

2026 NUTRITION RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CHALLENGE
(NRIC)



**Nutrition Society
of Nigeria**



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Say More with Less: Writing Abstracts for Scientific Success

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Why Do Good Research Works Get Rejected?

Poor communication

Weak abstracts

Lack of clarity

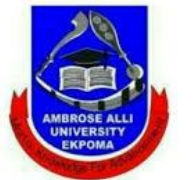
Failure to follow guidelines

Your abstract is often your first impression



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Learning Objectives



At the end of this session,

students should be able to:

i. Define a scientific abstract

ii. Identify components of a strong abstract

iii. Write concise and compelling abstracts

iv. Avoid common abstract-writing mistakes

v. Improve chances of abstract acceptance

What is an Abstract?

Definition

An abstract is a summary of a research study that highlights:

The problem

The objective

The methods

The major findings

The conclusion

Typical Length

Usually 150–300 words

Why Abstracts Matter



Determines acceptance or rejection

ii. Creates first impression

iii. Attracts readers and reviewers

iv. Promotes research visibility

v. Enhances academic opportunities



A weak abstract can hide strong research



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Where Are Abstracts Used?

 Scientific conferences


 Journal publications

 Seminars

 Research competitions

 Undergraduate and postgraduate projects

 Grant applications

 Many academic opportunities begin with a well-written abstract.

Types of Abstracts

Structured Abstract

Contains headings such as:

Background

Objective

Methods

Results

Conclusion

Unstructured Abstract

Written as one continuous paragraph

Structure improves clarity.

The Anatomy of a Strong Abstract

Five Core Components

- Background
- Objective
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion

Flow:

Problem → Aim → Method → Findings → Meaning

A strong abstract tells a complete story in few words."

Writing the Background

Purpose

Introduce the research problem briefly.

Tips

Keep it short

Focus on relevance

Avoid textbook explanations

Example

“Malnutrition among adolescents remains a major public health concern in Nigeria.”

The background sets the stage – not the entire movie.

Writing the Objective

Characteristics of a Good Objective

- i. Clear
- ii. Specific
- iii. Focused
- iv. Measurable

Example

"To assess dietary diversity among undergraduate students in Edo State."

If the objective is unclear, the entire abstract becomes confusing.

Writing the Methods



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Include Only Key Information

Study design

Study population

Sample size

Data collection methods

Statistical analysis

Avoid

Excessive procedural details

Methods should inform – not overwhelm.



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Writing the Results

The Heart of the Abstract

- Results should:
- Present major findings
- Include important statistics
- Directly answer the objective

Weak Example

- “Results showed significant differences.”

Strong Example

- “Low dietary diversity was observed in 41.8% of respondent (p < 0.05).”

No results, no abstract.



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Writing the Conclusion

A Good Conclusion Should:

- i. Reflect the findings
- ii. Answer the research objective
- iii. State implications or recommendations

Avoid

- Overstating findings
- Introducing new information.

Conclusions should close the discussion, not restart it.



Characteristics of a Winning Abstract

Strong Abstracts Are:

Clear

Concise

Logical

Accurate

Relevant

Scientifically sound

Error-free

Clarity is more impressive than complexity.



Common Mistakes Students Make

- i. Too much background information
- ii. No clear objective
- iii. Missing results
- iv. Grammar and spelling errors
- v. Inconsistent data
- vi. Exceeding word limit
- vii. Copying directly from project chapters

Small errors can weaken strong research.

Tips for Writing Better Abstracts

Practical Tips

- i. Write the abstract last
- ii. Follow submission guidelines carefully
- iii. Use simple scientific language
- iv. Revise multiple times
- v. Proofread thoroughly
- vi. Seek feedback from supervisors and peers

Excellent abstracts are rewritten, not rushed.

Abstract Submission Tips

Before You Submit

Check word count

Follow formatting instructions

Use correct keywords

Confirm data accuracy

Ensure consistency with full study

Submit before deadline

Many abstracts fail before review because guidelines were ignored.

Example of a Strong Abstract

Topic

- “Nutritional Knowledge and Dietary Practices among University Students”

Present a short sample abstract with:

- Background
- Objective
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion

WEAK ABSTRACT

Nutrition is very important to students because food affects health and academic performance. Many students do not eat well and this has become a problem in different universities. This study looked at nutritional knowledge and dietary practices among university students. Questionnaires were administered to students and the data were analysed statistically. The results showed that some students had good nutritional knowledge while others did not. Dietary practices also varied among students. There were significant differences in some variables. The study concluded that nutrition education should be encouraged among students.

Problems with this Abstract

- i. Too vague and general
- ii. No clear sample size or location
- iii. Methods poorly described
- iv. Results lack specific data
- v. "Significant differences" not explained
- vi. Weak scientific communication
- vii. Sounds descriptive rather than analytical

GOOD ABSTRACT

Poor dietary practices among university students may negatively affect health and academic performance. This study assessed nutritional knowledge and dietary practices among undergraduate students of a Nigerian university. A cross-sectional study involving 250 students selected through simple random sampling was conducted using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using SPSS version 25, and statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Approximately 68.4% of respondents demonstrated good nutritional knowledge, while 57.2% had poor dietary practices characterised by low fruit and vegetable consumption and frequent meal skipping. Female students had significantly better nutritional knowledge scores than males ($p = 0.03$). The study concludes that although nutritional knowledge was relatively high, healthy dietary practices remained suboptimal among students. Targeted nutrition education and behaviour-change interventions are recommended to improve students' dietary habits.

Why This Abstract is Strong

- i. Clear background and relevance
- ii. Specific objective stated
- iii. Methods adequately summarised
- iv. Results contain actual data
- v. Findings directly answer the objective
- vi. Conclusion is evidence-based
- vii. Scientifically concise and coherent

Nugget: “Specificity gives research credibility.”

Opportunities Created by Good Abstracts



- i. Conference presentations
- ii. Networking opportunities
- iii. Scholarships and grants
- iv. Publications
- v. Career advancement
- vi. Academic confidence and visibility



One good abstract can open many academic doors.

CONCLUSION: Key Lessons



Strong abstracts communicate clearly



Results are the core of the abstract



Simplicity improves understanding



Practice leads to improvement



Closing Quote



Say more with less – because powerful science deserves powerful communication

Acknowledgement

- ✓ Students
- ✓ NSN
- ✓ NRIC

Thanks for your attention

Questions & Discussion