WRITING A RESEARCH ARTICLE

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HOW TO WRITE
Write as you go

• Don’t leave writing to the end
• Write as you go
• Write in whatever order feels right
• Draft working papers with the expectation that one day it will likely be published
  • Start rough, bilingual, incomplete....
• Always cite and use bibliographic software
  • EndNote, Reference manager, Zotero, etc.
Write simply

• Keep sentences short and simple
• Use simple English
• Be specific
• Use topic sentences to start paragraphs
• Keep paragraphs short & focused
• Avoid jargon & abbreviations

“If you can’t explain something simply, you don’t understand it well.”

- Albert Einstein
Read and rewrite

• Critically read what you’ve written
• Is the flow logical?
• Are the arguments clear?
• Are claims substantiated?
• Can you be more precise?
• Can you say it more simply?

“We loved all the words in your manuscript, but we were wondering if you could maybe put them in a completely different order.”
WRITING ABOUT FINDINGS
Writing about findings

• Stick to your purpose (and the research questions)
• Organize sections around those questions
• Analyze don’t just describe, use key concepts as part of analytical framework to classify, measure and associate factors
• Avoid statements not backed by evidence
• Make use of tables and figures, but don’t then repeat detailed information in text
• Avoid long description of methods in results section
Organize the results around the research questions

(1) Do knowledge of river flows, experience of past extreme weather events, and individual or site characteristics influence how climate-related risks are perceived?

(2) Do farmers perceive that climate-related risks have changed over time, and, if so, which factors are associated with these perceptions?

(3) Are there any associations between how climate-related risks are perceived, and beliefs in or understanding of climate change?

- Characteristics of fish farmers
- Perceptions of climate-related risks
- Imminent Risks
- Perceptions of change in floods and droughts
- Awareness and understanding of climate change
- Risk perceptions and climate change knowledge
- Perceptions of climate change and variability

Is the results section of article A organized around the research questions?
Quantitative data

• Use statistics to ‘filter-out’ the differences and associations which deserve attention
• One variable at a time is often not good enough as need to consider confounding
  • Logistic regression (binary outcomes)
  • Linear regression (continuous outcomes)
  • Analysis of variance (comparing means)
• Use tables and figures to help reader understand most significant findings
Qualitative data

• Use tables/matrices for intermediate analyses
• Where-ever possible analyze systematically (eg using software)
• Coding strengthens evidence-base and facilitates semi-quantitative analysis
• Use illustrative quotes, note type of source

variable. Increased climate variability implies, overall, greater risks. A fish farmer in Chiang Mai province observed, *It is not the same as before. Everything is warmer. Nature has changed a lot. Rain falls out of season. Cold weather comes at the wrong time. The seasons have changed.* A farmer in Lamphun elaborated on the heat: *The weather is not like before. Consider when it rains. Before we use to put on a sweater; now we turn on the fan or air-conditioner. It has been like this for 10 years.* Another farmer in Phitsanulok
Writing ‘mixed’ method results

• State key findings about prevalence (high, low), differences (higher, lower) and associations (negative, positive)

• Explain differences or how vary with context or special informative cases using qualitative evidence
WRITING DISCUSSIONS
Writing a discussion section

- Concisely synthesize findings responding to key research questions
- Explore alternative explanations or balance of evidence
- Have you achieved your purpose?
- State significance for understanding and scholarship (theory, concepts)
- Explore consequences for policy or practice
- Note new questions or hypotheses
- Critically evaluate limitations (or reviewer will do it for you)

Do not

- Introduce a lot of new literature
- Introduce new findings (unless it is a section combined with results)
- Repeat the results
- Go too far beyond your evidence
Several important gender differences in the use and management of water were identified in this study. Women are major users of water for agriculture in the uplands, but less so in the lowlands. In the lowland, Khon Muang culture, irrigation is viewed as a masculine activity. In the uplands the role of women in water management is more widely accepted and acknowledged than in the lowlands (Figure 4), and as a consequence women are more frequently part of water user groups (Figure 5). Men, however, dominate ‘decision-making’ positions in both community-based and state-led water organisations in both upland and lowland areas. Women’s lack of representation and influence in upland organisations, in particular, does not reflect their acknowledged roles as farmers and irrigators. This is a frequently observed pattern in irrigation (Van Koppen and Hussain, 2007; Zwartteveen, 2008).
Cultural norms with respect to roles and rights of women among Karen, Hmong and Khon Muang are different, don’t fit simple stereotypes or neatly match specific roles in water management. Women in lowland Khon Muang households, for instance, are more likely to hold major assets like land or vehicles, but had relatively modest roles in agricultural activities and water use management. Decisions to borrow money were much more likely to involve both men and women in upland Hmong and Karen households, than in lowland Khon Muang households; but Hmong men, in particular, kept close control of property and formal loan agreements (Figure 2).
Men and women both identified men as being more effected by conflicts. In urban households water-related conflicts were rare, and had less impact on both men and women. Gender differences in concerns with water and their multiple uses have been noted in previous research (Cleaver, 1998; Sultana, 2009). Seasons and climate also play a role, suggesting that gender differences may not be fixed in time, but also related to resource conditions (Figueiredo and Perkins, 2013).
Based on this understanding of how important traits are seen in gendered terms, and the interdependencies of men and women despite strong underlying imbalances in gender relations, some of the strategies of women in these rural communities can be better understood, and supported.....

• Strategic use of existing norms

• Opportunities for shifting norms
This study had several important limitations that point to the need for further research. The eco-cultural context classification used here does not fully disentangle ethnicity and socio-ecological setting variables. All Khon Muang households were in an urbanising area of the lowlands, and all the Karen and Hmong households were in the uplands. There are many other differences from living in these two settings, apart from those related to ethnicity and topography, so it is possible that our finding of differences were also influenced by other factors...
WHERE TO PUBLISH
Before you leap...

• Make sure the work is original
  • It should not contain significant overlap with already submitted or published piece
• Make sure it is agreed who will be listed as an author
  • And who will be kindly acknowledged
• Make sure it is clear who will be listed as lead author
  • Regardless of who does the submission

Authorship

• All should make substantial contributions to
  • conception or design
  • Data collection
  • writing or revising content
  • And, Agree on final version

• But who goes first?
  • Whoever did the most
  • The PhD or post-doc student
  • Equal share, take turns
It matters

• If you want
  • people to read what you write
  • to influence their thinking
  • to build your credibility

• But do not want
  • To pay too much
  • To wait for ever
  • To get rejection depression
Criteria for choosing a journal

To look for
- you cite
- get cited
- fit your topic
- fit type of article
- your targets read
- match level of significance/originality
- Try publisher software:
  - http://journalfinder.elsevier.com/
  - http://www.springer.com/?SGWID=0-102-12-988548-0

To avoid
- Predatory journals often
  - Solicit articles via mass-emailing
  - charge publication fees
  - Publish junk (everything)
  - Are not listed in ISI/SCOPUS
  - Poor, fake, or no review
  - Most appear on Beall’s list: http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/
## Impact factors

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How many times an average paper is cited per year
Making the choice

• Seriously consider 2-3 options
  • Compare advantages/limitations
  • Choose one
• Keep others as back-up options
  • Manuscripts get rejected from better journals
• Compare metrics
Submission

- Carefully check author guidelines
- Look at recent issue for examples
- Register / log-in to on-line system
- Separate manuscript into bits and submit step-wise
  - Author information
  - Abstracts
  - Keywords, highlights
  - Main Text
  - Tables and figures
- Recheck before hit “SUBMIT”
Peer review process

• Feedback on submission is typically 1-4 months
• Expect to have to make revisions (major, minor) and to get 2-6 weeks to do them!
  • If rejected take a deep breath and look carefully at reviewers comments before resubmitting elsewhere
• For proofs check very carefully – ask others to help; expect few days only!
• Full process will often take 6-12 months before on-line publication
Ladder of satisfaction

- Getting rejected without review
- Getting rejected after review
- Getting published
- Being cited
- Being cited correctly (and favorably)
- Having influence on how others think...
Improving your own writing

- Review drafts of your colleagues
- Read published papers observing ‘organization’ and ‘argument’
- Allocate time to revise your own work
- Seek feedback from others

Everyone needs an editor.