
UNIT 4 METHOD OF THESIS

PROPOSAL AND PRESENTATION

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to explain the standard method of presenting a thesis or research report. In order to communicate the result of the research work in a systematic manner its report should be well prepared. This unit provides the guidelines for it by giving in detail the various components to be included in the report and their proper way of arrangement. After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the fundamentals of report writing;
- Acquire yourself with the format of a thesis;
- Identify the various types of bibliography;
- Acquire the skill to compile a bibliography and appendix.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

For disseminating the results of research, the researchers have to communicate the results of their research in a systematic manner. These written reports will be useful only if they are well prepared. This report should be a straight forward document that clearly, precisely and effectively describes what the researcher has done to investigate a problem. Report writing, therefore, is an essential procedure in research. In this unit, we are having a detail study about the method to be followed while presenting a research report. As the research report is an exposition, it must explain the study by giving all details of it. It must follow the rules of rhetoric , since it is a composition and it should be well arranged. In general, a research report consists of three parts-

- The preliminary,
- The text or the main body of the report,
- The reference material.

The core forms the middle part or the main body or text of the report. It is preceded by the preliminaries comprising the title page, acknowledgements, table of contents, etc. The core is followed by the end part containing the appendices, bibliography, etc.

4.2 PRELIMINARY SECTION

The preliminary section consists of the following components.

- The title page
- Researcher's declaration
- The certificate of the supervisor
- Preface, including acknowledgements
- Table of contents
- List of tables and figures
- Abstract or synopsis
- List of abbreviations

Now let us have a brief look into each of the above items.

The title page

The first page of the report is the title page. It should carry a concise and adequately descriptive title of the research study. It should be precise and reflect the core of the problem under study. Even though the format of title page differ from one to another, they usually include- (1) the title of the study (2) the name of the degree for which it is submitted (3) name of the author (4) the name of the institution where the report is to be submitted and (5) the date of presentation of the report. The entire title should be typed in all capital letters, single spaced and centred between the right and left margins of the page. Where more than one line is required, it should be broken and arranged to make a pleasing appearance on the page. The statement with respect to the University, Course and the Academic degree for which the thesis is submitted should be typed in lower case with capitalised initial letters below the title line. The name of the researcher should be typed in capital letters leaving 6-2 cm from the previous statement. The name of the institution where the report is to be submitted and the date of presentation of the report are typed in double space leaving 7-5 cm distance from the name of the researcher and 2.5 cm from the bottom of the title page.

Researcher's declaration

In case the research is undertaken by a student in fulfilment of the requirement of a degree, he may be required to make a declaration.

Researcher's supervisor's certificate

Again, in case of a student's research work, his research supervisor has to certify that it was a record of independent research work done by the student.

Preface including acknowledgements

A preface may include reasons, why, in the first place, the topic was selected by the researcher. The relevance of a study may also be mentioned here. If the researcher has opted to discuss the significance and nature of his research in 'introductory chapter' then he may not write preface. But he can use the page to make acknowledgements. Here the researcher acknowledges the assistance and support received from individuals and organisations in conducting the research and thank all those who have helped him for a variety of reasons including guidance, during the period of study. It is thus intended to show his gratitude. The comments, given in acknowledgements should be brief, simple, temperate and modest and given only for substantial assistance and cooperation of a non-routine character which warrants public recognition.

Table of contents

The table of contents appears after the preface and it gives an outline of the contents of the thesis. It contains a list of the chapters and their sub-titles with page numbers. Subtitles, however, should be indented under each chapter title and be followed by the specific page or section references. If reference to specific pages for subtitles is not desired, the subtitles may run together and separated by semi-colons or hyphen. When so many subheadings exist it may give an overcrowded look if all these are included in the table of contents. Hence, these may be placed at the beginning of that particular chapter below the title. It thus facilitates ready location of topics in the report.

The table of content also include the preface / acknowledgement, list of tables and figures, etc. The heading "Table of Contents" should be at the centre at the top of the page and in capital letters. The chapter headings may be typed in capital letters and subtitles in small letters. Small letters should be used for the subheadings except for the initial letter and of all nouns, pronouns, verbs, etc. On the right hand side should be typed the heading "Page" at the right margin below which page numbers will appear. On the left hand side will appear the headings in the sequence in which they actually appear in the thesis.

List of Tables and figures

If tables and figures are included in the report, separate pages for them should follow the table of contents. Figures refer to map, drawings, graphs, charts, diagrams, etc. The full titles of tables and figures, worded exactly as they appear in text, are to be presented with corresponding /consecutive numbers and page locations. Arabic numerals are usually used for identifying tables, figures etc. In the list of table and figures, the titles should be typed with initial capitals, rather than all capital letters.

Abstract or synopsis

An abstract is a summary of the findings of the research work. It should be as brief as possible and run about only one or two pages. It is placed at the prefatory part of the report so that a reader can get a quick overview of the report. Along with the summary of the findings or result of the investigation,

it states in brief the purpose and scope of the study and also the method used for the research work. Here care should be taken that there is no over emphasis of the minor points and also that important points have to be treated adequately.

Abbreviations

Only such names are to be abbreviated which are likely to appear too often in the report. Name of persons are never abbreviated. Most of the forms of abbreviations are universally accepted because of the international readership of the scholarly dissertations and thesis. The list of abbreviations should appear before the beginning of the main text.

4.3 PRESENTING THE PROBLEM OF THE THESIS

After the prefatory items, the body of the report is presented. It is the major part of the report. In a comprehensive report, the body of the report will consist of several chapters. The division of the report into chapter or sections should reflect the organisation of the parts with one another and with the whole; i.e.; the division should be logical to make the contents meaningful. The text usually consists of- (1) Introduction (2) Design of the study (3) Main body of the report (4) Summary, conclusions and recommendations.

Introduction

This is the first chapter in the body of a research report. It is devoted for introducing the theoretical background of the portion, its definition and formulation. It should be presented in such a way that it interests the reader in the subject matter of research. It must not be dull and lack in precision. It may consist of the following sections.

Theoretical background of the topic

Here the researcher introduces the background and the nature of the problem so as to place it into a larger context to enable the reader to know its significance in a proper perspective. This section summarises the theory or a conceptual framework within which the problem has been investigated.

Statement of the problem

In this section the researcher has to point out why and how the problem under research was selected. There is a need of clear statement of the nature of the problem with specific questions to be answered or hypothesis to be tested. A consideration of significance of the problem and its historical background is also a need. Hence, in this section, the problem is clearly defined and its facets and significance are pointed out. For this, the problem may be broken down into constituent elements or major subdivisions.

Review literature

This is an important part of the introductory chapter. Here a brief review of previous studies on the problem and significant writings on the topic under study is stated. Thus, it is summarising the current status of research work already done in the research area sought. Previous research studies are abstracted and significant writings of authorities in the area under study are reviewed. Such a review provides a background for the development of the present study and

makes the reader up to date. Brief summary indicating areas of agreement or disagreement in findings or gaps in existing knowledge should be included. How the research work is an attempt to fill that gap is highlighted in this part of the introduction.

Significance of the study

The significance of the problem, the contribution that the study is expected to make, its practical importance and the national relevance is specifically indicated in this section.

The scope of the study

The dimensions of the study in terms of the geographical area covered, the designation of the population being studied or the exact coverage of the study is mentioned here.

The objectives of the study

The objectives of the study and investigative questions relating to each of the objectives are presented.

Hypotheses

The specific hypotheses to be tested are stated. The sources of their formulation may be indicated.

Definition of concepts

The operational definitions of the key concepts of the study are presented here. i.e., various concepts or domains proposed to be used in a research requires to be stated. Definitions or special meanings of all important terms so as to enable the reader to understand the concepts underlying the investigation is to be indicated. How those concepts are defined by early writers and how the definition of the researcher were an improvement over earlier definition may be explained.

4.4 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This part of the thesis is devoted to the presentation of all the aspects of the methodology and their implementation ,i.e., methods of data collection instruments, methods of data processing and plan of analysis. Most of this material is taken from the research proposal plan. The revisions, if any made therefore should be clearly stated. The details of the study's design should be fully stated so as to enable another researcher to reproduce the study and test its conclusions.

Methodology

In this section, the overall typology of research used and the data collection methods employed are described. It also describes how the field work was carried out, the reliability of instruments selected and the statistical tools and procedures used in the analysis.

1. Sources of data:- The sources from which the primary and secondary data were gathered are stated. The limitations of secondary data also should be indicated.
2. Sampling plan:- The size of the universe from which the sample was drawn, the sampling methods adopted and the sample size and process of sampling are described in this section. The estimate of sampling error and what were originally planned and what were achieved are also to be given. These details are essential for determining the limitations of the funding.

3. **Data collection instruments:-** The types of instruments used for data collection and their contents, scales and other devices used for measuring variables and the procedure of establishing their validity and reliability are described in this section.
4. **Field work:-** When and how the field work was conducted and what problems and difficulties were faced during the field work are described under this sub-heading. The description of field experience will provide valuable lessons for future researchers in organising and conducting their field work.
5. **Data processing and analysis plan:-** The method adopted for data processing and an account of methods used for data analysis and testing hypothesis must be out lined and justified. If common methods are used there is only a need to mention about them. But an unusual method was used, sufficient details of them has to be described so as to enable the reader to understand it.

Chapterisation:- Chapterisation or the scheme of chapters in the main body of the thesis and their interrelationship is briefly described in this section in order to give an overview of the presentation of the results of the study.

Limits of the study:- All research designs have limitations and so do all research implementations .Such limitations may vitiate the conclusions and their generalisations. The sincere investigator faces these problems and he reports them carefully and honestly in the introduction itself. This will help the reader to judge the validity of the conclusions and the general worth of the study in the proper perspective.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Describe the layout or format of a research report.
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2. Explain briefly how a research report should be presented.
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3. Why is a 'review of literature' included in a research report? What is its purpose?
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4.5 MAIN BODY OF THE THESIS

This is the heart of the research report and probably the largest section of the report. It should be an organised presentation of the results and each major division of the problem should be presented in a separate chapter. The chapters should be well-balanced, mutually related and arranged in logical sequence. Each chapter should be given an appropriate heading. The chapter should include a discussion of the issue or part of the problem investigated and evidence used in its solution. If this becomes lengthy a summary of the evidence may be made at the end of the chapter. Through textual situation and tabular and graphic devices, the data are critically analysed and interpreted. Every table or chart should be a self-contained and self-explanatory unit within the body of the report, and the presentation should be so clear that the reader be able to grasp the finding either by reading the text or looking at the table or chart.

The results should be reported as accurately and completely as possible. The data themselves should be described fully, they should be analysed in detail and all the evidence resulting from the analysis should be presented. These chapters are primarily for the use of the reader who wishes to make a detailed study of the problem. So every bit of relevant evidence should be supported by logical reasoning and empirical facts. Materials should be organised systematically and presented under appropriate headings and subheadings. Each chapter should end with a summary and lead into the next section or chapter with a smooth transition sentence.

4.6 CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the last part of the text of the thesis. This chapter is more extensive than the abstract given in the beginning of the report. This chapter should be a self contained summary of the whole report, containing a summary of essential background, information, findings and conclusions and recommendations. It consists of the summary, conclusions or generalisation, suggestions and recommendations. The summary may be more or less a restatement of the topical sentences of the various findings. Summaries of findings may be subordinated under the conclusion statements. All these statements may be numbered or coded in some way so that they refer to pages or tables in the findings sections, upon which they are based. After a brief statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the methodology used in the investigation, the findings and conclusions are presented. Findings are statements of factual information based upon the data analysis. Conclusions are inferences or generalisations drawn from the findings and relate to hypotheses. They are answers to the questions of the hypothesis proposed. The formulation of conclusion is the most difficult aspect of report writings. A research may sometimes be tempted to overgeneralise. Hence, it is necessary to be modest.

Besides summary and conclusion, recommendations are also required from the investigator. Recommendations are typically brief statements of a limited number of suggestions for further consideration. These should flow from the findings and conclusions. They should be specific and should not be mere vague statements. Suggestions must be practicable and based on logical reasoning and are to be given at the end of the report. The research report should aim to

give leads to future research scholars. The researcher should be able to give directions to the future researchers from the insights he has gained during the investigations. Hence, it may be appropriate in concluding this part of the report to indicate topics which need further research; i.e., the reporter should explain in the beginning the relationship of his research to previous work on the subject (review literature). At the end, we suggest what part of the field would be more beneficial, perhaps on a bigger scale or from a different angle.

4.7 REFERENCE MATERIAL

The core part of the thesis is followed by the end part containing the appendices and the bibliography. Thus the end part of the report is made up of : Bibliography (2) Appendices (3) Index

Bibliography

A bibliography means a list of written sources consulted in preparation of the report during the course of research. It lists all published and unpublished references used by the writer in preparing the report. It may refer to all documents like books, periodicals, articles, government documents, pamphlets, lectures, interviews, etc., which have a bearing on the thesis irrespective of their being actually referred to or not, in the text. The aim is to permit the reader to find the exact items the writer consulted. There are different kinds of bibliography like, References or literature cited comprises a list of documents which is confined only to those works actually cited in the text or the footnotes of the report. Sources consulted consist of a comprehensive listing of books and papers consulted including those which are not strictly relevant to the subject of the thesis. Selected bibliography contains those sources cited, together with the more relevant of the works which have been consulted. Bibliographical notes is a brief annotated bibliography where the references are combined with the bibliography list.

Bibliography may be arranged according to the alphabetical order, chronological order, divisions of the subject, etc. Generally the simplest and the best arrangement for a short bibliography is the alphabetical order. Here the last name of the author (surname) is listed first, separated from the full name and arranged alphabetically by surname. Some list of books is most convenient if arranged in the chronological order of the publication. This is suited for works in history. Writers sometimes desire to make separate divisions for primary and secondary sources. But usual practice favours one comprehensive listing of both the sources together. Alternatively, the bibliography may be classified into three or four sections- (1) Books (2) Articles (3) Reports and (4) Other documents and in each section relevant references may be arranged in alphabetical order. The purpose of bibliography is different from that of footnotes. While bibliography is a list of all materials related to the topic of research, in the footnotes specifically paraphrased materials are found. Care should be taken by the researcher while listing bibliography and it should be done in the proper format.

Appendix

An appendix is used for additional material, which has not found place in the main text. It includes (a) copies of data collection instruments like questionnaire used for the study or interview schedules, (b) technical details on sampling plan (c) complex and long primary tables (d) statistical computation (e) supporting

documents or any other material evidence of considerable reference value. By relegating such supporting evidence to an appendix, the text of the report remains uncluttered, yet the argument is not weakened because the interested reader can be directed to consult particular pages of an appendix for further detail. Thus those materials given in appendices are not directly essential for an understanding of the text, but useful as a supporting evidence. Appendices may be placed between the final chapter and the bibliography or immediately after the bibliography. All appendices should be separated and listed accordingly in the Table of contents together with page numbers. Here pages are numbered usually having Arabic numerals. Each appendix should be referred to in the body of the thesis.

Index

The index, if prepared should give an alphabetically arranged references to all important matters discussed in the report. It may be either subject index or another index. To conclude, we can say that a thesis or a research report is an authoritative document based on research work. It presents highly specific information. The written reports will be useful only when they are well prepared and while preparing the report due attention has to be paid to represent the above mentioned components. Then only the report will be properly organised and can be communicated to others.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer

1. Explain briefly the various elements included in a research report.
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2. What is a bibliography? What is its purpose?
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3. Briefly explain the main components of the preliminary section of a Research report.
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4.8 LET US SUM UP

This unit deals with the prescriptions of contents and form of reporting suitable for communicating the results of the research to others. Mainly, the research report is divided into three parts, i.e., preliminary, main body of the report and the reference materials. All these three sections consist of different components which are studied in detail in this unit. Many of the components among this are familiar to all. But some others are not so. This unit explain the standard way of presenting such components also along with the familiar elements. This helps us to follow established standards while reporting and this make the thesis comprehensive and accurate.

4.9 KEY WORDS

Rhetoric	: Art of writing.
Variable	: A quality which changes.
Exposition	: Explanation of a theory.
Hypothesis	: Suggested explanation of something.
Index	: Alphabetical list of inferences.
Preface	: Introduction to book.

4.10 FURTHER READINGS

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Hand book for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New Delhi: affiliated East-West Press (Pvt) Ltd, 2009.

Seech Zachary. *Writing Philosophy Papers*. 4th ed. USA : Wardsworth / Thomson Learning, 2004.

Martininch, A.P. *Philosophical Writing: An Introduction*. London: Blackwell. 1997.

Laster, James D. *Writing Research Papers: A complete Guide*. 10th ed. New York: Longman .2001.

Ranganatham, Dr.M. & Krishnaswami. *Methodology of Research in Social Sciences*. 2nd ed. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House. 2005.