Research Report Preparation and Presentation

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ABSTRACT:-

Writing research reports can be one of the most difficult tasks to have researcher. Often it involves long days struggling with tricky concepts, trying to produce a coherent description of how a research project was done and its findings. A perform many research tasks and use different research methods to attain the research goal and test the hypothesis. Results after hypothesis testing confirm the direction of conclusions. Preparation a research report is gradual work of all research activities which are performed during the research. The presentation of research report is the tangible product of the research effort. After the research project is completed and researcher has made the decision, there is little documentary evidence of the research project other than the research report. The research report serves as a historical record of the project. The first five steps in the research project are carefully conducted but inadequate attention is paid to the sixth step; the value of the research project to management will be greatly diminished. The evaluation of the quality of the entire project is done on the quality of the report and presentation. The future or to use the particular research supplier again will be influenced by the perceived usefulness of the report and the presentation.

Introduction

Research report is a research document that contains basic aspects of the research projects. Writing a research report is naturally an important step in the scientific process,

since the report places the research study in the public domain for consideration and confirmation. Beginning researchers generally find the process much easier after they have completed one or two studies. A key to successful writing is to follow the guidelines developed by journal editors, or styles developed by individual companies or businesses. The same basic five-section format is used for all reports. Ethical considerations in conducting research should not be overlooked. Nearly every research study has the potential of affecting subjects in some way, either psychologically or physically. Researchers dealing with human subjects must take great care to ensure that all precautions are taken to alleviate any potential harm to subjects. This includes carefully planning a study as well as debriefing subjects upon completion of a project.

Mostly, research work is presented in a written from. The practical utility of research study depends heavily on the way it is presented to those who are expected to act on the basis of research findings. Research report is a written document containing key aspects of research project. Research report is a medium to communicate research work with relevant people. It is also a good source of preservation of research work for the future reference. Many times, research findings are not followed because of improper presentation. Preparation of research report is not an easy task. It is an art. It requires a good deal of knowledge, imagination, experience and expertise. It demands a considerable time and money.

Definitions

1.In simple words: Research report is the systematic, articulate and orderly presentation of research work in a written from.

2. We can also define the term as: Research report is a research document that contains basic aspects of the research project.

Report Format

There is no one best format for all reports. Format depends on several relevant variables. One must employ a suitable format to create desirable impression with clarity. Report must be attractive. It should be written systematically and bound carefully. A report must use the format (often called structure) that best fit the needs and wants of its readers. Normally, following format is suggested as a basic outline, which has sufficient flexibly to meet the most situations.

Research report is divided into three parts as:

Table 1.1   Parts of Research Report

First Part (Formality Part)	Main Report (Central Part of Report)	Appendix (Additional Details)
Cover page	Statement of objectives	Copies of forms used
Title page	Methodology and research design	Tables not included in findings
Certificate or statement	Types of data and its sources	A copy of questionnaire
Index (brief contents)	Sampling decisions	Detail of sampling and rate of response
Table of contents (detailed index)	Data collection methods	Statement of expenses
Acknowledgement	Data collection tools	Bibliography- list of books, magazines, journals and other reports
List of tables and figures used	Fieldwork	Any other relevant information
Preface(forwarding / introduction	Analysis and interpretation(including table, charts, figures,etc.)	
Summary report	Findings	
	Limitations	
	Conclusions and recommendations	
	Any other relevant detail	

Objectives of the Research Report

The objective of a research report is to provide a clear, accurate and complete report of the research project. It should help clarify the research issues so management can use the findings as an aid to decision- making. Good research reports are clearly written and presented. The authors avoid using unnecessary jargon. Experienced report writers know that their audience, may not be experts in all aspects of research. Good reports present an honest, accurate, and unbiased review of the research objectives, methodology, and findings. And good reports present a complete review of the data gathered. Reports should include appendices that show all data. It is very common for executives from the client's organization and its promotion agencies to study these data with great care to see if alternate conclusions can be supported.

Report Preparation

Researchers differ in the way they prepare a research report. The personality, back-ground, expertise and responsibility of the research along with the decision- maker to

whom the report is addressed, interact to give each report a unique character. Yet there are guidelines for formatting and writing reports and designing tables and graphs. Most research reports include the following elements:

Table 1.2   Elements of Research report

1	Submission letter	a	Type of research design
2	Title page	b	Data collection from secondary sources
3	Table of contents	c	Data collection from primary sources
a	Main sections	7	Data analysis
b	List of tables	a	Research design
c	List of appendices	b	Plan of data analysis and means of interpreting results
d	List of graph	8	Results
e	List of exhibits	9	Conclusions and recommendations
4	Executive summary	10	Limitations and caveats
a	Summary of prime objectives	11	Appendices
b	Major findings	a	Letter of authorisation
c	Conclusions and recommendations	b	Questionnaire development and pre- testing
5	Problem definition	c	Questionnaire, forms, interview guide
a	Background to the problem	d	Sampling techniques, including error and confidence levels
b	Statement of the problem	e	Field work
c	Statement of the research objectives- information needs	f	Lists including contact individuals and organisations
6	Approach to the problem and research design		

Submission letter: A formal report generally contains a letter of submission that delivers the report to the client and summarises the researcher's overall experience with the project, without mentioning the findings. The letter should also identify the need for

further action on the part of the client, such as implementation of the findings or further research that should be undertaken.

Title page: The title page should include the title of the report, information (name, address and contact no.) about the researcher or organisation conducting the research, the name of the client for whom the report was prepared, and the date of release. The title should encapsulate the nature of the project with a tone that is meaningful to the target managers, not one of technical 'research speaks'.

Table of contents: The table of contents should list the topics covered and the appropriate page numbers. In most reports, only the major headings and subheadings are included. The table of contents is followed by a list tables, a list of graphs, a list of appendices and a list of exhibits.

Executive summary: The executive summary is an externally important part of the report, because this is often the only portion of the report that executives read. The summary should concisely describe the problem, approach and research design that was adopted. A summary section should be devoted to the major results, conclusions and recommendations. The executive summary should be written after the rest of the report.

Problem definition: The problem definition section of the report gives the background to the problem. This part summarises research problem diagnosis. Key elements of any discussions with presented. Having set of this context for the whole project, a clear statement of the management decision problem.

Approach to the problem and research design: The approach to the problem section should discuss the broad approach that was adopted in addressing the problem. This section should summarise the theoretical foundations that guided the research, any analytical models formulated, research questions, hypothesis, and the factors that influenced the research design. The research design should specify the details of presentation of the stages undertaken, showing the relationships between stages. This should detail the methods undertaken in the data collection from secondary and primary sources. These topics should be presented in a non- technical, easy- to – understand manner. The technical details should be included in an appendix. This section of the report should justify the specific methods selected.

Data analysis: The section on data analysisis it quantitative or qualitative, should describe the plan of data analysis and justify the data analysis strategy and techniques used. The techniques used for analysis should be described in sample, non- technical terms, with examples to guide the reader through the interpretations.

Results: The results section is normally the longest part of the report and may entail several chapters. It may be presented in any of the following ways.

1. Forms of analysis
2. Forms of data collection
3. Objectives

The results should be organised in a coherent and logical way. Choosing whether to present by forms of analysis, forms of data collection or objectives, helps to build that coherence and logic. The presentation of the results should be geared directly to the components of the research problem and the information needs that were identified. The nature of the information needs and characteristics of the recipients of the report ultimately determine the best way to present results.

Conclusions and recommendations: Presenting a mere summary of the quantitative or qualitative findings is not enough. The research should interpret the results in light of the problems being addressed to arrive at major conclusions. Based on the results and conclusions, the researcher may make recommendations to the decision makers. Sometimes, researchers are not asked to make recommendations because they research only one area and do not understand the bigger picture at the client firm. The researcher may not have been fully involved in the diagnosis of the research problems, in which case their interpretation may not fit into the context that the marketer understands.

In any research project there are many approaches that can be taken to analysis the data. This can results in a potential over- abundance of data (quantitative / qualitative) and distilling the 'meaning' from the data and presenting this in a clear report can results in much of the original meaning or richness being lost.

Limitations and caveats: All research projects have limitations caused by time, budget and other organisational constraints. Furthermore, the research design adopted may be limited in terms of the various types of errors, and some of these may be serious enough to warrant discussion. This section should be written with great care and a balanced perspective. On the one hand, the researcher must make sure that management does not really too heavily on the results or use them for unintended proposes, such as projecting them to unintended populations. On the other hand, this section should not erode their confidence in the research or unduly minimise its importance.

Appendices: At the end of the report, documents can be compiled that may be used by different readers to help them to understand characteristics of the research project in more detail. These should include the letter of authorisation could include the agreed research proposal. Details that relate to individual techniques should be included relating

to questionnaires, interview guides, sampling and fieldwork activities. The final part of the appendix should include lists of contacts; reference used and further sources of reference.
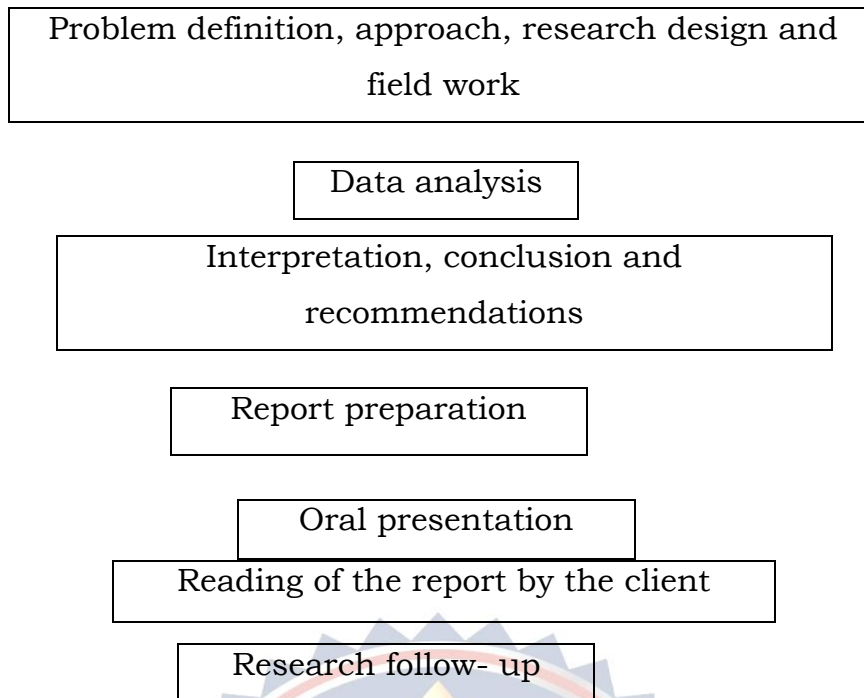
Presenting the Research Report

Research reports are presented in writing and in oral presentations. Written presentations are far more detailed than oral presentation software like PowerPoint. Oral presentation cannot cover all of the details covered in the written presentations. There is simply not enough time to read the entire report at a presentation. Reading slides with multiple sentences is a sure way of boring your audience. PowerPoint slides should have few words. Each slide should focus on a single idea supported with a picture, table or chart. Good presenters know what they want to communicate. They research and they connect with their audience by making eye contact.

This presentation will help management understand and accept the written report. Any preliminary questions that the management may have can be addressed in the presentation. Because many executives form their first and lasting impressions about the projects based on the oral presentations, its importance cannot be overemphasised. The key to an effective presentation is preparation. A written script or detailed outline should be prepared following the format of the written report. The presentation must be geared to the audience. For this purpose, the researcher should determine the backgrounds, interests and involvement of those in the project, as well as the extent to which they are likely to be affected by it. The presentation should be rehearsed several times before it is made to the management.

Visual aids such as tables and graphs should be displayed with a variety of media. Flip charts of large pads of blank paper mounted on an easel enable the researcher to manipulated numbers. They are particularly useful in communicating answers to technical questions. Visual aids can also be drawn on the pages in advance, and the speaker flips through the pages during the presentation. Although, not as flexible, magnetic boards and felt boards allow for rapid presentation of previously prepared material. Overhead projectors can present simple charts as well as complex overlays produced by the successive additions of new images to the screen. The use of computer packages such as Microsoft's PowerPoint can also be of immense help. They can be used for making computer controlled presentations or for presenting technical information such as analytical models.

Preparation and presentation process

Figure 1.1 Illustrates report preparation and presentation

Problem definition, approach, research design and field work

Data analysis

Interpretation, conclusion and recommendations

Report preparation

Oral presentation

Reading of the report by the client

Research follow- up

Summary

Report preparation and presentation is the final step in the research project. This process is being with interpretation of data analysis results and leads to conclusions and recommendations. Next, the formal report is written and an oral presentation made. After read the report, the researcher should conduct a follow up, assisting and undertaking a thorough evolution of the research project. It is a final reminder that the power of computing software can never replace the creative skills of conveying the story and impact of a piece of research upon a decision- making situation.

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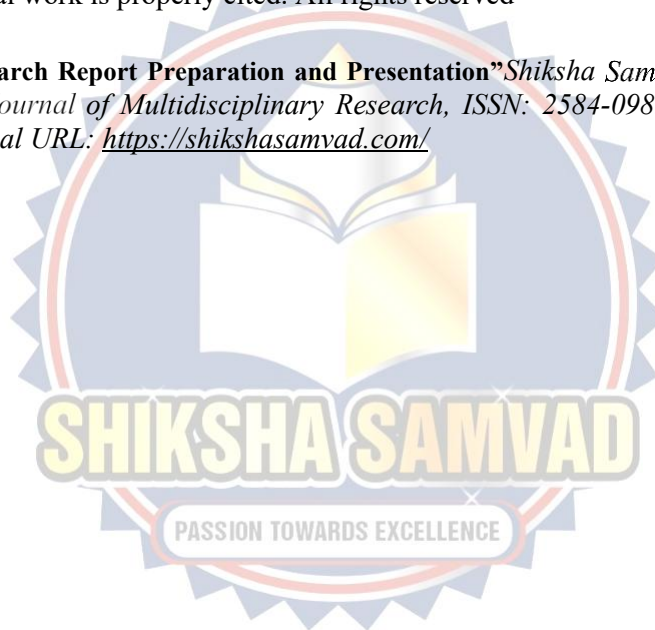
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