

Research Methodology

Chapter 17

Writing a Research Report



Topics covered

- Writing a research report
- Developing an outline
- Writing about a variable
- Different referencing systems
- Writing a bibliography



Writing a research report

- Last step in the research process is writing a report to communicate the findings of the study
- The report is what will be read by others
- Clear and logical
- Accurate and concise
- Developing a thematic draft outline



Developing an outline

- Dividing the report in different chapters
- Planning what goes into each chapter
- Geared towards the study and its objectives
- Chapter titles to reflect its content
- Content and methodology of each project is different
- How will findings be communicated?



Structure of report outline

- Introduction and rational for the study
- Literature review
- Objectives of the study
- Methodology
- Findings and discussion
- Problems and limitations
- Conclusions and possible explanations / recommendations



Writing about a variable

- Why is it important to study the variable? (*This is about providing a rationale for studying the variable*)
- In the case of a cross-tabulation, what relationships have other studies found between the variables that will be analysed? (*This is where the literature review is integrated into the findings of the study*)
- What is the expected outcome between the two variables? (*Stating hypotheses*)
- What has the study found out? (*Reporting results, e.g. as tables, graphs or text.*)



Writing about a variable continued

- What does the data show? (*Interpreting the findings of the analysis*)
- What conclusions can be drawn? How do the conclusions drawn from this study compare with those from similar studies in the past? Does the study support or contradict them? (*Linking results to existing literature*)
- What explanation can be provided for the findings of the study? (*Linking results to existing theories*)



Different referencing systems

- Adopting a referencing style that is used in the field or area of interest for the research report
- There are different academic styles of referencing:
 - The short-title system
 - The author-date system (Harvard system)
 - The reference by number system (Vancouver system)
 - The author-number system



Writing a bibliography

- Preferences according to disciplines or university
- The most common ones are:
 - Harvard system
 - American psychological association system
 - American Medical association system
 - Mcgraw-Hill system
 - Modern languages association system
 - Footnote system



Summary

- The research report communicates the findings of the research study
- Qualitative reports are written using a descriptive and narrative style
- Quantitative reports are written in a descriptive and analytical format
- Clearly and concisely written

