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WRITING A RESEARCH REPORT

Dr. Sawant Vitthal Kundalika

Associate Professor and HOD Accountancy , Savitribai Phule Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Satara.

ABSTRACT

Research can become a contribution to a field of knowledge only when it is adequately communicated. For this purpose, good and precise report writing is essential. A research report is a brief account of the problem of investigation, the justification of its selection, the procedure followed for its analysis and findings arrived at. Research writing must be absolutely accurate, clear, unambiguous, logical and concise. Research writing is required the high degree of intellectual confirmation. While writing a research report does not use ornamental and superficial language. A research report can be classified into decision-oriented (technical) report and research oriented report. Further research-oriented report can be classified into survey-based report and algorithmic report. The design and presentation of research report involves a pre-specified sequence of steps. A literature review is an integral part of research writing. The way of findings are communicated differs in quantitative and qualitative research. Depending upon the purpose of study, statistical measures and tests can also become a part of the research writing to support the findings. The text of report should convey the intended message. The outcome of the research should be well documented in the form of a research report for implementation and future use. The main intention of this paper is to study the significance of research report and highlight fundamental guidelines to researchers for writing research report.

KEYWORDS :Communication, Investigation, Knowledge, Research report, Text, Writing.



INTRODUCTION

The concept of research is as old as civilization. Research refers to human activities based on intellectual application in the investigation of matter. Research may be basic or applied. Research is conducted almost in all areas of knowledge, utility and subject matter. Research is an original contribution to the existing stock of knowledge making for its advancement. It is the pursuit of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison and experiment. Research is a confirmation based practice. Research is an art of scientific investigation. It is actually a voyage of discovery. Research is an academic activity and as such the term should be used in a technical sense. In short, the search of knowledge through objective and systematic method of finding solution of a problem is research. The systematic approach

concerning generalization and formulation of a theory is also research. The purpose of research is to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedure. The main aim of research is to find out the truth which is hidden and which has not been discovered yet. Research helps to solve many complex problems faced by the business and society.

The last step in the research process is writing the research report. Each step of the process is important for a valid study, as negligence at any stage will affect the quality on not just that part but the whole study. After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher has to accomplish the task of drawing inferences followed by report writing. The purpose of conducting research is to come out with inferences and suggestions. The outcome of the research should be well documented in the form of a research report for implementation and future use.

Objectives of the Study: In brief, objectives of the present study are as follows:

- + To study the significance of research report.
- + To reveal structure and layout of research report.
- + To highlight fundamental guidelines to researchers for writing research report.

Data Base: The present study is of descriptive nature and which is entirely based on secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from reputed books. In order to fulfill constructed objectives of the present study the secondary data has been assembled.

Report Writing: Research report may be defined as the tangible outcome of research investigation. Before to start writing of a research report, it is good practice to develop an outline. Division of a report into different chapters is an important part of report writing. The outline should specify the subsections of the chapter. The subsections should be developed around the different aspects of the theme being discussed in the chapter. The last step in the research process is writing the research report. The purpose of conducting a research is to come out with inferences and suggestions. Generally, a research involves utilization of different types of resources and results in significant cost of conducting it. Research can become a contribution to a field of knowledge only when it is adequately communicated. For this purpose, precise and effective writing is essential. A careful choice of words will serve to convey exact meaning. The best word to express an idea is not necessarily the longest word. Terms should be clearly defined outset and their use must be consistent with such definitions.

Significance of Research Report: Research report is considered a major component of the research study for the research task remains incomplete till the report has been presented and or/ written. The significance of research report can be stated as under:

- + Means of communication: A research report acts as a means of communication of research findings to the interested parties and general public.
- + Useful in conveying unknown facts: Research report plays a significant role of conveying the unknown facts about the phenomenon to the general public. This may provide new insights and new opportunities to number of people.
- + Assists in decision making: Research report communicates its findings, suggestions and recommendations to the academicians, scholars and policy makers. The findings of research provide useful information in arriving rational decisions that may reform business and society.
- + Improves communication skills of researcher: A research report phase trains the researcher in logical representation of ideas and information and improves his/her communication skills.
- + Provides guidance for future research: Research report serves as a reference material for further research in the same or similar areas of research. It provides guidelines for new researchers and also encourages them.

What Constitutes the Core of the Report ?: The research report constitutes introduction, review of the literature, need of the research, scope and limitations, methodology, method, participants, data collection method, data analysis, findings, discussion, scope for further research, bibliography and appendices.

Structure and Layout of Research Report: The outcomes of research works are to be conveyed to end-users or recorded for future use. The mechanical structure of a report refers to the arrangement of different parts of report. The length and formality determines the structure of report. Structure contains:

Cover Page: The cover page gives the title of the research, department/faculty to which the thesis/report is submitted, degree for which it is submitted, name of researcher, name of the supervisor (if applicable), university/organizational emblem, name of university/organization and its address, month and year of submission.

+ **Introductory Pages :** The introductory pages include the following:

- + Title page
- + Letter of Transmittal
- + Preface
- + Acknowledgement
- + Abstract/Summary
- + List of Tables
- + List of Charts/ Graphs/ Maps /Figures/ List of Variables
- + Abbreviations

+ **Text Part/ Body of the Report:** The different items under 'Text' are:

- + Chapters
- + Main Sections
- + Subsections
- + Footnotes
- + Conclusions
- + Recommendations

✦ **Bibliography:** Bibliography is an alphabetical catalogue of different literatures which are used in research. These works may be books, journals, newspapers, reports, research studies etc. There are several well-established systems for writing a bibliography. In the social sciences some of the most commonly used ones are the Harvard system, the American Psychological Association system, the American Medical Association system, the McGraw-Hill system, the Modern Languages Association system, the footnote system. Bibliography contains:

- + Journal Articles
- + Articles in a Book
- + Government Publications
- + Conference Articles
- + Articles in Newspapers
- + Research Studies

✦ **Appendices:** Appendices are placed at the end of the report. The types of materials which are to be placed under appendices are as listed below:

- + Questionnaire used to collect the data
- + Details of some calculations work involved in report
- + Illustrative materials

- + Statistical tables
- + Views of other experts on the similar topic, etc.
- + Glossary: List of Technical words, the words in the glossary is arranged alphabetically with their explanations.
- + **Index:** It enables the reader to locate the description and explanation pertaining to the important aspect of the contents. The entries in the index are in alphabetical order and are cross referred. All the page numbers of the text on which the information about the entry is available are mentioned against it.

Fundamental Guidelines to Researchers for Writing Research Report: At the time of writing a research report, the researcher should follow the following guidelines:

Sustain reader's interest.

- + Abstract terminology and technical jargon should be avoided.
- + Scholarly writing is not filled with jargon.
- + Avoiding expressions such as "it seems," "there may be" and the like.
- + As a general rule personal pronouns such as I, we, me, my, our and us should not appear except in quotations.
- + A report should not consist of the reporting of personal experience or opinion but should be a critical analysis of a problem and the presentation.
- + The report must provide a ready availability of the findings.
- + The layout of the project should be well thought out and must be appropriate and in accordance with the objective(s) of the research problem.
- + The report should be free from grammatical mistakes.
- + Sentences should not be too complex.
- + Being a researcher sweeping statements and exaggerated claims should be avoided. Statements must be suitably qualified.
- + Quotations must be accurately cited and suitably qualified.
- + The report must present the logical analysis of the subject matter.
- + A research report should show originality and should necessarily be an attempt to solve some intellectual problem.
- + A research report must add to the store of knowledge.
- + The report should be able to convey the matter as simply as possible.
- + Each and every table as well as figure is numbered and it must be referred in the main text.
- + The content of the report should fully reveal the scope of the research in logical sequence.
- + There should be continuity between chapters and also between sections as well subsections.
- + Avoid using lengthy sentences unless warranted.
- + Towards the end, the report must also state the policy implications relating to the problem under consideration.
- + Bibliography must necessarily be given.
- + Appendices should be enlisted in respect of all the technical data in the report.
- + Index is also considered an essential part of a good report and as such must be prepared and appended at the end.
- + Report must be attractive, neat and clean, whether typed or printed.
- + Calculated confidence limits must be mentioned and the various constraints experienced in conducting the research study may also be stated in the report.
- + Objective(s) of the study, the nature of the problem, the methods employed and the analysis

techniques adopted must all be clearly stated in the beginning of the report in the form of introduction.

CONCLUSION:

Knowledge generation and knowledge creation is essential for the development of any society/economy. And research is regarded as an essential tool for performing this activity. Writing report is the most crucial step in the research process as it communicates the findings to readers. Research report is the tangible outcome of research process. Various steps in writing the report should be strictly adhered. A badly written report can spoil all the hard work. Reports may be short, long, technical, management, informative, etc. The specified format has to be adopted and followed while writing the report. All research reports must be written clearly and concisely. Within a theme the information is provided in an integrated manner following a logical progression of thought. In spite of all that has been stated above, one should always keep in view the fact report-writing is an art which is learnt by practice and experience, rather than by mere doctrinarian. Hence, research reporting calls for skills of different order.

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Dr. Sawant Vitthal Kundalika

Associate Professor and HOD Accountancy , Savitribai Phule Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Satara.

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