

# Research Proposal and Ethics Workshop

Lecture 3

Clarifying your Research Topic:  
RQ

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Recap- where to start?

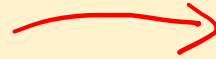
Rec

# → Practice Based P-T-P

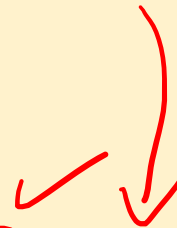
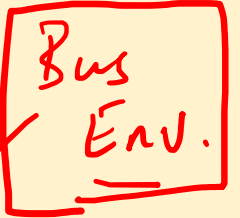
Experience / Tacit  
Knowledge



Current practice  
of org / industry



ID  
Managerial / Business  
Issues.



① Analyse  
the Issue

② Benchmark  
against literature

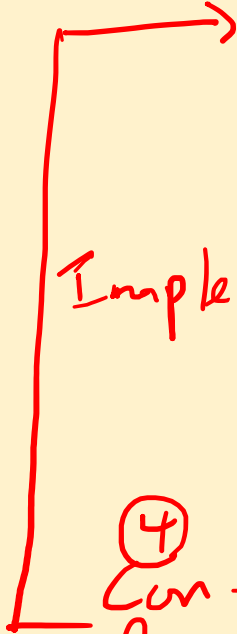


③ Gaps

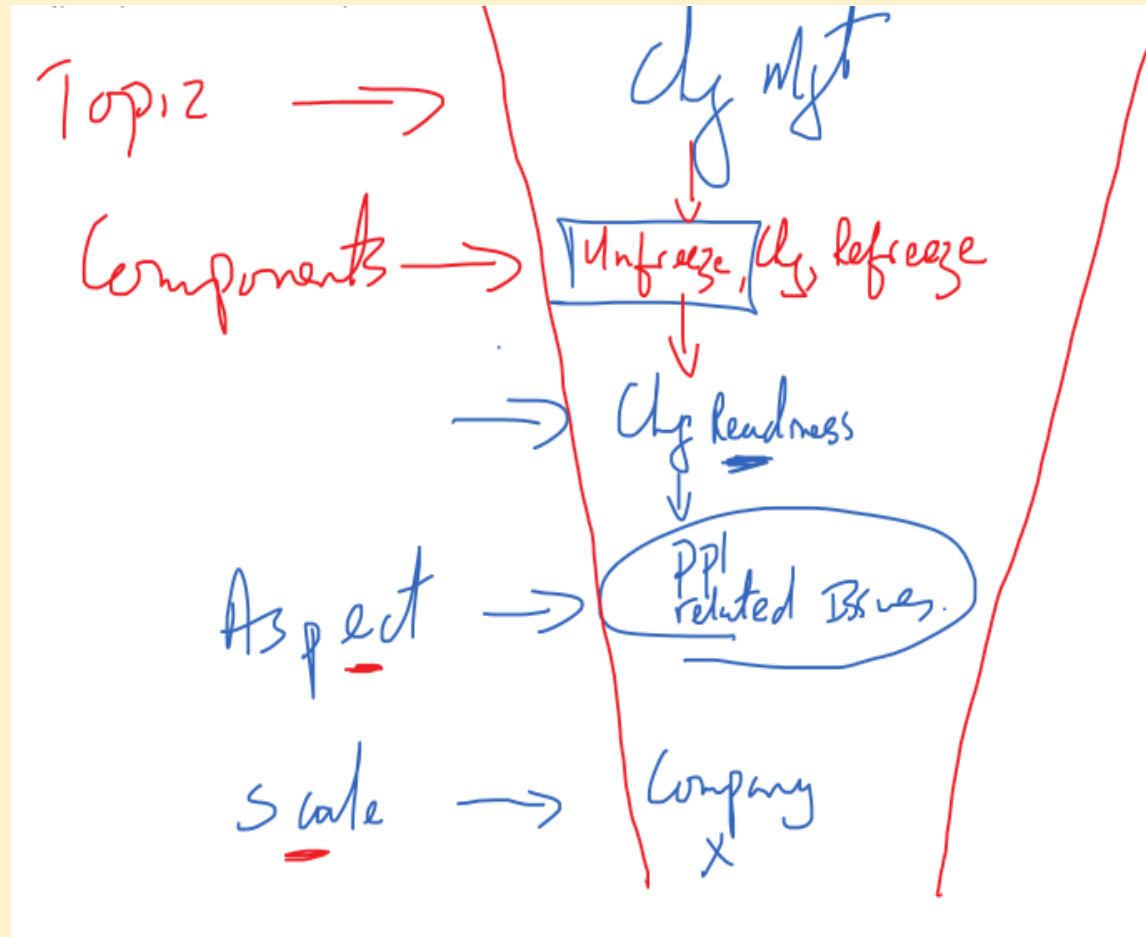


④ Con +  
Rec  
(Your Theory)  
Ans to RQ

Implement



# Narrowing your Research Idea



# Research Question

# What is a Research Question?

- Research questions designate what researchers want to understand about the research problem that led to their study.
- Research questions further specify the stated purpose of the study, which in turn addresses the stated research problem.

# Quantitative vs Qualitative RQ

- Research questions in **qualitative research** are broad enough to permit the discovery of the specific experiences, events, artifacts, concepts, or other empirical and/or analytic subjects that will ultimately be the focus of study.
- Research questions in **quantitative research** restrict, and commit researchers to, the variables that will be addressed. This usually leads to a Hypothesis

# General Tips

- Make sure it is a clear question
- **Use the Research Issue** to frame the Question
- Ideally one wants an **open question**: that is one that does not just end with a yes or no answer
- A question is an expression normally used to request information in the **form of an answer**



# Using theory to Refine your RQ

- Having developed the initial research question, the researcher's task is then to find out **what the literature indicates** on the first formulation of the question.
- The most efficient way to do this is to find **five or six major papers (sources) on the topic** that are recent.

# Basic Research Questions Form

- When attempting to construct a question, think about what sort of answer is expected
- Think of the FORM of answer
- There are four kinds of answers that can be elicited:
  - Bi-Polar answers
  - Explanatory answers
  - Descriptive answers
  - Exploratory answers

# Bi-Polar Answers

- Essentially questions that imply a limited range of possible answers.
- Typically, a bi-polar question starts with **interrogative words** such as WHAT, IS, CAN or DOES
  - Is it possible to sharpen this pencil? (Y/N)
  - Does it make sense to allow children to sharpen pencils (Y/N)
- Bi-polar questions can of course be useful but more often than not they have no great utility and the answer is obviously yes or no
- **Don't use this type of question, as it will be obvious that you did not think about the info you want to elicit from your research**

# Explanatory Answers

- In this type the expected answer is an explanation and it is often in the form of a procedure or process
- Typically, explanatory questions that start with 'HOW' or 'WHY'
  - How can a pencil be sharpened safely by young children? (a procedure)

# Descriptive Answers

- Here the expected form of answer is a description most often in the form of an evaluation
- Typically, these questions start with WHAT or WHY
  - What is the purpose of HB0 pencils? (simple explanation)
  - Why are HB0 pencils difficult to sharpen? (an evaluation)

# Exploratory Answers

- Where the expected form of answer implies an answer as an exploration of something
- Typically, exploratory questions start with HOW or WHY
  - How should we use HB1 pencils to get the best drawing? (often an exploration is needed here leading to an explanation)

Essentially.....

- In your project you are looking for **one significant Research question** and one significant answer
- **In practice one should express the answer to their research question in the Research Aim**

# An Example

- Question: Are you enjoying the course?
  - Form of the answer will be just Yes/No
- Whereas: What is it about the course that you like most?
  - Then the form of the answer would be a
    - topic or
    - workshop session or
    - the project research itself
- Alternatively: How can workshop sessions be used to enhance the learning experience of students?
  - The form of answer would possibly be a workshop session protocol or a guide/framework for conducting workshops



- How can operating costs be lowered by the use of online procurement to gain low cost leadership advantage?
- Then the answer might be: a series of factors or a procurement model or a cost framework
- **This is the type of question we are looking for**

# Make Sure.....

- That whatever form the answer will take you can actually construct it and
- When it is constructed as part of your research it is in fact **useful strategically in some way**
- That is, it is **actionable**
- This will determine the success of your research

# Testing your Research Question

- **Paraphrase** – if it's a good question you will be able to ask it in several different ways.
- **Bi-polar** – this means that the question has a fixed and limited range of answers such as “Y/N”, “bad, good, excellent” and so on. Avoid this feature
- **Discussion** – look at your question and honestly ask ‘will this question produce discussion?’
- **Reverse** – it is often illuminating to reverse the question – try this and see what ideas occur to you. But as a rule you should not use negative questions.
- **Interrogative** – try writing your question with a different interrogative. That is, if you question starts with ‘how’ try re-writing it with ‘what’ and so on.

# Some more examples

- **RQ** = What are the strategic constraints that affect investment into e-applications for SME's in Trinidad?
- Form of Answer:
  - A list of constraints or
  - A strategy to deal with the constraints or
  - A feasibility report on e-application implementation
- **RQ**= How can the use of Instant Messaging lead to better personal communication protocols and business success?
- Form of Answer:
  - A feasibility study on its use in offices or
  - A series of factors that must be in place before IM adoption or
  - A cost/benefits report

# RQ Examples

- What are the Leadership Competencies needed to drive transformation at XYZ?
- How can Small Business owners strategically position their company to maximize opportunities for sustainable growth and development?
- How can CRM be used to enhance customer loyalty at XYZ Ltd?

- What is the appropriate Advertising Strategy to attract customer to XYZ Ltd?
- What are the generational differences in Work Ethics among front line staff at XYZ Ltd?
- How can employee Resistance to Change be managed at XYZ Ltd?
- What are the key determinants of work life balance for health care professionals?
- To what extent can transformational leadership improve job satisfaction?

# Activity- Post your RQ

- Go to:  
<https://padlet.com/andresamuel2005/researchideas>

- **Edit** Previous Post

**Andre**

Topic: Change Mgt  
Issue: Resistance to change, ppl related reasons



A screenshot of the Padlet mobile app interface. At the top right is a pink 'Update' button. Below it is the name 'Andre'. The main area is a grid of colorful hexagons. In the center, there are five icons: a green document with a pencil, a green camera, an orange double-headed arrow, an orange person icon, and a pink three-dot menu icon. Below the grid, the text reads: 'Topic: Change Mgt', 'Issue: Resistance to change, ppl related reasons', and 'RQ: |'.