

### Exercise 3: Developing Research Questions

In the first week of class, you drafted a paragraph defining your research interests. The next step is to move from research *interests* to a research *problem*. This exercise is designed to guide you through that process.

The exercise is due by Friday, Sept. 30, at the beginning of class. Prepare a report in a Microsoft Word (or other word processor) document and name it “5091\_05\_ResQuest\_*yourlastname*.doc.” Send it to me as an email attachment, with the subject line “ANG5091 Research Questions.”

1. Write at least six research questions related to your interests, with two of each type of question we discussed in class—descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory.
2. Using the form below, rank-order the questions in terms of personal interest, feasibility, ethical acceptability, theoretical or practical significance, and long-term potential.
3. Consult with potential advisors to discuss potential research questions.
4. Now, choose a single research question you would like to pursue. Consider your personal interests, available resources, and the theoretical and ethical implications of the question. Write the question in one sentence, and give at least three reasons why it is a good research question.
5. Identify the major concepts involved in your research questions. List the concepts either in descending order of importance or in terms of the logical relations among them. Define key terms precisely.
6. Search the literature on the question and concepts you have identified. Refer to class discussions and readings for tips on conducting the search. Provide a summary of your search strategy (e.g., what databases did you use, what keywords did you try?)
7. Compile a reading list of at least 20 references that seem relevant to your question; give complete bibliographic details. Be very selective in compiling your reading list. You may need to skim many more articles to identify the 20 most important references for your question.
8. Create a concept map or hierarchical outline of the major topics that are relevant to your literature review (see Locke et al. for examples). Focus on trying to place your research question in context and to justify specific decisions about measurement and sampling.
9. Revisit your original research questions. Do you still prefer one question over the others? How does your research question need to be refined after your initial review of the literature.

**Research Questions**

Identify at least six research questions (descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory), and rank-order them (1 to 6) in terms of personal interest, feasibility (i.e., accessibility of adequate time, money, people, and data), ethical acceptability, theoretical or practice significance to the discipline, and long-term potential (e.g., for funding, follow-up studies, publication, and your long-term interest).

Question	Personal interest	Feasibility	Ethical acceptability	Theoretical or practical significance	Long-term potential