


Source use in Results sections in qualitative research articles of two disciplines


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Motivation of the study



Under-referencing in the Results and Discussion sections /chapters in research manuscripts or theses produced by novice writers.



2004: 120

Bunton, 1998
Thompson, 1998
Swales, 2004
Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006

A relatively low level of citations in many dissertation drafts is, I suspect, a familiar enough phenomenon to supervisors and advisors. Certainly, advisors will meet students who believe that they have “got done” with prior research in the literature review section or chapter and therefore have little need to refer to it in the data-collection, methodology, and *results chapters* [my emphasis].

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Research questions



1. In **which parts (moves)** of the Results section do source ideas tend to be engaged?
2. What sorts of **source ideas** tend to be engaged?
3. What **manifest functions** do the source ideas have in the parts?

The study was part of a bigger project of source use, part of which has been published in Kwan & Chan (2014)...

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Kwan & Chan (2014)



Predominant moves in *Results* of quantitative (positivist) research articles in Information Systems

Move	Predominant steps
Methods	Treatment of data Statistical procedures
Results	Mostly statistical about Hypotheses or models
Comments	Interpreting results Comparing results with other studies Accounting for results



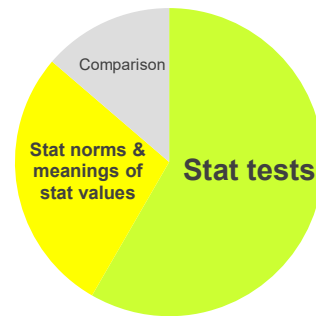
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Kwan & Chan (2014)



Major types of source ideas cited in predominant steps of Methods & Comments

Move	Steps
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical testing (e.g., test names, principles, instruments, procedures, evaluation, etc.)
Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statistical norms (e.g., effect sizes) -- <i>benchmarking</i> Meanings of statistical values – <i>validity & reliability</i> Comparing results with those of other studies



Samples [A-D](#)

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Data & approach to analysis



- Part 1:
 - Results sections in 25 Qual. RAs in Information Systems
 - Move and citation analysis
 - Move coding → move typology
 - Citation coding (ideas cited & their manifest functions) → citation typology developed
- Part 2:
 - Results sections in 30 Qual. RAs in Tourism and Hospitality
 - Move/citation analysis:
 - applying the move and citation typologies developed in Part 1
 - fine-tuning the typologies

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Findings: Sectional structure



Overview [optional]

Sub-section 1

Sub-section 2

...

Sub-section n

each


- given a thematic heading
- capturing a key point(s) (arguments) about observations

cf, Holliday, 2007

Sample [E-F](#)

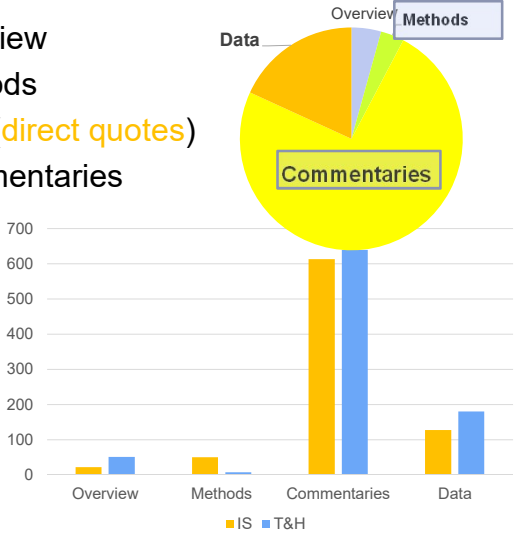
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Move structure in sub-sections



- Overview
- Methods
- Data (*direct quotes*)
- Commentaries

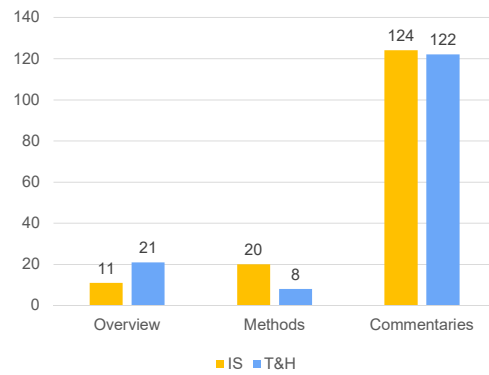
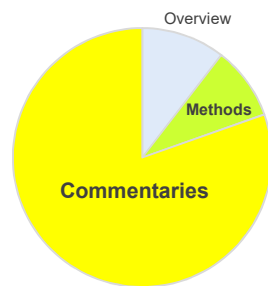
In sharp contrast to Move distribution in *Quant IS* articles



Sub-section	IS (Yellow)	T&H (Blue)
Overview	~20	~50
Methods	~50	~10
Commentaries	~600	~650
Data	~120	~180

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Distribution of citations across moves



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Steps in Overview



- Existing situation driving the study
- Theoretical anchoring
- Method
- Summary of observations
- Advance organizer

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Steps in Methods




- Research site
- Participants
- **Method (coding)**

Different from the move of Method in quant. --> The move in Results sections mainly report statistical methods (see a previous slide on the Method move in quant. articles.)

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Steps in data commentaries



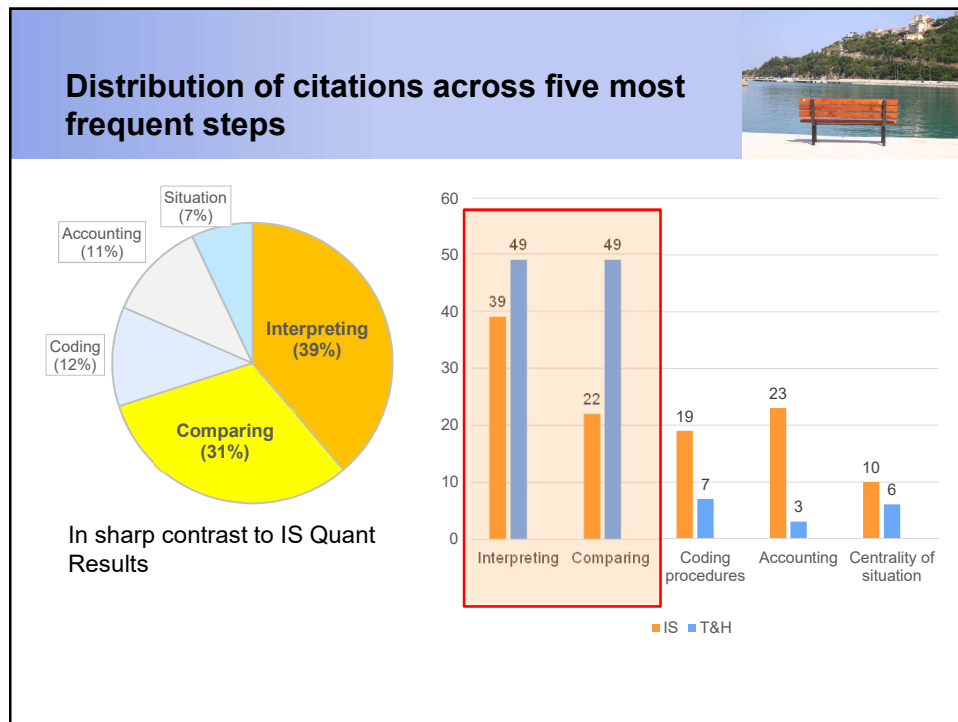
- **Interpreting data (summarizing observations and/or stating what observations mean)**
- Comparing observations within the study and/or with other studies
- Accounting for observations
- Claiming importance of observations

-- The step of Interpr. also observed in quant. articles but the types of interpretations are qualitatively different

-- In qual. articles, interprs are mostly about what an experience / a phenomenon / a process captured in cited data or generalized from data means, signifies, suggests, etc.

-- In quant. articles, interprs are mostly about the validity/reliability of statistical values generated or whether the statistical values confirm hypotheses or a model developed by the researchers

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Citations in *Interpreting Data*

These can include categories in existing typologies

- **Theoretical notions** to abstract essence of observations and/or quick glosses of the notions
- Others' research/theoretical claims to state what observations signify or imply

In sharp contrast to quantitative interpretations: meanings of statistical values: validity and reliability of results → confirming hypotheses or models

Sample [H-J](#)

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Conclusion



The Qual. Results section

- Source ideas tend to involve notions or theoretical claims which the researcher uses to *make sense of (i.e., theorize)* or *label* what is observed in the data.
- Such source use reflects an *interpretivist (constructivist)* approach to data analysis typical of various types of qualitative research

The Quant. Results section

- Source ideas tend to involve statistical matters which the researcher cites to *demonstrate the rigor exercised in data analysis* and to *benchmark results of analysis*.
- Such source use reflects an epistemological concern with *validity* and *reliability* of outcomes that forms part of the *positivist research* paradigm

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Implications for teaching



- Showing students differences between qual. and quant. Results sections in terms of their source use (ideas to cite, functions of the source ideas, and methods of citing).
- Approaches to instruction:
 - Descriptive
 - Data-driven / exploratory

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Descriptive approach to instruction



Procedure

1. Show students the move-specific typology of citations in the two types of Results sections.
2. Illustrate the typologies described in Kwan & Chan, 2014 and developed in the current study with examples drawn from articles published in students' disciplines.
3. Show students how the ideas are cited (e.g., integrally vs non-integrally, use of citation verbs, etc.)
4. Ask students to share (summarize) with their peers the results or findings of their studies.
5. Ask students to think about the need to draw on the existing literature (see Student's reflection on the right)
6. Ask students to draft one part of their results sections that will involve source ideas

Student's reflection

- Quant.
 - Need to cite to demonstrate the rigor exercised in their data analysis, to benchmark the validity/reliability of their results?
- Qual.
 - Need to cite to interpret and/or support interpretation of data? Which part of the data?
- Both quant/qual.
 - Need to cite to compare their results/observations with others? Which parts of the results/observations?

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Data-driven/exploratory approach to instruction (Procedure)



1. Ask students to share (summarize) with their peers the results or findings of their studies.
2. Ask students whether there is a need to draw on existing literature in the results section of their writing. If there is a need, what ideas need to be cited and for what purposes they should be cited.
3. Show students samples of Results sections or excerpts of sections of both quant. and qual. articles that are embedded with source ideas which can illustrate the citation types identified in Kwan & Chan's (2014) study and the current study.
4. Ask students to read the sample texts and study the cited ideas in them:
 - underline ideas drawn from sources,
 - describe the ideas and their functions in relation to the results being reported
 - how the ideas are cited (e.g., integrally vs non-integrally, use of citation verbs, etc.)
 - discuss their observations with peers.
5. Show students the move-specific typologies of citations in the two types of Results sections and ask them whether their observations in Step 4 match with those shown in the two typologies mentioned in Step 3.
6. Ask students to think about the need to draw on the existing literature (see Student's reflection in Slide 17) and apply what they have observed (see Slide 17).

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