



Writing up Results & Discussion for your publication

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Overview



Results and Discussion: Their functions in your journal article, and their links with other sections



Functional parts of the results,
Functional parts of the discussion



Your planning, writing & editing for
Results & Discussion: Techniques &
sequences



Common challenges, and strategies
for getting through them

Results & Discussion: Functions & links with other sections

Results

- + Functions of your Results section within your paper
 - Reveal the outcomes of your data collection & analysis
 - Provide the evidence for the answers to your research questions
 - Demonstrate transparency and accountability for your interpretations
 - Allow readers to independently examine your data analysis

Results & Discussion: Functions & links with other sections

Match = 100%
both ways

Results

- + Links between your Results section and other sections
 - **Methods** section: your data and analysis needs to match the methods
 - **Introduction**: your data and analysis needs to logically match the aims, research questions and any hypotheses
 - **Discussion** section: your data and analysis needs to logically match your interpretation and claims

Results & Discussion: Functions & links with other sections

Discussion

- + Functions of your Discussion section within your paper
 - Interpret your data analysis
 - Make claims which answer research questions and address aims
 - Show how findings line up with/against the literature and suggest reasons for differences
 - Indicate implications of findings
 - Acknowledge limitations

Results & Discussion: Functions & links with other sections

Discussion

Match = 100%
both ways

- + Links between your Discussion section and other sections
 - **Introduction:** your Discussion claims and interpretation need to logically match aims, research questions and any hypotheses
 - **Results:** your Discussion claims and interpretation need to match all of your data and analyses
 - **Conclusion:** your Discussion claims and interpretations will provide the basis for more condensed and selective summary in the conclusion

Functional parts of the Results section

The structure of the Results section has **more variation between disciplines & individual papers** than any other section.

The functional parts that are consistently required:

1. Findings for every analytical category which was promised in the Method – e.g. each theme, each measure, each calculation
2. Details for transparency and accountability – e.g. sample sizes, statistical significance values, example quotes from interviews, inter-rater reliability indicators

Functional parts of the Results section

The structure of the Results section has more variation between disciplines & individual papers than any other section.

Possible **structural variations**...

- + Findings reported under each method in mixed methods study
- + Findings grouped chronologically, where data collection or analysis were either sequential, iterative or revised
- + Findings grouped thematically, according to research questions, or elements of the research design
- + Findings presented in tables, images, graphs, flow-charts
Note: Key findings must also be summarised in the text

Functional parts of the Results section

- Look at the Results sections in the papers which participants have brought as examples
- Scan the sub-headings or paragraph topics, to jot down the structure of the section
- Can you see why they have made their structural choices? Do they work well?
- Do you see any structures which may suit your own Results section? If not, what would need to be different?
- Take 7 minutes to look at examples & be ready to share your observations

Functional parts of the Discussion section

1. Summaries of key results of data analysis
2. Interpretation of results and claims which directly address the aims and research questions
3. Links to the literature, to show how your findings are similar to, or different from, what others have found, and why
4. Implications of your research: for future research, but also potentially for industry, policy, clinical practice, etc
5. Limitations of the study – e.g. what can't be generalised from these findings

Functional parts of the Discussion section

The functional parts can be grouped in many ways.

Limitations are generally in a separate subsection.

Implications for future research are also typically separate.

However the other functional parts (summary, interpretation/claim, literature, other types of implications) may be clustered together around themes or components of the findings.

Functional parts of the Discussion section

The functional parts can be grouped in several ways.

For example...

Having a standardised approach to EBP was recognised by participants as central to reliable, evidence-based care. This belief is also widely accepted in the literature [15], yet still, it is noted that EBP models are infrequently used, used superficially, or misused [5]. This shortcoming has led to a call to action for further wide-scale adoption and use of EBP models and more research to support them [10]. This research helps answer that call by providing valuable insights into how an organisation might take up, support, and sustain an EBP model.

Can you see the functional parts in the paragraph above?

Functional parts of the Discussion section

The functional parts can be grouped in several ways.

- Take 7 minutes to look at 2-3 Discussion sections in the examples.
- Can you identify the places where the author has summarised key findings?
- Has the author made their interpretations and claims clear? Check the Introduction: does the Discussion clearly link to the research questions?
- How much have they drawn links with the literature in the Discussion?
- How have they grouped these functional parts of the Discussion?
- Do any of the examples look like they might suit your paper? If not, what might need to be different for you?

Your writing, planning & editing process

+ Planning strategies

- Have a loose structure of headings visible (whiteboard, pen & ink, app) Predict, ponder & tinker with the structure, while doing data analysis
- Gather papers from your target journal which have similar data and analysis. Zoom in on their results & discussion, including structure, presentation (graphs, tables, images). What is common, successful or appealing to you? What is possible in the wordcount and layout?
- Keep your readership in mind: What is most familiar to them? What is likely to need extra clarification? What are their key interests?

Your writing, planning & editing process

+ Writing & editing strategies

- Dot point the structure of both the Results and Discussion, before you write anything. Check that 1) all the functional parts are there and 2) all the links between sections match 100% (see slides 4 and 6 above)
- Draft up your Results first, spend quality time playing – especially if things didn't go to plan or were changed in the middle. Then re-visit your Introduction, if you need to re-frame the story of your paper. Come back to the Discussion next, so it links properly with both the Intro and the Results.
- There will be to-ing and fro-ing between the sections, to get the links to match, whether you do this mainly at the beginning, or mainly at the end, or as you go along.

Common challenges ...

and strategies for getting through them

- + Condensing, selecting & presenting analyses for brevity, while keeping accuracy
- + Structuring data analysis for clarity
- + Moving from thesis-writing mode to publication-writing mode: brevity & scope, different readerships, timescales
- + Marking the line between data analysis & interpretation/claims, especially for non-positivist qualitative research
- + Finding a compelling story for disappointing results
- + Deciding how to tell a story of unexpected data collection or analysis – e.g. problems with recruitment, revised analysis
- + Other challenges which participants have struggled with, or overcome?



**Final questions,
struggles or insights to
share...**

Thank you and happy writing 😊

