Chapter 27

Guide for Postgraduate Student Research and Publications:
A Step-by-Step Approach

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ABSTRACT

Academic research writing (manuscript writing) involves many shortcomings and challenges, but the process is systematically structured. Overcoming these challenges should involve proper adherence to steps and processes when carrying out academic studies. These challenges are a continuous worry for beginners and emerging researchers. Also, the components that constitute academic writing and its structure are continuously debated by scholars globally, especially for beginners and emerging researchers. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines and steps that can assist researchers (beginners) to write manuscripts that meet the requirements of journal editorial boards, their audiences, as well as theses/dissertations for academic institution requirements and expectations of examiners. To achieve the purpose of this chapter, various vital variables and constructs were explained in clear and understandable terms in line with literature review of precious studies. The constructed ideas make the chapter useful for beginners who are writing manuscripts, theses, and dissertations.

INTRODUCTION

Writing to deliver high quality manuscript for publication and thesis/dissertation for postgraduate degree can be demanding. It necessitates strict adherence to standard, steps and approaches with clarity in terms of structuring and presentation of information to foster easy understanding of the readers. The process in developing and delivering these quality scientific papers can be challenging and time con-

suming, nevertheless rewarding. Meanwhile, owing to ambiguous perceptions clamoring the mindset of beginners regarding research and manuscript writing, detailed and coherent explanations of the various steps involved are imperative. Importantly, applying lay down processes and procedures as contained in this chapter can minimize as well as eliminate common mistakes and errors involved in writing. This guide will increase the possibility of producing quality manuscripts for publication and (a) successful research document/s (passing of thesis/dissertations examination) for beginners as well as established researchers and authors.

Despite the challenges in writing for publication and thesis/dissertation, Tribe and Tunariu (2016) believes that producing acceptable and publishable manuscripts is a huge achievement as well as contributing to the general scientific community, but this demands great patience and guideline. This chapter aim to present a comprehensive guideline for beginners and established researchers in writing academic proposal and manuscript that will contribute towards a quality academic writing and outputs. This chapter regards thesis/dissertations as postgraduate research documents for examination and degree purposes, while manuscripts are considered journal, conference, book chapter and other contributions. Oftentimes, in this chapter, academic writing or paper will be used to refer to both the thesis/dissertation and manuscript writing process. The structure and components of this chapter will benefit beginners to understand the most common problems encountered by researchers in writing manuscripts and thesis or dissertation proposals, field reports, grant applications and consultancy documents, which makes it more needful for readers.

The study is structured into five parts; steps to consider in academic writing, additional components to consider, summary or conclusion, future research direction and references. Importantly, any reader should refer to Table 1 for the necessary components to include while developing manuscripts, such as article writing or thesis/dissertations.

Steps To Consider In Academic Writing

Considering the rigorous nature of academic writing and the manuscript publication process, knowledge of the appropriate steps connotes a positive direction. For instance, when an individual understands the intricacies involved in any project, actualising the project becomes easier and clearer. Clarity is a distinct feature in any scientific writing, which a researcher should always bear in mind (Day & Gastel, 2016). The clarity of any scientific paper demands proper organisation, communication skills and presentation of information throughout the paper. Day and Gastel (2016) further stated that in any manuscript writing, understanding of the paper depends on the clarity of the information being passed and the reader's interpretations. Therefore, there is a need to consider the audience. Audiences (readers) are primarily people to consider while writing (Cargill & O'Connor, 2013). Manuscript publication is undoubtedly an avenue of joining the scientific community. Therefore, to join the community it is important to understand the rules of engagement. The rules will vary with disciplines, but the researchers follows general steps while attempting to write or publish academic manuscript as well as writing thesis/dissertations. The steps are the following:

Step 1: Develop Idea

The ability to write any manuscript or thesis/dissertation begins with a conception, imagination or ideas. This idea builds the intention that engineers the purpose for the study. An idea defines the overall view

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