

PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF A SURVEY REPORT

Introduction

Better theses, dissertations, term papers and professional articles can be written if the rules and principles involved in writing a research report is known. These will also help in reading research publications more easily and more discerningly.

Format of the Report

Although research reports may differ considerably in scope of treatment, they are expected to follow a similar pattern or style and form that have become conventional in academic circles. Since research reports are read by busy professional people, a rather formal and uniform method of presenting them has evolved. The requirements at various institutions differ, but all formats are somewhat similar to the following outline which embraces three main divisions: (1) the preliminaries (2) the body of the report or text, and (3) the reference matter. Each main division may consist of several sections.

The Preliminary materials

The preliminary materials include the followings:

1. Title page
2. Approval sheet (if any)
3. Acknowledgement (if any)
4. Table of contents
5. List of Tables (if any)
6. List of Figures (if any)
7. Abstract

The first page of the report is the title page. The title page differs from one institution to another, however they usually include:

1. The name of the topic (i.e. title of the study);
2. The name of the author;
3. The relationship of the report to a course or degree requirement;
4. The name of the institution where the report is to be submitted, and
5. The date of presentation.

All these items are centered between the margins of the page with no terminal punctuation is used. The title should be concise and should indicate clearly the purposes of the study. It should be typed in capital letters, single-spaced, and centered between the right and left margins of the page. Where more than one line is required, the words in the title are divided into lines so that each successive line is shorter than the one above it, and is centered below it in an inverted pyramid style.

If the institution requires an approval sheet, a page of the thesis/dissertation allots space for the adviser's signature and his name is typed below. Sometimes the names of all faculty committee members are presented on this page.

An acknowledgement page is included if the author has received any further assistance in the conduct of the study. Acknowledgements should be simple and restrained. Flattery and effective recognition for routine participation by members of the author's family, faculty advisers, librarians and clerical staffs are considered unnecessary and of poor taste.

The Table of Content which occupies a separate page or pages, gives the reader a bird's-eye view of the report and enables him to locate quickly each section of it. The chapter headings are usually typed in capital letters and their sub-headings in small letters with the initial letter of the principal words capitalized. These headings appear in the exact words and orders that they are in the report and each is being followed by the correct page citation. The relationship between main headings and sub-topics are shown by proper indentation and capitalization.

If Table and Figures are included in the report, a separate page is included for each list. The full titles of figures and tables worded exactly as they appear in the text are presented with corresponding numbers and page locations.

All pages in the preliminary section are numbered at the center of the bottom margin with lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.).

Body of the Report

The kernel of the study, the data and their analyses, follows the preliminary materials. This section may be divided into five divisions as follows:

1. Introduction
 - a. Background
 - b. Statement of the problem - specific questions to be answered
 - c. Objectives/purposes of the study
 - d. Significance of the problem
 - e. Assumptions and limitations
 - f. Statement of hypotheses
 - g. Definition of important terms
2. Introduction Review of Related Literature and Conceptual Framework
3. Methodology
 - a. Locale of the study
 - b. Population and sampling design
 - c. Measurement of variables
 - d. Data gathering instrument
 - e. Methods of gathering data
 - f. Statistical treatments
4. Results and Discussions
 - a. Text
 - b. Table (if any, are usually incorporated into the text)
 - c. Figures (if any, are usually incorporated into the text)
5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations
 - a. Brief restatement of the problem
 - b. Descriptions of procedures used
 - c. Major findings and conclusions
 - d. Recommendations
 - e. Recommendations for further study

In a thesis or a dissertation these divisions may comprise chapters. In a shorter term paper or report they may consist of sections appropriately set off by centered headings.

Introduction

The first section (Chapter) serves as an introduction to the area of consideration. A clear statement of the problem with specific questions to be answered or hypothesis to be tested is presented first. A consideration of the significance of the problem and its historical background is also important. Specific purposes of the study are described and all assumptions and limitations are recognized. All important terms are carefully defined, so that the reader may understand the concepts underlying the development of the investigation.

Review of Related Literature

This section reviews the important literature related to the study. Previous research studies are abstracted and significant writing of authorities in the area under study is reviewed. In the review, the researcher brings together the results of the existing research, shows how the studies are related, and indicates where gaps or weaknesses exist that have given rise to the study. This part of the report provides a background for the development of the present study and brings the reader up to date.

Methodology

This section explains the design of the study in detail. The researcher gives an accurate, detailed description of how the work was done as well as all of the information that the reader needs to judge the validity, adequacy and suitability of the methods and instruments employed. The size of the samples and how they are selected, the variables and the controls employed, the sources and methods of gathering data, the reliability of instruments selected or constructed, and the statistical procedures used in the analysis are carefully described.

Results and Discussions

This constitutes a vital part of the study, for these materials represent the researcher's contribution to the advancement of knowledge. This is the heart of the research report. Through textual discussion and tabular and graphic devices, the data are critically analyzed and reported. Tables and figures are used to clarify significant relationships. Good tables and figures are constructed and titled so that they are self-explanatory.

In the analysis of the data, the researcher points out the important facts that the collected evidence reveals and notes their relationships. He does not repeat all the detailed information that is in the tables and figures, but rather interprets what the facts mean their causes and effects, and whether they confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis. Extracting the meaning from the data is one of the most difficult and most delightful phases of an investigation. Any uncontrolled factors that may have affected the results and their possible implications are discussed. If the results of the investigation are in agreement or disagreement with other studies, this fact is pointed out and possible explanations are given for any differences. When stating the results, careful qualifications are included that stipulates the precise condition or limits to which the conclusions apply.

Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

In the summary, the researcher briefly reviews the procedures, findings, and entire involvement of the problem, after a brief statement of the problem and a description of the procedures used in the investigation, the findings and conclusions are presented. Findings are statements of factual information based upon the data analysis. The conclusions are stated

precisely and related directly to the hypothesis that were tested; the conclusions reveal whether the conditions that were deduced to be observable if the hypotheses offered and adequate explanation of the phenomena being studied were observable. The conclusions announce whether his findings of the study confirmed or disconfirmed the hypotheses.

It may be appropriate in concluding this part of the report to indicate promising side-problems that have been uncovered and to suggest areas or problems for further investigation.

The summary and conclusions chapter is the most widely read part of a study because of recapitulates the information that has been presented in the previous sections of the report. Most readers see the summary first to obtain an overview of the problem and to determine its usefulness to them. If the study is pertinent to their purposes, they examine the remaining chapters.

Reference Materials

1. Bibliography
2. Appendix (if any)
3. Index (if any)

The bibliography, which has the center title BIBLIOGRAPHY, follows the main body of the report. This section is sometimes termed as "Literature Cited" or simply "References". An appendix, if included, follows the bibliography. References are arranged in alphabetical order, the last name of the author listed first. Each entry is placed flush with the left margin of the page, and subsequent lines are single-spaced and indented five spaces. A double space separates entries. If no author name is given, the name of the Publication or the sponsoring organization is listed as the author.

Style of Writing

The research report should be presented in a style that is creative, clear, and concise. To avoid making unnecessary, time-consuming revisions of his report, a researcher should study the report format and style manual recommended by his professor or editor or institution. After adopting a style manual, he must adhere to it throughout the report, for switching from one acceptable style of writing to another is not permissible.

Slang, hackneyed or flippant phrases and folksy style should be avoided. Since objectivity is the primary goal, there should be no element of exhortation or persuasion. The research report should describe and explain rather than try to convince or action.

In traditional style of academic report writing, personal pronouns such as I, We, You, My, Our and Us are not being recommended to use. These personal pronouns can be avoided by use of such expressions as the investigator or "the researcher." However, in recent past, this trend has been found shifting. Many academic journals allow the author(s) to use personal pronouns in the write-up. With regard to citation, only the last names of cited authorities are used. Titles such as Professor, Dr., Mr., and Dean should be omitted. The past tense should be used in describing research procedures that have been completed. Abbreviations are not usually employed in the textual materials, but they may be used in footnotes, bibliographies, appendix, and tables.

Percent (meaning per hundred) is spelled out, but some journals permit the use of the symbol % in tables and even in the textual discussions. Numbers of less than 100, round numbers,

and numbers that begin sentences are spelled out. Punctuation conforms to good usage and is consistent. The past tense is used when referring to what the researcher or other investigators have done. The present tense is used when referring the reader to tables that are presently before him and when mentioning general truths and well-established principles. Not all style books present exactly the same rules, but, as has been stated previously, after a style has been selected, it must be followed consistently throughout the report.

Construction of Tables and Figures

Tables and figures that are accurately compiled, properly arranged, easily read, and correctly interpreted may convey information more effectively than many paragraphs of written descriptions.

Tables

Using a table, a researcher may help a reader to find important details, explore relationships, get a concise overview of the findings, or grasp the significance of data much more quickly and easily than through many pages of prose explanation.

Content

Simplicity and unity are essential in the construction of tables. A well-constructed table is self-explanatory; it is complete and sufficiently clear to be understood without reading the textual explanation.

Placement

A table never precedes but rather follows, as closely as possible, the first reference to it in the report. A table that will not fit into the remaining space on the page is placed on next page at the end of the first paragraph. A table that covers more than half a page is usually centered in a page by itself. Long, detailed tables that interrupt the continuity of the discussion may be put in the appendix.

Numbers and Title

Tables are numbered consecutively throughout the report including those that appear in the appendix. The word "Table" followed by its number (Arabic numeral) is placed flush with the left margin. A period is placed after the table number (e.g. Table 12). The title of the table starts after 2 spaces from the table number. Only the first letter of the beginning word is capitalized; others are in small letters. Title should be parallel in grammatical structure, common abbreviations may be used, but other abbreviations are avoided, if possible.

Size

Tables should be no longer than the pages of the manuscript or publication. Folding tables into the copy is unsatisfactory and should be avoided, if possible. If a table extends beyond a page, the word "Table" and the number are repeated followed by the word a "continued" in parenthesis at the top left hand margin of the succeeding page or pages.

Rulings

Rulings or lines are used only if they make the table easier to read. A double or heavy horizontal line may be placed above the column captions, a single one below them, and another double line below the last row of items in the table. Rulings are not used on the sides of tables.

Figures

A figure is a device that presents statistical data in graphic form. The term figure is applied to a wide variety of graphs, charts, maps, sketches, diagrams, and drawings when skillfully used, figures present aspects of data in a visualized form that may be clearly and easily understood.

The following are some of the characteristics of good figures:

1. The title should clearly describe the nature of the data presented.
2. Figures should be simple enough to convey a clear idea, and should be understandable without the aid of textual description.
3. Data should be presented carefully and accurately, so that over-simplification, misinterpretation, or distortions do not result.
4. Figures should be used sparingly; too many figures detract from, rather than illuminate, the presentation.
5. Figures that occupy more than a half-page should be placed on a separate page.
6. Figures should follow, never precede, the related textual discussion.
7. Figures are referred to by number, never as "the figure above" or "the figure below".
8. Figures are numbered with Arabic (i.e. 1, 2, 3) rather than Roman numbers (i.e. i, ii, iii).
9. The title of the figure is placed below rather than above it.

There are several acceptable and frequently used title forms, any of which may be used if followed consistently throughout the report.

Paragraph form

Figure 1. Path diagram of job performance of the Department of Agricultural Extension officers and its contributory factors

Underhung form

Figure 1. Path diagram of job performance of the Department of Agricultural Extension officers and its contributory factors.

Block form

Figure 1. Path diagram of job performance of the Department of Agricultural Extension officers and its contributory factors

Headings

When the manuscript is divided into chapters, each chapter begins a new page. The word "chapter" is capitalized followed by a capitalized Roman numeral (i.e. I, II, III), center and placed four spaces lower than the usual top line or the text. The chapter title is centered and capitalized, a double space below the heading. Text follows three spaces below the title.

A major division of a chapter is introduced with a center heading of which only the first letter of the principal words are capitalized. A sub-division of the section of the part of the discussion under the center heading is introduced by a freestanding side heading, flush with the left margin. For further sub-division of the discussion, a paragraph side heading is used, with the usual paragraph indentation. In this paragraph side heading only the initial letter of the first word is capitalized. The side heading follows the same style of capitalization as that of the center heading. For an example,

CHAPTER III CHAPTER TITLE

.....
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Center Heading
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Side Heading
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Paragraph Side
Heading.....
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Bibliography and Footnote Form

The purpose of the bibliography is quite different from that of the foot note. The bibliography located at the end of the main body of the report, lists in alphabetical order the references used by the writer in preparing the report. The foot notes, formed at the bottom of the page specifically cite the exact place where quoted or paraphrased materials may be found. The typographical form of the bibliography listing and the foot note citation also differ. The following Table shows the aspects of difference.

Table 1. A Comparison of bibliography and foot note

	BIBLICGRAPHY	FOOTNOTE
Indentation	Overhanging first line flush with margin, second line indented five spaces	Regular paragraph indentation
Name order	Last name first (of first author when more than one author)	First name first
Placement	End of body of report listed alphabetically by last name of first author	Bottom of page with superscript
Punctuation	Author name, Year, Title. Place of publication, Publisher.	Author, Title (place of publication: Publisher, date of Publication).
Page reference	414 pp, (total number of pages in book or in article)	P. 23, (specifies page location of references)