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From Idea to Manuscript:

Mastering Academic Writing for Student Researchers

Maisie Liao

2024. 04



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Basic Sections

Reader's market

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Keywords
4. Introduction
5. Methods/Materials and Methods
6. Results
7. Discussion
8. Conclusion
9. References/Bibliography

Appendices





Chap.1:

Title and Keywords: The first impression





Requirements and Improvements of Title

Requirements

- **Unique**
- **Lasting**
- **Concise**
- **Clear**
- **Honest**
- **Cathy**

How to improve

- Placing the contribution of your research at the beginning of the sentence
- Using verb (participles and infinitives)
- Do not use a long string of nouns as modifiers

EG: Teaching reform: animation undergraduate course personnel training innovation mode in colleges and universities *

Training animation talents : teaching reform in colleges and universities at undergraduate stage

- Incorporating terminology that bears the hallmark of the era



Different Levels of Keywords

- **Generic keywords:** express the field and type of a paper and might be high-frequency words, but they are not useful for precise filtering.
- **Transitional keywords:** indicate subfields or certain common research methods, and they are beneficial for professional readers to filter.
- **Specific keywords:** crucial for clarifying the research direction. Although they are low-frequency search terms, they are indispensable for an academic paper.
- **Keywords should include research methods**
- **Different journals, different standards**



Selection and Balance of Keywords

- **For popular subjects, it is necessary to choose at least four transitional keywords that are currently frequent.**
- **For some less popular studies, more than three generic keywords are suggested**
- **Three specific keywords are normal for a long paper.**
- **Do not choose vocabulary beyond your research field, even if it is closely related to your work**



Chap. 2:

Abstract: The heart of the paper





Essentials of an Abstract

- **Research backgrounds:** Under what circumstances was the study conducted?
- **Existing problem:** What problem does the research attempt to solve? What is the purpose or the scope of the project?
- **Methods employed:** What are the scientific approaches used in the study?
- **Results or findings:** How do the research data indicate the results of the project?
- **Conclusions from the research:** What can we conclude from the research? What changes should be implemented as a result of the work?



Features and Tips of a Good Abstract

Features

- **Complete**
- **Stand-alone**
- **Tied to title**
- **Representative**
- **Present**

Tips

- Use the present simple tense
- Full coverage of keywords literally
- Stating the importance of the results should be included
- Try to show the depth of the research
- Don't mention other people's work



Chap. 3:

Introduction: A guide to the paper





Three Moves in Introduction

- **Establishing a research territory** (background/Introduction)

Explaining why this field is worth studying by giving the background

Introducing items of previous research (Literature review)

- **Finding a niche**

Indicating a gap/imperfection

(Research questions)

- **Occupying the niche**

Stating the purpose or nature of research

Listing research questions or hypotheses

(Scope of Research)

Outline the general structure and significance of your work



Fulfil the Requirements of Introductions

Purposive

- That authors recognise gaps in knowledge and try to fill them is shown
- Active voice is recommended, including the use of we

Story-like

- A variety of tenses can be used to show the background of the research

Authoritative

- Existing research findings need to be provided to support what is stated

Complete

- Need to answer the "why" that readers may ask

Concise:

- Don't use historical eulogies or less precise words



Chap. 4:

Literature review: An important component of the introduction





You don't need a literature review, If you work on.....

- **Case Reports:** A case report usually describes a unique case or phenomenon. The introduction section needs to include a review of the relevant literature to demonstrate what makes the case special, but usually does not include a comprehensive literature review.
- **Technical or methodological papers:** This type of paper focuses on the development and validation of new methods or techniques. The introduction will likely focus on the evolution of the relevant technology without the need for an extensive literature review.
- **Conference papers:** Due to space constraints and the need for rapid communication, conference papers may not contain a complete literature review section. Instead, they may briefly cite a few key pieces of literature to support the need for research.



Writing Literature Review

- When your research introduces a breakthrough in a field, it is recommended to employ an **"achievement-based literature review"** to indicate which previous findings have been used as premises or foundations for your work.
- If your topic presents a new insight into a subject that has already been widely discussed, then a **"contentious literature review"** may be employed to showcase the diverse existing perspectives on the topic.
- When the research object is a rapidly developing field, or when your research results include judgments about the future, adopting a **"dynamic literature review"** can demonstrate the historical development process of the subject.



Chap. 5:

Methods: the backbone of a study





Main Components

- **1 Study design – idealised/unspecified**
(Quantitative research or Qualitative research or Others)
(Types of research: Exploration, Descriptive , or Causal)
- **2 Procedures – practical/specific**
(Detail: Participants – Materials – Instruments)
(Data generation and collection)
(Data processing and analysis techniques)
- **3 Anything limited and unfulfilled**
(The difference from the plan)



Effects and Measures of Methods:

Effects

- **Verifiability**
- **Replicability**
- **Transparency**
- **Providing Evaluation Criteria**

Measures

- By detailing the research methods, it demonstrates how the study is conducted systematically and scientifically
- Sufficient details are provided so that other researchers can accurately replicate the experiment or research process
- A clear description of the measure allows readers to understand the specific ways in which data was collected and analysed
- Ensure that your research plan actually follow ethical standards and reporting guidelines



Some Suggestions

- A flowchart can be used to illustrate a certain mode/process
- The past simple tense is primarily used, but when introducing formulas, methodology, and theories, the present simple tense is employed

EG: CDST approaches empower researchers to evaluate the complicated nature of phenomena under investigation and trace their potential fluctuations over time....., participants were asked to self-rate their anxiety levels over time. *

- When uncertain about which details to provide concerning participants, materials, or equipment, consult the most recently published articles in your target journal
- If the experiment involved individuals other than the authors in the collection and analysis of the data, indicate that these individuals met professional requirements



Chap. 6:

Results and Discussion: the voice of a paper





Writing a Results Section

- Your results should always be written in the past tense.
- Although the length of this section depends on how much data you have collected, it should be as concise as possible.
- Include only the results that are directly related to answering your research question. Avoid using speculative or interpretive words such as "appear" or "implies."
- Always start with the most general results first, then move on to more detailed (but still relevant) results.



Checklist of a Good Chart

- **Relevant:** Information of charts is closely related to the final conclusions (rather than selecting content that is easy to make into charts).
- **Clear and Concise:** Information presented in each chart is clear, on the same theme, concise, and avoid overly complex information.
- The difficulty of reading the charts should match the overall complexity of the paper.
- If the existing chart is too hard to read, consider switching to a different type of chart
- **Self-contained:** Charts should convey information without the need for redundant textual explanation.



Steps in Writing the Discussion

- **Step1: Restating results**

Indicating what kind of gap the study fills

Explaining what the information listed in the Results section means

- **Step2: Relating to previous findings**

The research methods and results are compared

Interaction with other relevant studies (proof, extension, refutation)

- **Step3: Listing possible limitations of the study**

Proposing possible solutions to limitations, including the reasons of socialization as well as science and technology

- **Step4: Giving suggestions for the future**

For example, what other research can be carried out based on this result



Some Reminders

- The results section involves presenting a subheading, followed by an immediate and direct statement of purpose or action, such as “xx was/were performed/tested/utilized” “To evaluate/identify/validate” *. No background or deep analysis is needed.
- The discussion section avoids only repetition of information presented in the results and abstract
- In the discussion section, pay attention to your use of **connectives** to demonstrate the most appropriate logic
- When it comes to comparison with previous studies, emphasis is placed **on progress rather than correctness** of this study



Chap. 7:

Conclusion: resolved mystery

Feibelman, P. J. (1993). *A Ph.D. is not enough!: A Guide To Survival In Science*. London: Addison-Wesley Longman.





Essentials of a Conclusion

- **Summary of topic and main points**
- **Summary of findings/ Answers to the questions**
- **Reinforcement of the contribution of the research to the field**

The significance of the findings

Potential impact on the field

- **Summary of your ideas**

Sublimate the views mentioned above about further study and practical significance



Notes of Conclusion

- Maintain **a positive attitude** and do not be pessimistic just because the research has limitations or the results are not comprehensive.

“fail to/has not been” → has not yet... However ...

- Conclusions should **be predictable** and not introduce points that have not been argued for in the preceding text.
- Keep **consistency with** the title, keywords, abstract, and introduction.
- Explain to your readers the importance of this research, sometimes in a more macroscopic and abstract way

“.....reduction of the burden of support and care by the family. The intervention would also contribute to the reduction of the dementia-related medical cost”

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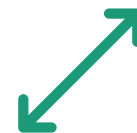
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