

Project: Field study report structure

You will submit **one printed copy** of the manuscript for approval and evaluation to the tutor facilitating the individual work and you will present its summary (can be done from Word document) at the group session.

You will bring **another copy** of your manuscript to the state examination, when you will present its short summary. The evaluation (mark) of the report is a part of the state examination evaluation.

Structured abstract

An abstract is a condensed version of the manuscript, which highlights the major points covered, concisely describes its content and scope, and reviews its material in abbreviated form. It is usually the first section read and sets the tone of the paper for the reviewer. It must be concise and easy to read and must cover the important points of the paper.

Limit the abstract to approx. 300 words. Do not cite references in the abstract. Limit the use of abbreviations and acronyms. Use the following subheads: Objectives, Methods, Results, and Conclusions.

Omit background information, literature review, and detailed description of methods.

Text

Organize the manuscript into four main headings: Introduction, Materials and methods, Results, and Discussion. Define abbreviations at first mention in text and in each table and figure. If a brand name is cited, supply the manufacturer's name and address (city and state/country).

Introduction

The purpose of the Introduction is to stimulate the reader's interest and to provide pertinent background information necessary to understand the rest of the paper. You must summarize the problem to be addressed, give background on the subject, discuss previous research on the topic, and explain exactly what the paper will address, why, and how.

Materials and methods

In the Methods section you explain clearly how you conducted your study in order to: (1) enable readers to evaluate the work performed and (2) permit others to replicate your study.

You must describe exactly what you did: what and how experiments were run, what, how much, how often, where, when, and why equipment and materials were used.

Results

The purpose of a Results part is to present the key results of your research without interpreting their meaning. The results should be presented in an orderly sequence.

1. Determine whether the data are best presented in the form of text, figures, graphs, or tables.

2. Summarize your findings and point the reader to the relevant data in the text, figures and/or tables. The text should complement the figures or tables, not repeat the same information.
3. Provide a clear description of the magnitude of a response or difference. If appropriate, use percentage of change rather than exact data.
4. Make sure that the data are accurate and consistent throughout the manuscript.
5. Use the past tense when you refer to your results.
6. Number figures and tables consecutively in the same sequence they are first mentioned in the text.
7. Provide a heading for each figure and table. Each figure and table must be sufficiently complete that it could stand on its own, separate from the text.
8. Write with accuracy, brevity and clarity.

Tables

Tables are used to make an article more readable by removing numeric data from the text. Tables can also be used to synthesize existing literature, to explain variables, or to present the wording of survey questions.

Use column headings and table notes accurately to simplify and clarify the table. In most cases, the meaning of each column should be apparent without reference to the text.

Figures

Figures provide visual impact and therefore they are often the best way to communicate the primary finding. Figures are traditionally used to display trends and group results but can also be used effectively to communicate processes or to display detailed data simply.

Label each axis including units of measurement and clearly identify the data you are displaying (e.g. label each line in a graph).

Discussion

The purpose of the Discussion is to state your interpretations and opinions, explain the implications of your findings, and make suggestions for future research. Its main function is to answer the questions posed in the Introduction, explain how the results support the answers and, how the answers fit in with existing knowledge on the topic.

To make your message clear, the discussion should be kept as short as possible while clearly and fully stating, supporting, explaining, and defending your answers and discussing other important and directly relevant issues. Care must be taken to provide a commentary and not a reiteration of the results.

1. Organize the Discussion from the specific to the general: your findings to the literature, to theory, to practice.
2. Use the same key terms, the same verb tense (present tense), and the same point of view that you used when posing the questions in the Introduction.
3. Begin by re-stating the hypothesis you were testing and answering the questions posed in the introduction.
4. Support the answers with the results. Explain how your results relate to expectations and to the literature, clearly stating why they are acceptable and how they are consistent or fit in with previously published knowledge on the topic.
5. Address all the results relating to the questions, regardless of whether or not the findings were statistically significant.
6. Describe the patterns, principles, and relationships shown by each major finding/result and put them in perspective. The sequencing of providing this information is important; first state the answer, then the relevant results, then cite

- the work of others. If necessary, point the reader to a figure or table to enhance the “story”.
7. Defend your answers, if necessary, by explaining both why your answer is satisfactory and why others are not. Only by giving both sides to the argument can you make your explanation convincing.
 8. Discuss and evaluate conflicting explanations of the results. This is the sign of a good discussion.
 9. Discuss any unexpected findings. When discussing an unexpected finding, begin the paragraph with the finding and then describe it.
 10. Identify potential limitations and weaknesses and comment on the relative importance of these to your interpretation of the results and how they may affect the validity of the findings. When identifying limitations and weaknesses, avoid using an apologetic tone.
 11. Summarize concisely the principal implications of the findings, regardless of statistical significance.
 12. Provide recommendations (no more than two) for further research. Do not offer suggestions which could have been easily addressed within the study, as this shows there has been inadequate examination and interpretation of the data.
 13. Explain how the results and conclusions of this study are important and how they influence our knowledge or understanding of the problem being examined.
 14. In your writing of the Discussion, discuss everything, but be concise, brief, and specific.

The text above is based on the materials at San Francisco edit webpage accessible at <http://www.sfeddit.net/> Accessed April 20, 2009

References: Key the references at the end of the manuscript. Cite the references in text in the order of appearance. If there are more than three authors, name only the first three authors and then use et al. Sample references are given below:

Journal article

I. Guarino A, Spagnuolo MI, Giacomet V, et al. Effects of nutritional rehabilitation on intestinal function and on CD4 cell number in children with HIV. *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr* 2002;34:366-71.

Book chapter

2. Todd VR. Visual information analysis: frame of reference for visual perception. In: Kramer P, Hinojosa J, eds. *Frames of Reference for Pediatric Occupational Therapy*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 1999:205-56.

Entire book

3. Ming S-C, Goldman H. *Pathology of the Gastrointestinal Tract*. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 1998.

Database

6. CANCERNET-PDQ [database online]. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute; 1996. Updated March 29, 1996.

World Wide Web

7. Gostin LO. Drug use and HIV/AIDS [JAMA HIV/AIDS web site]. June 1, 1996. Available at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/special/hiv/ethics>. Accessed April 26, 2009