

Writing a Research Article in One Semester

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Introduction

The goal is for each participant to write one publishable journal article using a qualitative methodology of 5,000-8,000 words during the semester of 15 weeks. This particular set of guidelines and templates is for interviews and focus groups. Other methodologies will need slightly different guidelines and templates, even though the basic outline is the same.

This procedure is open to staff of all related institutions. I am assuming that you are an Indonesian academic staff member with teaching and administrative responsibilities, and must do research part time. However, this is also open to graduate students interested in helping to write journal articles.

Participants should attend the weekly zoom meetings when possible, and may ask for help through WhatsApp. The limit is 100 people per Zoom group.

Working in groups

If possible, work in pairs or small groups so that you can help each other, for example, to check each others' work and give advice and suggestions.

An article can have multiple authors if it is not presented for academic credit and you work together as co-authors on one topic. If you work as a research and writing team:

- Choose one person to be the group leader and first author.
- Make sure that tasks are spread evenly between group members, so that nobody is left to do most of the work.
- Beware that it can be difficult to meet together if the group is too big.

Time

Time is critical.

- Some tasks are simple and might not take long.
- The tasks in some weeks require more time, especially data gathering.
- Different people need different amounts of time.
- Good teamwork will save time.

Assumptions and definitions

As you go, identify any assumptions that you make or any new terms that need defining. At the end, you can include these in your introduction.

Rules

The purpose of these rules is so that you can finish on time.

- You must meet all deadlines, no excuses accepted.
- You must manage your time so that you get tasks done.
- You must manage your focus so that you concentrate on tasks with distraction from other work.
- You may not change your mind once a topic is accepted.
- You must be able to use basic technology. Word processor, WA, etc.

- Your work is assessed *only* on what is written. (No oral evidence allowed: “*Tetapi maksud saya ...*”)
- Your institution may assign another supervisor, although the supervisor’s load might be heavy if there are too many writers.
- Before you send in work, check your typing, spelling, and language. Use whole sentences and paragraphs, not dot-point notes.

Week 1

Finding topics

Personal introductions

What is research?

What is qualitative research?

About topics

Topics must be:

- A new contribution to knowledge
- Real benefit and significance
- *One* question, not multiple topics. (You may have sub-questions if you want.)
- Narrow and specific enough to handle in one journal article
- Suitable for a qualitative method using interviews.
- Keep it local unless you can work in English.
- Accreditors might require that it is in your particular teaching area.

You will be under time pressure to finish in 15 weeks.

- Choose a topic where the respondents are close so you do not have to travel.
- Choose a topic where you have a strong background.
- Make sure you allocate enough time.

Finding a suitable topic is your responsibility. You can find topics by:

- Being curious
- Talking to people
- Reading.

How to find topics if you're stuck:

- Search your favorite area of interest on Google Scholar.
- Look for the most interesting articles.
- Look near the end of the articles for "Suggestions for further research."
- You don't have to copy them, but they might inspire you to find a better topic.

A population

- Must be a perfect match for your research
- Respondents must be very close to you, because you do not have time to travel. You might even be able to do all research on campus. Some topics might be suitable for telephone interviews

Work to hand in on deadline

Fill in the form with a list of three possible research topics.

Week 2

Choose a topic and refine it

How to choose a journal

Work to hand in on deadline

1. The title of the particular journal that you chose.
2. The form with *one* improved topic, and with all questions answered in no more than two pages.

Week 3

Annotated bibliography

What is an annotated bibliography?

How to write an annotated bibliography

How to find sources on Google Scholar or Core:

1. Go to search engine
2. Check criteria
3. Use key words
4. Select articles (e.g. start with title)
5. What to do when you've found them
 1. Download
 2. Copy reference
 3. Summarize the relevant contents
 4. Make your comments as evaluations

Work to hand in on deadline

Annotated bibliography of 10-15 highly relevant sources.

For each source:

- Give the full reference to be included in the list of references for your article.
- Brief summary of relevant contents
- Give your comments.

Week 4

Convert the annotated bibliography into a literature review

How to separate comments from bibliography items

How to group comments into a structure

Add an opening paragraph

If it's long, add a closing paragraph. (If it is short, you might not need a closing paragraph.)

Work to hand in on deadline

1. Literature review of 10-15 highly relevant sources.
2. The list of references for your article.

You can probably spend up to 3000 words in this section.

Week 5

Methodology: Prepare a list of questions

This list of questions needs to be suitable for your chosen method, either interviews or focus groups.

- How to write a list of interview questions E.g.
 - Short, open questions
 - Questions that have only one meaning
 - Order that makes sense to interviewees
 - Interviewees do not feel misled or set up
 - Interviewees are not manipulated to give certain answers
 - Collects useful, valid information
 - Covers all data needs
 - No unnecessary data collected
- How to test a list of interview questions E.g.
 - Start with a colleague
 - Test with people from the target population
 - Re-test until it works well.
- How to interview people
- How to record field data
 - Field notes should be good enough for you to understand them, even when you have forgotten the particular interview or group
 - Field notes are confidential
- For interviews, stop collecting data when you have three consecutive interviews that do not collect any new data (saturation)
- Ethics: Prior informed oral consent

The ethical compliance statement should be similar to this:

We applied an informed consent procedure. We first gained approval from the Institutional Review Board. We then informed prospective subjects of the purpose and nature of the research, informed them that their identities would be confidential, and answered any questions they asked, and then obtained their consent.

Work to hand in on deadline

1. Questionnaire
2. Describe the reasons for using the approach that you did
3. Describe how you wrote and tested the questionnaire
4. Ethics form
5. Ethical compliance statement.

Week 6

Data collection: First week

You have only three weeks to do all the interviews, so this will be very demanding of your time.

Work to hand in on deadline

Report

1. How many interviews or focus groups did you do this week?
2. What went well?
3. What did you find difficult?
4. Did you keep good field notes?
5. Did you need to adjust the questions or the approach. If so, how?

Week 7

Data collection: Second week

Work to hand in on deadline

Report

1. How many interviews or focus groups did you do this week?
2. What went well?
3. What did you find difficult?
4. Did you keep good field notes?
5. Did you need to adjust the questions or the approach. If so, how?
6. Have you seen any patterns in the data?
7. Are you on track to reach data saturation with one more week of interviews?

Week 8

Data collection: Third week

Work to hand in on deadline

Report

1. How many interviews or focus groups did you do this week?
2. What went well?
3. What did you find difficult?
4. Did you keep good field notes?
5. Did you need to adjust the questions or the approach. If so, how?
6. Have you seen any patterns in the data?
7. Have you reached data saturation yet? If not, how will you do so?

Week 9

Analysis

Work to hand in on deadline

Describe in your own words how you analyzed the data:

1. Identify major themes that arose
2. Group them into a clear outline
3. Explain them from respondent/s viewpoints, with quotes
4. Identify the pattern(s) in the data (The sooner you see them, the faster you can go.)
5. Check that you have enough data to confirm those pattern(s)
6. Express the patterns as findings
7. Express your conclusions. These should directly address your original research question.

Week 10

Discussion

The discussion is the comparison of your findings with existing research:

1. What are the similarities?
2. What are the differences?
3. What are the reasons or possible explanations?

Use the items in the literature review. You might see the need to also find other journal articles.

Work to hand in on deadline

The discussion section of your paper.

Week 11

Conclusion and Abstract

Write a conclusion

1. The conclusion may be quite brief, perhaps only one or two hundred words.
2. Statement of limitations of this research
3. It should include suggestions for further research.
4. You may include a list of recommendations if you wish, but it is not required.

Write an abstract using a formula

The purpose of this study is ...

The scope of this study

The methodology was ...

The findings are ...

The conclusions reached are ...

Limitations of this study include ...

This study contributes ...

Work to hand in on deadline

1. A conclusion for your paper
2. An abstract

Week 12

Collate

Collate what has been done already and write up as a coherent document.

You have already done all these things, so now you just need to copy and paste them together:

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
 - a. Topic or title
 - b. Research question
 - c. Significance: Say why it is significant and the expected benefit
 - d. Problem Describe it and how it arose
 - e. Describe the research population
 - f. Assumptions
 - g. Definitions
3. Literature Review
4. Methodology*
 - a. Describe the reasons for using the approach that you did
 - b. Describe how you wrote and tested the questionnaire
 - c. Ethical compliance statement
5. Analysis
 - a. Identify major themes that arose
 - b. Explain them from respondent/s viewpoint, with quotes
 - c. Explain the pattern(s) in the data
 - d. Explain how you reached saturation and had enough data to confirm those pattern(s)
 - e. Express the patterns as findings
 - f. Express your conclusions. These should directly address your original research question.
6. Conclusion
 - a. Appropriate closing sentences
 - b. Statement of limitations
 - c. Suggestions for further research
 - d. A list of recommendations (optional).
7. References

*Depending on the journal rules, you might be able to put the questionnaire in an appendix. However, some journals, do not allow appendices.

Work to hand in on deadline

Full rough draft

Week 13

Edit and proofread

Edit your draft article, e.g.

- Make corrections and any necessary additions.
- Check language
 - Spelling, grammar, punctuation
 - Formal style
 - Whole sentences and paragraphs, not lists of points
 - Simple and clear
 - No verbiage
 - No redundancies
- Include transition paragraphs
- Check the logic
- Check that you have suitable transitional paragraphs
- Check that your conclusion is well supported

Work to hand in on deadline

Polished draft

Week 14

Get reviews from colleagues

Get comments from other colleagues and cohort members. Your article will probably be better if you get comments from a wider group of colleagues. This will help bring your work up to the standard to be accepted by a journal.

You should also comment on the papers of others.

Comments should be:

- Fair
- Justified
- Clear
- Helpful with advice and suggestions for improvement
- Polite
- Critical

Work to hand in on deadline

Full set of comments and suggested improvement

Week 15

Final edit

Check the journal style guide and template

- Move your work to the journal template
- Check that your work complies with journal guidelines

List yourselves as authors.

Edit your final work, e.g.

- Make corrections and any necessary additions.
- Check language
 - Spelling, grammar, punctuation
 - Formal style
 - Whole sentences and paragraphs, not lists of points
 - Simple and clear
 - No verbiage
 - No redundancies
- Include transition paragraphs
- Check the logic
- Check that you have suitable transitional paragraphs
- Check that your conclusion is well supported

If you are ready, submit it to the journal.

Work to hand in on deadline

Final copy