

Abstract

Whether you write a dissertation, a PhD thesis or a journal paper, all of them require you to formulate a **short summary** that is a fully **self-contained description** of the overall content of your writing. This synopsis is called abstract and is often used for online search databases to entice any potential reader to obtain as well as read the full publication.

General Guidelines

Writing an abstract can seem very time-consuming and hard. Terminology and structure of the abstract and main body of the text could potentially not match up, or you could forget to include relevant information. To overcome this, bear in mind that an abstract...

- has the purpose to **summarise**, not to introduce your research.
- is the first thing to be read by an assessor and forms the **first impression**.
- should be written **at the end, after** you have finished your main body of text.
- should normally contain **no references** and is written in **present tense**.
- should be between **150 – 250 words** long.
- may also require a **list of keywords** that describe your research.

Style and Terminology

You should have a look at abstracts used in your research area and being published in peer-reviewed academic journals. If you **copy their style and terminology** your abstract will ultimately increase its academic tone and voice:

- Previous research has shown that...
- Current conceptualizations indicate...
- Recent research has begun to focus on...
- The current study aims to examine...
- The present study explores...
- The paper employs...
- These results indicate that...
- This study highlights...
- The findings recommend that...
- The study provides evidence that...
- The research supports current developments in...
- The findings have implications for...
- The gained insights underscore...



What to include in an Abstract?

You should focus on **five features** that basically sum up any academic writing. Below is an example based on an abstract by Fracalanza et al. (2014). It highlights how all of these aspects are clearly and in a brief manner addressed. You could basically **copy and paste these sentence from the corresponding (chapter) sections in your writing**. This ensures that the terminology and writing style stays the same and increases the chance of people taking the time to obtain and read your complete publication.

Features	Example
The problem/ focus/ topic you are investigating.	Previous research has shown that individuals with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) report elevated anger compared with nonanxious individuals;
The rationale for the research.	However, the pathways linking GAD and anger are currently unknown.
The research methods e.g., participants included, methods used for analysing data.	We hypothesized that negative beliefs about uncertainty, negative beliefs about worry and perfectionism dimensions mediate the relationship between GAD symptoms and anger variables. We employed multiple mediation with bootstrapping on cross-sectional data from a student sample (N = 233) to test four models assessing potential mediators of the association of GAD symptoms to inward anger expression, outward anger expression, trait anger and hostility, respectively.
The main results of your thesis.	The belief that uncertainty has negative personal and behavioural implications uniquely mediated the association of GAD symptoms to inward anger expression (confidence interval [CI] = .0034, .1845, PM = .5444), and the belief that uncertainty is unfair and spoils everything uniquely mediated the association of GAD symptoms to outward anger expression (CI = .0052, .1936, PM = .4861) and hostility (CI = .0269, .2427, PM = .3487). Neither negative beliefs about worry nor perfectionism dimensions uniquely mediated the relation of GAD symptoms to anger constructs.
The conclusion and implications of your research.	We conclude that intolerance of uncertainty may help to explain the positive connection between GAD symptoms and anger, and these findings give impetus to future longitudinal investigations of the role of anger in GAD.

Note. Fracalanza, Katie; Koerner, Naomi; Deschênes, Sonya S., & Dugas, Michel J. (2014). Intolerance of Uncertainty Mediates the Relation Between Generalized Anxiety Disorder Symptoms and Anger, *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy*, 43(2), 122-132.