

**APPROACH AND STRATEGIES FOR WRITING QUALITY
ACADEMIC PAPERS**

By

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Abstract

The paper discusses the essence of writing academic paper, qualities of good academic paper and type. It highlights the strategic steps for and approaches to writing quality academic paper. It concludes that for all intent and purposes the writer should have a focus, be ready to accept constructive reviews and criticisms, and above all be determined.

Introduction

One of the basic duties and responsibilities of an academic or researcher especially in an academic environment is the publication of quality academic papers. This is to facilitate sharing with others one's knowledge, experience, ideas, discoveries, views, opinions and imaginations both in soft and hard copies as the case may be. An academic's or researcher's capacity and ability to publish quality papers is a *sin qua non* to his/her survival and advancement in the academic world and in the process of contribution to knowledge for the overall development and advancement of the society.

Essentially, academics and researchers have to constantly publish and do so regularly due to some of the followings:

- Convey information
- Educate and enlighten
- Persuade audience on topical issues
- Obtain academic qualifications
- Promote ideas, belief, ideals, principles, philosophy and doctrines
- Share knowledge, experiences, ideas and expertise
- Obtain academic promotion
- Obtain financial and material gains
- Solve problems especially of strategic importance
- Give professional opinion and advice
- Propagate discoveries, practices, ethics, policies, manifesto and plans
- Advance knowledge and practice
- Self pride and show off knowledge

The above reasons for paper publication by academics and researchers point to the fact that it is necessary for any academic and researcher to possess the requisite knowledge, skills, expertise and experiences of how to write quality papers worthy of publication especially in academically respected and acceptable medium.

Qualities of Academic Paper

One of the major steps toward writing quality academic paper for publication is identifying what to write on and having the knowledge and idea of what constitutes quality paper. A quality paper worthy of publication should:

- Lend itself to achieving the objectives of the author for writing it
- Be logical in structure
- Be easy to understand and follow
- Be interesting to read
- Clearly set out ideas and information to be conveyed
- Be concise and simple as much as possible
- Be devoid of unnecessary technical terms and jargons as much as possible
- Have clear conclusions, practicable recommendations and useful suggestions

Approach To Writing Quality Paper

In order to ensure that an academic paper written has high quality and indeed worthy of publication, the writer has to determine a better approach to writing it. One of the best approaches is for the writer to ask himself/herself the following basic questions so as to facilitate situating the paper in its proper perspectives. It will also enable the writer to determine the type of paper to write as well as the style of the written communication to adopt. A good writer should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the paper?

- What does the paper sets out to achieve?
- What is the likely action and reaction the paper intends to trigger?
- Who are the potential readers and users of the paper?
- What is the likely size of the intended audience and users?
- What do the intended users and readers stand to gain from the paper?
- What new knowledge, ideas and experiences the paper is likely to add to the existing ones?
- What is the likely current level of the users' and readers' knowledge, ideas and experiences on the subject matter?
- To what extent has the paper elucidated more to ease the understanding and appreciation of the contemporary issues or phenomenon under consideration.

Like the prospective paper writers, it is also important that the reviewers and assessors of papers submitted for publication put the foregoing basic questions into consideration in their decisions to accept or reject papers submitted for publication.

Type of Academic Papers

The writer's capacity and ability to answer the foregoing basic questions will certainly influence his/her decision to determine what type of paper to write for publication, its format and medium. Papers written and submitted for publication could be in the form of:

- Original research paper/article
- Position paper/article
- Short communication in form of report of small experiences, case report, short reports on latest developments on contemporary issues

- Letter to the editor in form of observations, comments, commendations, review of performance, objections, etc
- Review paper especially of published books, articles, and documents, in both electronic and printed formats.

However, the **choice** of which type of paper to write for publication will largely determine:

- Its length
- Its audience
- The style of writing
- The tone of the language and expression
- The organization and structure of the paper
- The number of authors or contributors to the paper
- The medium of publication, whether in printed or electronic format
- The choice of publisher for the publication of the paper.

Haliru (2006) observed that, for any manuscript to be considered for publication, it must not be in conflict with any accepted paper and the subject matter of the manuscript should not prove unsuccessful for the publisher but should be of great potentials. What is therefore important for a writer to meet up to these **expectations** is to be:

- Creative,
- Innovative
- Courageous
- Skillful
- Honest
- Idealistic

- Objective

in his/her approach to writing a paper for publication regardless of the audience its to address and the medium of publication.

Strategies for Writing Quality Paper

Writing quality academic paper for publication should be considered with all the seriousness it deserves. The writer needs to be methodological in the approach to writing the paper, using all the necessary skills, experiences and expertise to ensure the production of acceptable paper for publication. The following strategic steps could be adopted in the writing and publishing of quality academic paper.

- decide on the type of paper, the likely area of coverage and the audience
- determine the composition of the authorship
- if its shared authorship identify the role of each contributor
- determine the likely title of the paper
- engage in literature search and possibly review of the literature collected
- engage in data collection, sorting and analysis of the result
- outlining and discussing the result of the findings to reflect the subject, scope and purpose of the paper
- writing the draft paper to reflect the following sub headings:
 - ✓ title of the paper
 - ✓ abstract
 - ✓ introduction and discussion of the major variables, concepts and theories
 - ✓ review of related literature
 - ✓ methodology of research
 - ✓ presentation and discussion of results of findings

- ✓ summary of major findings
- ✓ conclusion and recommendation
- ✓ references
- ✓ appendices

Determining Final Copy of Paper

There is no doubt in the fact that writing quality academic paper is full of several interrelated approaches and processes. This ranges from determining the title of the paper to producing a final copy of the paper. It is important that certain considerations are kept in view before the production of the final copy of the paper. This is necessary to ensure that it is not only acceptable for publication but it has met the yearnings of both the writer and the audience. It is therefore suggested that:

- The title of the draft paper is revisited to ensure that it reflects the content of the paper and the theme its set to address
- Abstract of the paper is written after the draft of the paper is concluded
- Edit the draft before the final copy of the paper is produced.
- Where its co-authored work, all contributors must read through the draft to make their final intellectual contributions and reviews (within a given period of time to avoid unnecessary delay).
- Give the final copy of the paper to contemporary and senior colleagues, in the profession/area and other specialists, (as much as it is feasible within a given period to avoid delay) for comments and observation before the clean copy is sent out for publication.
- Send the clean and final copy of the paper for publication via a reliable mail system.

Conclusion

The writing of quality academic paper for publication requires strategic steps, experiences and skills to meet up to expectation. What is more important is the fact that the writer should have a focus, be ready to accept constructive reviews and criticisms and above all, be determined.

Reference

Haliru, Alhaji Musa (2006) "Assessment process of editing and publishing academic papers." A paper presented at a workshop on Editing and Publishing of academic papers organised by Carnegie Corporation Projects, Ahmadu Bello University on 25th January, p.4.