

Unit- 9

WRITING THE RESEARCH REPORT

The most important aspect of any research is the presentation of the research findings. The readability of the report enhances the value of the research activity undertaken. The formal report follows a well-delineated and relatively long format.

COMPONENTS OF A RESEARCH REPORT:

The research report contains several components or elements. In general these are three parts:

- a. **The preparatory or preliminary papers**
- b. **The body of the report**
- c. **The appendix sections**

a. The preliminary pages (Prefatory items): Prefatory materials do not have a direct bearing on the research report. They assist the reader in using the research report. These includes

- (i) Letter of transmittal
- (ii) The title page
- (iii) Acknowledgements
- (iv) Table of contents
- (v) List of tables
- (vi) List of figures
- (vii) Abbreviations or glossary of technical words used in the report
- (viii) Abstract or summary of the entire report

NOTE: all these are to written on separate pages and with appropriate capital letters and centering the entire text on the page. The title should include four items, the tile of the report, the date, for whom and by whom the report was prepared. A satisfactory title should be brief, the type of relationship between the variables and the population to which the results may be applied.

The title page should include four items: the title of the report, the date and for whom and by whom it was prepared.

Table of contents page:

S. No	Contents	Page. No
1.	Acknowledgements	i.
2.	List of tables	iv

List of Tables:

S. No	Table	Page. No
1.	Age Distribution	10

List of Figures:

S. No	Figure	Page. No
1.	Description (of the fig in precise words) Fig.1	20

Abstract / synopsis (Executive summary):

It is a short summary. The size of the abstract varies from as few as fifty words to as large as a full page. For the less interested reader they tell what is in the report. It should exist following the list of figures on the separate page. Information to be included in a summary is:

- Brief statement of the problem
- Objectives of the study
- Method and procedures of data collection and analysis
- Major findings but recommendations are not included.

b. The body of the research report:

This includes:

- **Introduction**
- **Literature review**
- **Methodology**
- **Findings (Results and Discussions)**
- **Summary and**
- **Conclusions and recommendations**

- i. **The introduction** section normally contains several major subsections. Patterns vary, but one common model consists of three parts as:

- **The problem**
- **Research Objectives**
- **Background of the study**
- **The scope and limitations.**

The problem statement: The statement of problem usually comes first and contains three parts namely, the background, the problem statement itself and the hypothesis.

In the background, the researcher should introduce the major variables and relate them to previous research and theory. The background information leads to a statement of the specific problem, which the research addresses.

Research Objectives: The research objectives address the purpose of the project. These objectives may be research questions and associated investigative questions. In correlational or causal studies, the hypothesis statements are included.

Background of the study: It may be the preliminary results of exploration from an experience survey, focus group, or another source. It could also be secondary data from the literature review. Background material may be placed before the problem statement or after the research objectives. If it is composed of primarily of literature review and related research, it should follow the objectives. If it contains information pertinent to the management problem or the situation that led to the study, it can be placed before the problem statement.

Scope and limitations: Some people ignore the matter, feeling that mentioning limitations detracts from the impact of the study. Such an attitude is unprofessional and borders on the unethical part of the researcher. An even-headed approach is needed in which the readers are aided in judging the validity of the results. The limitations in the present report may be further investigated in future research.

ii. **Literature review:** Those secondary sources of information that supports the statement of the problem and objectives are mentioned here. Review of literature should be taken from empirical studies by researchers in the similar field of study. Certain concepts or models or theories that supports the relevant study can also be incorporated in this section.

iii. **Methodology:** The methodology comprises the following parts.

- Sampling frame and sample
- Sampling design
- Research design
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Limitations

Under the **sampling design** the researcher should define the target population being studied and the sampling methods used. Was it Probability or non probability sampling method? How were the elements selected? How was the sample size determined?

Research design: The coverage of the design must be adapted to the purpose. The rationale of using one design should be stated.

Data Collection: This section includes the type of data collected, the tools and methods adopted in collecting the data, when and where the data was collected should be incorporated.

Data analysis: This section summarizes the methods used to analyze the data. Describe data handling, preliminary analysis, statistical tests, computer programs, and other technical information.

Limitations: All research studies have their limitations, and the sincere investigator recognizes that readers need aid in judging the study's validity.

iv. **Findings and Discussions:** This is generally the longest section of the report. It is an organized presentation of the results. The objective of the findings is an exposition of what the data says rather than drawing interpretations or conclusions. In the discussion section, the researcher presents what interpretations he/she can draw from the data collected and gives the reader of the report an unambiguous interpretation. This should be done as simple as possible with the help of graphs, charts, and tables.

v. **Summary and conclusions:** The summary is a brief statement of the essential findings. The findings state facts which conclusions represent inferences drawn from the findings.

Recommendations: 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 area. 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:

Appendix: complex tables, statistical tests supporting documents, copies of forms used (questionnaires) detailed description of methodology, instructions to field workers and any other evidence that may be important.

Bibliography: There should be a bibliographic section if the study makes heavy use of secondary material. For specific reference, use foot notes and endnotes placed at the conclusions of each major section rather than referring to the bibliography. The objective of which is generally appended to the research report is a list of books in some ways pertaining to the research, which has been done. It should contain all the works, which the researcher has consulted. It should be arranged alphabetically.

There may be several bibliographic entry formats. But the following points should be emphasized on the styles and formats in writing the bibliography.

- All references noted in the text, including the sources for figures and tables must appear in the reference list. (Note: That you should include only those references that are cited in the paper)
- Each item in the list should include all pertinent facts about the publication: author, title of the work in question and nay journal or book in which it is included, city of publication, publishing company, date, page numbers (for journal articles)
- Don't number references
- When there is more than one work by a singe author, place them in reverse chronological order i.e., put the most recent item first and work backwards.
- Don't use lines to indicate that the name is repeated; just repeat the name.
- Format reference lists with a "hanging indent", i.e., the first line of the entry is at margin, with second and subsequent lines indented ones.
- Allow one space between the entries.

Individual citation: List authors last name first (use initials for first names)

When there is more than one author of a single publication, the other are listed by first names first.

- Do the best with ambiguous names, like Chown Lai
- Alphabetize references according to the author's last names. Date of publication follows the names of the authors and is punctuated with a full stop.
- Articles titles are in double quotation marks with sentence style capitalization and punctuated with a full stop.
- Books and journal titles are in italic's with volume and number.
- Conference papers and presentations should be noted with title, sponsor, location and date.
- Publishing information is last with the publishing company's name.

Summary:

For books:

- Name of the author, last name first (First name first for Ethiopian names)
- Date of publication
- Title of the book, italics
- Place and publisher
- Number and volume
- Edition
- Year

For Magazines, Journal Articles and Newspapers:

- Name of the author
- Date of the issue
- Title of the article
- Name of the periodical
- The volume or volume & number
- Pagination

In the text citations in the report it could be at the middle or end of a sentence (author's name, year of publication; page numbers if any Ex: Keynes, 1936: p.450)

Further Rules:**I. CHAPTER (CENTER HEADING)****1.1 Side heading****1.1.1 Paragraph side heading****1.1.1.1 Fourth level heading.****Tables and Figures:**

Tables: Number of tables: All tables including those that appear in the appendix should be numbered to permit their easy identification by the reader. The usual practice is to use Arabic numerical and to number tables consecutively throughout the report including those tables in the appendix. The word table followed by its number as.

Ex: Table 1: Age & Sex Distribution

Title of Table: Every table should be given a title or heading. The title of the table should be a concise summary of what is presented in the table. Capitalize the first letter of all principal words of the table title as given in the above example as:

Age & Sex Distribution.

In the report the title of the report is usually underlined and the tile should be at the top of the table. Give the source of the table and any notes immediately below the table as:

Title of the table:

Source: Compiled by the researcher (if the data is collected by you as a researcher)

Or

Source: Philip Kotler, Principles of Marketing, Vth edition 2000 (if secondary data is used)

Content and placement of tables: Tables should always follow as closely as possible to its first mention in the text. If the table is more than half a page, it should be placed center on a separate page. If it is short and occupies less than half a page, place it on a page with textual matter. Long and detail tables should be put in the appendix of the document.

Figures:

Definition: Figure is any type of illustrative material other than table. Ex: Graph, line drawing, chart, photograph or map should be labeled as figures.

Number of figures: Figures are labeled with the word “Fig. No” and period and should be numbered consecutively throughout the report to permit their easy identification by figures. Ex: Fig.12. They should be numbered with Arabic numerical.

Title of the report: In the report title of the figure is given below the illustration.

GENERAL RULES:

1. **Spelling:** Follow American or English system throughout the paper.
Ex: (American – English): color-colour, labor-labour, center-centre, program-programme.
2. **Word Division:** Avoid dividing words at the end of a line. If the choice is to divide a word, it is advisable to refer a dictionary about where the break should occur.
3. **Punctuation:** Use the same punctuation in parallel situation throughout the report.
4. **Abbreviation:** Abbreviations are commonly used in the list of references, but really in the text of research paper except within parenthesis (brackets). In using abbreviations, keep your reader (evaluator) in mind. When abbreviating, use the commonly accepted forms such as:
 - a. Use neither periods after letters nor spaces between letters for abbreviations made up of all capital letters Ex: U.S.A (wrong), USA (correct). The chief exception to this trend continuous to

- be in initials used for personal names – A period and a space ordinarily follow each initial. Ex: Ato. D. Chaffo
- b. Most abbreviations that end in lower case letters are followed by periods. EX: apr. April, coll. College, dec. December, dept. Department, yr. Year.
 - c. Abbreviations made up of lower case letters that each represents a word, a period follows each letter but no space intervenes between letters.
Ex: a.m (antemeridian), p.m (postmeridian), i.e., (that is)
5. **Numbers:**
- a. Write numbers as words all whole numbers from zero to nine and use numerical for all numbers 10 and above, ex: five students, 20 students
 - b. Never begin a sentence with a number, Ex 500 people have been....x, Five hundred people have been is appropriate, or change the sentence in other form so that the numbers will be at the middle of the sentence
 - c. Always use numerical with:
 - (i) Abbreviations – 8kms (no space between the numerical and the unit, no full stop after the value. (writing Eight kilometers is wrong)
 - (ii) Symbols – 3%. (writing three percent is wrong)
 - (iii) Dates – 21st April 2005
 - (iv) Decimal fraction – 8.5 (and not eight point five)
 - (v) Page reference – Page 8 or P.8 (and not page eight)
6. **Percentage:** There are two ways of treating percentage. You have to use one of it through out report Ex: treat percentage as 2% (number and symbol) or 2 percent (number and word) and not in the form of two percent.
7. **Date:** Be consistent in writing date throughout the paper. Use: day, month and year, Ex: 21st April 2005 (and not 21st, April 2005) or Month, Day and year as: April 21st, 2005.
8. **Roman Numbers:** Use capital roman numerical for
- a. Primary divisions of an outline Ex: Chapter I, II, III etc.,
 - b. Individuals in series Ex: Menilik II, Charles I etc.
9. **Pagination:** Pagination means giving page numbers for your manuscript. Number or page continuously throughout the report. Do not use a period or a hyphen or any other mark or symbol for number of the pages in the report. Every page of the research report is given a number, although not every page has its page number on it. The instances in which page numbers are not types are:
- The cover page
 - The initial page of every chapter
 - The initial page of bibliography

- The initial page of appendix. But numbering is allowed for them in the series.
- Two separate series of page numbers are used as:
 - a. Lower case roman numbers as i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, ...x
 - b. Arabic numbers as 1,2, 3, 4,.....10, ...2000. etc