

Selecting questions

Steps



1. This section aims to support you in selecting your research questions. The first step in the process will be selecting your general problem/broad idea/theme that you want to investigate.

Broad topic - what is your general interest, or problem you want to investigate?

In selecting your broad topic you may consider:

- ✓ Your personal interest or experiences.
- ✓ Time and resources - It is important that you select the topic that is manageable within the time and resources you have.
- ✓ Your experience and knowledge about the subject.
- ✓ Ethical issues.

2. After you decide what is your general interest, you need to narrow it down and select a **sub topic** which you can investigate. In order to do that, you may think **what you want to find out about your general topic?**

This question requires from you to ask yourself what is your research about.

You may consider:

People, Social actors, Bodies, Emotions, Thoughts , Feelings, Memories, Senses, Consciousness, Instincts, Understanding, Interpretations, Motivations, Ideas, Perceptions, Attitudes, Belief, Views, Identities, Self, Groups, Communities, Cultural or Social Construction, Experiences, Accounts, Stories, Narratives, Biographies, Development, Process, Text, Discourses, Words, Codes, Communication, Languages, Actions, Behaviours, Events, Interactions, Social Relations, Social or Cultural practices, Rules, Norms, Regulations, Institutions, Organisations.

Masson (1996:11-12)

This is not a complete list, but you may use it to filter your interest to select your sub topic.

3. Once you know more precisely, what is your specific topic, it is time to **formulate your research question**.

In selecting your research questions you may consider following questions:

- ✔ Decide what you want to know about the components of your topic ?
- ✔ Avoid yes/ no question. There is nothing to do research about.
- ✔ Be specific, precise and simple. Decide: When? Where? Who? What? How? you want to know about.

4. Once you select your research questions, you should **evaluate your research question**.

In evaluating your research questions you may consider following questions:

- ✔ Is your research question clear?
- ✔ Is it enough literature available on your research questions?
- ✔ Is your question specific? This mean that your question should be researchable. This means that it should not be formulated in abstract terms.
- ✔ Is your research question grounded in theoretical and empirical knowledge? This means that it should be a literature that should guide you how your question should be approached.

If your answer to above questions is 'No' you should re-consider your research questions.

Now view the **checklist** which contains all steps described in this section. It may help you in selecting research questions.