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Editorial

Writing for academic journals: A general approach

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1. Introduction

It is an important and difficult job to write and publish an academic paper. A large percentage of the manuscripts that are submitted to academic journals for publication are rejected because the author's research is not credible or the manuscripts are poorly written. This paper provides a general approach and some key points for writing and successfully publishing journal papers.

An essential approach in preparing a journal paper is to follow the instructions provided by the target journal. Authors must follow the format and the template of the target journal when preparing their papers for submission. In this paper, we focus on some standard procedures for writing the three most common types of academic papers, i.e., review articles, original articles, and case reports.

2. Approach to writing a Review Article

If you are a post-graduate student who has been asked to perform a comprehensive review of the literature, you should use this opportunity to demonstrate your abilities by publishing some mini-review articles. Many people believe, incorrectly, that only senior researchers are eligible to write review articles. It is much more likely that a Ph.D. student who does not have prior writing or publication experience could publish a review article than publish her or his original Ph.D. research in good journal. It is vitally important that a researcher in this early phase of her or his career gain writing skills and develop her or his own successful style by writing mini-review articles, essays, and educational articles in the first year of post-graduate study. The quality of such reviews might be insufficient to warrant publishing in top-ranked journals, but there are hundreds of good journals that will gladly review and publish such work. When writing a review article, the author should always keep the following key points in mind:

- Review articles usually must have an unstructured abstract that is presented in a short paragraph.
- Review articles usually consist of three sections: Introduction, Discussion, and Conclusions. Some journals may ask that a short methodology section be added in which the methods used for the systematic review are explained.
- The Introduction usually consists of two or three short paragraphs. The opening paragraph should cover the background, and the rest of the Introduction section should identify the gaps in current knowledge and indicate the significance of the review.
- The Discussion section is the heart of a systematic review. The best approach in writing this section is to divide it into separate parts, based on the main variables of interest. In a good Discussion section, it is critically important that the main factor, "Gaps in the Knowledge," be addressed thoroughly.
- The author must summarize "Current Knowledge" and "Gaps in the Knowledge" in a short paragraph. The "Conclusions" section of a good review article must present the author's conclusions based in her or his

review work, state the author's hypotheses that were developed as a result of the work, and provide suggestions for future research that could address the knowledge gaps.

3. Organizing an Original Article

An original article is the most common type of academic paper. Its structure varies depending on the nature of the research and the format requirements established by the target journal. However, such articles usually consist of the following sections: Introduction, Methodology, Results, Discussion, and Conclusions. Some journals merge the Discussion and Conclusions sections. The key aspects that must be addressed in writing a good original communication are:

- The abstract of the original article must convey the main points of the research and the implications of these points. The abstract can be either structured or unstructured, depending on the requirements of the target journal. A structured abstract usually is comprised of four sections: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.
- The two key elements in stating the problem in the Introduction are the use of statistics and citing published work.
- A good approach in concluding the Introduction of an original article is to present the general objective of the research followed by a list of the specific objectives. Usually, the research questions are not presented, but some journals may ask the authors to present their research hypotheses rather than specific objectives.
- The Methodology section usually begins with the "Research Design" followed by the "Study Population and Setting," "Sample Size and Sampling method," data collection, and a list of the methods, instruments, and measurement tools that were used. If the author developed a new measurement tool (such as a new questionnaire), he or she must describe the methods that were used to test and validate the reliability of the tool.
- Only the main findings of the study should be presented in the Results section. Tables and figures should be used conservatively, but they should contain as much information as possible. The most common quantitative findings that should be presented are P-values, confidence intervals, effect sizes, odds ratios, and relative risks.
- In the Discussion section, the author should compare the findings of the research with those of other work. To do this, the author must cite other research publications to indicate the importance of the research findings and to confirm the importance of the research. It is essential to address the limitations of the study in the Discussion section.
- In the Conclusions section, the author should generalize the findings if possible and indicate how policy makers can use the findings beneficially in practical applications. While doing so, however, the use of extreme and grandiose words and unsubstantiated claims should be avoided. Addressing the previously-mentioned "Gaps in the Knowledge" logically opens our eyes to new gaps that may lead to the development of new hypotheses.

4. Writing a Case Report Article

Case reports are important in that they can show us the path that future research should take. Many researchers believe that only unique cases are publishable; however, classical or educational cases are also good enough to be published. The key points that an author should consider in writing case reports are as follows:

- Without question, it is important to present unique case reports.
- Classical or typical cases also should be published because of their educational importance. Such cases provide many valuable educational tips for students.
- Case reports can be structured into the following sections: Introduction, Case Presentation, Discussion, and Conclusions. The Introduction is usually a short paragraph that covers the background and importance of the topic. The Case Presentation should provide all pertinent information about the case that is valid and worthy of discussion. The Discussion section of a case report should tell the readers how unique or classical or important the case is and why. In the Conclusions section, the author should specify what was learned from the case and the basis for upon which those things were learned.
- An unusual case may warn readers about the weakness of a standard operating procedure, or it may highlight required changes in protocols, procedures, and policies. Such cases may define a bigger problem that must be solved by future studies.
- Some case reports are good enough to furnish us with new hypotheses and trigger new research.

5. Publication ethics! Cite this article

In the case of using the approach presented in this article, the author(s) are invited to give appropriate credit to this educational article by including this article in the reference section of the manuscript and making the appropriate citations in the text or acknowledgement section.

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