

Module IV: Report Writing and Presentation

23. Research Report, Types of Reports, Style of Reporting Documentation

Research Report

Meaning: After completing a research study, the researcher must communicate the findings to others. Merely conducting research is not enough; the results should be presented in a systematic and understandable manner. This is done through a Research Report.

A Research Report is a formal written document that presents the entire research work in an organized manner. It explains what problem was studied, why it was studied, how the study was conducted, what data were collected, what conclusions were reached, and what recommendations were made.

In simple words, a research report is the final written presentation of research findings.

Example: Suppose a company conducts a study to understand why sales are declining. After collecting and analyzing data, the researcher prepares a document containing objectives, methodology, findings, and suggestions. This document is called a research report.

Need and Importance of Research Reports

Research reports are important because research becomes useful only when its findings are communicated properly.

- **Communication of Findings:** A report helps researchers communicate their findings to readers in a systematic manner.
- **Permanent Record:** Serve as permanent records that can be referred to in the future.
- **Basis for Decision-Making:** Managers, governments, and organizations use them to make decisions.
- **Contribution to Knowledge:** Add to the existing body of knowledge and help future researchers.
- **Academic Requirement:** Required for dissertations, theses, and project submissions.

Structure of a Research Report

Generally, a research report consists of three parts.

- 1. Preliminary Pages:** Provide introductory information. (Title Page, Certificate, Declaration, Acknowledgement, Table of Contents, Lists of Tables/Figures).
- 2. Main Body:** Contains the actual research work. (Introduction, Review of Literature, Objectives/ Hypotheses, Research Methodology, Data Analysis, Findings, Suggestions, Conclusion).
- 3. End Matter:** Contains supporting information. (References, Bibliography, Appendices, Annexures).

General Structure of a Research Report

Preliminary Pages → Main Body → End Matter

Types of Reports

Different reports are prepared according to the purpose and audience.

Technical Report

Prepared mainly for researchers, experts, and academicians.

Features: Detailed presentation, Technical language, Statistical analysis, Complete methodology.

Example: Doctoral theses and scientific research papers.

Popular Report

Prepared for managers and ordinary readers.

Features: Simple language, Less statistical info, Greater emphasis on findings.

Example: Market survey reports prepared for company executives.

Interim Report

Provide info about the progress of research before completion.

Purpose: Inform sponsors about progress, present preliminary findings.

Example: Monthly progress reports submitted during projects.

Summary Report

Present only important findings and conclusions.

Purpose: To provide essential information quickly.

Example: Executive summaries prepared for top management.

Comparison of Different Types of Reports

Type of Report	Audience	Main Focus
Technical Report	Researchers and experts	Detailed analysis
Popular Report	Managers and general readers	Findings and recommendations
Interim Report	Sponsors and management	Progress of research
Summary Report	Executives	Major conclusions

Style of Reporting Documentation

Meaning: Style of reporting refers to the manner in which information is presented and organized in the report. Good documentation improves readability and understanding.

Characteristics of Good Reporting Style

- **Clarity:** Ideas should be easy to understand.
- **Simplicity:** Complicated words should be avoided.
- **Accuracy:** Facts and figures should be correct.
- **Logical Sequence:** Information should be presented systematically.
- **Objectivity:** Personal bias should be avoided.
- **Consistency:** The same style and format should be maintained throughout.

Guidelines for Effective Documentation

- Use proper headings and subheadings.
- Arrange information logically.
- Use tables and figures where necessary.
- Avoid grammatical mistakes.
- Follow a consistent citation style.

24. Qualities of a Good Report

Meaning: Not every report is effective. A good report is one that communicates information clearly, accurately, and systematically. The quality of a report determines how useful and reliable it is.

Clarity & Simplicity

Language should be simple and understandable. Technical jargon should be minimized.

Ex: Explain complex stats simply.

Accuracy & Objectivity

All facts, figures, and calculations must be correct. Free from personal bias; conclusions based on evidence.

Conciseness & Completeness

Include only relevant information, but ensure all essential information required by readers is present.

Logical Organization

Ideas should flow from one section to another in a systematic order.

Consistency

Uniform style, format, and citation methods should be followed.

Presentation & Timeliness

Proper use of tables/graphs. Submitted within the required time.

Importance of a Good Report: Improves communication, enhances credibility, facilitates decision-making, provides a reliable record, and helps future researchers.

25. Citation, Footnotes, References, Bibliography, APA, and MLA Format

Citation

Meaning: Whenever info/ideas/data are taken from another source, the original author must be acknowledged. Gives credit and prevents plagiarism.

Why Necessary? Acknowledge author, avoid plagiarism, increase credibility, help readers locate sources.

Example: (Kothari, 2019)

Footnotes

Meaning: Explanatory notes or references placed at the bottom of a page. Provides additional info without interrupting main text.

Uses: Provide references, explain difficult terms, add supplementary info.

Example: ¹ Kothari, C.R., Research Methodology, 2019.

References

Meaning: A list of sources actually cited within the report. Only those sources mentioned in the text are included.

Ex: If Kothari's book is cited in the report, it appears in the reference list.

Bibliography

Meaning: A list of all materials consulted during the study, whether cited or not. Broader than references.

Difference Between References and Bibliography

References	Bibliography
Includes only cited sources	Includes all consulted sources
Mandatory in reports	Broader list
Usually shorter	Usually longer

APA and MLA Formats

APA Format

Meaning: American Psychological Association style, widely used in management, psychology, social sciences.

Characteristics: Uses author-year citation, publication year appears after author's name.

General Format: Author's Name. (Year). Title of Book. Publisher.

Example: Kothari, C.R. (2019). Research Methodology. New Age Int.

MLA Format

Meaning: Modern Language Association style, commonly used in literature and humanities.

Characteristics: Gives more importance to author and title, publication year appears near the end.

General Format: Author's Name. Title of Book. Publisher, Year.

Example: Kothari, C.R. Research Methodology. New Age Int, 2019.

Difference Between APA and MLA

APA Format	MLA Format
Used in Social Sciences	Used in Humanities
Year appears after author's name	Year appears near the end
Uses author-year citation	Uses author-page citation
Emphasizes publication date	Emphasizes author and title

26. Research Ethics – Ethical Issues in Research, Plagiarism

Research Ethics

Meaning: Research ethics refers to the moral principles and standards that guide researchers in conducting research honestly, fairly, and responsibly. It ensures that participants are treated properly and findings are reported truthfully.

Why Important? Protect participants, Promote honesty and integrity, Improve the credibility of research, Prevent research misconduct, Maintain public trust.

Ethical Issues in Research

Informed Consent

Participants voluntarily agree after understanding the purpose.

Ex: Signing consent forms.

Confidentiality & Privacy

Personal info should remain private. Respect privacy.

Ex: Keeping customer names confidential.

Objectivity & Honesty

Avoid personal bias. Data should be reported truthfully.

Avoidance of Harm: Research should not cause physical or psychological harm to participants.

Plagiarism

Meaning: Plagiarism means presenting another person's ideas, words, or work as one's own without giving proper credit. It is considered a serious academic offense.

Direct

Copying someone else's work word-for-word.

Self-Plagiarism

Using one's previously published work without acknowledgment.

Mosaic

Combining copied material with original writing.

Accidental

Failure to cite sources unintentionally.

Consequences: Loss of reputation, Academic penalties, Rejection of research papers, Legal consequences.

27. Plagiarism Checkers, Salami Slicing, Falsification, Fabrication, Duplicate Submission, Data Manipulation

Plagiarism Checkers

Meaning: Software tools used to identify copied or unoriginal content.

Common: Turnitin, Grammarly, Copyscape, iThenticate.

Importance: Detect plagiarism, encourage originality, maintain standards.

Salami Slicing

Meaning: Dividing one large study into several smaller publications to increase publication count.

Unethical because: Creates unnecessary duplication and misrepresents productivity.

Ex: Publishing 4 articles from 1 dataset when 1 was enough.

Falsification & Fabrication

Falsification: Changing or manipulating data to get desired results. (*Ex: Changing survey responses*)

Fabrication: Creating fake data/results that never existed. (*Ex: Reporting interviews never conducted*)

Duplicate Sub. & Data Manip.

Duplicate Submission: Submitting same paper to >1 journal at same time. Unethical as it wastes editors' time.

Data Manipulation: Intentionally altering, omitting, or distorting data. (*Ex: Removing unfavorable obs.*)

Comparison of Research Misconduct

Practice	Meaning	Example
Plagiarism	Using others' work without acknowledgment	Copying from a journal article
Salami Slicing	Dividing one study into many papers	Multiple papers from one dataset
Falsification	Altering data	Changing survey responses
Fabrication	Creating fake data	Inventing observations
Duplicate Submission	Sending same paper to multiple journals	Simultaneous submission
Data Manipulation	Distorting data intentionally	Omitting unfavorable values

Why Should Research Misconduct be Avoided? Research is based on trust and honesty. Unethical practices reduce the reliability of findings, damage the reputation of researchers, and hinder scientific progress. Therefore, researchers must maintain integrity and follow ethical principles throughout the research process.

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