

## Research Methodology Notes and Points from Professor's Lectures

Research is not a simple act; it consists of a series of activities. To conduct research, we must go through specific stages. For example, in jurisprudence, praying and performing the rituals of Hajj are different activities. Hajj itself is not considered a single act; rather, it involves multiple tasks such as sacrificing, circumambulating the Kaaba, and praying.

Research skills are, in fact, a combination of these activities and cannot be reduced to a single act. Conducting research is the result of the sum of these actions.

To conduct research, it is necessary to carry out approximately ten specific activities in order. The first step is to identify a problem, issue, or uncertainty in your field of study. This research should be conducted by someone who specializes in that discipline.

You should be looking for a real and tangible problem in your area of expertise and avoid choosing an imaginary or similar issue that does not exist in reality. In other words, the problem you select should have specific characteristics and should not be based solely on notions and fantasies.

The second step in the research process is to complete a summary form or proposal. You need to obtain the relevant form from your academic group regarding the issue you have chosen for research and fill it out. This process should be conducted using a form with a specific format.

After you have completed the summary proposal form, submit it to the head of the department. They may approve or reject it after review.

The third step is to identify the problem you have chosen for research. This stage is regarded as preliminary studies or exploratory studies about the research issue, which has eight main components. Anyone familiar with these eight components can conduct quality research.

For example, the first point you should identify regarding the issue you have chosen is related to your field of jurisprudence. You could research about Hajj, specifically in the context of Tawaf, which is itself considered a compound act. Regarding Tawaf, the main topic is examining the boundaries of the Mattaf. We have two types of boundaries: one is the horizontal boundary that extends to the Masjid al-Haram, and the other is the vertical boundary which refers to the ceiling of the Kaaba or higher. Therefore, the research topic could be "The Longitudinal Boundaries of Tawaf in Hajj from the Perspective of the Jurisprudence of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)."

Another example that can be mentioned is the topic of sexual education from the perspective of the jurisprudence of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). In this regard, we must first conduct preliminary studies. Every topic we choose has three components:

1. The research issue and its subject
2. The orientation of the research on the subject
3. The scope and domain of the research

The first step in the typology of the research issue is to identify and determine its type and category, including whether it relates to jurisprudence, education, economics, or physics. The second step specifies in which specific scientific disciplines the topic is determined, such as Islamic economics. Some issues are related to a specific field, while others are considered interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. Some topics are clearly linked to a scientific field, while other issues, which were previously classified solely under physics, are now also related to interdisciplinary areas like physical chemistry and biology. Consequently, single-disciplinary issues are now presented in an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary context.

We usually want to choose from several topics or fields, but the important point is to be realistic in our choices and not overreach. For example, law students should only deal with topics related to their field. The golden rule is that they should not choose topics from other disciplines and should focus solely on subjects related to their own field of study.

The second step in the research process involves identifying the researcher's direction regarding the research topic. For instance, at this stage, it should be clarified what aspect of sexual education is being addressed from the perspective of the jurisprudence of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and from which angle this topic is being examined. Additionally, it should be noted that the direction of the research should not be infinite and vague; rather, it must be clearly and precisely defined.

Furthermore, fundamental questions that arise in this regard must be answered. These questions include: What is the nature of the topic? Why is it important? How should it be addressed? Examining these dimensions helps ensure that the research progresses in a meaningful and structured manner.

For example, if the research topic is about ethics, specifically focusing on envy, it is essential to clarify from which aspect envy is being examined. What does envy mean, and what is its relationship with psychology? One can address the questions of what envy is and why it matters.

Sometimes, instead of using the word "direction," we can say what questions exist regarding the research topic. For example, if the research topic is envy, we should clarify what questions can be asked about envy.

In general, the second point is the importance of the "direction" or "questions" related to the research topic.

Write research questions in a specific form or formulate questions related to your topic. The structure of research questions should be such that it includes two main and subcategories. Main questions usually contain a declarative question, while sub-questions explain and clarify the main questions and provide more details.

In the research issue of sexual education from the perspective of the jurisprudence of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), what is the topic, direction, and scope of the subject? In the research problem regarding sexual education from the perspective of the jurisprudence of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), the topic, direction, and scope can be defined as follows:

1. Topic: The topic of this research is to examine the principles and foundations of sexual education in the jurisprudence of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). This includes studying the verses and narrations related to sexual issues, the psychological and emotional needs of individuals, and the importance of proper education in this area. It may also address the harms and challenges of sexual education in contemporary societies.

2. Direction: The direction of this research aims to examine and explain the jurisprudential viewpoints of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS) regarding sexual education. The main objective may include identifying suitable frameworks for sexual education within families, addressing questions and concerns related to this topic, and providing suggestions for improving methods of education in this area.

3. Scope: The scope of this research can refer to the limitations and boundaries of the topics to be examined in this study. For example, this scope may include the following:

- Focusing on religious texts related to sexual education and their interpretation.
- Limiting the subject to specific age groups (children, adolescents, or adults).
- Examining the experiences and opinions of specialists in the field of sexual education based on the jurisprudence of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS), without delving into non-religious or cultural discussions.

Thus, by defining the topic, direction, and scope, the researcher can more purposefully investigate issues related to sexual education from the perspective of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS).

The fourth step involves examining the importance and necessity of the research concerning the issue. In other words, if the research cannot provide any benefit, it will have no value for investigation. For example, examining the number of Habil's

children or his wives, or the events following Habil's murder holds no significance for us.

However, regarding Prophet Adam (AS), the topic of his educational methods towards his children is very important. We need to understand what factors led to the conflict between his two sons, causing one to strike the other and commit murder. These issues can offer valuable lessons for us.

The fifth step concerns the researcher's priorities. In other words, in addition to the topic being beneficial, its importance must also be prioritized. Therefore, all research topics should be of a certain level of priority and significance, and each of them should be identified in a coded manner.

In the sixth stage, we need to become familiar with the research literature and identify the proposed foundations related to our research problem. It is necessary to examine what actions other researchers have taken in this area and who has worked in this field before us. If you intend to write a thesis, you should refer to the sources and work of others. These foundations can be divided into two categories: conceptual foundations and propositional foundations. You should utilize these foundations and previous achievements.

We have two types of background: general background and specific background. Suppose that our research topic is about sexual education methods from the perspective of the jurisprudence of the Ahl al-Bayt (AS). First, we should address the general background, and afterward, by exploring sexual education methods from the viewpoint of behavioral psychology, we can obtain more specific information. This specialized information regarding sexual education methods from a psychological perspective is considered our specific background.

In the research, the difference between general and specific background refers to the type and level of detail examined in the two sections related to the research background.

#### General Background

General background, or literature review, refers to sections of research that examine general and broad information related to the research topic. This section

mainly provides contextual information relevant to the main subject and includes studies, theories, and previous research that cover the fundamental theories and concepts of the topic. This background helps researchers understand foundational concepts and theories while indicating attention to new developments in areas directly connected to the research topic.

The sources for general background typically include books, review articles, and other reputable academic resources that help provide an overall perspective on the research topic. The aim of this section is to provide a broad foundation and context for the main research so that readers can understand the research topic within a larger framework.

#### Specific Background

Specific background, or more detailed literature review, involves a thorough study and examination of previous studies and research that are directly related to the specific questions or hypotheses of the research. In this section, researchers focus on the details and results of previous studies that pertain to the specific research topic. This background not only analyzes the outcomes of past research but also helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses, gaps, and suggestions present in earlier studies.

Specific background usually includes research articles, theses, and case studies that specifically address the research topic, with their results being directly or indirectly related to the research questions at hand. This section helps researchers gain insights into innovations and differences present in their research compared to previous studies, allowing them to place their work appropriately within the existing body of research.

In conclusion, general background provides broad and general foundations and contexts regarding the research topic, while specific background focuses more precisely and in detail on previous research that is directly related to the specific research questions and hypotheses.

If I find a book titled 'Foundations of Sexual Education,' this would be considered general background. If the background of the topic we are examining relates to the same subject but is discussed in a different domain, this would be regarded as specific background. However, if there is a similar topic that differs in terms of orientation and domain, then this would also be considered general background.

The backgrounds are divided into three categories:

1. Article Background: Articles published in scientific journals.
2. Book Background: Sources that have been published in book form.
3. Thesis and Dissertation Background: Research presented in the form of theses and dissertations.

For article background, it is necessary for the article to be of a scientific nature and recognized as a research article, rather than a journalistic piece.

We have three types of books:

1. Academic Books: Books written to meet the needs of scholars and researchers, such as academic books in the field of sociology or interpretations.
2. Textbooks: Books prepared for students that help in teaching various subjects.
3. Reference Books: Including encyclopedias, dictionaries, and terminologies. Examples of these types of books include "Usul al-Kafi," "Encyclopedia," "Terminology Books," "Indexes," "Mizan al-Hikmah," "Bihar al-Anwar," "Wasa'il al-Shi'a," and other similar resources.

The background criteria for a bachelor's thesis or dissertation should be appropriate for graduate levels. For master's theses, the background should be relevant to master's levels, and for doctoral dissertations, the background should pertain to doctoral levels.

In the new world, digital books and articles, digital theses, and digital writings that have valid documentation can be used as references. Sources with documentation hold special value, while those without documentation are less valuable. If you use digital articles with valid documentation, you can benefit from them. If you are writing a thesis at the master's level, refer to literature relevant to that level. Additionally, you can use reputable websites and digital documents. If you intend to use the works of Martyr Motahari, you can utilize reputable websites related to him.

The Noor website, due to its provision of resources with valid documentation, is usable and is considered credible. Resources available on any site that is not credible or not verified are not supposed to be used.

Step seven in the research process is understanding the research method. At this stage, the focus is briefly on which cognitive tools will be utilized for conducting the research. Will you rely on sensory experience, logic and reasoning, or will you draw upon inquiry and curiosity? Additionally, the manner in which these tools will be used is also examined.

The method of questioning is known as a hermeneutic method. If you intend to raise questions related to the Holy Quran, you must engage in the interpretation and derivation of the text. Research conducted in a hermeneutic manner strives to extract the meaning and concept of the text based on the Quran and traditions, using specific principles. In the principles of jurisprudence, the process of extraction must also be undertaken to understand meanings.

To understand the various aspects of a topic, we must first identify suitable tools. If we intend to conduct sensory analysis, sensory research can be carried out based on descriptive, correlational, and then explanatory dimensions, ultimately leading to the necessary planning. In the context of research related to belief transitions, which sources should we utilize?

The eighth step in the research process is identifying hypotheses. At this stage, potential answers to the explanatory questions of the research are examined. For example, if the research topic pertains to the reasons for students' delays in class, the causes of students' non-attendance in in-person classes with instructors should be analyzed.

If the research topic is vascular blockage, the main question might be why blood vessels become blocked. Factors such as the consumption of oils or sugars, high blood pressure, stress, and the intake of solid fats may play a role. "Why" questions are formulated as hypotheses. It is worth noting that harmonic hypotheses do not require hypothesis formulation.



The consumption of vegetable oil can be a factor that leads to the blockage of blood vessels, and consequently, blood vessel blockage is recognized as a dependent variable.

The ninth step in research is identifying the necessary resources. Books, articles, and websites are recognized as sources. What is the difference between resources and background?

Resources refer to the information and data that researchers use to support their claims, hypotheses, and findings. These resources can include scientific articles, books, reports, and other credible documents. Resources are divided into two main categories:

- **Primary Sources:** These resources contain data and information that have been directly obtained from a research study or investigation. For example, the results of an experiment or interviews conducted with individuals.
- **Secondary Sources:** These resources include analyses and interpretations from others based on primary data. For example, articles that review and analyze the results of previous studies.

Background refers to the examination and analysis of previous studies and research in the field of the research topic. This section helps the researcher to:

- **Contextualize:** Define the context and history of the topic and show how previous research relates to the current subject.
- **Identify Gaps:** Recognize weaknesses and gaps in previous research and demonstrate how the new study can help fill these gaps.
- **Theoretical Framework:** Introduce the theoretical foundations and key concepts related to the topic.

The next stage of information gathering includes materials, evidence, and findings necessary to answer the research questions, both primary and secondary.

Familiarity with library and digital resources is especially important. While using reference and digital sources is permitted, it is essential that you make your own effort and do not use GPT. The Al-Mustafa Institute has software called "Sanim" that can detect your use of GPT, and as a result, your research may be disregarded.

To summarize, gathering information involves compiling materials and findings to address research questions effectively. It's crucial to engage with both book and digital resources, but please rely on your own work rather than AI tools like GPT, as this may affect the validity of your research.

Read books and utilize note-taking. Start by using digital resources before moving on to studying. There are four models for note-taking: ant resources, spider resources, fly resources, and honeybee resources.

In the context of research and information gathering, what are the differences between ant researchers, spider researchers, fly researchers, and honeybee researchers?

Ant Researchers have a particular characteristic in that they collect a lot of information, but much of this information may not be relevant to their questions. They tend to gather excessive information, which can lead to confusion. You should not act like ants; rather, you should only collect information relevant to your research topic and gather just the necessary and essential amount of information.

The golden rule in research is to collect only the necessary information, just as you would when shopping, and to gather it in sufficient amounts.

The characteristic of Spider Researchers is that they are lazy and do not engage in active searching. They randomly weave together anything that comes to mind and do not seek out the necessary information, which reflects their carelessness and laziness.

The characteristic of Fly Researchers is that they do not take direct action themselves; instead, they exploit the work of others. They use the works of others and present the information as their own without giving proper credit. This type of researcher essentially engages in information theft from others, using books and articles in a superficial manner without contributing any original writing of their own.

Bee Researchers collect information in the amounts and measures they need. You should act like honeybees when gathering information, as they only work as much as necessary and produce sweet honey. In contrast, ants produce venom and are like those who eat anything; that's why they always have a foul smell, and their waste is extremely unpleasant.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "A believer is like a honeybee; when it eats, it feeds on something pure, and when it does something, it does a pure and good deed. A believer should be like a honeybee; they eat pure things and produce something pure."

After gathering raw information, it is necessary to evaluate and analyze it. For the transmitted reports obtained, two essential tasks must be performed: one is to examine the chain of transmission, and the other is to analyze the text.

Quranic verses do not require examination of their chain of transmission or evidence, and the Quranic interpreter should focus on interpreting them.

In contrast, the interpreter of reports must carry out two duties: both examining the chain of transmission and analyzing the reasons behind the text of the report.

Sometimes this process is referred to as critique and review, in which we must evaluate the credibility and accuracy of the information.

This task includes three sections:

1. Examining the statements and opinions of others,
2. Analyzing and reviewing the narrations of the infallible (peace be upon him),
3. Interpreting the verses of the Quran and their implications.

The final stage in research is to write a report on the research activities in the form of an article, thesis, or dissertation. Research can be compared to a journey, where one of the activities of the journey is writing a travelogue. It is very important to be familiar with the art of report writing. Travel reports are presented in three forms: an article for a bachelor's degree, a thesis for a master's degree, and a dissertation for a doctoral degree.