# Chapter 6: Writing the Research Report

# I) The Writing Process

Many people often give inadequate attention to reporting their findings and conclusions. This is unfortunate because & well-presented study can often impress the reader more than another study with great scientific quality but a weaker presentation.

* What is the purpose of the report?
* Who will read the report?
* What are the circumstances and limitations under which the report was written?
* How will the report be used?
* etc.

are all important questions one needs to consider in writing the research report. The intrinsic values of a study can be easily destroyed by a poor final report or presentation. Thus, researchers must makes special efforts to communicate clearly and fully their research results. You, as the researcher, are clearly the expert on the topic covered. You know the specifies in a way no one else can. Because the researcher report is an authotiative one-way communication, it imposes a special obligation on you to maintain objectively. Even if your findings seem to point to a certain course of action, you should demonstrate restrains and caution when proposing that course.

The preparation of the research report follows from the logical analysis of the subject matter under investigation. Once the analysis is done, the preparation of the outline **????** in followed by the preparation of the rough or draft report. The next phase of the exercise involves the rewriting and polishing the draft report together with the preparation of the bibliography. The final phase of the research exercise will be the preparation of the final draft report.

Writing is a process. It takes time, and it **???** with practices. There is no one single correct way to write, but some methods are associated with good willing. Generally the writing process has three major steps:

1. **Pre-writing-** prepare to write by arranging notes on the literature, making lists of ideas, outlining, completing bibliographic citations, and organizing comments on data analysis.
2. **Composing-** get your ideas onto paper as a **????** than by free willing drawing up the bibliography and footnotes, preparing data for presentation and forming of an introduction and conclusion.
3. **Rewriting-** evaluate and polish the report by improving coherence, proofreading for mechanical errors, checking citations, and reviewing voices and usages. Thus actually involves two related procedures: revising and editing.

* **Revising-** is the process of inserting new ideas, adding supportive evidences, deleting or changing new ideas, **?????** between ideas.
* **Editing-**  is the process of clearing up and tightening. This involves the more mechanical aspects of writing such as spelling, grammar usage, verb tense, sentence length and paragraph organization.

# Types of Research Reports

Research reports are the products of a slow, painstaking accurate inductive work. Reports my be defined in terms of their degree of formality and design. We may have short reports and long reports.

**a) Short Reports**

Short reports are more informal and are appropriate for studies in which the problem is well defined, of limited scope and for which methodologies are simple and straightforward. Most information reports and interim reports are of this sort. Short reports are usually five pages or less. At the beginning, there should be a brief statement on the authorization of the study, the problem examined and its breadth and depth. Next are the conclusions and recommendations, followed by findings that support the conclusions A letter is a form of short report. Memorandum reports are another variety.

**b) Long Reports**

Long reports are long and follow well delim?????? Formats. They are of two types, the technical or base report and the popular report. Which of these to use depends chiefly on the audience and the researcher’s objectives. Some researchers try to write a single report that satisfies both needs.

1. **the technical report-** this report should include full documentation and detail. It will be the major source document. It is the report that has the full story of what was done and how it was done. While completeness is a goal in a technical report one must guard against including non-essential material. One good guide is that sufficient information of a procedural nature should be include sources of data, research procedures, sampling design, data gathering instruments, index construction, data analysis methods, etc. a technical report should also include a full presentation and analysis of significant data. Conclusions and recommendation should be clearly related to specific findings.
2. **The popular report-** in some cases the client has **no** research background and may be interested in results rather than methodology. The major communication medium in this case is the popular report. The popular report is designed for the non-technical audience. Readers are less concerned with methodological details but are more interested in learning quickly the major findings and conclusions. They want help in making decisions. The style of the popular report should encourage rapid reading quick comprehension of major findings and prompt understanding of the implication and conclusions.

# Research Report Format for Long Reports

There is no one best format for all long reports. Two arrangements are typically found or used-the logical format and the psychological format.

The logical format in this format the introductory information covering the purpose of the study, the methodology and limitations is followed by the findings. The findings are analyzed and then followed by the conclusions and recommendations.

**The psychological format –** this is largely in inversion of the logical order. The conclusions and recommendations are presented after the introduction with the findings coming later. This is the most widely and format in popular reports. Readers are quickly exposed to the most critical information the conclusions and recommendations. If they wisa to further they may read on into the findings, which support the conclusion clearly given.

Other report formats include the chronological report, which is based on time sequence or occurrence.

# II) Components of the Technical Research Report

A long report has clearly defined parts. While some may be dropped, other added and their order varied fro one situation to another, the following outline is in the logical format typical of technical reports and many student reports. The research report contains several components or elements. In general there are three parts: the prefatory pages, the body of the report and the appended **sections**.

**A) Prefatory pages-** this section includes the title page, letters of authorization, tables of contents, charts, and illustrations, synopsis (summary, abstracts).

**The title page-** the title page should include four items: the title report, the data, for whom prepared and by whom the report was prepared. A satisfactory title should be brief, but should include the following three elements. The variables included in the study, the type of relationship between the variables, and the population to which the results may be applied.

**Example**: the five-year demand outlook for plastic pipes in Ethiopia. The relationship between the value of the Birr in the world markets and relative national inflation rates.

**The table of contents**- any report of several sections that totals more than six to ten pages should have a table of content.

**Letters**- a letter should be included if the study is for a specific client company president outside organization.

**Synopsis**- this is a short summary. The size of the abstract varies from as a few as 50 words to as large as a full page. For the less interested reader they tell what is in the report. For readers looking for specific information, they help the reader determine whether the full report contains important information. The synopsis executive summary can serve two purposes (i) it may be a report in miniature in which case it may but need not be in the same organizational formats as the body of report. It could be a concrse summary of the major findings and the conclusions but should not exceed one or two pages. (ii) The second version of a synopsis represents little mor ethan a pose talbe of contents indicating the major topics in the study of the major actions taken. Such a presentation often called an abstract is found in most scientific reports less than 150 pages. In either case the synopsis should be written after the rest of the report is finished. It should not mention any ?????? and should not include graphs.

**B) The body of the report-** contains the introduction, findings, summary and conclusions and recommendations.

The problem- the statement of the problem usually comes first and contains three parts namely the background, the problem statement itself and the hypotheses. In the background, researchers should introduce the major variables and relate them to previous research and theory. If some of the relevant variables are not studied, this fact should also be mentioned. The background information leads to a statement of the specific problem. Which the research addresses. Often this might be discussed in terms of a research question and its associated investigative questions. In the problem statement, it is important to state clearly the variables of concern, the type of relationships between them, and the target group, which is being studied.

The introductory section also frequently includes a context literature review and links the problem with**?????** The **????** also define key **????** and presents conceptual hypothesis that are tested in the study.

**The method**- this section should cover at least five items: (i) the target population that is being studied and any sampling methods used. (ii) the research design used and the rationale for using it including the sample size, (iii) the materials and instruments used often with a copy of **these** materials in the appendix, (iv) the specific data collection method (survey, observation or experiment) and (v) a summary discussion of the data analysis methods including the statistical tests, computer programs etc.

**Scope and limitations-** some people with to ignore the matter, feeling that mentioning limitations detects from the impact of the study. Such as an attitude is unprofessional and borders on the unethical. An even handed approach is needed in which the which the readers are aided in judging the validity of the results.

**II) Findings and discussions-** this is generally the longest section of the report. It is an organized presentation of results. The objective of the finding is an exposition of what the data says rather than drawing interpretations or conclusions. In the discussion section we talk about what we see in the data and give the reader unambiguous interpretation of its meaning. It is useful to present findings in **??????** paragraphs or to present one finding per page.

# III) Summary and Conclusion - The summary is a brief restatement of the essential findings. Findings state facts while conclusions represent inferences drawn from the findings.

# IV) Recommendation- this involves suggested future actions. In academic research the recommendations are likely to be for further study to test, deepen or broaden understanding in the subject and in applied research for decision making the recommendations will usually be for managerial actions rather than research actions.

# C) The appended section- this includes appendix and bibliography

1. **Appendix** – complex tables, statistical tests, supplying documents, copies of forms used, detailed description of the methodology, instructions to field workers, and any other **????** that may be important.
2. **Bibliography –** there should be a biographic section if the study makes heavy use of secondary material. For specific references use footnotes and end notes placed at the conclusions of each major section rather than referring to the bibliography. The objective, which is generally appended to the research report, is a list of books in some way **?????** which has been done. It should contain all those works, which **????????** and may be divided into two parts. The first part may contain names of books and pamphlets and the second part may contain names of magazines and newspapers articles. There may be several biographic entry formula. The following is one of such entry formats.

For books and Pamphlets the following order may be followed.

* + Name of author, Last name first
  + Title, underlined or in italic styles
  + Place, publisher and data of publication
  + Number and volumes.

# Examples Kothart, C. ??????

# For magazines, journal articles and newspapers the following order is appropriate.

* Name of author, Last name ?????
* Title of article in questions marks
* News of periodical underlined
* The volume or volume and number
* The data of the issue
* The pagination.

Example: Christenons I. R. D. W. **????** and **????** Law “Transcendental Logarithmic production Froptiers” Review of economics and statistics **??????**

# Popular report format

As pointed out earlier the detail depth, writing style and communication forms differ between **??????**? A typical popular report outline usually follows the following forms.

* Title page
* Table of contents
* Objectives of the study
* Methodology
* Conclusion and Recommendation
* Findings
* Appendix.

**Other Formats**- an organization may have its own special reporting the format.

**Presentation consideration.**

Reports should be physically inviting easy to read and much the comprehension abilities of the designated audiences (reader).

**Physical presentation**- poor report appearance is a **frequently** problem. Poor reproduction, dirty typewriter type, incorrect spelling and poor punctuation (typographic errors). Overcrowding of text, in adequate labeling of charts and tables, etc. reduce the credibility of a report. So those physical problems must be removed.

# Readability – one can achieve high readability more easily if the topic inertest in the reader.

# Comprehensibility- good writing various with the writing objectives. Research writing is designed to convey information of a ?????. It is always good to use words that convey those thoughts accurately, clearly and efficiently.

# Briefings (presentation)

# Researchers may be required to present their findings orally in briefings. Whether written or oral poor presentation does grave in justice to what might otherwise be excellent research ?????? of the researcher. A successful briefing typically ???? a condensation of a lengthy and complex body of information. Speaking rates should not exceed 100 to 150 words per minutes. About 20 minutes presentation is usually required. A detailed outline of what one is going to say includes.

* Opening
* Findings and conclusion
* Recommendations.