

TOPIC 2

Formulating and clarifying the research topic



Attributes of good research topics

- ▶ **Capability: is it feasible?**
 - ▶ Do you have the necessary research skills?
 - ▶ Can you complete the project in the available time?
 - ▶ Will you be able to gain access to data?
- ▶ **Appropriateness: is it worthwhile?**
 - ▶ Is the topic clearly linked with theory?
 - ▶ Are the research question (aim) and objectives clearly stated?
 - ▶ Is the research topic matching your career goals?



Generating research ideas

Rational thinking	Creative thinking
Searching the literature	Scanning the media
Brainstorming	Relevance Trees
Exploring past projects	Discussion
Keeping an ideas notebook	



Turning ideas into research projects

- ▶ Start with a general focus question
- ▶ Use the 'Russian Doll' principle to reach the essence of the question
- ▶ Define areas of interest (knowledge) relevant to your project
- ▶ Don't cut corners!



Writing research questions

Research idea	General focus research questions
Advertising and share prices	How does the running of a TV advertising campaign designed to boost the image of a company affect its share price?
Job recruitment via the Internet	How effective is recruiting for new staff via the Internet in comparison with traditional methods?

Sources: Saunders et al. (2009)

Ex. 1 – YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION

Broad Topic	HR	Marketing	Banking & Finance	Tourism
Restricted Topic	4GS and recruitment	Innocent Drinks and pricing	Barclays and LIBOR	London and attractions
Narrowed Topic	4GS and recruitment and London 2012	Innocent Drinks and pricing and customer perception	Barclays and LIBOR and credit quality	London and attractions and Madame Tussauds
Research Question	What could 4GS do to prevent recruitment shortages in the future?	What is the impact of price discounts on Innocent Drinks customer perception?	How did LIBOR manipulation influence Barclays credit quality?	What factors contribute to the success of Madame Tussauds in London?

Developing research objectives

- ▶ The objectives of the research are the steps, or the actions, the researcher takes in order to accomplish the aim of the research
- ▶ **Breaking down the research question** (or the aim) of the project
 - ▶ ONE main research question
 - ▶ 3-4 objectives
 - ▶ Turning ideas into actions



Ex. 2 – YOUR OBJECTIVES

Broad Topic	
Restricted Topic	
Narrowed Topic	
Research Question	



The research process

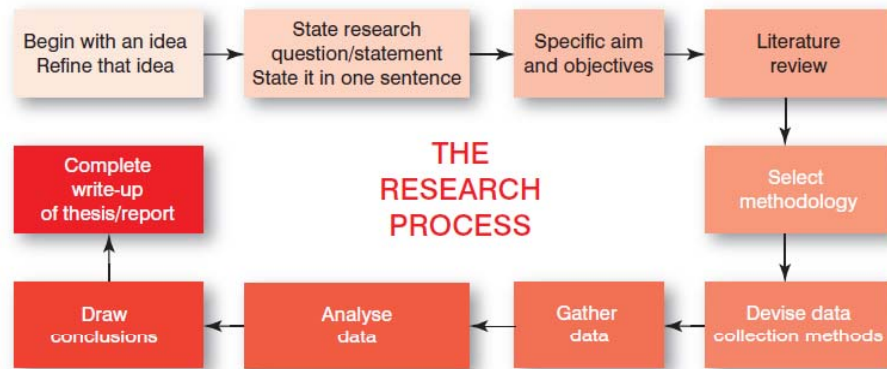


Figure 1.1 The research process

Sources: Quinlan (2012)

Ethics in research

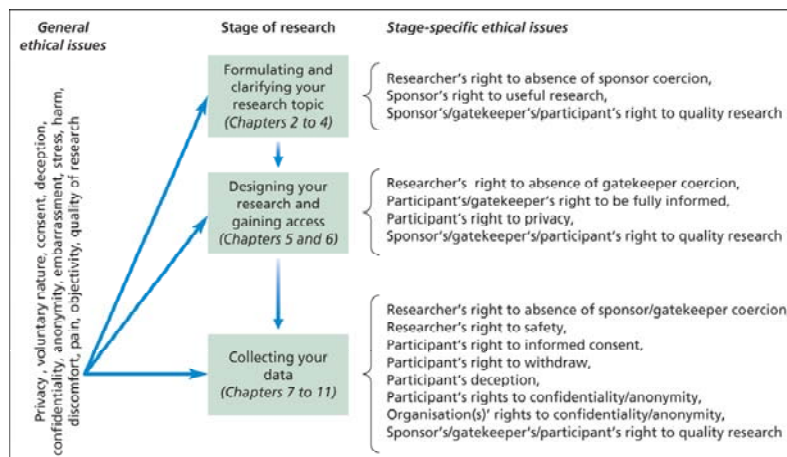
Ethics:

‘The appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of or are affected by your work’

- ▶ Critically engage with your own ethical standards and behaviours
- ▶ Critically engage with the ethical standards of your own research

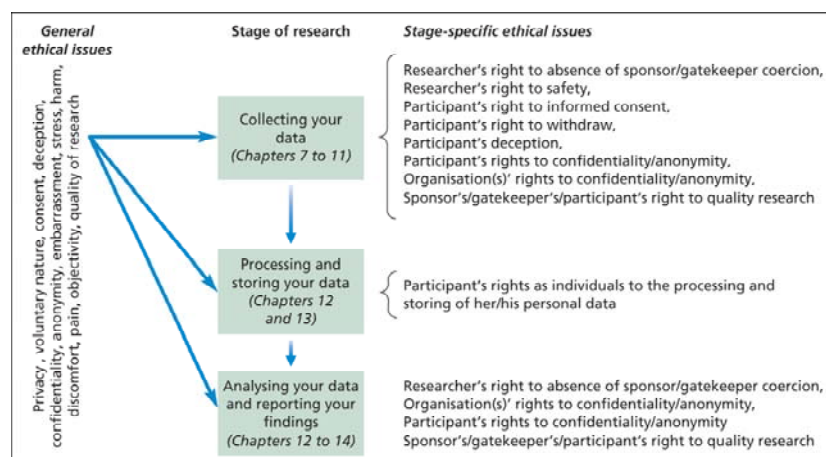
Sources: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2009); Quinlan (2012)

Ethical issues (stages of research) - I



Sources: Saunders et al. (2009)

Ethical issues (stages of research) - II



Sources: Saunders et al. (2009)

The ethically reflective practitioner

- ▶ It is important for standards in ethics in research that every researcher becomes an ethically reflective practitioner
- ▶ Integrity – the integrity of the research project is dependent upon the integrity of the researcher
- ▶ Transparency – one established way of avoiding potential harms in a research project is through the use of openness and transparency

Sources: Quinlan (2012)



Remember...

“there is no one best way for undertaking all research”

Saunders et al. (2009)