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The Art of Writing an Article

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Abstract: ***The advent of information technology and the required information at the finger tips by using search engines writing an article is not that much difficult as it before. Hence, the author should be very careful in preparing a manuscript, citing the references, preparing an abstract and a good title, otherwise the article is likely to be rejected by the publishers. If the title is heart, abstract is the soul then eyes and ears are references and reviews. Title is a most important part of an article because it is a gateway to the content of a research article.***

A good title to the research article is the one which is able to focus the research work to the fullest extent. Likewise, an abstract is like a trailer and should give stimulation to the reader to go through the entire article. On the other than if the reader is unimpressed with the information in the abstract the reader will never read the article and the very purpose of publishing an article is nullified. A good abstract should be honest, trustworthy and summary of the manuscript with a continuity of thoughts. The purpose of references in any article is to identify and locate the source of information used for justifying the need for conducting the research work.

While citing the references the author should take into account by giving the relevant citations in an appropriate manner as desired by the editorial board of the Journals. The other obligatory on the part of an author of an article is he should satisfy not only the editorial board of any Journal but also the peer reviewers whose comments are necessary for publication. Peer Review is an important element in the research process before publication and this review makes the road either to publish or to reject the article.

It is important for the author while submitting the manuscript to prepare a covering letter and it should contain why this article is important to the journal and its readers. The author while preparing the manuscript should follow the ethics according to the nature and subject matter. The author should be careful in choosing the relevant subject the source of information, preparing right title, scripting good abstract and finally an acceptable manuscript.

Keywords: Title, Abstract, Peer Review, Satisfying doubters and critics, journal ethics

I. INTRODUCTION

For any research scholar it is necessary to write a research article that is to be published in UGC Care Journal for their Ph.D.; In addition writing thesis to obtain Ph.D., it requires some ingredients that have to be reinforced in the an article . In this article an attempt is made to identify the ingredients that are required and also how these ingredients are to be presented in the order of preference so that by seeing the title of the article the reader should get an inclination to read the entire article.

While preparing an article it is necessary to choose a subject of interest and that can give a scope to the research scholar to develop it into an article with a open end for further research in future. When the subject is decided the next step being to formulate the right title. Once the title is decided the research scholar has to choose right references to the subject, while choosing the references the scholar should be careful enough that the references are correct quite in nature without any ambiguity. Otherwise, the article will not give the desired results. After choosing the references the author has to review the theoretical aspect of the subject with the help of references.

The other important aspect for a research scholar is writing an Abstract for the manuscript. The Abstract should be brief, honest and complete summary of the subject. Once the Abstract is complete the scholar will be in a position to know the length and breadth of the Article. Then follows writing the contents of the Article giving short titles and descriptions for each paragraph;

It is important for any research scholar when the Article is presented in public, to satisfy the doubters and critics dealing with the peer review.

If Title and Abstract are the heart and soul, References and Reviews are eyes and ears.

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II. TITLE

The most important part in research Article is choosing right type of title because it is the gateway to the contents of the research article. A good title to a research article is the one which is able to focus the research work to the fullest extent but in a specified manner. Especially in scientific research articles the title should be informative and attractive; but it is a challenging task to give a proper and effective title to the article. On the other hand Title is nothing but a communication regarding the sum substance of the research work from the author to the reader.

It is usually the first and the foremost part of an article that the editors and reviewers read it. Once an article is published one will see the titles of the articles that are published, whether they are relevant to them or not. Hence, the title is so important that it should reflect the work of the author and it should give impression to the readers / research scholars to go through the data base, based on titles. The first impression that the title creates to a reader, help them to decide whether that work will help them or not.

Titles, always describes the content of the Research Article so that the readers can have an idea about what the research paper is and whether to go through the contents that may be useful to them or not. Each title of an article should differentiate from other paper/article on the same topic. The title should be catche and should get the attention of the reader and make him to read the article, thus creating an interest that means, the title should attract readers so that the article is read appreciated and taken for reference.

Hartley, in his observation mentioned that there are 13 types of titles and of which, there are three broad categories. Declarative title, Informative title and finally Interrogative Title. Declarative Title means/states that the, main finding or conclusion stated in the article. Descriptive title means/states that it describe the article theme, but without divulging its findings or conclusions (For Example: randomized controlled trial of a monochlonal antibody against the interleukin-2 receptor as compared with rabbit anti thymocyte globulin for prophylaxix against rejection of renal allografts) Normally descriptive titles include all aspects of research questions study. Normally descriptive titles though longer has certain advantages because, the editor gets complete information about the article. Interrogative Title usually restate the research question (in part or in full; for example: “does occupational exposure to anesthestic gases lead to increase of pro-inflammatory cytokines?”) Normally and it is customary to prefer descriptive titles because they inform the reader about research study but not the study results; this helps to maintain the suspense about the outcome / result. On the other hand a declarative title gives the outcome but it will not create much curiosity for a normal reader.

In general, titles can be classified as nominal – compound – and full sentence titles. Nominal titles capture main premise of the study and compound titles will have sub-title and are primarily used to present additional information of the study. Full sentence titles are uncommon and are more longer. Though they indicate an added degree of certainty of the study results, but they are used very rarely. Normally it is the wisdom of the author to decide based on his/her research work, what type of title suites to the article.

A title should be accurate about the contents of the article and it is the duty of the author and title, that it would tell the truth of the article and not mislead the readers. It should be simple, direct, clear, brief and attractive and should be interesting, easy to understand and catchy. The title should give unambiguous and precise information and should not create multiple interpretations and confuse the readers. By and large different journals follow different patterns regarding titles by prescribing number of words the Title should contain or characters that can be used. Journals prefer, compared to lengthy title unfocused, distracting and outrage, boring, compared to short title in giving information in short effective and catchy. Certain Journals gives specific instructions with regards to the maximum number of words allowed to a title. The another advantage of the title is the author’s work is circum-veined to the extent of keeping the manuscript within the limits. The sum substance of the title of an article is not easy for the authors because multiple factors need to be considered while formulating a title.

There are various categories of titles and each type of title gives the information to the readers about the content of the article in a different manner.

III. ABSTRACT

If the Title is the heart, Abstract is the soul of Research Article. It is nothing but the sum substance of the full article wherein the author summarizes the important information of the research work with an aim of getting the reader interested in the subject matter and enticing the reader to go through the whole manuscript. It is important that an author should give greater attention in writing a good abstract to the work done. After the title the most commonly read part of a manuscript is the abstract only. Normally when an article is submitted, the editorial board and the reviewers will look into the abstract to check whether the article is likely to meet the criteria for processing further, because when you read the title of the article it should give an impression that the reader should get an interest in going through the entire article. The abstract is like a trailer and should give stimulation to the reader to go through the entire article. On the other hand if the reader is unimpressed with the information in the abstract, the reader will never read the entire article. Thus, the very purpose of publishing an article is nullified.

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The abstract may be classified into descriptive or informational. Normally, the descriptive abstract of any article only showcase what the paper contains without providing any details. That means, the reader is required to read the entire article to know the contents of the article. Such type of abstracts are normally used for Case Reports, Review Articles and Opinion Articles and finally the articles that do not contain original research data / information. On the other hand informational abstracts will provide a gist of what the research article contains and are, therefore summarizes in the form of a synopsis of the entire research work. This type of abstract includes details of research study and will have enough material information of the research work carried out. Normally, information abstracts can be structured or unstructured. Unstructured/non structured abstracts are free flowing and have no predefined arrangement in the form of headings/sub headings. On the other hand structured abstracts have planned and orderly assembled with sub headings, background objective methods, results and conclusions with an option of future study. Normally journals will prescribe word count that the abstract either structured or unstructured should not exceed.

A good abstract whether structured or unstructured should be complete, honest, trustworthy and summary of the manuscript with a continuity of thoughts. If a reader goes through the abstract should feel and get an opinion about the entire work. Normally the abstract should contain the hypothesis/research question, objectives, concept, methodology and the importance of methodology used. Finally the abstract while concluding should state the most important message of the research and should include answer to the hypothesis. The authors while preparing the abstract for any article should use short, clear and direct sentences but not compound sentences to confuse reader. Since the abstract and the article cater to the same population of the readers, same level of technical language has to be used. Normally many researchers on the subject suggest, use of active voice in scientific writing and significant use of passive voice is permitted while writing abstract to reduce the word count. The abstract should contain important details presented in an unbiased manner and should be packed with relevant information and from such abstract the reader should feel about the underlined rational behind the study and also they should be in a position to understand the basis on which the conclusions are drawn. Finally the author while preparing the abstract should keep in mind that they should not give redundancies and replace verbose passages with concise statements.

To conclude, abstract should be written with great attention and care but with poorly written abstracts with insufficient information or unsupported conclusions are unlikely to kindle readers any interest in the author's work.

IV. REFERENCES

The purpose of references in any article is to identify and locate source of information used for justifying the need for conducting the research and also to verify different methods employed in different studies and also for interpretation of results and implementation of the results of the study. While choosing the references the author should be careful enough that the references are in line with the subject matter, accurate and complete. Also the author should use references for the purpose of informing the readers about the techniques used for conducting the survey and the appropriateness of the methodology adopted. This type of communication will help to discuss the purpose of citations and also the source and quality of citing the references. References also help the author the rational of the study and support to the interpretations, suggestions and also to check the methods cited. Normally in writing the articles there are several ways of citing references. For example, the counsel of Science Editors suggests, three types of references for documentation. Normally all the authors will give a reference list at the end of the article to provide all the information that the reader requires to know the source of information. These three types of references can be classified as Citation – Name, Citation – Sequence and Name – Year System. Normally the source of information cited will be arranged alphabetically by the first authors name in the reference list. There are several formats and styles and citations for references it depends upon the article, the source and the author. Few examples of citation formats are, Vancouver, the harward, the APA (American Psychological Association), the ASA (American Sociological Society), the MLA (Modern Language Association), the Chicago etc.,

While citing the references the author should take responsibility of giving relevant citations that are appropriate to the article and accurately and honestly; also while citing the reference the author of the article should mention various elements of the source such as, author's names, article title and Journal Name, Volume No., Year of Publication and the Page Nos. in the reference List. This clearly shows that the author has genuinely searched for the references and studied their relevance to the research work.

Tasks related to references are, choosing references for citation, placing citation in the manuscript text and writing the reference list. The guidelines for this purpose are, selection of most relevant and most appropriate reference, citing of direct references to original research source, following guidelines provided by that particular journal and also should comply with the number of citations prescribed by the Journal. The authors are advised not to use conference abstracts, self citations, personal communications if they are not available from the public source, unpublished articles, finally the facts and references that any reader can easily recognize.

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If two or more references are used for one single fact they should be arranged in Alphabetical manner. However, it is always desired and available to the authors that they should follow the instructions and advice given by the respective journals with regard to citations. To sum up citations will play an important role in a research work, because they provide foundation for the study, rational and methodology. Inappropriate and incorrect, illusionary and inaccurate references can make the chances of manuscript for being not accepted for publication.

V. HOW TO SATISFY THE DOUBTERS AND CRITICS, WHO ARE PEER REVIEWERS OF THE ARTICLE

It is obligatory on the part of the editorial board of Journals to adopt peer review process (blind/open) to improve the quality of the published articles that will enhance the reputation of the Journal. It is the duty on the part of the author to respond to reviewers comments appropriately, convincingly and in a satisfying manner all the queries of the reviewers should be answered by the author in an objective manner by providing additional information but not arguments. Peer Review is an important element in the research process before publication. Peer Review also makes the road either to publish or reject an article. When an article is received by the Journal the editor or the sub editors primarily look into the manuscript of the article submitted whether it confirms to the Journal's aim, scope and relevancy to the reader's of the Journal. If the article fails it will be rejected summarily before submitted to the peer reviewers. The editor also can reject manuscript if he sees a fatal flaw, unimportant research topic, inappropriate study design, methodology or control group, invalid data, unable to achieve the objectives and writing invalid data, gross discrepancies in data, unsupported conclusions etc., The editor can return the manuscript at this stage itself with the remarks to resubmit after complying the defects that are observed. After resubmission if the editorial board finds that the resubmitted article is worth referring to peer reviewers. After receiving the reviewer's comments, suggestions the editorial board is at liberty to accept or reject the manuscript. The article can be rejected outright if the plagiarism is more than 60% and in a rarest of rare cases the articles will be totally rejected if no revision is possible. However, whether it is rejected (totally) or with maximum revision as suggested by the reviewers, the author is at liberty to prove how the reviewers erred in their evaluation and Judgment of the script. However this type of argument by the author have limited success because the author has to prove, gross errors in evaluation. Normally, the editorial board will take the views of the reviewers into confidence rather than the supportive argument by the author against the reviewers. The most prudent and pragmatic strategy to the author is to make necessary corrections by incorporating the suggestions made by the reviewers and resubmit the manuscript to the Journal. Rejection, putting questions, vicious criticisms by the reviewers or the editorial board will normally affect the author if the article is a genuine one and the author made genuine effort. On the other hand if the article is sent back by the editorial board of the Journal with a request to clarify the issues raised by the reviewer and make the necessary changes, it shows that the editorial board of the Journal are interested in your manuscript and they find that there is a potential contributor to the body of knowledge. In such situations the author is advised to have a break and look into the manuscript along with the comments and suggestions of the reviewer after one or two days with a fresh look. This will really help the author about the inherent defects in the manuscript and also the relevant points raised by the reviewers. The author can classify the points raised by the reviewers as fundamental, reorganization of the Paper, as minor, as must do, etc., and provide the information accordingly. The author should be polite be constructive and take the criticism in right perspective and if the author does not agree to be polite in the answer. The author should also state the reasons for non-agreeing with the suggestions of the reviewers.

If we analyze the entire process of publishing an article in the journal that consists of planning, conducting the study, analyzing, interpreting the findings making it a suitable manuscript for publication. The irony is, the peer reviewer comes into picture of the above said entire process is over. However, the present system of publication by the Journals is such and it is thought provoking that, it change this type of system so that the author can be at ease. Is it not prudent should the process begin in right earnest from the stage of planning to satisfy the reviewers and the editors?

VI. COVERING LETTER

It is very important for any author while submitting the manuscript to a Journal to prepare a covering letter to the editor. Normally the covering letter should contain, why this article is important to this Journal and its readers. Also, the author should mention a gist of the article and should mention how this article contributes new evidence. The impact it is likely to have and that it might generate new opinions. The presentation of a covering letter should entice even a busy editor to read the whole manuscript rather than take any unfavorable decision.

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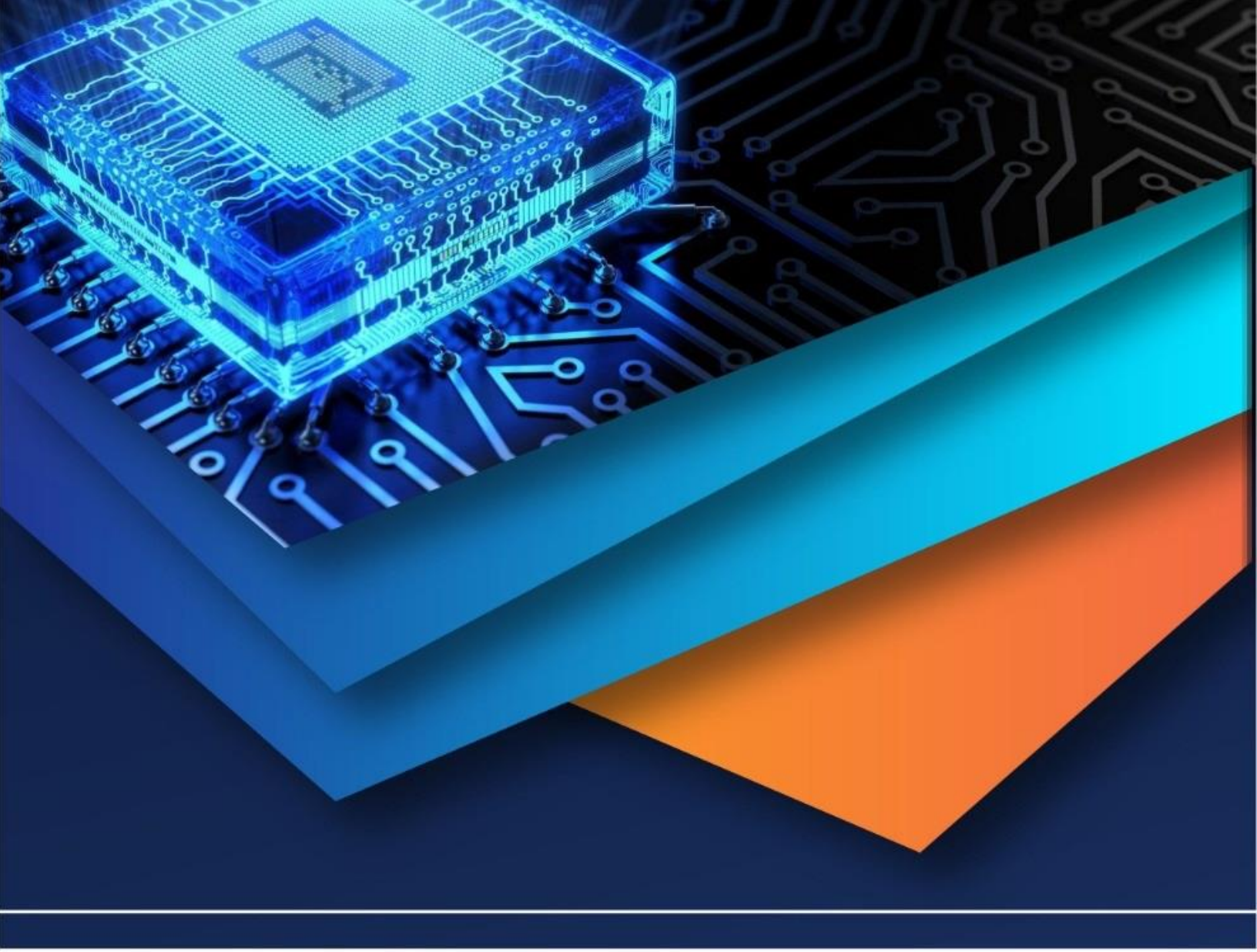
VII. CONCLUSION

As already mentioned above, to get an article whether it is research article, review article, article of analysis, they have to satisfy the editors and the reviewers. The author should keep in mind that either the editorial board or the reviewers are not the adversaries but they act as collaborators to help improve the quality of the manuscript of the author. Normally, scientific research papers as they are based on evidence are not rejected on technical grounds. Hence, the author while preparing the manuscript should follow the ethics according to the nature and subject matter. There is a lot of difference between scientific research paper, Review articles and Articles of Analysis. Hence, an author should be careful in choosing the relevant subject, the source of information, preparing right title, scripting good abstract and finally an acceptable manuscript.

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