Academic and professional report writing

Chapter overview

The key elements of academic writing will be covered in this topic, along with skills needed to communicate well in both academic and professional settings. Approaches that are essential to effective academic writing will be covered, including coherence, clarity, structure, and the proper use of formal language. You will start to understand the value of writing precisely and purposefully in academic settings by interacting with a variety of teaching materials.

You will study important principles that will help you improve your academic and professional report writing abilities throughout this subject. These are intended to assist you in writing logically and clearly, making sure that your thoughts and arguments are coherent and easy to understand. To improve your comprehension and implementation of these ideas, educational resources, videos, and activities will be suggested. You will gain a greater understanding of academic writing. This entails knowing how to organise your writing, make good use of evidence, and how to present your insights logically. Additionally, you will learn how to write the proposal and the digital poster for the summative assignment. We will give you some tips and advice on creating the digital poster.

You will develop your writing abilities by the end of this topic, which will help you draft your proposal more competently and confidently. These abilities will be helpful in both your academic and professional endeavours, in addition to being necessary for your current studies. This topic is intended to give you the foundational knowledge of academic writing that you need to succeed in your coursework. It additionally seeks to establish a basis on which you can build more sophisticated writing skills in subsequent modules and over your academic career.

Learning outcomes

- Develop skills in academic and professional report writing
- Apply these skills to write a clear and well-structured project proposal

Chapter summary

This chapter will focus on improving your academic writing abilities, which are essential for effective communication in both professional and higher education contexts. One of the most important steps in developing your writing style is realising whether words are too informal, generalised or unsuitable for academic writing. We'll also look at the essential components of academic writing and the things you should consider carefully when creating your assignments. This involves tone, organisation, use of evidence, and clarity of argument. We shall explore the difference between descriptive and critical writing. Both have a place, but critical writing—which calls on the capacity to assess, contrast, and effectively express arguments—is frequently required at higher educational levels.

In order to determine what makes for strong professional practice, we will examine a range of writing examples throughout the topic. These will assist you in understanding how to efficiently organise your work and make your writing style more formal. Furthermore, we will offer direction regarding the summative assignment.

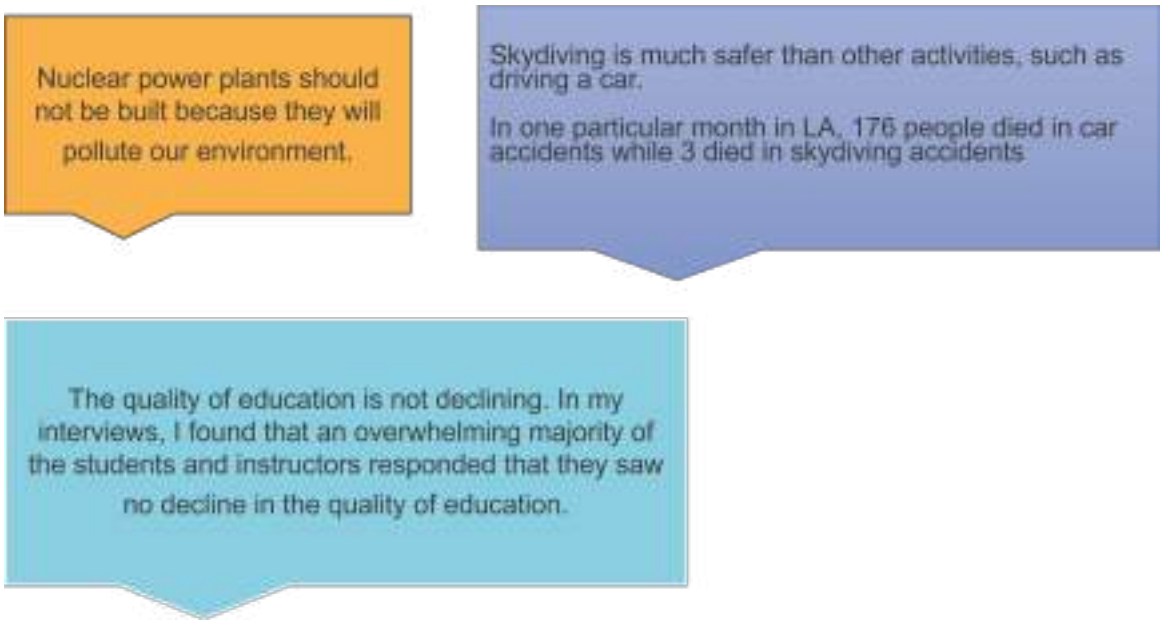
1 Descriptive versus critical writing

Descriptive writing	Critical writing
States what happened	Identifies & discusses the significance of what happened
Details an activity	Explains why the activity is likely to achieve the desired outcome – using evidence to support this assertion
Says when something occurred	Identifies why timing was important
States the different components	Weighs up the importance of component parts
States what a business does	Explains how it does these things and why they are done in these particular ways
Identifies a problem	Explains the nature, size, potential duration and significance of the problem

Descriptive writing is about reciting events with an emphasis on what happened and when. Without delving into more complex meanings or justifications, it offers information in an uncomplicated way. It does not provide an in-depth analysis or interpretation, even though it could highlight certain problems or circumstances. This kind of writing is meant to describe, not to assess or evaluate. Because of this, it lacks critical engagement and fails to explore the importance of the provided material. To put it another way, descriptive writing ends with the presentation of facts or observations without providing a solution to the question, "so what?". It doesn't explore the significance of events or its potential wider ramifications. This writing style is frequently employed in the preliminary phases of academic work, but in order to show comprehension and critical thinking at university level, it needs to be further refined into critical writing.

You should carefully consider not only the information sources you use, but also the concepts and arguments they present. This is a necessary component of being a university student. You can't just trust what you read or are told. Some people may find this awkward because it calls on you to criticise published authors. This may seem out of place, but it is a fundamental aspect of scholarly discourse. It is true that there are numerous equally legitimate academic insights on any particular subject or problem. You must be both sceptical and objective in order to think critically effectively. The foundation of criticality is inquiry. Asking questions forces you to think actively by comparing what you already know with what you are hearing, reading, seeing, or experiencing. But not every question is as inquisitive. In contrast to queries like "how" or "so what," which are far more critical, "what," "when," and "who" are typically more descriptive (University of Hull, 2025) You should ask a variety of questions when practicing critical thinking in order to analyse the topic or the selected challenges. To fully engage in critical thinking, you must think about asking more analytical and evaluative questions in addition to descriptive ones, which are excellent for fostering your first comprehension. You must recognise everything that shapes your viewpoint when you are using critical thinking. This is crucial because, in the absence of this degree of self-awareness, you may concentrate more on forming your viewpoint than on creating a well-reasoned argument (University of Hull, 2025).

1.1 Descriptive or critical?



The above statements are broad and generalised, and they lack clear evidence and detail. As an example, the writer should specify what LA is – does this stand for Los Angeles in the USA? What month and year did the accidents occur? What school/ college/ university does the text refer to regarding the standard of education? And what nuclear power plants are they referring to? Why are these polluting the environment? What does it mean 'not declining'? The above statements could be improved by making them more specific, detailed and evidence based.

1.2 What are the characteristics of academic writing?

A formal communication style that is necessary for university success is academic writing. First of all, writing for academic purposes is essentially a communication process in which the writer, as the sender, presents a fact-based argument to the reader, as the receiver. Since the target audience influences the substance and the presentation of arguments, it is essential to understand them. It is important for writers to know what their readers already know so they may adjust their message properly. A further essential component is objectivity. Generalisations, prejudices, and personal opinions should be avoided in academic writing. Even whether talking about fictitious characters, political disputes, or religious issues, the emphasis must always be on putting forward a well-reasoned argument supported by facts rather than personal opinions. This dedication to neutrality guarantees that the writing will always have a formal, critical tone (Turner, 2017).

Another essential component of academic writing is formality. Casual language should not be used in academic publications, just as one would not wear casual clothing to a formal function. Students are urged to read widely in their academic discipline in order to master the proper style and level of formality. Student theses, textbooks, and research publications are just a few of the useful materials available at university libraries. Students can improve their writing by examining how seasoned authors present arguments, clarify important vocabulary, and cite earlier studies (Turner, 2017).

1.3 Guidance for report writing

(Source: Adapted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023)

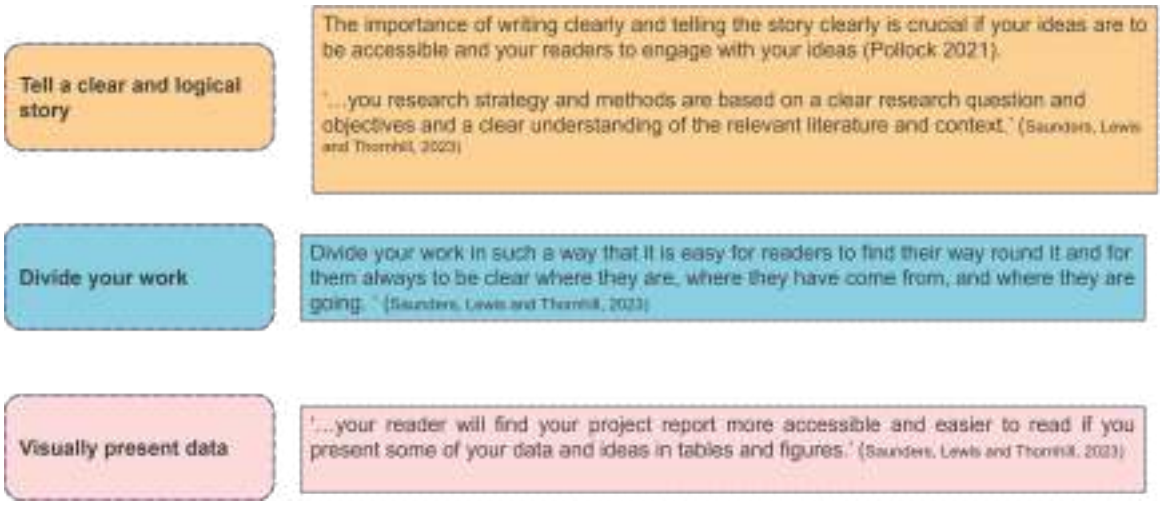
Your report's structure and content are equally as important as your writing style. One thought, one sentence is a straightforward rule to follow. Despite spellcheckers, many of us still struggle with spelling. Spellcheckers won't fix your "moral" when you meant to enter "morale," identify when you should type "practise" instead of "practice," or notice that you typed "researches" instead of "research." If the person reading your draft is a proficient speller, they can assist you in this situation. Every misspelling in your project report diminishes the credibility of your ideas and the calibre of your presentation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

In academic writing, structure is especially important since it clarifies your ideas, directs the reader's understanding, and supports your claims. Essays and report writing necessitate the writer to choose and arrange their subject matter in order to create a structure. In order to let the reader know what to anticipate and the sequence in which it will be presented, the writer typically lays out the structure in the introduction. Ideally, there should be only one point or thought each paragraph, and the information should be presented logically so that the reader can follow the reasoning. Additionally, rather than pausing and beginning at each new point, the ideas should flow or be connected so that the reader is pulled through an explanation or argument. The article's conclusion should synthesise all of the ideas or points and reach a conclusion (University of Reading, 2018).

Please note that the structure of the consultancy proposal report is as follows:

Introduction, challenges, research basics, research methodology, ethics and conclusion

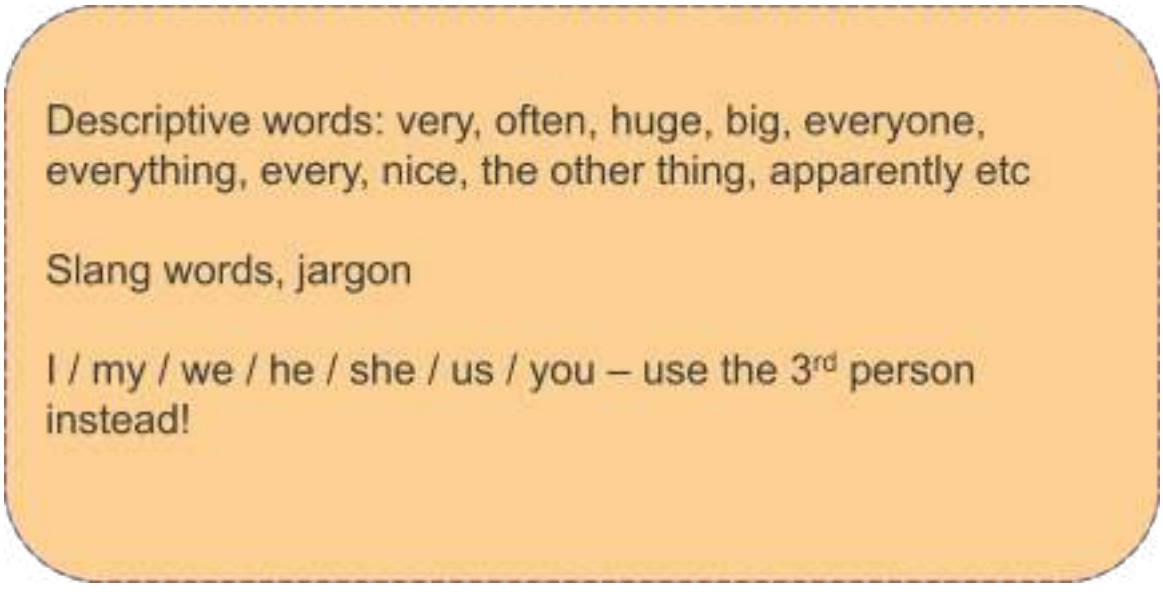
1.4 Ensuring good quality writing



If you want your thoughts to be understandable and your audience to be interested in what you have to say, it is essential that you write and tell the story clearly (Pollock 2021). As a result, you

must be ready to address questions such "What is your main storyline?" Your main point should be concise, uncomplicated, and obvious. The storyline of your project report should be so obvious that you can stop the next person that approaches you and explain it to them, and they will respond, "Yes, I understand that." If you include some of your facts and thoughts in tables and figures, your reader will find your project report easier to read and more accessible. Tables and diagrams can display more than just numerical data. Additionally, you can give concepts that are easily comparable. Refrain from including your tables in the appendices. Incorporate, mention, and discuss them inside the writing. The important features of the data in the tables should be highlighted in your discussions . It shouldn't only list the items in the table. Whenever possible, introduce the table or figure before it appears in the text to prevent confounding the reader (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

1.5 Use of words – what to avoid



Avoid using descriptive words such as the ones on the slide as these do not add value to your discussion. You need to avoid jargon and slang words and use the 3rd person (as opposed to 'we' as an example).

1.6 Use of words - continue

Your writing must be precise, succinct, and supported by good logic. Steer clear of redundancy, ambiguous language, and superfluous terminology. Every sentence should directly advance the main point of the analysis or argument. Make use of clear, unambiguous, neutral language that is grammatically correct. Arguments need to make sense and be backed up by credible sources. Statements need to be supported by facts rather than anecdotal evidence. Use cautious words like "may," "might," "could," or "potentially" to highlight areas of ambiguity and the boundaries of present knowledge. This prevents overgeneralisation and guarantees academic honesty. Arguments need to make sense and be backed up by credible sources. Statements need to be supported by facts rather than anecdotal evidence. Use cautious words like "may," "might," "could," or "potentially" to highlight areas of ambiguity and the boundaries of present knowledge. This prevents overgeneralisation and guarantees academic honesty.

Every conversation needs to be closely related to the subject and critically focused. Avoid using off-topic or filler text. To communicate important ideas, you should evidence from reputable sources. Journal articles, scholarly books, and company reports could fall under this category. Claims that lack specific evidence detract from the overall calibre of the work and ought to be avoided. There should be a logic in the structure. A clear introduction should come first, then well-structured points that form a logical argument. Every paragraph should address a distinct facet of the problem and make sense in relation to the one before it.

2 How to write the consultancy project proposal digital poster?

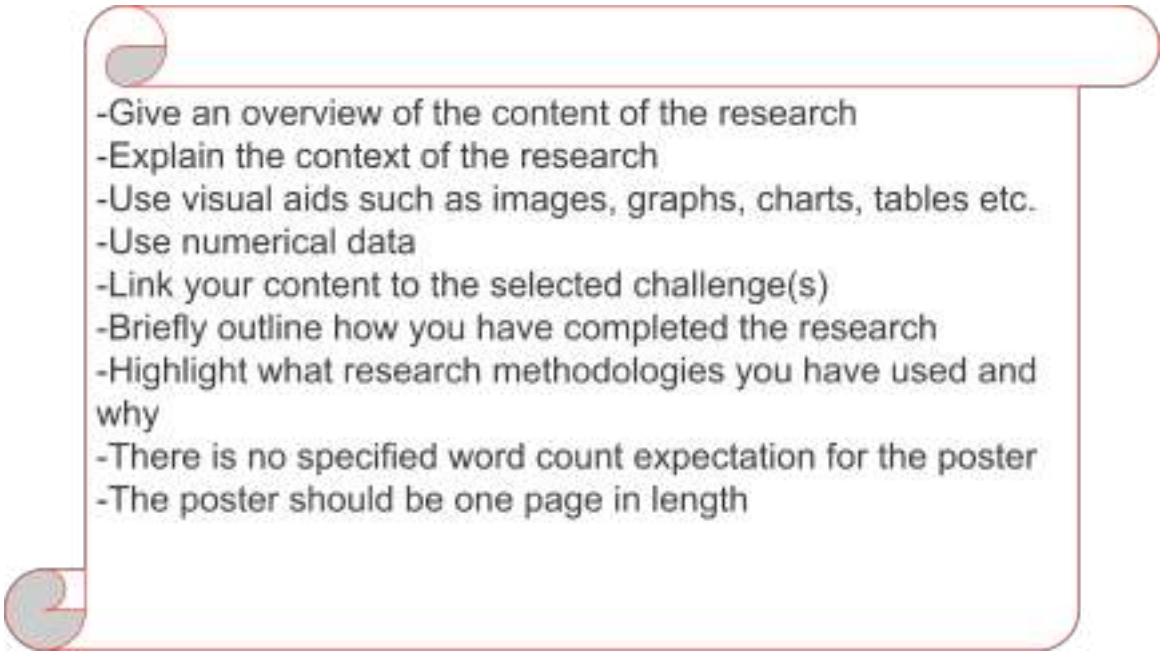
> 'The purpose of a poster is not to provide a detailed explanation of your research but to give a succinct and clear message about the main aspects.' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023)

The digital poster should provide an overview of your research. It needs to include visual elements, data, and paragraphs to explain the essential parts of your project.

Digital Poster: Use the below link to access a step-by-step video which explains how to design a poster using Microsoft Word: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpyTK-s6SDw

You can also use Canva to access free poster templates:
https://www.canva.com/posters/templates/

2.1 Continue



When preparing your academic poster, aim to present a clear, concise, and visually engaging summary of your research. The poster should be limited to one page and designed to capture attention while effectively communicating key findings. Support your arguments with relevant numerical data whenever possible. Quantitative evidence, such as percentages, statistics, or trends, can strengthen your conclusions and add credibility to your work. To enhance engagement and understanding, use appropriate visual aids such as graphs, charts, tables, and relevant images. These visuals should complement the text and highlight significant insights, trends, or comparisons. Avoid cluttered layouts—each visual element should have a clear purpose and be easy to interpret. Also, making sure that you provide sufficient content in the poster.

Include a brief yet informative explanation of your research method. Describe how the data was collected and analysed, and ensure your chosen methodology is clearly justified. Use a logical structure to explain why this method was suitable for your research. Organise the content into short, readable paragraphs or use bullet points where appropriate. This makes the poster more accessible and helps the audience quickly locate key information. Use academic language that is neutral, grammatically correct, and free of bias or informal expressions.

Avoid unnecessary repetition or vague wording. Every element of your poster should serve a purpose—either to inform, illustrate, or persuade. Your primary goal is to communicate your research clearly, accurately, and efficiently, providing your audience with an engaging and fact-based overview of your work. It is important that your poster is clearly visible when making the submission and the reader can easily read all the information/ data/ text provided.

3 Academic writing example 1 and comments

A research question is one that the thesis statement of a study or research effort seeks to address. This question frequently refers to a problem or issue that is resolved in the study's conclusion through data analysis and interpretation. The research question is typically written to outline the population and variables to be investigated, the problem the study is trying to solve, and other features of the study. A research question is frequently based on research, as their name suggests. These questions are therefore dynamic, meaning that when researchers examine relevant material and create a study framework, they can alter or improve the research question.

Why is it important?

Creating a research question is crucial because it helps focus a wide range of interests into a particular field of study (Creswell, 2013). Along with hypotheses, research questions provide a framework for direction. These inquiries also clearly define the parameters of the research, establishing its bounds and guaranteeing its unity. Furthermore, the rest of the study is impacted by the research topic. The research technique, sample size, data collecting, and data analysis are all impacted by these questions (Lipowski, 2008).

What are the types of research questions?

Depending on the kind of study to be conducted, research questions can be divided into many categories. Writing good research questions can be aided by knowing the kind of study one wants to conduct, whether it be mixed-methods, quantitative, or qualitative. The following list of typical research question categories is provided by Doody and Bailey (2016).

Quantitative research questions

Research questions that are quantitative are exact. The population to be examined, the dependent and independent variables, and the research strategy to be employed are usually included in these inquiries. Typically, they are finalized and framed at the beginning of the study (Berger, 2015). The relationship between the research question and the research strategy is also established by quantitative research questions. Furthermore, there are no "yes" or "no" answers to these queries. Therefore, terms like "is," "are," "do," and "does" are not used in quantitative research inquiries. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), quantitative research questions typically aim to comprehend specific social, familial, or educational events or processes that take place in a given context and/or region. They can be further divided into three categories: relational, comparative, and descriptive.

Qualitative research questions

Both more general and more specialized fields of study may be covered by qualitative research questions. Qualitative research questions are connected to study design, just like quantitative research questions. However, qualitative research questions are typically more flexible, non-directional, and adaptive than their quantitative counterparts (Creswell, 2013). Because of this, research that employs these questions typically seeks to "discover," "explain," or "explore."

Mixed-method studies

A set of both quantitative and qualitative research questions is usually necessary for mixed-methods investigations. When a mixed-methods study concentrates on the importance and distinctions between quantitative and qualitative methods rather than the integrative component of the investigation, separate questions are suitable (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Another choice available to researchers is to formulate a single mixed-methods study topic. This implies an integrated process or component between the study's quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, claim Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010).

(Source: Adapted from Bouchrika, 2023)

3.1 Academic writing example 2 and comments

The subject of this article is secondary analysis, which is believed to raise few ethical concerns in the course of research. It specifically draws on the experience of a collaborative research project that utilized secondary analysis of qualitative data gathered as part of an ongoing international longitudinal study, Young Lives (www.younglives.org.uk), in addition to a more comprehensive review of regulatory guidance on research ethics and scholarly debates. Secondary analysis

comes in a variety of forms and offers various benefits. Although regulatory frameworks may indicate otherwise, it is a more intricate ethical dilemma. Whether data is kept in a public repository or not, ethical concerns need to be addressed. These issues include obligations to participants and the original researchers, as well as the necessity of achieving a contextual knowledge of the data by recognizing and mitigating the dangers of misinterpretation. The issues brought forth here are meant to encourage planning and thought in order to promote ethical research practice, both for primary researchers who aim to archive their data and for researchers starting a qualitative secondary analysis. Finally, the significance of establishing and preserving trustworthy relationships between primary and secondary researchers is underscored by our experience.

The regulation of data sharing

The Oxford English Dictionary cites John Dryden's translation of Plutarch's life in the 17th century to place the etymology of the word "archive" (as a noun) in ancient Greece. However, archiving has only just been linked to data access and main empirical research data. According to Mauthner (2012), confidentiality, data protection, and informed permission have historically been used as justifications for the expectation that researchers remove data after a study is complete. The number of primary databases that funders will be willing to support is becoming more and more constrained, according to Thorne's 1998 article (p. 547). Arguments regarding the advantages of data sharing and economic factors have also contributed to this change.

Data archiving has become a standard requirement for research funders. This expectation is outlined in the ESRC Research Data and Open Access Policies. According to the ESRC Open Access Policy:

More specifically, we require research data arising from ESRC-funded research to be made available to the scientific community in a timely and responsible manner. ESRC grant holders are expected to make use of existing standards for data management and to make data available for further re-use (ESRC 2010, p3).

Guidelines for ethical research practices have helped to change expectations in recent years. Previously, it was assumed that it was morally right to destroy data after a study was completed. However, since 1995, ESRC policy has included an apparent expectation that data will be archived and made publicly available to other researchers through sharing and archiving. The prevailing view is that information ought to be disseminated, and the arguments made appear to be based on moral ethics.

Secondary data analysis

According to Janet Heaton (1998, 2004), defining "secondary data analysis" is difficult. She described the term in a 1998 article as including the use of data that has already been gathered for a previous study to pursue a different research interest from the original work. This could be a new research question or a different viewpoint on the original question.

There are numerous and diverse ethical issues brought up by secondary analysis of any type of data. Up until now, most of the attention has been on the ethics of archiving qualitative data, such as proper consent procedures (e.g., Van den Eynden et al. 2011).

The possibility of misrepresenting or distorting data analyzed remotely due to a lack of contextual awareness and local expertise is one of the significant ethical issues associated with cross-cultural research (Fossheim, 2013). A secondary analysis's inherent distance from the original data is likely to increase the risk of misinterpretation due to a lack of contextual knowledge (e.g., Parry and Mauthner, 2004, Mauthner, 2012, Carusi and Jirotka 2009). As Josselson (2004, p3) writes:

Because meanings cannot be grasped directly and all meanings are essentially indeterminate in any unshakeable way, interpretation becomes necessary, and this is the work of the hermeneutic enterprise.

Overcoming ethical challenges

A fundamental principle of research ethics, which can be traced back to Socratic ideas of virtue and, more recently, to international ethics codes like Nuremberg (1947) and Helsinki (1964), is that research should not do harm. Regarding secondary use, this refers to the harm caused by misrepresentation and stigma or discrimination. A thorough comprehension of contexts is essential to reducing the possibility of misunderstandings and misrepresentations that arise from

the examination of secondary data. This also means that the secondary researcher must be mindful of the boundaries of knowledge, being careful to identify what cannot be known and what should not be assumed. Nevertheless, since many things are still unknown in primary research, this awareness of the boundaries of contextual understanding can be viewed as an ethical requirement for both primary and secondary researchers with regard to their duties for ethical practice in data use and re-use.

Anonymisation and anonymity

Since it is becoming harder to provide complete anonymity due to information technology advancements and the possibility of data linkage, the boundaries of anonymization have come to be recognized more and more in relation to biobanking and DNA data (Nuffield 2012). Concerns of anonymization are similarly problematic in qualitative research. The UK Data Archive 10 (2011) advises against mentioning names throughout the interview in order to protect the participants. These guidelines also recommend that other personal identifiers be included: "names of friends, relatives, places, institutions...."

Conclusion

Data sharing has the potential to be very beneficial for all of the reasons listed by Van den Eynden et al. (2011) and others, including (but not limited to) cost. But sharing and reusing data is a difficult ethical issue that needs to be handled in light of "our ethical and moral responsibility as researchers" (Mauthner 2012, p173). These moral and ethical obligations fall on us as primary or secondary researchers, or somewhere in between.

Funders like the Research Councils view data sharing as the "default" strategy, thus researchers may overlook the intricate ethical issues that come with this part of the research process. This approach runs the danger of making researchers ill-prepared to handle ethical issues like the ones mentioned above, whether they are sharing their data or doing secondary analysis.

The time and cost required for the task are affected by practical concerns that must be taken into account for studies that intend to archive and distribute their data as well as studies that intend to reuse the data of other researchers. For instance, primary researchers must think about how to guarantee adequate (informed) consent for ambiguous future uses and to guarantee the resources required to prepare qualitative data for archiving. In order to prevent the possibility of misrepresentation, secondary researchers must make sure that their intended (re)uses are in compliance with the participants' initial consents and understandings. The issue of anonymisation is still crucial for primary and secondary analysts alike.

While posing ethical questions of their own, methods for anonymising data during its collection (such urging participants not to disclose identifiable details of their life) may compromise the quality of primary data for potential future usage. However, when identifying information like location or unique participant traits is eliminated, complete anonymisation invariably decontextualises qualitative data, increasing the possibility of misunderstanding by the secondary analyst. While these issues are not insurmountable, they do necessitate consideration, preparation, and funding, just like any other aspect of conducting ethical research.

(Source: Adapted from Morrow, Boddy & Lamb, 2014)

3.2 Academic writing example 3 and comments

Read some examples of the UN's Sustainability

Development Goals:

1- **No poverty**: One of humanity's biggest tasks is still to eradicate poverty in all of its manifestations. Too many people still struggle to meet their most basic requirements, even though the number of people living in extreme poverty decreased by more than half between 1990 and 2015.

Approximately 736 million people still subsist on less than $1.90 per day as of 2015; many of them lack access to food, clean drinking water, and sanitary facilities. Though progress has been unequal, millions of people have been lifted out of poverty by the rapid rise in nations like China and India. Due to their lower levels of education, employment, and property ownership, women are more likely than men to be impoverished.

Other places, like South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where 80 percent of people live in extreme poverty, have likewise seen little progress. More work is required to lift people out of poverty because of new challenges posed by conflict, climate change, and food insecurity.

The SDGs represent a daring pledge to complete the task at hand and eradicate poverty in all of its manifestations by 2030. This entails assisting communities impacted by conflict and climate-related disasters, focusing on the most vulnerable, and expanding access to essential resources and services.

2- **Zero hunger**: Due to rising agricultural output and strong economic expansion, the number of undernourished individuals has decreased by about half during the last 20 years. Many developing nations that once experienced starvation and famine are now able to meet their nutritional needs. Extreme hunger has been eradicated in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Central and East Asia.

Sadly, severe malnutrition and hunger continue to be major obstacles to growth in many nations. As of 2017, 821 million people were estimated to be chronically undernourished, frequently as a direct result of biodiversity loss, drought, and environmental degradation. The number of children under five who are severely underweight exceeds 90 million. In practically every part of Africa and South America, there seems to be a rise in undernourishment and extreme food insecurity.

By 2030, the SDGs seek to eradicate all types of hunger and malnutrition and ensure that everyone, particularly children, has access to enough wholesome food throughout the year. This entails encouraging sustainable farming practices, helping small-scale farmers, and providing equitable access to markets, land, and technology. To guarantee investments in technology and infrastructure to raise agricultural productivity, international collaboration is also necessary.

3- **Good health and wellbeing**: We have made significant strides in combating a number of the main causes of illness and mortality. Life expectancy has significantly increased, maternity and infant mortality rates have decreased, HIV is under control, and malaria deaths have been cut in half.

Sustainable development depends on good health, and the 2030 Agenda acknowledges the intricate relationship between the two. Growing economic and social disparities, fast urbanization, environmental and climatic risks, the ongoing prevalence of HIV and other infectious diseases, and new issues like noncommunicable diseases are all taken into consideration. Achieving SDG 3, which calls for eradicating poverty and decreasing inequality, will require universal health care. Action is also required in response to emerging global health problems, such as antibiotic resistance, that are not specifically addressed by the SDGs.

However, the world is not on track to meet the SDGs relating to health. Both inside and between nations, progress has been unequal. The nations with the shortest and longest life expectancies differ by 31 years. Furthermore, national averages conceal the fact that many nations are falling behind, even while some have made remarkable progress. Addressing disparities and promoting universal health require multisectoral, rights-based, and gender-sensitive strategies.

4-**Quality education**: Significant progress has been made since 2000 in reaching the goal of universal primary education. The number of children who are not in school has decreased by about half globally, and in 2015, the overall enrolment rate in developing regions reached 91%. Additionally, literacy rates have skyrocketed, and a greater number of girls are enrolled in school than ever before. All of them are outstanding achievements.

High rates of poverty, armed conflicts, and other crises have also made progress difficult in some developing regions. The number of children who are not attending school has increased throughout Western Asia and North Africa as a result of persistent armed conflict. This pattern is concerning. Large gaps still exist even though Sub-Saharan Africa saw the biggest gains in primary school attendance of any emerging region, rising from 52% in 1990 to 78% in 2012. Compared to children from the wealthiest homes, children from the poorest households are up to four times more likely to be absent from school. There are still significant differences between rural and urban places.

The idea that education is one of the most effective and tested means of promoting sustainable development is reinforced by the achievement of inclusive, high-quality education for all. By 2030, all boys and girls will have had free primary and secondary education thanks to this aim. In addition, it seeks to eradicate income and gender inequalities, provide universal access to high-

quality higher education, and give all people equal access to reasonably priced vocational training.

5-**Gender equality**: Since it has been shown that empowering women and girls fosters economic growth and development, eliminating all forms of discrimination against them is not only a fundamental human right but also necessary for a sustainable future. Significant progress has been made in the last 20 years in the area of gender equality, which has been a primary emphasis of UNDP's work. More girls are enrolled in school today than there were fifteen years ago, and the majority of regions have attained gender parity in basic education.

There are still notable differences in many areas, where women are frequently denied the same rights as males, even if the proportion of women in the workforce has increased. Sexual abuse and exploitation, unfair distribution of unpaid care and domestic work, and discrimination in public office remain significant barriers. Climate change, migration, conflict, and disasters continue to disproportionately harm women and children.

Technology, the internet, sexual and reproductive health, and land and property must all be equally accessible to women. Even if there are now more women in public office, more female leaders will improve gender equality.

6-**Clean water and sanitation**: Over 40% of people suffer from water scarcity, a startling statistic that is expected to increase as temperatures rise. Every continent is experiencing declining supplies of drinking water, despite the fact that 2.1 billion people have improved their water sanitation since 1990.

A growing number of nations are facing water stress, and these trends are already being exacerbated by rising drought and desertification. At least one in four individuals are expected to experience frequent water shortages by 2050. By 2030, we must make sufficient infrastructure investments, supply sanitary facilities, and promote cleanliness if we want to ensure that everyone has access to safe and reasonably priced drinking water. Ecosystems associated to water must be preserved and restored.

Reaching more than 800 million people without access to basic services and enhancing the safety and accessibility of services for more than two billion people are essential to ensuring universal access to clean and reasonably priced drinking water. 2.3 billion people lacked even basic sanitation in 2015, and 4.5 billion lacked safely managed sanitation services (with excreta that was properly disposed of or disinfected).

(Source: Adapted from United Nations Development Programme, 2024)

Essential reading

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023) Research Methods for Business Students. 9th edition. Pearson. Chapter 14

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