

Topic 1: Compose research problems and purposes



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Steps in Planning Your Research Project

Level Question	Problem	Purpose	Design Level	Design	Sample	Methodology	Analysis	Answer
I. What is or what are	Little to no literature on the topic	To declare or claim a statement(s)	Exploratory Descriptive	Exploratory	Small sample or total population	Qualitative, structured, or unstructured data	Content analysis and constant comparison	Description of the processes, concepts or phenomena
				Descriptive	Total population sample		Descriptive statistics Charts and graphs	Description of variables or populations
II. What is or what are the relationships between or among variables	Conceptual or theoretical base	To test a question(s) or hypothesis(es)	Descriptive Survey	Correlational	As large as possible	Structured or quantitative data collection	Correlation analysis, or tests of association	Explanation of the relationship among variables
				Comparative	Non-random assignment to groups		Differences between group means	Support or reject a hypothesis or a theory
III. Why	Theoretical base	To test a hypothesis(es)	Experimental	Quasi-experimental	Non-random assignment to groups	Structured or quantitative data	Differences between sets of scores	Test a theory
				True experimental	Random assignment to groups			

Note: This table was modified from the table included in the book of Wood and Ross-Kerr (2006).

Source: Wood, M.J., & Ross-Kerr, J.C. (2006). *Basic steps in planning nursing research: From question to proposal* (6th ed.). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Inc.