

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
WRITING RESEARCH REPORTS AND PROJECTS

BY

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Objectives

At the end of this chapter students should be able to;

- Identify the structure of a research report.
- Write clear introduction and literature review chapters.
- Present methodology, results, and discussion logically.
- Write sound conclusions and recommendations.
- Use appropriate academic language and style.

13.1 Introduction

Research report and project writing is a systematic and scholarly process through which the outcomes of scientific inquiry are documented and communicated to a wider audience. It represents the final and most visible stage of the research process, translating abstract ideas, empirical procedures, and analytical outcomes into a coherent academic document. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), research writing is not merely a record of findings but a structured narrative that demonstrates logical reasoning, methodological rigor, and intellectual contribution to a field of study. A well-written research report enables readers to understand the purpose, process, and implications of a study, thereby facilitating knowledge dissemination and scholarly dialogue.

In higher education institutions, research reports and projects are integral components of academic training at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. They serve as formal requirements for the award of diplomas, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral qualifications. Beyond fulfilling institutional requirements, research projects are designed to equip students with critical skills such as problem identification, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and academic communication (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Through project writing, students demonstrate their ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems and contribute meaningfully to their disciplines.

Furthermore, research report writing plays a crucial role in making and policy formulation. Well-documented research findings provide valuable insights for academics, policymakers, practitioners, and development agencies. As noted by Kumar (2023), research reports form the foundation upon which policies, innovations, and professional practices are developed, evaluated, and improved. In developing countries, particularly Nigeria, quality research documentation is essential for addressing societal challenges such as education reform, technological development, health improvement, and economic growth.

Research report and project writing is a systematic and scholarly process through which the outcomes of scientific inquiry are documented and communicated to a wider audience. It represents the final and most visible stage of the research process, translating abstract ideas, empirical procedures, and analytical outcomes into a coherent academic document. The process of research writing requires careful planning, organization, and critical thinking, ensuring that every section of the report contributes to the overall narrative and purpose of the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), research writing is not merely a record of findings but a structured narrative that demonstrates logical reasoning, methodological rigor, and intellectual contribution to a field of study.

A sound research report also reflects the researcher's mastery of methodology, data analysis techniques, and ethical standards. It showcases the researcher's ability to engage critically with existing literature, select appropriate research designs, and interpret findings objectively. According to Bryman (2021), the credibility and usefulness of any research study depend largely on how clearly and accurately the research procedures and results are reported. Poorly written reports can undermine even the most rigorous studies, while well-structured reports enhance transparency, replicability, and academic integrity.

This chapter, therefore, provides a comprehensive guide to writing research reports and projects in line with accepted academic standards. It examines the structure of research reports, explains the content and purpose of each chapter, discusses appropriate academic language and style, and highlights common weaknesses encountered by student researchers. By offering practical guidance and scholarly insights, the chapter aims to assist students and emerging researchers in producing high-quality research reports that meet institutional requirements and contribute meaningfully to knowledge and national development.

Here's an expanded version of your Introduction section broken into 7 paragraphs, with more elaboration and smoother flow:

2. A well-written research report enables readers to understand the purpose, process, and implications of a study, thereby facilitating knowledge dissemination and scholarly dialogue. It allows scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to evaluate the validity of the research, replicate studies if necessary, and apply findings in practical contexts. The clarity, coherence, and organization of the report are critical to its effectiveness, as a poorly structured document can obscure key findings, reduce the credibility of the study, and limit its impact on the relevant field (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

In higher education institutions, research reports and projects are integral components of academic training at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. They serve as formal requirements for the award of diplomas, bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and doctoral qualifications. Beyond institutional obligations, research projects are designed to develop students' critical skills, including problem identification, literature review, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and effective academic communication. Through these exercises, students learn to bridge theory and practice, demonstrating their ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems.

Research report writing also plays a crucial role in advancing evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation. Well-documented research findings provide valuable insights for academics, policymakers, development agencies, and practitioners. In the context of developing countries such as Nigeria, quality research documentation is essential for addressing societal challenges, including education reform, technological advancement, health improvement, and economic growth (Kumar, 2023). Research reports therefore not only serve academic purposes but also contribute to national development by informing effective policies and innovative solutions.

A sound research report reflects the researcher's mastery of methodology, data analysis techniques, and ethical standards. It demonstrates the researcher's capacity to critically engage with existing literature, select appropriate research designs, and interpret findings objectively. According to Bryman (2021), the credibility and usefulness of any research study depend largely on the clarity, accuracy, and transparency of how the research procedures and results are reported. A well-structured report enhances academic integrity and facilitates the replicability of studies, while poorly written reports can undermine even the most rigorous research efforts.

Effective research report writing also requires attention to academic language, style, and presentation. Researchers must ensure that their writing is precise, coherent, and free from ambiguity, while adhering to established academic conventions and citation standards.

Additionally, the logical organization of chapters, subheadings, tables, figures, and appendices contributes to the accessibility and readability of the report. Developing these skills is particularly important for students and early-career researchers, as the ability to communicate research findings clearly is a key determinant of scholarly recognition and impact.

This chapter, therefore, provides a comprehensive guide to writing research reports and projects in line with accepted academic standards. It examines the structure of research reports, explains the content and purpose of each chapter, discusses appropriate academic language and style, and highlights common weaknesses encountered by student researchers. By offering practical guidance and scholarly insights, the chapter aims to assist students and emerging researchers in producing high-quality research reports that meet institutional requirements, advance knowledge, and contribute meaningfully to national and global development.

13.2 Structure of a Research Report

A standard research report or project is organized into preliminary pages, main chapters, and end matter. The preliminary pages include the title page, certification, dedication, acknowledgements, abstract, table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures. The main body of the report is usually divided into five chapters, while the end matter consists of references and appendices.

The typical structure includes:

- Chapter One: Introduction
- Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature
- Chapter Three: Methodology
- Chapter Four: Results and Discussion
- Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This structure ensures logical flow, clarity, and consistency in the presentation of research work. Each chapter has a distinct purpose but collectively contributes to addressing the research problem.

A standard research report or project is systematically organized to ensure clarity, logical flow, and scholarly coherence. This organization allows readers to easily understand the progression of the study from problem identification to conclusions and recommendations. Generally, a research report is divided into three major sections: preliminary pages, main body (chapters), and end matter. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this conventional structure enhances transparency, enables replication of the study, and ensures that the research meets accepted academic and professional standards.

The preliminary pages provide essential background and navigational information about the research work. These pages typically include the title page, certification or approval page, dedication, acknowledgements, abstract, table of contents, list of tables, and list of figures. The title page presents key details such as the research title, author's name, institution, and date, while the abstract offers a concise summary of the study, including the purpose, methodology, major findings, and conclusions. As noted by Kumar (2023), well-prepared preliminary pages create a positive first impression and help readers quickly grasp the focus and scope of the research.

The main body of the research report is usually organized into five interrelated chapters, each serving a distinct but complementary function. Chapter One (Introduction) establishes the foundation of the study by presenting the background, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions or hypotheses, significance, scope, and operational definitions. This chapter provides the rationale for the study and explains why the research is necessary. Bryman (2021) emphasizes that a strong introduction guides readers and frames the entire research process.

Chapter Two (Review of Related Literature) critically examines existing scholarly works relevant to the study. It is often organized into conceptual, theoretical, and empirical reviews, culminating in the identification of gaps that justify the current research. This chapter demonstrates the researcher's familiarity with existing knowledge and situates the study within a broader academic context. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), an effective literature review goes beyond summarizing previous studies by analyzing, comparing, and synthesizing findings to establish a solid theoretical and empirical foundation.

Chapter Three (Methodology) explains how the research was conducted and provides sufficient detail to allow replication. It includes the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability procedures, methods of data collection, and techniques of data analysis. The clarity and accuracy of this chapter are crucial, as it determines the credibility of the research findings. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argue that methodological transparency strengthens the trustworthiness and scientific value of a study.

Chapter Four (Results and Discussion) presents and interprets the data collected. The results section objectively reports findings using tables, charts, and statistical analyses, while the discussion section interprets these findings in relation to research questions, hypotheses, and existing literature. This chapter is critical because it shows how the findings contribute to knowledge and whether they support or contradict previous studies. Bryman (2021) notes that

effective discussion demonstrates the researcher's analytical depth and understanding of the subject matter.

Chapter Five (Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations) synthesizes the entire study. The summary highlights key aspects of the research and major findings, the conclusion draws logical inferences based on the results, and the recommendations provide practical suggestions for policy, practice, and future research. This chapter emphasizes the implications of the study and its contribution to knowledge and society. Kumar (2023) emphasizes that recommendations should be realistic, evidence-based, and directly linked to the study's findings.

The end matter of a research report consists of references and appendices. References list all sources cited in the work and must follow a recognized academic style such as APA, ensuring consistency and academic integrity. Appendices contain supplementary materials such as questionnaires, interview guides, raw data, or ethical approval letters that support the study but are too detailed for inclusion in the main text. Collectively, the structured organization of a research report ensures coherence, academic rigor, and effective communication of research outcomes.

13.3 Writing the Introduction Chapter

The introduction chapter sets the foundation for the entire research work. It introduces the research problem, provides background information, and justifies the need for the study. This chapter typically begins with the background of the study, which situates the research problem within a broader academic and practical context.

Other key components of the introduction chapter include:

- **Statement of the Problem:** Clearly describes the issue the study intends to address.
- **Purpose of the Study:** States what the research seeks to achieve.
- **Research Objectives:** Specific goals derived from the purpose.
- **Research Questions and/or Hypotheses:** Questions or propositions guiding the study.
- **Significance of the Study:** Explains the importance and potential contributions of the research.
- **Scope and Delimitation:** Defines the boundaries of the study.
- **Operational Definition of Terms:** Clarifies key terms as used in the study.

A well-written introduction is clear, focused, and engaging, providing readers with a roadmap of the research.

The introduction chapter is a critical component of any research report or project, as it lays the intellectual and conceptual foundation upon which the entire study is built. It introduces the

reader to the research problem, establishes the context of the study, and provides justification for undertaking the research. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the introduction chapter serves as a roadmap that guides readers through the purpose, direction, and scope of the research. A well-structured introduction ensures that readers clearly understand what the study is about, why it is important, and how it will be conducted.

The chapter typically begins with the background of the study, which provides a broad overview of the research area. This section traces the historical, theoretical, or practical developments related to the topic and gradually narrows down to the specific problem under investigation. The background helps situate the study within existing academic discourse and real-world practice, demonstrating the relevance of the research. Kumar (2023) notes that a strong background section should move from general issues to specific concerns, thereby logically leading to the research problem.

Following the background is the statement of the problem, which clearly and concisely describes the specific issue the study seeks to address. This section identifies gaps, inconsistencies, or challenges observed in existing literature or practice that necessitate the research. A well-articulated problem statement explains what is wrong, where the problem exists, and why it is significant. Bryman (2021) emphasizes that the clarity of the problem statement largely determines the focus and success of the entire study, as it influences the formulation of objectives, questions, and methodology.

The purpose of the study and research objectives outline what the research intends to achieve. The purpose provides a general statement of intent, while the objectives break this intent into specific, measurable goals. Closely related to these are the research questions and/or hypotheses, which guide data collection and analysis. Research questions are commonly used in descriptive and qualitative studies, while hypotheses are used in experimental and correlational studies to test relationships between variables. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) argue that alignment among the problem statement, objectives, and research questions is essential for coherence and methodological rigor.

The introduction chapter also addresses the significance of the study, explaining the potential contributions of the research to knowledge, practice, policy, and future research. This section highlights who will benefit from the study and how the findings may be applied. Additionally, the scope and delimitation define the boundaries of the research in terms of content, location, population, and time frame, helping readers understand what the study covers and what it does not. Finally, the operational definition of terms clarifies key concepts as used within the context of the study, reducing ambiguity and ensuring shared understanding. Overall, a well-written

introduction chapter is clear, focused, and engaging, providing readers with a comprehensive overview and logical entry point into the research.

The introduction chapter sets the foundation for the entire research work. It provides readers with a clear understanding of what the study is about, why it is important, and how it will be conducted. This chapter introduces the research problem, situates it within a broader academic and practical context, and justifies the need for the study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the introduction serves as a roadmap for the research, guiding readers through the purpose, scope, and direction of the study. A well-written introduction engages readers and provides a conceptual and intellectual framework for the research.

Typically, the chapter begins with the background of the study. This section provides a broad overview of the research area, tracing historical, theoretical, or practical developments related to the topic. It gradually narrows down to the specific research problem, helping to situate the study within existing literature and real-world practice. The background demonstrates the relevance of the research and highlights existing gaps or challenges. Kumar (2023) emphasizes that a strong background should progress logically from general issues to specific concerns, preparing the reader for the problem statement.

Following the background is the statement of the problem, which clearly and concisely describes the specific issue the study seeks to address. This section identifies gaps, inconsistencies, or challenges in existing research or practice that justify the need for the study. A well-articulated problem statement explains what the problem is, where it occurs, and why it is significant. Bryman (2021) notes that the clarity of the problem statement largely determines the focus and success of the entire study, as it directly influences the formulation of research objectives, questions, and methodology.

The purpose of the study and the research objectives outline what the research seeks to achieve. The purpose provides a broad statement of intent, while the objectives break this intent into specific, measurable goals. Closely related to these are the research questions and/or hypotheses, which guide data collection and analysis. Research questions are generally used in descriptive or qualitative studies, whereas hypotheses are formulated in experimental or correlational studies to test relationships between variables. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) stress that alignment between the problem statement, objectives, and research questions is essential for coherence and methodological rigor.

13.4 Writing the Literature Review Chapter

The literature review chapter is a fundamental component of a research report, as it provides a critical examination of existing scholarly works related to the research topic. Its primary

purpose is to establish the current state of knowledge, identify gaps or inconsistencies in previous studies, and justify the need for the present research. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the literature review enables the researcher to situate the study within an existing body of knowledge and demonstrate how it contributes to theory, practice, or policy. Without a well-developed literature review, a research study may appear repetitive, unfocused, or disconnected from established scholarship.

Literature in this chapter is commonly organized under conceptual, theoretical, and empirical reviews. The conceptual review focuses on explaining and clarifying key concepts and variables relevant to the study. It defines major terms, explains how they are used by different scholars, and shows the relationships among variables. For example, in a study on *the effect of e-learning on students' academic performance*, the conceptual review would explain concepts such as e-learning, academic performance, digital literacy, and learning outcomes, drawing definitions from various authors. This helps readers understand the meaning and scope of concepts as used in the study and provides a basis for developing a conceptual framework.

The theoretical review examines theories that underpin the research. This section discusses relevant theories, explains their assumptions, and shows how they relate to the study variables. Theories provide explanations for observed phenomena and guide the formulation of research questions or hypotheses. For instance, a study on students' learning outcomes might be anchored on Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes active learner engagement, or Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) when studying technology adoption in education. By reviewing such theories, the researcher demonstrates the theoretical foundation of the study and explains how the present research extends, supports, or challenges existing theoretical perspectives (Bryman, 2021).

The empirical review analyzes findings from previous studies that are closely related to the research topic. This section focuses on what other researchers have discovered, the methods they used, and the conclusions they reached. Empirical studies are often reviewed chronologically or thematically to show trends and patterns. For example, a researcher studying *the impact of Google Classroom on students' achievement* may review studies conducted in Nigeria, Africa, and other parts of the world, highlighting similarities and differences in findings. This comparison allows the researcher to identify contradictions, methodological weaknesses, or unexplored areas in previous studies, thereby justifying the need for the current research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

A key feature of a good literature review is that it is critical rather than merely descriptive. Instead of simply summarizing previous studies, the researcher evaluates their strengths and

weaknesses, compares findings, and identifies gaps. For example, if several studies report that e-learning improves academic performance but fail to examine students' motivation or access to technology, the current study may address this limitation. The chapter usually ends with a summary of the reviewed literature and identification of research gaps, clearly stating how the present study differs from or builds upon existing research. This final section bridges the literature review and the methodology chapter, reinforcing the originality and relevance of the study.

Example of Literature Review Excerpt (Illustrative)

Several studies have examined the effect of e-learning on students' academic performance. For instance, Adeyemi and Okafor (2021) found that the use of online learning platforms significantly improved students' achievement in secondary schools in Lagos State. Similarly, Bello (2022) reported a positive relationship between digital learning tools and students' engagement in tertiary institutions in North-Central Nigeria. However, these studies focused mainly on achievement and engagement, with little attention given to students' reasoning ability and grit. In addition, most of the studies employed survey research designs, leaving experimental approaches underexplored. The present study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the effect of Google Classroom on learning outcomes, reasoning ability, and grit among pre-service teachers using a quasi-experimental design.

13.5 Writing the Methodology Chapter

The methodology chapter explains how the research was conducted. It provides sufficient detail to enable replication of the study. Key elements include:

- Research Design
- Area of the Study
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Techniques
- Instruments for Data Collection
- Validity and Reliability of Instruments
- Procedure for Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Clarity and precision are essential in this chapter, as it determines the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

The methodology chapter describes in detail the procedures and techniques adopted in conducting the research. It explains *how* the study was carried out and provides sufficient information to allow other researchers to replicate the study under similar conditions.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the methodology chapter is critical because it establishes the scientific rigor, credibility, and trustworthiness of the research findings. A well-written methodology demonstrates that the research process was systematic, objective, and appropriate for addressing the research problem.

One of the key components of the methodology chapter is the research design, which refers to the overall plan or strategy used to answer the research questions or test hypotheses. Common research designs include descriptive survey, correlational, experimental, quasi-experimental, and qualitative designs. The choice of design depends on the nature of the study, objectives, and variables involved. For example, a study examining the effect of an instructional strategy on students' achievement may adopt a quasi-experimental design, while a study seeking opinions or perceptions may employ a descriptive survey design. Bryman (2021) emphasizes that the research design provides the framework that guides data collection and analysis.

The area of the study describes the geographical or institutional location where the research is conducted, such as a state, local government area, school, organization, or community. This section provides contextual information that helps readers understand the environment in which the study takes place. Closely related to this is the population of the study, which refers to the entire group of individuals or elements that possess the characteristics of interest to the research. For instance, the population may consist of all secondary school teachers in a particular state or all pre-service teachers in a college of education. Clearly defining the population ensures that the study's findings are meaningful and appropriately interpreted (Kumar, 2023).

The sample and sampling techniques section explains how a subset of the population was selected for the study. Sampling is necessary when studying the entire population is impractical due to time, cost, or accessibility. Common sampling techniques include simple random sampling, stratified sampling, purposive sampling, and cluster sampling. This section also states the sample size and justifies its adequacy. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), an appropriate sampling technique enhances the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the findings.

Another important aspect of the methodology chapter is the instruments for data collection, which describe the tools used to gather data, such as questionnaires, interview schedules, observation checklists, tests, or rating scales. This section explains the structure of the instrument, the type of items included, and how responses are measured. To ensure the quality of the data, the validity and reliability of instruments must be established. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, while reliability

concerns the consistency of the instrument over time. Techniques such as expert validation and pilot testing are commonly used to establish validity and reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The procedure for data collection outlines the step-by-step process through which data were gathered from respondents. This includes obtaining necessary permissions, administering instruments, and ensuring ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality. Finally, the method of data analysis explains how the collected data were analyzed to answer the research questions or test hypotheses. This may involve descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, inferential statistics such as t-test or ANOVA, or qualitative techniques such as thematic analysis. Clarity and precision in describing data analysis procedures are essential, as they directly influence the credibility, reliability, and acceptability of the research findings.

13.6 Writing Results and Discussion Chapters

The results chapter is concerned with the systematic presentation of data obtained from the study, using appropriate statistical tools such as tables, charts, percentages, means, standard deviations, or test statistics. The findings are usually organized in line with the research questions or hypotheses to ensure clarity and logical flow. At this stage, the researcher reports *what was found* without introducing personal opinions or extensive explanations. For example, in a study examining the effect of Google Classroom on students' academic performance, the results chapter may present a table showing the mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups, followed by a statistical test such as a t-test indicating whether the difference in performance is significant. Objectivity is essential in this chapter, as biased interpretation can undermine the credibility of the research findings.

The discussion chapter, on the other hand, focuses on explaining the meaning and implications of the results. In this chapter, the researcher interprets the findings by relating them to existing literature and relevant theories, highlighting areas of agreement or contradiction with previous studies. For instance, if the results reveal that students taught using Google Classroom performed significantly better than those taught using conventional methods, the discussion would link this finding to studies by Adeyemi and Okafor (2021) and the Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes active learner engagement. Where findings differ from previous research, possible reasons such as context, sample size, or methodology are explored. Through critical interpretation and comparison, the discussion chapter demonstrates the researcher's analytical depth and understanding of the subject matter, thereby strengthening the overall contribution of the study.

The discussion chapter explains the meaning of the results. It relates findings to existing literature and theories, highlighting similarities or differences. This chapter demonstrates the researcher's analytical skills and understanding of the subject matter.

13.7 Writing Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This chapter provides a concise summary of the entire study, highlighting major findings. Conclusions are drawn based on the results, while recommendations offer practical solutions and suggestions for future research. Recommendations should be realistic, actionable, and aligned with the findings.

The summary section provides a concise but comprehensive overview of the entire study, reflecting the key components discussed in the preceding chapters. It briefly restates the research problem, objectives, methodology, and major findings without introducing new information. The purpose of the summary is to remind readers of what the study set out to achieve and what was discovered in the process. For example, in a study on the effect of an instructional strategy on students' academic performance, the summary would highlight the design adopted, the population and sample, the instruments used, and the major results obtained from data analysis. A well-written summary ensures coherence and helps readers quickly grasp the essence of the research.

The conclusion section draws logical inferences from the findings of the study. It interprets the results in relation to the research objectives and provides definitive statements about what the study has established. Conclusions should be evidence-based and strictly derived from the data presented in the results chapter. For instance, if findings indicate a significant improvement in students' performance due to the use of a particular teaching method, the conclusion would state that the method is effective for enhancing learning outcomes. The conclusion also highlights the contribution of the study to knowledge, theory, or practice.

The recommendations section proposes practical actions and policy directions based on the findings and conclusions of the study. These recommendations may be directed at policymakers, educators, administrators, practitioners, or future researchers. For example, a study that finds positive effects of e-learning may recommend that schools invest in digital infrastructure and train teachers in technology integration. Additionally, suggestions for future research may be made to address limitations of the study or explore related variables not covered. Effective recommendations are realistic, actionable, and directly aligned with the study's findings, ensuring that the research has practical relevance and lasting impact.

13.8 Language, Clarity, and Academic Style

Academic writing requires clarity, precision, and objectivity. Proper grammar, coherent paragraphs, and appropriate citation styles are essential. The use of formal language, avoidance of plagiarism, and adherence to formatting guidelines such as APA are critical for quality research writing.

Language, clarity, and academic style are essential elements of effective research writing, as they determine how well ideas, methods, and findings are communicated to readers. Academic writing demands clarity and precision so that arguments are easily understood and interpretations are not ambiguous. Sentences should be well-structured, concise, and logically connected, while paragraphs should focus on a single central idea supported by relevant evidence. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), clear academic language enhances the readability of research work and allows readers to follow the researcher's line of reasoning without confusion.

Objectivity is a defining feature of academic writing and requires the use of formal, impersonal language. Researchers are expected to present arguments and findings based on evidence rather than personal opinions or emotions. This involves avoiding informal expressions, slang, and biased language, as well as minimizing the use of first-person pronouns where not permitted by institutional guidelines. Proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling are equally important, as grammatical errors can distort meaning and reduce the credibility of the research. Bryman (2021) emphasizes that linguistic accuracy reflects the researcher's scholarly discipline and respect for academic standards.

Appropriate citation and referencing practices are also central to academic style. Researchers must acknowledge all sources consulted through in-text citations and a properly formatted reference list, commonly using styles such as the American Psychological Association (APA). Correct citation not only strengthens arguments by supporting them with authoritative sources but also helps to avoid plagiarism, which is a serious academic offense. Adherence to formatting guidelines—such as font type, spacing, heading levels, and referencing style—ensures consistency and professionalism in research reports. Overall, careful attention to language, clarity, and academic style enhances the quality, credibility, and acceptance of research writing within the scholarly community.

13.9 Common Weaknesses in Research Report Writing

Common weaknesses include poor problem formulation, inadequate literature review, inappropriate methodology, weak data analysis, and poor referencing. These weaknesses can

be minimized through proper planning, consultation with supervisors, and thorough proofreading.

One of the most common weaknesses in research report writing is poor problem formulation. This occurs when the research problem is vague, overly broad, or not clearly defined, making it difficult to develop focused objectives, research questions, or hypotheses. A weak problem statement often leads to confusion throughout the study and affects the coherence of subsequent chapters. Closely related to this is an inadequate literature review, where the researcher merely summarizes previous studies without critical analysis. Such reviews fail to identify gaps in knowledge or establish the relevance of the current study, thereby weakening its academic justification.

Another frequent weakness is the use of inappropriate research methodology, including unsuitable research designs, poorly defined populations, or incorrect sampling techniques. When the methodology does not align with the research objectives, the validity and reliability of the findings are compromised. Additionally, weak data analysis—such as incorrect use of statistical tools, poor interpretation of results, or failure to link findings to research questions—can undermine the credibility of the study. These methodological and analytical flaws often arise from limited understanding of research methods or insufficient guidance during the research process.

Poor referencing and citation practices also constitute a major weakness in research writing. Inconsistent referencing styles, missing citations, and reliance on outdated or non-scholarly sources reduce the academic quality of a research report and may result in plagiarism. These weaknesses can be minimized through proper planning, regular consultation with supervisors, and careful adherence to approved academic styles such as APA. Thorough proofreading, peer review, and the use of plagiarism detection tools further enhance the clarity, accuracy, and overall quality of research reports, ensuring they meet acceptable scholarly standards.

Evaluation

1. Outline the structure of a research report.
2. How is the introduction chapter written?
3. Explain how to write results and discussion chapters.
4. What are common weaknesses in research report writing?
5. Discuss the importance of academic language and clarity.

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