

# Writing a manuscript for publication

Lesson 8

## Research problem selection:

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- Interest

Most important

- Significance

Theoretical value

Practical value

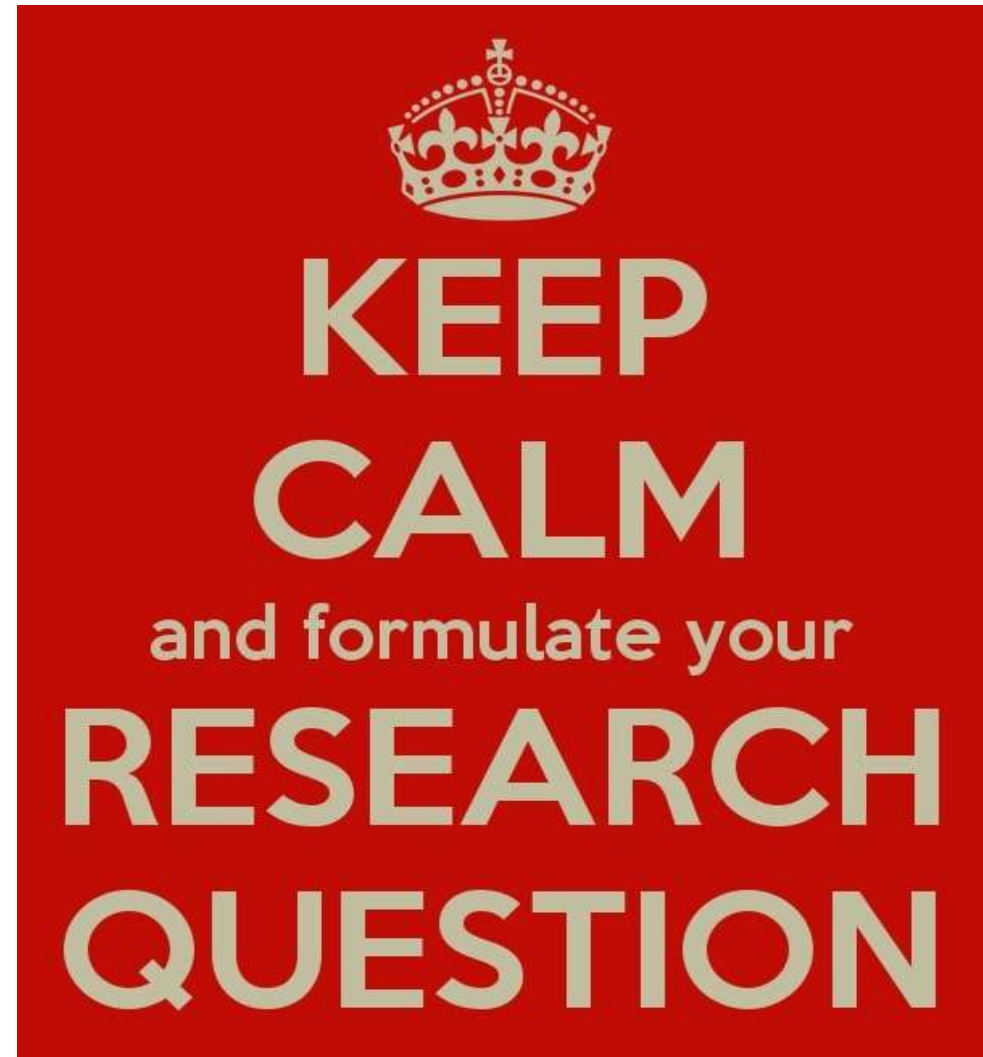
Timeliness

External review

- Manageability

Expertise, time, resources

Free from personal bias



# Problem Statements

“The problem of this study was to ...”

“This study was concerned with ...”

“This study is designed to ...”

“The purpose of this investigation is to ...”

# 1. Research Question

? **Clearly state the research question**

? A good research question:

? interesting

important (why should we care?) scope (not too narrow, not too broad)

measurable (data exist can be collected) hypotheses (you have some ideas)

? “Clearly” =

Can be a general question, but be specific about how you will study

Define key concepts in first instance

## 2. Literature

- ? **Review the existing scholarly literature that has addressed this research question**
- ? The bulk of your research proposal = ~2 pgs
- ? Should have its own mini thesis statement,
- ? eg: a gap in the literature:
- ? Mixed findings
- ? Applying a theory to a different context / topic

### 3. Hypotheses

- ? **Present preliminary hypotheses, based on existing research and logic**
- ? Do not have to have an argument yet, but ideas about explanatory variables
- ? Can be framed as “alternative hypotheses” Must be testable!

## 4. Methods

- ? **Discuss 1-2 methods of studying this that will answer the research question.**
- ? 1. Discuss data currently available, including specific variables, scope **and / or**
- ? Discuss plans for the collection of new / additional data
- ? 2. Describe how you will analyze the data to answer the research question
- ? Can be **qualitative** (case studies, interviews)  
Or **quantitative** (statistical analysis, surveys, experiments)

# The Research Question

- ? The research question
  - The “puzzle”
- ? Why is it important?
- ? What do we know about it?
  - The literature review
  - The “gap” in the literature
- ? **What explains the puzzle?**
- ? How will I solve the puzzle?
  - Methods, case selection, data gathering



# The Research Question

- ? It should be a **puzzle**
  - no one or obvious answer
  - new and relevant topic/question
- ? It should be stated clearly and concisely as a **question**
  - the question should identify what you want to explain
- ? It should be stated in your **first or second paragraphs**
  - begin the proposal by formulating the question
- ? It should be answerable given your **resources**
  - “*a prudent question is one half of wisdom*” (F. Bacon)
  - ... but it must relate to *broader* questions in the discipline