

Guidelines for Authors

1. Title and Title Page

The title of a research article is the first element that communicates the focus and nature of the study. It should be **clear, specific, concise**, and informative enough to give readers a sense of the main variables, the population studied, and the research design or setting.

An ideal empirical research title is not overly broad or vague. It should reflect key concepts and suggest the type of study conducted. If possible, it should include the research method or geographical scope.

The title page should include:

- The full title of the article
- The names of all authors; specify the corresponding author in case of multiple authors
- Author affiliations (institution and department)
- Contact information of the corresponding author
- ORCID IDs (optional but recommended)
- Date of submission or publication

2. Abstract

The abstract is a brief but complete summary of the entire article, typically 150 to 250 words in length. It should allow readers to quickly understand the main objective, methodology, results, and significance of the study. Most academic journals now prefer **structured abstracts**, especially for empirical research.

A structured abstract usually includes the following components:

- **Background:** A concise explanation of the research context and importance.
- **Objective:** The main aim or research question addressed.
- **Methods:** A brief description of the study design, data sources, participants, and analysis techniques.
- **Results:** A summary of the key findings, with specific numerical indicators where possible.
- **Conclusion:** A statement on the implications or contributions of the findings.

Avoid including references, abbreviations, or technical jargon in the abstract. The abstract should be understandable to a wide academic audience.

3. Keywords

Keywords are 4 to 7 carefully selected terms or short phrases that reflect the core elements of the study. They help index your article in academic databases and search engines. It is mostly asked to write them in italicized format using ‘;’ instead of ‘,’ between them. Use terms that capture:

- The main topic
- The target population or location
- The research method
- Any key concepts or theoretical frameworks

4. Introduction

The Introduction section explains the **rationale, context, and significance** of the study. It typically moves from a broad discussion of the topic to the specific research problem being addressed. It is always beneficial starting with a surprising fact, or provocative statement to make the introduction more appealing. How to start it?

Background and Context: Begin with a compelling overview of the topic. Describe the societal, scientific, or policy-related importance of the issue. Use up-to-date statistics or trends to establish relevance.

Literature Review Summary: Offer a concise but critical overview of key prior research on the topic. Highlight what is already known and identify gaps, inconsistencies, or emerging questions in the literature. Cite recent, high-quality sources, and avoid overloading the section with too many studies.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework: Explain the theories, models, or conceptual frameworks guiding your research. Clarify how these frameworks shape your research questions, variables, or hypotheses.

Research objectives, Issues, Questions or Hypotheses: Precisely write the overall and specific objectives of the study in a comprehensive form. These should align with the questions and help guide the methodology. Then clearly state the research issues or questions the study aims to answer, or the hypotheses being tested. These should logically follow from the literature and theoretical framework.

5. Methods

The Methods section is where you **describe how the research was conducted**. It must be detailed enough that another researcher could replicate the study or evaluate its validity. The following sub-sections are commonly included in paraphrased form without using a bulk of headings and sub-headings:

Research Design: State the type of study you conducted (survey, case study, ethnography, quasi-experiment, mixed methods). Justify the choice of design in terms of suitability for the research question.

Study Setting: Describe the location, institutional setting, and time frame of the study. Provide contextual information that could affect results or interpretation.

Population and Sample: Identify the study population and describe the sampling strategy (random, purposive, stratified) and sample size obtained and explain how it was determined (power analysis, rule-of-thumb). Include demographic or contextual information about the participants or events sampled.

Data Collection Methods: Describe in detail how data were collected. Mention the tools used (structured questionnaire, interview guide), their sources (original or adapted), and their reliability and validity. If multiple instruments were used, explain how they relate to each research question. If ethical clearance was obtained from an institutional review board, include the approval number and date.

Data Analysis Procedures: Explain the process of organizing and analyzing the data. Specify the software used (SPSS, NVivo, Stata, R) and the statistical or qualitative techniques employed. For quantitative data, specify the variables, significance levels, and types of analysis (regression, ANOVA, chi-square). For qualitative data, explain how codes and themes were developed (thematic analysis, grounded theory).

Limitations of Methods: Discuss any methodological constraints, such as small sample size, sampling bias, or limited generalizability. Be transparent about trade-offs and acknowledge how they may affect interpretation.

6. Results

This section presents the **findings** of the study based on the data analysis, without interpretation or speculation. This should include the following thematically constructed paragraphs:

Descriptive Statistics: Report characteristics of the sample (age, gender, income levels). Use means, medians, frequencies, and standard deviations. Visual aids like tables and figures can help.

Inferential Statistics: Present the outcomes of statistical tests used to answer your research questions or test hypotheses. Include p-values, confidence intervals, effect sizes, and relevant coefficients. Use concise text and accompanying tables to present these results.

Qualitative Results: If using qualitative methods, present the major themes, subthemes, and illustrative quotations. Explain how themes emerged from the data and provide context for each insight.

Tables and Figures: Tables and figures must be numbered sequentially and labeled clearly. Refer to them directly in the text (“As shown in Table 2...”). Avoid repeating what’s in the tables verbatim in the narrative.

7. Discussion

The Discussion interprets the results in relation to your research questions, literature, and theory.

Summary of Key Findings: Briefly restate the main findings and relate them to the research questions. Also compare them with the past research in other studies. Present the unique findings and contributions of the present research (as applicable).

Interpretation and Link to Literature: Explain what your findings mean. Do they confirm or challenge previous studies? Offer theoretical, empirical, or contextual interpretations. Show how your study advances knowledge or fills gaps in the literature.

Implications: Discuss the **practical**, **policy**, or **theoretical** implications of your findings. How can they be used by practitioners, educators, policymakers, or researchers?

Limitations of the Study: Discuss limitations that affect how the findings should be interpreted. Acknowledge potential biases, data constraints, or threats to validity.

Recommendations for Future Research: Offer specific, feasible suggestions for how future studies can build on your work, using improved methods, larger samples, or different settings.

8. Conclusions

The conclusions provide a **succinct summary** of the research, emphasizing key findings and contributions. It should **not** introduce new data or arguments. Instead, summarize the key takeaways, reaffirm the study’s significance, and close with a strong concluding remark or call to action (if appropriate).

9. References

List all sources cited in the paper using a consistent citation style, such as **APA 7th edition**. Each reference entry must include the author(s), year, title, journal/book title, volume/issue numbers, and digital object identifier (DOI) or URL for online sources. Ensure all in-text citations match the references listed, and vice versa.

10. Final Formatting and Submission Checklist

Before submitting your manuscript, make sure that the following formatting and editorial standards are met:

- Use 12-point Times New Roman font
- Uniformly line spaced, as expected by the Editorial Board of the respective journal.
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- Page numbers included
- Consistent heading styles for each section
- Tables and figures formatted properly
- No spelling, grammar, or citation errors
- Word count is within the journal's limit
- All references cited are included and formatted correctly