traditions • Provision of insight into specific groups (ethnic, religious) • Clarification of folklore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn more about people's way of life • To get information about overlooked groups • To get insight into a culture's traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depend on the memory of the participant • Information is limited to the history of a particular city, country or area • Information is geared at the criteria established by the agency that commissioned it
Visual images	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps • Before and after Pictures • Video tapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information about real-life situations • Showcasing of new perspective on the issue • Conveying missing detail • Capture of applicable visual images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they represent the issue • To show changes over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to subjective interpretation • Permission of the participants may be difficult to acquire

Figure 1.1 Choosing your sources



The diagram in Figure 1.1 summarises the important things to focus upon when collecting information to substantiate your research and to meet the required criteria in terms of degree of validity, adequacy and relevance, always bearing in mind the fundamental question: do the source findings relate to the hypothesis or problem?

Internet Sources

It is very important that you are vigilant in the selection of your sources to ensure that you have used appropriate ones to validate your research. While online sources can prove to be invaluable, a researcher must use some important criteria in addition those applied to other sources to select which of them are appropriate for inclusion in their **literature review**.

Figure 1.2 Criteria for using internet sources

Authorship

Can the author be identified – is their name on the page?
 What are his/her qualifications?
 Does the author provide contact information?
 (A website with an unnamed author should be avoided.)

Motive

What is the author's purpose in writing this?
 Which audience is the information intended for?
 Is the author affiliated to an organisation?

Accuracy

Can the information be verified?
 Are there grammatical, typographical and spelling errors?
 (The presence of these can be an indication that the writing has not been created by an established authority or been reviewed.)
 Is there evidence that the information has undergone review?

Objectivity

Is there evidence of bias?
 Is the author impartial and unbiased?
 Does the writer use emotive words to influence readers?

Currency

Is the creation date provided?
 Is the information updated regularly? When was the last time? Is it up-to-date?

Links

Are the links on the site current?
 Do the links lead to dead ends?
 Are the links related to the topic?

Key Term

Literature review – an analytical and detailed review of the existing literature that relates to a particular field of study. See Chapter 2 'Research Practice' for more information on this.

Exam Tip

A critical approach is important in examining information found on the internet. It is recommended that you print out the information that you plan to include in your research and document the date of access, website address and other key details.

Referencing Style

In the writing of any research, it is extremely important that the researcher acknowledges the sources from which he or she has gathered information. In some instances, you will be citing the work that you used, in other cases you will be paraphrasing. As you will need to

Table 1.2 APA style for references and bibliographies

	Referencing text	Bibliography
One Author	<p>Format Last name (Year of publication) (Last name Year of publication, Page)</p> <p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor (2014), traces the history of workers conflict in the Caribbean ... • In 2014, Taylor presents an in-depth examination on the impact of labour policy on income inequality ... • This has been identified as a major effect of labour policy on income (Taylor 2014, 142). 	<p>Format Last name, First initial. (Year of publication). <i>Title</i>. Location of publisher: Publisher</p> <p>Example Taylor, O. (2014). <i>Broken Promises, Hearts and Pockets: A Century of Betrayal of the Jamaican Working Class</i>. Kingston: Arawak Publications.</p>
Two or more Authors When a work has more than two authors, all the names must be cited the first time, and afterward only include the first author's last name followed by et al.	<p>Format Last name and Last name (Year of publication) (Last name & Last name Year of publication)</p> <p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haralambos and Holborn (2013), define culture as ... • McChesney, Covey and Huling (2012) explain that leaders can only achieve extraordinary goals ... • McChesney et al. (2012) explain further that success ... • ... that enable goals to be prioritised (McChesney et al. 2012) 	<p>Format Last name, First initial, & Last name, First initial. (Year of publication). <i>Title</i>. Location of publisher: Publisher</p> <p>Example Haralambos, M. & Holborn, M. (2013). <i>Sociology Themes and Perspectives</i> (8th Edition). UK: Harper-Collins</p> <p>McChesney, C., Covey S., & Huling, J. (2012). <i>The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals</i>. New York: Free Press</p>
Journal article and other sources If the source is available online, add the DOI or URL to the end of the reference.	<p>Format Last name, Year of publication</p> <p>Example One main condition of alcoholic liver disease is cardio vascular disease (Gao & Bataller, 2011),</p>	<p>Format Last name, First initial. (Year). Title of article. <i>Journal Title</i>, volume number(issue number):page range. doi: xxxx or URL</p> <p>Example Gao, B. & Bataller, R. (2011). Alcoholic liver disease: Pathogenesis and new therapeutic targets. <i>Gastroenterology</i>, 141(5):1572-85. doi:10.1001/jama.2012.82</p>
Online newspaper articles	<p>Format Last name (Year of publication)</p> <p>Example Connelly (2015) quoted a retired educator who claims that the education policies are lacking ...</p>	<p>Format Last name, First initial. (Year, Month Day). Title of article. <i>Newspaper Name</i>. Retrieved from URL</p> <p>Example Connelly, C. (2015, September 27). Bernard: More of the same from education policies. <i>Newsday</i>. Retrieved from http://www.newsday.co.tt/news</p>
Website	<p>Format Name of article, year</p> <p>Example Marginalised or privileged? Why boys underachieve in Caribbean schools, 2000</p>	<p>Format Name of article (Year, Month Day). Retrieved from name of website: URL</p> <p>Example Marginalised or privileged? Why boys underachieve in Caribbean schools (2000, August 30). Retrieved from the Aidis website: http://www.eldis.org</p>

Table 2.1 Comparing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods		Qualitative	Quantitative
Purpose	Provides information about the 'human' side of an issue, such as beliefs, opinions, behaviours, intentions, emotions and relationships	Collection of numerical data which is analysed statistically in order to be able to explain a specific phenomenon	
The approach used	Observation and interpretation	Measurement and testing	
Characteristic of the sample	Small samples, which are often in their natural setting; non-representative; purposeful	Large samples used to provide wide range of results; precise and random representative sample	
Data collection method	Unstructured; no constraints or stipulations; spontaneous responses	Structured responses; categories are pre-determined from which respondents must choose	
Examples of data collection methods	Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informant • Semi-structured • Individual Focus group discussions Participant observations/field notes Logs, journals, diaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random sampling surveys • Structured interviews • Population census • Questionnaires • Observation checklists 	
Researcher involvement	Intimately involved; trust emphasised; results are subjective because it involves examining and reflecting on perceptions, values and attitudes	Uninvolved, detached; results are objective because they measure the frequency, range and scale of a phenomena	
Goals	To develop understanding of realities; have a concern or issue resolved; to understand social processes	To test theories; establish facts; predict relationships between variables; provide statistical descriptions of phenomena	
Questions to answer	How? Why?	What? How many?	

Qualitative Methods

The three most common qualitative methods are:

<p>Focus groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective in drawing out data on the cultural customs of a group • produce general ideas about issues of concern to the cultural groups or to the subgroups represented 	<p>In-depth interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ideal when data on individuals' personal histories, experiences and perspectives are being investigated • especially appropriate for the study of delicate topics 	<p>Participant observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable for accumulating information on naturally occurring behaviours in their traditional environments
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Quantitative Methods

The three most common quantitative methods are:

<p>Survey/Questionnaire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable for collecting homogeneous data from a large population • typically poses questions to bring about responses about facts, qualities, behaviours, inclinations, traits and attitudes 	<p>Observation schedule/ checklist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable for gathering information about people, events and places using a checklist to identify frequency of a phenomenon 	<p>Document analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable for obtaining relevant documented information that will help in the validation of facts in the research • especially important for the literature review
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