BUILDING CONSISTENCY BETWEEN TITLE, PROBLEM, PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS
To Improve the Quality of Research Plans and Reports

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Abstract
A key in the first steps in designing or reviewing research are crucial for improving consistency of that research. This paper discusses ways to build consistency into the problem, purpose and research questions.

THE PROBLEM

This purpose section states succinctly WHAT will be done or was done to address the problem. The WHAT section should be one paragraph, two at the most. It is a link between the longer WHY section and the next section on research questions. It tells what will be done or was done to collect data to address the why.

THE PURPOSE

The problem sections highlights the relevant literature, data, trends or related information that justifies the study. Sometimes called the purpose statement, or the introduction with a short problem statement, this section tells WHY the study should or was done. It gives the reader the main reasons for the study.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Academic titles are long so they can clarify the main elements of the research. WHAT words are used to list the variables or constructs the study explores. WHO words name the people, groups, sample or population within which these variables and constructs will be studied. HOW words suggest the research design of the study, indicating how data on the constructs are collected from the people. This can be broadly stated as quantitative or qualitative, or more narrowly focused on data collection like interviews or surveys, or even data analysis as factor analysis or multivariate analysis of variance. WHERE words tell us where the people and the data was collected, such as in a nation, region, a military organization, or 3rd grade classrooms in Detroit.

THE WHY SECTION

Research questions summarize in at least one but often up to four or five questions the main inquiry for which data was collected. Using key words in the title and key relationships noted in the problem and purpose help craft questions consistent with the aim of the study. These questions can then be used to rework the title, problem and purpose.

TITLES

- WHAT?
- WHO?
- HOW?
- WHERE?
- WHEN?

REFERENCES
