

---

## The eight critical research questions for the researchers: Research made easy

Joshua Ebere Chukwuere<sup>1\*</sup> 

[joshchukwuere@gmail.com](mailto:joshchukwuere@gmail.com)

\*Corresponding author

---

### 1. Introduction

Academic writing is different from everyday writing. However, there is a correlation between academic and everyday writing. The latter involves a systematic process. This short article is aimed at simplifying academic writing by answering the following questions: What is research? What is research scope? What is the academic writing process? Why do we research? Can anyone conduct research? (Can academic writing be for everyone?) Where, how, and when can research writing start? What are the characteristics of a researcher? What are the common challenges in starting to write research? These seven questions beg for answers from upcoming and established academic researchers.

### 2. The eight critical research questions

#### 2.1. What is research?

The word research can be traced to the French word 'recherche', which means 'search or seek' and 'search again'. It simply means searching for something over and over (repeatedly) to improve the existing information about the concept or thing. At this point, one can deduce that research is a repetition in search of existing knowledge. It means that research is knowledge-oriented in nature, which means improving knowledge on a given phenomenon through a process. The process is systematic in nature, which is to follow a logical sequence of actions or plans. According to WordWeb Dictionary, systematic is "characterized by order and planning". It means that the research process is organized and planned, and it does not just happen. A systematic process aims to provide answers to questions, solve problems, and generate new thoughts, ideas, and knowledge through data collection and analysis. Research is a systematic process to collect and analyze data. According to Naidoo (2011), research is a systematic process that enables the researcher to understand nature and the environment in order to confirm the existing knowledge and generate new information.

Research is categorised into kinds called 'types of research', which are: *descriptive* (it focuses on defining the state of things such as through a survey, case study and fact-finding investigation), *historical* (it investigates an event through studying documents of past events), *experimental* (this is evidence-based to understand an event or variable to assigned criteria called treatment variables), *correlation* (it involves bringing to fore the relationship between two or more variables and to understand the associations between and among the variables); *ex-post facto or after the fact* (this type of research is done to understand causes and effects) *qualitative* (used to qualify a phenomenon, understanding it through text or word); *analytical* (examine already known facts); *quantitative* (analyse numerical events in numbers); *conceptual* (used to develop new perceptions or ideas; usually used by philosophers); *longitudinal* (done at once, over a long or short period of time especially in months or years); *benchmark/baseline* (this is done when published materials are not available to project future impacts or events; or a set standard for future reference, a reference point until the information is debunked by new information); *diagnostic/clinical* (this type of research aims at understanding the reasons of events like the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic, research that is aimed at solving problems); *feasibility study* (used to understand the likelihood of the occurrence of an event before it occurs and used in projecting the achievability of a project, finance, economics and many others); and *impact assessment* (this type of research is used to understand the project benefits and the negatives). Based on these classifications, one can understand the area of his/her research discipline and

adhere to it. In this article, research involves processes applied to collect and analyze data in order to increase knowledge.

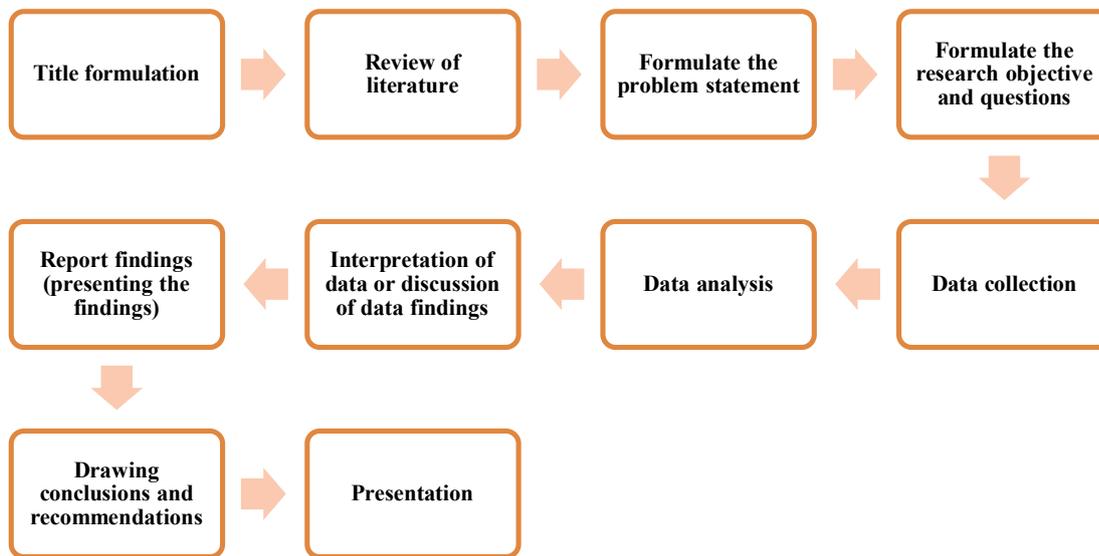
## 2.2. What is research scope?

A scope covers the extent of a subject matter. By extension, research is bound by scope. The scope of research lies within one's discipline and subject area. It is important to understand that one research study cannot solve or provide an all-around solution in a given discipline, topic, or situation. The scope is significant when considering research in a given discipline. For example, in social sciences, your research scope lies within the discipline and topic (it means, stick your research interest within the discipline and topic). Therefore, define your research topic, identify a title and the aim of the research, and link your research within the defined research aim. Research can be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. No matter the interconnection of your research topic or title, the aim of the research or study should guide you in defining the scope. In other words, research scope means a topic area, and therefore research must have a boundary that defines an area of focus or domain. For example, an investigation into the of social media platforms on information systems .first-year students". The research scope of this topic (title) will focus on social media platforms, information systems, and its first-year study. The researcher cannot be assessed or examined outside this research scope by any reviewer/s. Research scope assists reviewers or examiners to assess accordingly and accurately.

## 2.3. What is the academic writing process?

Academic writing involves a systematic process, as noted above (what is research?). According to Hermon, Morgan, Gliner and Harmon (1999), research is an investigation conducted to address existing arguments within a given discipline. The process is systematic in nature. As a systematic process, a conventional process or procedure must be followed in carrying out research to be accepted in the academic or scientific circle. As a systematic process, it consists of a topic (title) conceptualization, review of literature, research objectives/questions and problem statement formulation, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of data or discussion of data findings, presenting the findings, drawing conclusions, and recommendations. Academic writing should be relevant and empirical evidence must be produced. To gain empirical evidence, methods are followed called the research methodology. The research methodology is qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods in social sciences, humanities, arts, natural science disciplines, and beyond. To write a research methodology, one should always apply these three keywords: what (explain the concept and add citations), why (justify the use of the concept in the research and add citations), and how (provide evidence, based on how the concept will be applied in the study under investigation). Figure 1 presents a systematic research process that can be applied to different research methodologies or methods such as quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. These processes can be deployed in any research discipline. The systematic research process involves (see Figure 1):

- ✓ **Title formulation** – Develop a research title.
- ✓ **Review of literature** – Search and read existing documents on the title.
- ✓ **Formulate the problem statement** – The existing research gap, opportunities, or issues in the title to be studied.
- ✓ **Formulate the research objective and questions** – It involves defining the research objectives and questions. The research questions are the inverse of the objectives.
- ✓ **Data collection** – It involves gathering information from participants and recording it.
- ✓ **Data analysis** – Making meaning from the collected data using manual or electronic tools.
- ✓ **Interpretation of data or discussion of data findings** – It allows researchers to draw meaning from the collected data and often back with existing literature.
- ✓ **Report findings (presenting the findings)** – It involves writing up and summarising the analyzed data in the form of a thesis, dissertation, or article paper.
- ✓ **Drawing conclusions and recommendations** – This covers generating conclusions from the study and providing recommendations for now and the future.
- ✓ **Presentation** – Showcasing the final reported findings to the audience (professional, academic, and students).



**Figure 1:** Systematic research process  
**Source:** Author's Construct

This systematic research process (Figure 1) is carried out analogous to the research types above.

#### 2.4. Why do we research?

The purpose of research lies in four parts, to 1) increase knowledge in a given discipline, 2) increase personal knowledge within a discipline in order to understand a given phenomenon (Morgan et al., 1999), 3) solve issues within a discipline and 4) solve societal issues facing communities. Altogether, the purpose of research is to add knowledge to an existing idea. Thus, researchers should investigate topics and ideas to promote and solve everyday social, economic, political, and educational issues and challenges.

#### 2.5. Can anyone conduct research? or Can academic writing be for everyone??

Academic research (writing) is consumed by students, lecturers (professors), and professionals in different disciplines to improve their specialties or fields and society. Therefore, anyone in the academic environment, irrespective of the level of study, can conduct research. There is growing interest in academic research findings, and so anyone can start now to contribute to the academic bank of knowledge. There are many things to write within a research domain. Research writing is not reserved for a special group of people or experts; anyone can write research provided the systematic process is followed from beginning to end. It means that one can even start to write while still doing undergraduate studies. One can, therefore, be encouraged to join research writing groups on social media platforms to learn the act of academic writing because everything in a given discipline is researchable.

#### 2.6. Where, how, and when can research writing start??

Academic writing can be done from any place, anytime, and on any topic (title) or discipline. The three keywords are discussed:

**Where:** Research writing involves reading journals and conference papers (articles), textbooks, and other related academic documents to get started. According to Adom (2021), writing is constructive, which is correlated to reading. The ability to read improves your writing skills. Therefore, anyone who wants to start writing should immediately start reading. Furthermore, attending workshops, training, webinars, and others can help one to start writing. Start writing using short articles and essays to improve one's writing skills..

**How:** Writing an academic paper begins with identifying a research area or niche, conceptual research topic, and title. The identification is a function of reading and understanding the gaps in the literature in a discipline. One can start by putting down his/her ideas and thoughts and researching them thoroughly.

**When:** research writing starts now, and everything in any discipline is researchable. Research writing is not a seasonal or periodic event or exercise; rather, research ideas and topics come all the time. Accordingly, be ready to write at any time and place. For example, I was in a queue to receive some services, later got seated, a research idea came to my mind; I quickly grabbed my phone and started writing. While in the queue, I conceptualized a research topic (title), developed the abstract, introduction, research methodology, and downloaded the needed literature documents to read. Therefore, starting research writing can happen anywhere, even while you are about to rest, while eating, in a public function, and so many other places. However, the ability to write a given research idea while they are still fresh matters a great deal.

### **2.7. What are the characteristics of a researcher?**

Research writing demands some essential qualities. According to Tabinas (2010), researchers should possess qualities such as honesty, intelligence, analytical skills, sense of initiative, curiosity, good communication skills, presentation, good knowledge base, written and verbal communication acuity. These qualities are ascribed to a good researcher. Islam and Samsudin (2020) suggest that researchers are characterized by their continuous research, applying scientific methods, being objective, generalizing, and empirical sound and thoughtful. Attia (2017) states that a good researcher should be prudent, systematic, logical, accurate, and precise. Furthermore, good researchers are characterized by their degree of motivation, eagerness, commitment, interest, inquisitiveness, excelling, scholarly approach, knowledge base, sacrifice, and integration (Toledo-Pereyra, 2012). These qualities make enhance success in the field of research writing, now and in the future. Based on personal experience, these qualities are key in building an excellent research career in any discipline because they help one to work or research when others are idling away.

### **2.8. What are the common challenges in starting to write research?**

Academic writing can be challenging and threatening if one has not mastered the art of writing. Here are some of the challenges that upcoming and 'established' or seasoned researchers face:

- ✓ Ability to identify a researchable title, topic, or area.
- ✓ Ability to conceptualize a problem statement.
- ✓ Ability to conceptualize the research aim and objectives.
- ✓ Ability to overcome academic writing phobia.
- ✓ Ability to overcome the belief that research writing is reserved for professors and senior academics.
- ✓ Lack of knowledge about how and where to publish.
- ✓ Lack of basic understanding of the real research concepts.
- ✓ Fear of being rejected.
- ✓ Inability to search literature review.
- ✓ Inability to research and paraphrase others' ideas.

## **3. Conclusion**

Academic writing involves a logical and systematic process in understanding and applying procedures. This short article provided answers to common questions being asked by upcoming and established researchers in different research disciplines. These questions oppose challenges in starting and the ability to write across disciplines.

## **ORCID**

Joshua Ebere Chukwuere  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8366-4328>

## **References**

1. Adom, A. (2021). Writing Scholarly Papers: A Window from my Experiences. *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 8(1):1-9.
2. Attia, S. (2017). Qualities of a good researcher.
3. Islam, M. S., & Samsudin, S. (2020). Characteristics, Importance and Objectives of Research: An Overview of the Indispensable of Ethical Research. *Science and Technology*, 33(3), 57-62.
4. Morgan, G. A., Gliner, J. A., & Harmon, R. J. (1999). Definition, purposes, and dimensions of research. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 38(2), 217-219.

5. Naidoo, N. (2011). What is research? A conceptual understanding. *African Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 1(1), 47-48.
6. Tabinas, C. A. (2010). Good Qualities of a Researcher: A Note to Beginners.
7. Toledo-Pereyra, L. H. (2012). Ten qualities of a good researcher. *Journal of Investigative Surgery*, 25(4), 201-202.

## **ACADEMIC VOICES (AV)**