Chapter 3

Establishing Direction in Educational Research With Purpose, Questions, and Scope

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ABSTRACT

Selecting a research topic is crucial for research success, however transforming it into manageable and researchable endeavours is equally pivotal. This chapter delves into three important components in this transformation process: (1) Defining the research's purpose, (2) Formulating research questions, and (3) Establishing scope. These components, explored in three distinct sections, are integral to rendering social science research navigable and conducive to rigorous exploration. The first section scrutinizes the concept of research purpose, emphasizing its profound impact on the research process and its critical role in shaping research questions. The second section distinguishes research questions from the research purpose, highlighting their significant impact and providing insights into crafting them effectively. The third section explores the concept of scope, specifying parameters and addressing the multifaceted aspects influencing the research process. This chapter guides researchers in navigating educational research complexities, covering design, question, and scope.

INTRODUCTION

Selecting a research topic and planning are among the pivotal determinants of research success. A substantial part of the process of executing research lies in refining it to

manageable and researchable dimensions. Conducting rigorous research hinges on precisely delineating a research topic and planning process. Designing research does not follow a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, it is guided by the concept of fitness for purpose (Newman & Covrig, 2013). The specific objectives of the research dictate the methodology and design chosen. As for the research topic, it constitutes only a fraction of the broader subject domain, necessitating the delineation of meticulous boundaries around it – defining what it encompasses and excludes. The essence of research resides in the pursuit of discovery, investigation, development, testing (such as validating a theory), and addressing questions like "what if, how, why, how well, what, and where." (Cohen et al. 2018, p. 153). The genesis of a research topic can spring from various sources.

Research topic may spring from a researcher's personal interests or experiences, giving rise to questions like, "What is the impact of early identification of behaviour disorders on the educational provision for affected students?" or "How can educators effectively enhance students' motivation to learn a second language?" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 154). Alternatively, research topics may stem from recognized areas of significance or contemporary concerns. For example, "Do interactive teaching methods yield higher test scores in university students compared to lecture-based teaching?" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 154). Whatever the research topic, the success of educational research is intimately tied to transforming it into manageable and researchable endeavours. During the transformation process, the researcher develops the research purpose, research questions, and scope, which are pivotal in directing educational research. Educational research often aims to inform and improve educational practices and policies (Pramodini & Sophia, 2022). A clear research purpose and well-structured questions contribute to evidence-based decision-making, providing insights that educators, administrators, and policymakers can use to enhance teaching methods, curriculum design, and overall educational systems (Bulterman-Bos, 2008). Educational environments are dynamic, influenced by numerous factors, and involve various stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, policymakers, and communities. A defined scope is crucial in setting boundaries for the study, specifying the educational context, participant demographics, and time frame. It ensures that the research remains manageable and relevant within the complexities of educational settings. This chapter, titled *Establishing Direction in Educational Research with Purpose, Questions, and Scope*, examines the research purpose, research questions, and scope, which guide the researcher during this process.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section investigates the concept of research purpose, provides insights into its formulation, discusses its profound impact on the research process, and emphasizes its critical role in producing research questions. The second section delves into the nuances of research questions, distinguishing them from the research purpose, emphasizing the

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