



Alzahra University

# Academic Writing for Research Publication

(Week 6; on-line course)

شنبه 21 فروردین 1400

نگارش متون علمی برای انتشار پژوهش

پژوهش از زمستان تا بهار

1399-1400



*Dr Ali Derahvasht*

دکتر علی درهوش

معاونت پژوهشی و فناوری

# ACADEMIC & RESEARCH PAPER WRITING SKILLS



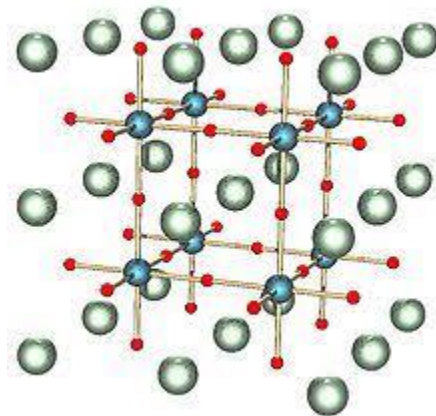
PREPARING A JOURNAL ARTICLE:

**LARGELY** A MATTER OF **ORGANIZATION**

A Standard **Format** for Sections of Journal Articles:

**IMRAD**

*An Academic Superstructure for  
Reading and Writing*



# IMRAD

- **I**ntroduction: What was the question?
- **M**ethods: How did you try to answer it?
- **R**esults: What did you find?
- **A**nd
- **D**iscussion: What does it mean? **So What?**

# A More Complete View

1. (Title)
2. (Authors)
3. (Abstract/Abstract, key words)
- 4. Introduction**
- 5. Methods**
- 6. Results**
- 7. Discussion**
8. (Acknowledgments)
9. (References)

# Some Other Structures

- Variants of IMRAD—for **example**, with
  - a **literature review** section **after the introduction**,
  - a **combined results and discussion** section, or
  - a **conclusions** section **added**
- **Essay-like format**, with **subheadings** chosen by the author
- Other formats

Question:

What have ***you*** found to be the common structure(s) of journal articles in ***your*** research area?



**Titles**

# Title

- It is read the **most** and it is usually read **first**
- Summarizes the main idea or **ideas** of your study
- Contains the **fewest possible words** that adequately **describe** the contents and/or purpose of your research paper

# Number of Words in Title

- If the title is **too long** it usually contains **too many unnecessary words**

**Example:** *“A Study to Investigate the....”*

*“A Study of....”*

*“Observations on....”*

- Also, a title which is **too short**, often uses words which are **too general**.

**Example:** *“African Politics”* could be the title of a book, but it does not provide any information on the focus of a research paper.

# Structure and Writing Style of Titles

## Parameters of formulating a suitable research paper title:

- The initial aim of a title is to capture the **reader's attention** especially towards the **research problem** being investigated, thus the title displays:
- The **purpose** of the research
- The narrative **tone** of the paper [typically defined by the research type]
- The **methods** used

# Creating a Working Title

- The working title should be developed **early** in the research process
- It can help anchor the **focus** of the study, like the research problem does
- Referring back to the working title can help you **reorient yourself** back to the main purpose of the study if you feel yourself drifting off on a tangent while writing

# The Final Title

The final title you submit to the journal is created **after** the **research is complete** so that the title accurately captures what was done

# Question:

- **What are the characteristics of effective titles in academic research papers?**



# Characteristics of Effective Titles

- Indicate accurately the **subject** and **scope** of the study.



- Avoid using **abbreviations**.



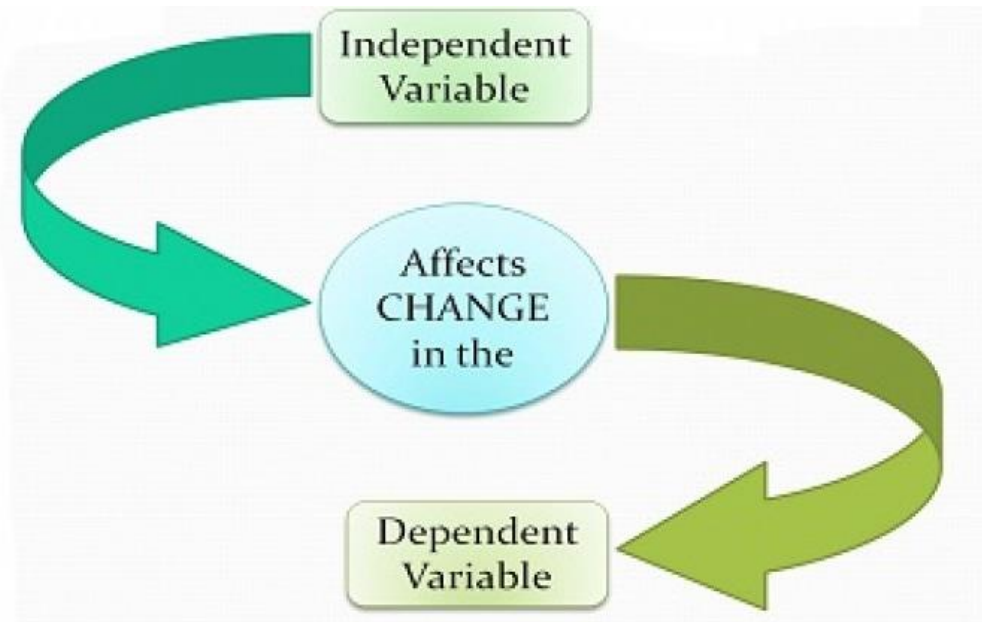
- Use words that create a **positive impression** and stimulate reader interest.



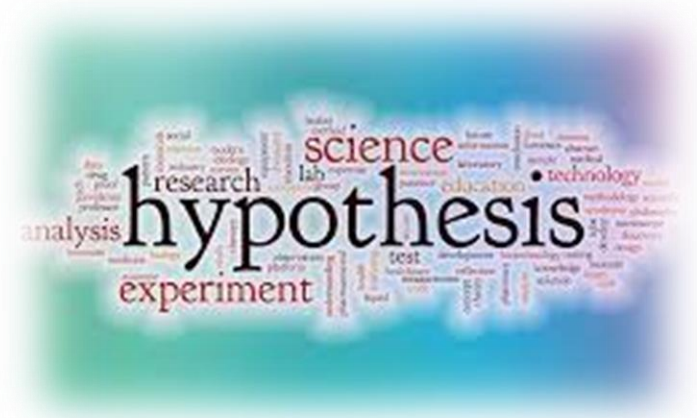
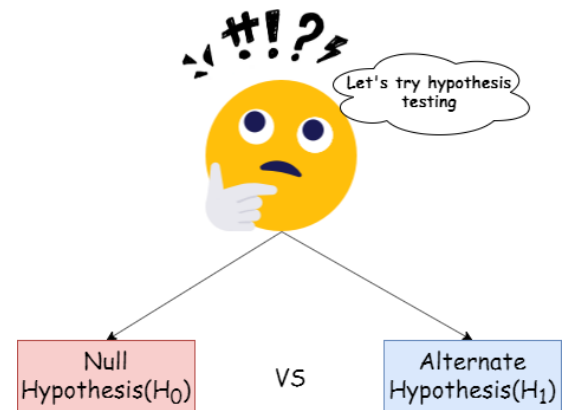
- Use **current terminology** from the field of study.

A word cloud where the word 'TERMINOLOGY' is the largest and most prominent, written in a bold, dark red font. Surrounding it are several other words in various sizes and orientations, all in a light grey font. The words include: 'DEFINITIONS' (vertical on the left), 'TERMS' (vertical on the left), 'PHRASES' (horizontal above), 'DESCRIPTIONS' (horizontal above), 'VERNACULAR' (horizontal above), 'LABELS' (horizontal below), 'WORDS' (horizontal to the right), 'TAG' (vertical on the right), and 'GLOSSARY' (vertical on the right). The word 'NAMES' is also present, written vertically between 'DESCRIPTIONS' and 'LABELS'.

- Identify **key variables**, both dependent and independent.



- Suggest a **relationship** between variables which **supports** the major **hypothesis**.



- **May reveal** how the paper will be **organized**.

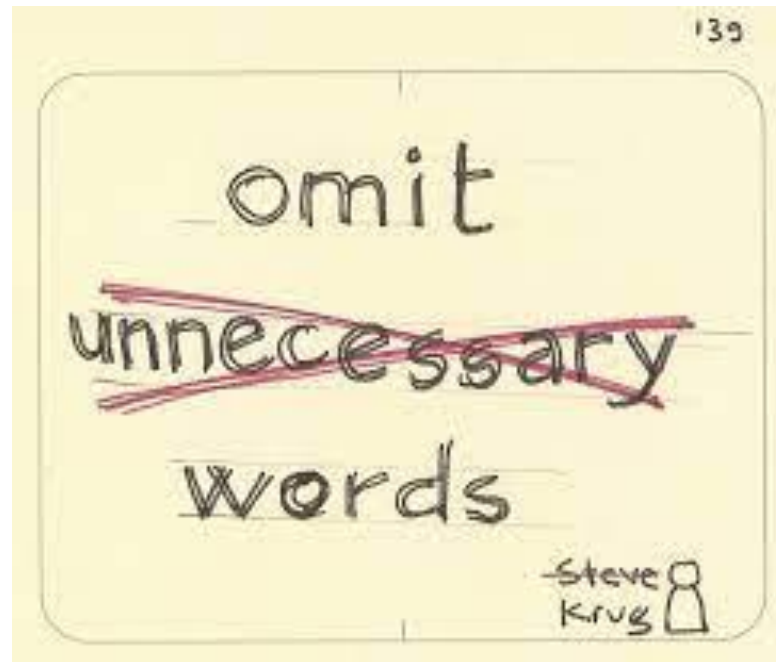




- Is limited to 10 to 15 functional words.

10 TO 15

- Do **not include** "study of," "analysis of" or similar constructions.




- Titles are usually in the form of a **phrase**, but can also be in the form of a question.



- Use correct **grammar** and **capitalization** with all **first words** capitalized, including the first word of a subtitle.

## **10** CAPITALIZATION RULES

<p><b>1. Capitalize the first word of every sentence, and every new line.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I got up early. Then I went to school.</li></ul>	<p><b>2. Capitalize the first word of quoted sentences.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• He said to her, "You betray my trust!"</li></ul>
<p><b>3. Capitalize the names of people</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mary, John, Sam, Susan, etc.</li></ul> 	<p><b>5. Capitalize the name of streets, cities, provinces, states &amp; countries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Washington street, the United States</li></ul>

- In academic papers, a title is **rarely** followed by an **exclamation** mark.  
However, a title or subtitle can be in the form of a question.



# The Subtitle

(in social sciences are used abundantly)

Examples of why you may include a subtitle:

# Example 1

- **Explains or provides additional context:**

*"Linguistic Ethnography and the Study of Welfare Institutions as a Flow of Social Practices: The Case of Residential Child Care Institutions as Paradoxical Institutions."*



## Example 2

- **Adds substance to a literary, provocative, or imaginative title:**

*"Listen to What I Say, Not How I Vote: Congressional Support for the President in Washington and at Home."*

## Example 3

- **Qualifies the geographic scope of the research:**

*"The Geopolitics of the Eastern Border of the European Union: The Case of Romania-Moldova-Ukraine."*

## Example 4

- **Qualifies the temporal scope of the research:**

*"A Comparison of the Progressive Era and the Depression Years: Societal Influences on Predictions of the Future of the Library, 1895-1940."*

## Example 5

- **Focuses on investigating the ideas, theories, or work of a particular individual:**

*"A Deliberative Conception of Politics: How Francesco Saverio Merlino Related Anarchy and Democracy."*

# Why do Research Titles Matter?

- Before we look at how to title a research paper, let's look at a research title example that illustrates why a good research paper should have a strong title.

# Activity

Imagine that you are researching meditation and nursing, and if meditation makes nurses better communicators.

1. Conduct a keyword search using “nursing”, “communication”, and “meditation.”
2. Select 5 titles that you like most

# Sample Titles:

- *Benefits of Meditation for the Nursing Profession: A Quantitative Investigation*
  - *Why Mindful Nurses Make the Best Communicators*
  - *Meditation Gurus*
  - *Nurses on the Move: A Quantitative Report on How Meditation Can Improve Nurse Performance*
- All four of these titles may describe very similar studies—they could even be titles for the same study! As you can see, they give very **different impressions**.

# Title 1

*Benefits of Meditation for the Nursing Profession: A Quantitative Investigation*

- Title 1 describes the topic and the method of the study but is not particularly catchy.



# Title 2

## *Why Mindful Nurses Make the Best Communicators*

- Title 2 partly describes the topic, but does not give any information about the method of the study—it could simply be a theoretical or opinion piece.

# Title 3

## *Meditation Gurus*

- Title 3 is somewhat catchier but gives almost no information at all about the article.

# Title 4

*Nurses on the Move: A Quantitative Report on How Meditation Can Improve Nurse Performance*

- Title 4 begins with a catchy main title and is followed by a subtitle that gives information about the content and method of the study.

# Question:

- Remember? What are Characteristics of a Good Research Title?

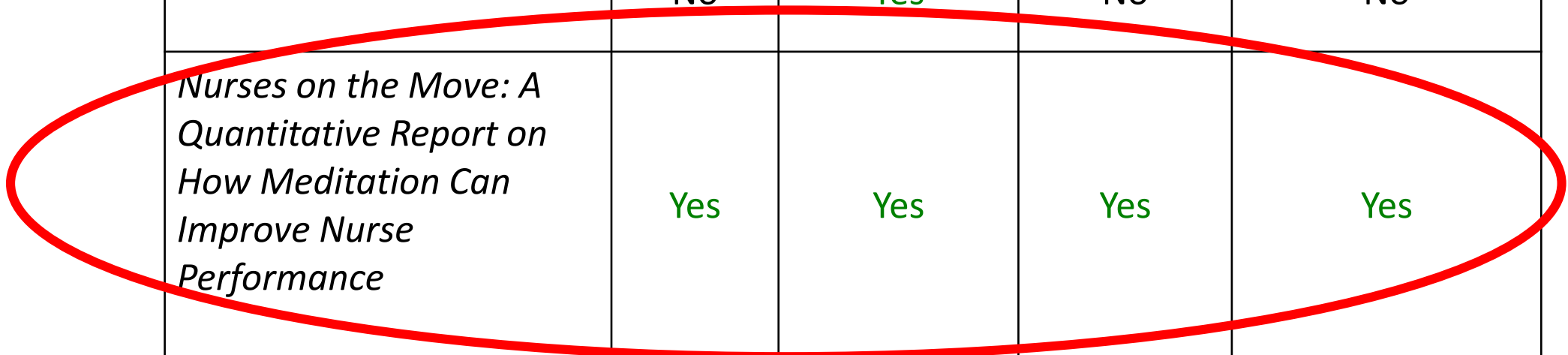
# Characteristics of a Good Research Title:

- It should predict the content of the research paper
- It should be interesting to the reader
- It should reflect the tone of the writing
- It should contain important keywords that will make it easier to be located during a keyword search

Complete this table with “YES” or “NO”.  
Let’s return to the examples to see if they meet these four criteria.

Title	Predicts content?	Interesting?	Reflects tone?	Important keywords?
<i>Benefits of Meditation for the Nursing Profession: A Quantitative Investigation</i>				
<i>Why Mindful Nurses Make the Best Communicators</i>				
<i>Meditation Gurus</i>				
<i>Nurses on the Move: A Quantitative Report on How Meditation Can Improve Nurse Performance</i>				

Title	Predicts content?	Interesting?	Reflects tone?	Important keywords?
<i>Benefits of Meditation for the Nursing Profession: A Quantitative Investigation</i>	Yes	No	No	Yes
<i>Why Mindful Nurses Make the Best Communicators</i>	No	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Meditation Gurus</i>	No	Yes	No	No
<i>Nurses on the Move: A Quantitative Report on How Meditation Can Improve Nurse Performance</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes





## Review: Tips for Writing an Effective Title

- Here are a few more tips you can use to make sure your title will be part of the process for an effective research paper:

## Tip No. 1

- Make sure your research title describes **(a)** the **topic**, **(b)** the **method**, **(c)** the **sample**, and **(d)** the **results** of your study.

You can use the this formula:

**[Result]: A [method] study of [topic] among [sample]**

**Example:** *Meditation makes nurses perform better: a qualitative study of mindfulness meditation among German nursing students*

## Tip No. 2

- **Avoid** unnecessary words and **jargons**
- Keep it as **concise** as possible
- A title is **comprehensible** even to people who are not experts in your field (your grandma)

## Tip No. 3

Make sure your title is **between 5 and 15 words** in length

## Tip No. 4

- Verify that your title **conforms to the standards** and requirements (of the target publisher)
- Many journals require that titles fall under **a character limit**, including spaces
- Many universities require that titles take a **very specific form**, limiting your creativity

## Tip No. 5

Use a **descriptive phrase** to convey the **purpose** of your research efficiently

## Tip No. 6

Most importantly, use **critical keywords** in the title to increase the discoverability of your article



## WANT TO INCREASE THE IMPACT OF YOUR MANUSCRIPT TITLE? FOLLOW THESE TIPS NOW!

1

Ensure that the title is clear, interesting, and attracts the reader's attention. Prefer using declarative titles.



2

The title should be around 10–15 words. Highlight key aspects of the study using keywords. Shorter titles increase citations.

3

Avoid unnecessary words and technical jargons. Make sure the title conforms to journal guidelines and is formatted properly.





# Do it at home

Write a title for your future research paper in 3 consecutive days, in separate papers.

1. Write a title for your future research paper (today)
2. Write the title for the same study (tomorrow), without looking at the previous one
3. Write the title for the same study again (day after tomorrow), without looking at the previous ones
4. Put all three titles in one document and send it to my email by Tuesday.

