

Formulating a Research Problem Statement

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Academic writing is a means of reporting research findings to the public, allowing them to be known, replicated, or applied. However, academic writing differs significantly from non-academic writing. It is inherently objective, grounded in research facts, and supported by citations from existing studies to substantiate or refute arguments. In contrast, non-academic writing is subjective and does not require the use of factual evidence in every analysis. This fundamental difference poses a challenge for academic writing, particularly for novice researchers.

Academic papers generally consist of an introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. The first challenge for researchers is developing the research background, particularly the problem background. Some novice writers often use phrases such as: (1) "Therefore, the author is interested in researching XXX," (2) "The impact of X on Y is not yet well understood," or (3) "To date, no research has been conducted on XXX." Additionally, questions like "What is a good research title?" frequently arise. This question is less appropriate because research fundamentally stems from real-world problems that are urgent and need resolution.

As a crucial component of drafting a research problem background, formulating a clear research problem statement will guide the direction of the study. However, researchers often encounter writer's block when attempting to write the research problem background. Therefore, we propose the following formula for crafting a problem statement:

Problem Statement = 2-3 sentences describing the phenomenon + Statement of the Problem + Research Question + Research Objective

Example: "Clinicians should perform a thorough clinical assessment before selecting a support surface based on the specific needs of the patient (citation). When the appropriate type of support surface is not clearly determined, patients may experience pain, depression, anxiety (citation), suffering (citation), delays in the healing process, prolonged hospital stays, and an increased burden of care (citation). To date, various systematic reviews have examined the role of support surfaces in preventing pressure injuries (PI) (citation) (phenomenon). Nevertheless, despite the significance of selecting a support surface that aligns with the care environment (citation), the effectiveness of

these surfaces in intensive care units (ICUs) remains uncertain (Problem Statement). Consequently, this systematic review seeks to identify and analyze scientific evidence concerning how well active and reactive support surfaces reduce the incidence and prevalence of PI in adult ICU patients (Aim Statement) (Bambi et al., 2022)."

Another challenge researchers face in writing academic papers, due to the formal fact-based orientation, is neglecting the diversity of readers who may come from varying educational backgrounds, experiences, and even different countries. As a result, research articles often fail to be comprehended or applied due to ambiguous information. Therefore, researchers must sharpen their writing skills to craft sentences with high accuracy and precision.

Reference:

Bambi, A. A., Yusuf, S., & Irwan, A. M. (2022). Reducing the Incidence and Prevalence of Pressure Injury in Adult ICU Patients with Support Surface Use: A Systematic Review. *Advances in Skin and Wound Care*, 35(5), 263–270. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.ASW.0000824552.38110.E7>