



U N I V E R S I T Y O F B E R G E N

Faculty of Psychology

Publishing

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Scientific writing

- The IMRAD (Introduction, Method, Results And Discussion) format
 - Spur in medical research from the 1930s resulted in a large scientific production and a huge pressure on journals.
 - The IMRAD-system became universal in the 1940s.
 - IMRAD
 - What is current status / issues / problems? (Introduction)
 - How was the problem studied? (Method)
 - What were the findings? (Results)
 - What do the these findings mean? (Discussion)



Typical errors in writing



Inconsistent use of concepts

- Example 1: «The **reinforcer** increased the frequency of..... When given **rewards**, behaviors like Thus, **incitaments** may be used for altering behavior related to.....»
- Example 2 “The rat was placed with other animals causing the mammals to start a fight with death of the creature as the consequence.”
- It's in general ok to vary language and an ideal not to use the same word more than once in a sentence. But this holds NOT IN TERMS OF SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS!



Lack of rationale for the study

- Too often the introduction end with no arguments or rationale for the research questions or the hypotheses

- Thus add text like:
 - “Due to.... we need more information about....”
 - “Studying XXX can help us understand....”
 - “As the current empirical status regarding this topic is ambiguous more studies on XXX are warranted”
 - “By investigating XXX we can gain more knowledge on how to....”
 - Due to previous methodological limitations, studies using XXX methods are needed in order to....



Lack of specificity

- Lack of **relational specificity**
 - E.g. “Group A scored higher on X”. BUT, higher than who? When using adverbs please **specify the relationship** (e.g. “...group A scored higher than group C on X”)
- Lack of **directional specificity**
 - E.g. “Age had a significant relationship with sleep onset latency”. BUT in which direction? Specify the direction (e.g. “Age had a positive and significant relationship with sleep onset latency”).



Lack of order / chronological presentations

- Too often arguments, hypotheses, instruments, analyses, results and discussion are presented in a more or less random order.
- Align the first argument (in the introduction) with the first hypothesis, with the first instruments presented, with the first analysis, with the first results and with the first issues in the discussion, etc.
- Thus, make the order of elements in the paper systematic and neat!



Misuse of English

- Keep it simple
 - Be careful with/avoid metaphores
 - Use simple words/expressions
 - “Start” instead of “initiate”
 - “End” instead of “finalize” or “terminate”
 - “Last” instead of “ultimate”
 - “Make” instead of “fabricate”
 - “After” instead of “subsequent to”



Tense in writing

- Site previous studies using present tense (as you say “the Earth is round”)
- The findings of the present study should be in past tense
 - E.g. *“Respondents who had passed puberty scored lower on morningness than respondents who had not passed puberty.”*
- Much of the abstract and methods will be in past tense, whereas much of the introduction and discussion will be in present tense



Other aspects of writing

- Normally **active form** reads better than passive.
 - We found that.... Instead of “it was found that....”

- Avoid **euphemisms**
 - Laboratory animals were not “sacrificed”, they were “killed”

- Singulars and plurals
 - Don't use “we” if you are the sole author
 - Don't use plural form when the singular form should be used
 - E.g. “10g were added” should be “10g was added”
 - E.g. “The data is...”



Other aspects of writing, cont...

- Do not turn verb into nouns
 - “separation of the components was accomplished by...” should be replaced by “the components were separated by...”

- Numbers
 - Normally spell out single digit numbers, two digit number should be expressed as numerals
 - Exception: The number is related to standard units of measure, e.g., 3 ml, but never start a sentence with a numeral.



Recommendations when writing the different parts of a paper



ABSTRACT

- Short statement about the objectives, methods, results and conclusions. Written in past tense, not info not in the article, not references etc.)

INTRODUCTION

- Scope of the problem, brief overview of relevant literature, statement that motivates the study, adjusted to the journal/reader, end with research questions/hypotheses

METHODS

- Typically four subheadings: Sample, procedures, instruments (be consistent), statistics. Enough info to replicate study. No results.

RESULTS

- Many data = tables/figures. Not percentage if N is low. Use decimals reasonably and consistently. Avoid redundancy. More demand on supplementary info (data files).

DISCUSSION

- **Adhere to every** question / hypotheses! Discuss, not recapitulate findings, discuss implications, limitations and strengths, future studies



Other recommendations



Sell the study

- State explicitly what are the **new and innovative aspects** of your study
- Examples of selling arguments/sentences
 - “This is the first study that has shown.....”
 - “No previous study has”
 - This has never before been studied with this method.....”



Make a good title

- Few will read your paper but many will read the title
- A good title: The fewest possible words that adequately describe the content
 - Too short: “A study of bullying”
 - Too long: “On the addition to the method of microscopic research by a new way of producing colour-contrast between an object and its background or between definite parts of the object itself”
- Cut waste words like “Investigation of” or openings words like “A”, “an” or “the”.
- Make the title specific
- The title should not contain abbreviations



Make sure the discussion is consistent with the other parts of the manuscripts

- The discussion should provide an answer to the research question; what is the answer?
- If hypotheses are stated – you need **explicitly** to state/conclude whether these were supported, partly supported or not supported by your findings. Thus, write e.g., «hypothesis 1 was supported by the results.»
- If no hypotheses have been stated do NOT write «as expected.....».



Authorship



Vancouver guidelines

Each and every author on a publication needs to have been involved in the:

- Conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data

AND

- Drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content

AND

- Final approval of the version to be published.



Who to invite as co-author?

- More common with co-authorship within psychology, medicine and natural sciences than within humanities, social sciences and law.
- Can invite people who has written the proposal, owns the data, have skills and competence needed, etc.
- Better to invite too many than too few (still the Vancouver rules must be followed)
- Establish as early as possible common expectations and agreements about authorship in the research group/team
- Nothing wrong being sole author



Order of authors

- There are no formal rules
 - The first author normally has done the largest part of the research and writing
 - In psychology the tradition is to list authors in accordance with their contribution from 1st to last
 - In medicine the same tradition is followed except for the last author, who is regarded as the most important after the first author
 - Some list authors alphabetically
 - My view: authors should be listed in accordance with their contribution
 - Be aware that publication points are divided equally among all authors!
 - Some journals demand that each authors' contribution is specified



Suggestions on how to work with the manuscript

- Before you start writing decide on the research question(s) and topic with the supervisors and co-authors
- It is much easier to tell **ONE story** than two or three stories at the same time / in the same article
- Set deadlines for yourself
- For novice writers I suggest the main supervisor or relevant other (e.g. statistician) provides feedback on each part of the manuscript consecutively as the draft is finished (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion)
- Feedback should in my view normally be provided within one week
- When a first draft of the paper is finished and the main supervisor has provided feedback send the paper to the other co-authors. Set a deadline (e.g., one week for feedback)
- All feedback should be shared with all co-authors
- Revise the manuscript and send it again to the co-authors, repeat until you have green light for submission



Submission of paper



Things to do before submission

- Decide early in the writing process where to submit the paper
 - Almost all journals have specific rules in terms of manuscript preparation. Some have also strict rules regarding length of papers (e.g. word limit) or other aspects (do not publish data from online surveys)
 - Check thoroughly the formal demands
 - Check the reputation of the journal:
 - Talk to colleagues who have published there
 - Obtain information about the speed of review the process
 - Read some recent articles published in the journal to become familiar with the writing style
 - Check the impact factor; $IM \text{ for a given year} = \frac{\text{number of citations for a journal a given year}}{\text{number of articles published the two previous years}}$
 - Check if the journal is approved in Norway in terms of academic outlet





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Treff

Fant 16 tidsskrift og 0 forlag

Publiseringkanalene er merket med nivå (1 eller 2 for godkjente kanaler, - for andre).

Tidsskrifter/serier:

Nivå	Tittel	
1	Perception	
1	Music perception	
1	i-Perception	
1	Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs	
1	Perception & Psychophysics	Nedlagt: 2008
1	Ceramics Art and Perception	
1	ACM Transactions on Applied Perception	
1	Attention, Perception & Psychophysics	
1	Timing & Time Perception	
2	Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance	
1	Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception	
1	Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception	
-	New Voices in Classical Reception Studies	
1	Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa	
1	Perceptual and Motor Skills	
1	Classical Receptions Journal	

NSD

Database for statistikk om høgre utdanning

NSD Datatjenester Programvare Undervisning Internasjonalt

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Om DBH

Publiseringskanaler

Søk

Dokumentasjon

Bokprosjektet

Vedtak nivå 1

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Registrert bruker

Rediger profil

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Nedlastinger

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Publiseringskanaler

Søk Min side Dokumentasjon

Redigere forslag

* må fylles ut

*Kanatype: Tidsskrift/serie

*Print ISSN:

*Electronic ISSN:

*Original tittel:

*Internasjonal tittel:

*Webadresse:

*Vitenskapsdisiplin: -- Velg vitenskapsdisiplin--

Utgiver:

Planlagt vedtaksdato:

Ny kommentar:

Lagre

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- Dokumentasjon
- Bokprosjektet
- Vedtak nivå 1
- Vedtak nivå 2

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Publiseringskanaler

Søk Min side Dokumentasjon

Logget inn som Ståle Pallesen (staale.pallesen@psysp.uib.no)

Som registrert bruker kan du legge inn forslag og se status på dine foreslåtte publiseringskanaler. Dine forslag kan redigeres inntil NSD begynner arbeidet med å innstille dem til UHRs publiseringsutvalg sitt arbeidsutvalg (AU).

Mine forslag

Skjul behandlede forslag

15 forslag funnet.

Foreslått	Tittel	Type	Status	Vedtaksdato	Vedtak
2014-03-19	Journal of Sleep Disorders and Therapy	Tidsskrift	Venter på godkjenning (UHR)	2014-11-07	-
2014-04-17	Current Addiction Reports	Tidsskrift	Under behandling (NSD)	-	-
2014-08-07	Comprehensive Psychology	Tidsskrift	Venter på godkjenning (UHR)	2014-11-07	-
2014-10-21	Sleep Health	Tidsskrift	Under behandling (NSD)	-	-
2008-01-08	Current Psychiatry Reviews	Periodika	Vedtatt (UHR)	2008-01-08	Godkjent nivå 1
2008-06-16	Interpersona	Periodika	Vedtatt (UHR)	2008-06-16	Godkjent nivå 1
2011-07-21	TPM - Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology	Periodika	Vedtatt (UHR)	2011-08-03	Godkjent nivå 1
2011-11-01	Gambling Research	Periodika	Vedtatt (UHR)	2011-11-02	Godkjent nivå 1
2012-07-26	Journal of Behavioral Addictions	Periodika	Vedtatt (UHR)	2012-08-02	Godkjent nivå 1
2013-02-20	Journal of Sleep Disorders: Treatment and care	Tidsskrift	Vedtatt (UHR)	2013-05-16	Ikke godkjent

Things to do before submission, cont...

- Decide whether or not to go for an open access (GOLD or GREEN) approach
 - There is an increasing trend towards publishing in open access journals
 - In open access journals the authors normally pay a fee, whereas access is open/free to all readers (e.g. PLoS ONE, BioMed Central)
 - Many traditional journals provide authors with the opportunity to pay for open access for their specific article (hybrid models)
- Apply UiB fond:
 - www.uib.no/ub/72255/budsjettpost-%C3%A5pen-publisering-ved-universitetet-i-bergen#



Things to do before submission, cont...

- Subject the manuscript to English copy-editing
 - Although many write English quite well, those not being native English speakers should still consider having the ms copy-edited
 - UiB has an agreement with Amesto Translations (about 550 NOK/hour)
 - But check the copy-editing – sometimes the copy-editor misunderstands



Cover letter

Dear Editor-in-Chief

Attached is a manuscript entitled "XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX" which is being submitted for possible publication in the Journal of Psychology. The manuscript is 18 pages long and contains three tables and one figure.

The manuscript is new and is currently not under review or submitted elsewhere. My coauthors (professor XXXXXX and professor XXXXXX) and I do not have any interests that might be interpreted as influencing the research. The ethical standards outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki are followed when conducting the study.

The manuscript presents new findings on the relationship between XXXXXX and XXXXXX.

I will be serving as the corresponding author for this manuscript. All authors have agreed to submit the manuscript in its present form. I have assumed responsibility for keeping them informed about the progress through the editorial process, the content of the reviews and any revisions made.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX



Submission

- Normally you need emails and affiliation to all co-authors
- You have to decide who will be corresponding author
- Typically, two forms must be submitted together with the submission, often signed by all co-authors.
 - Transfer of copyright form
 - Conflict of interest form
- The manuscript often has to be uploaded separated by different parts
 - The manuscript without authors names
 - Abstract
 - Tables
 - Figures
- Suggest reviewers
 - This is common and sometimes mandatory (suggest nice people!)
- Not preferred reviewers
 - Sometimes an option; if not put it in the cover letter (e.g., “due to competitive theoretical views and methodological approaches I would appreciate not having professor Xxxxx Xxxxxx as a reviewer for this paper”)



The review process

- Normally, editor-in-chief reads the paper. If it's not suitable (due to topic or quality) you will be rejected without reviewer comments.
- If deemed interesting the editor-in-chief or another editor will recruit 1-4 reviewers (colleagues, previous reviewers, suggested reviewers, central researchers on the topic).
- Not seldom reviewers are slow
- If you don't receive feedback within the indicated time frame, ask for info about progress
- The reviewers send their comments and suggestions (Reject, Major revision, Minor revision, Accept) to the editor
- The editor makes a decision based upon feedback from reviewers and his/her own judgement.



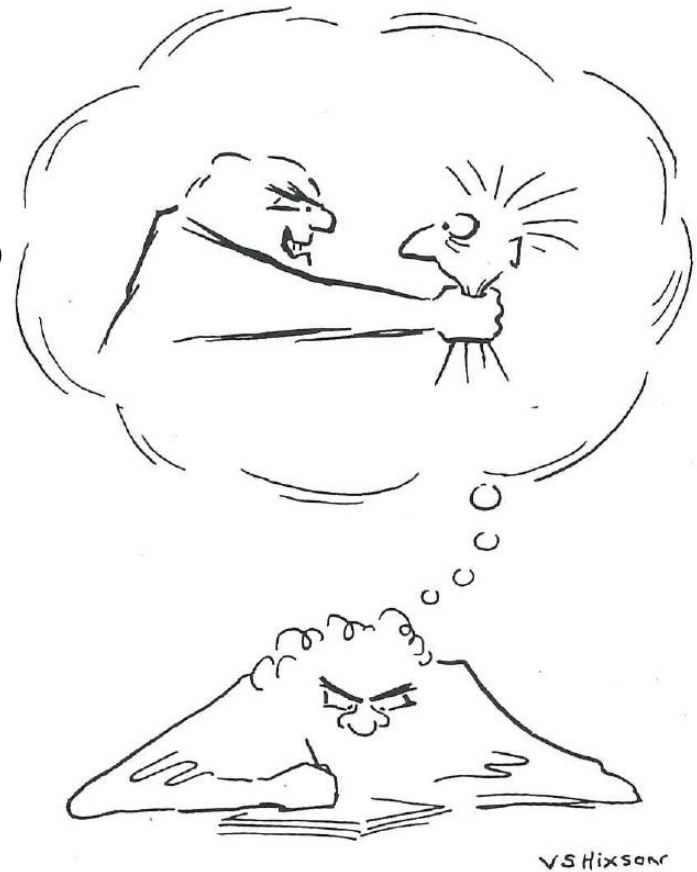
If you are rejected

- Don't put your manuscript away for too long; my advise is to start working on it right away
- Make a plan for revision - often good advises come together with a rejection
- Find a new possible outlet
- Repeat the aforementioned process as many times as necessary
- There is always a home for every article!!!
- Also remember that one has an ethical obligation to publish research results



If you are invited to resubmit

- Get an overview of all the points and the work needed for the revision – make a plan for how to do the review – there is often a deadline.
- Make a revision letter. Copy all comments into the letter and answer **EVERY SINGLE** point.
- When revising the ms start with a clean copy and use track-changes for the revision. Then you can show exactly how the ms has been revised – some journals also demand this.
- Do **NOT** change things the reviewers have not commented on, unless you discover real errors.
- Be polite and humble.
- Still, if you do disagree on some points, provide a good explanation (based on relevant theories, empirical data, etc.) for why you disagree – but say that you will/can reconsider if demanded.
- Be prepared for several revision rounds



"Thank you for your detailed and lengthy criticism of my manuscript. I will be sure to incorporate your suggestions in my next draft."





V.S. Hixson

“I’m not sure, but I did notice that there was a letter from a publisher in his box.”





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