Finally

Remember to fulfil any obligations you entered into, such as supplying a copy of your dissertation if, for example, your access to an organization was predicated on providing one; maintaining the confidentiality of information supplied and the anonymity of your informants and other research participants; and storing or disposing of your data properly (as discussed in Chapter 6).

Writing up quantitative and qualitative research

In the next two sections, research-based articles that have been published in journals are examined to discern some characteristic features. One article is based on quantitative research and another on qualitative research. The presentation of the quantitative and the qualitative research articles raises the question of whether or not practitioners of the two research strategies employ different writing approaches. It is sometimes suggested that they do, although when Bryman compared two articles based on research in the sociology of work, he found that the differences were less pronounced than he had anticipated on the basis of reading the literature on the topic (Bryman 1998). One difference we have noticed is that, in journals, quantitative researchers often give more detailed accounts of their research design, research methods, and approaches to analysis than qualitative researchers. This is surprising because in books reporting their research, qualitative researchers provide detailed accounts of these areas. Indeed, the chapters in Part Three of this book rely heavily on these accounts. Wolcott (1990: 27) has also noticed this tendency: 'Our [qualitative researchers'] failure to render full and complete disclosure about our data-gathering procedures give our methodologically orientated colleagues fits. And rightly so, especially for those among them willing to accept our contributions if we would only provide more careful data about our data.' Being informed that a study was based on a year's participant observation or a number of semi-structured interviews is not enough to gain an acceptance of the claims to credibility that a writer might be wishing to convey.

However, this point aside, although one article based on quantitative research and one based on qualitative research will be examined in the discussion that follows, we should not be too surprised if they turn out to be more similar than might have been expected. In other words, although we might have expected clear differences between the two in terms of their approaches to writing, the similarities are more noticeable than the differences.

In addition to looking at examples of writing in quantitative and qualitative research, in Chapter 27 we will examine how mixed methods research can be written up and explore some guidelines that are offered by practitioners.

An example of quantitative research

To illustrate some of the characteristics of the way quantitative research is written up for academic journals, we will return to the article about gender bias in attitudes towards leaders by Elsesser and Lever (2011) introduced in Chapter 1 (Research in focus 1.3). We are not suggesting that this article is somehow exemplary or representative, but rather that it exhibits some typical features in terms of presentation and structure, as well as a few less typical ones. The article is based on analysis of data from a US-based national survey conducted using the popular news website msnbc.com, and was published in the journal *Human Relations*. The article has the following components, aside from the abstract:

1. Introduction
2. Role congruity theory
3. Goals of the present study
4. Method
5. Results
6. Discussion (including subsections on 'limitations and strengths' and 'implications')

Introduction

Right at the beginning of the introduction, the opening sentence attempts to grab our attention, to give a clear indication of where the article's focus lies, and to provide an indication of the importance of the subject of study for practitioners, policy-makers, and academics. This is what the authors write:

> Although acceptance of female managers has increased in the last half-century, negative attitudes toward female leaders still persist (Carlson et al., 2006; Heilman, 2001; Heilman et al.,1995).
>
> (Elsesser and Lever 2011: 1556)

This is an impressive start, because, in just eighteen words (plus citations), the authors set out what the article is about and persuade us of its significance. They achieve this by first stating what progress has been achieved in increasing equality between men and women in business over the last 50 years, and then declaring the continued existence of negative attitudes towards female leaders. The inclusion of three citations to previous research at the end of this sentence provides support for their assertions and immediately situates the statement in relation to these earlier studies and existing literatures. Hence is it made clear which research audiences and debates the current study is addressing.

Next, Elsesser and Lever identify what they see as a limitation of existing research, which they suggest cannot be generalized to real world situations. 'While a few studies are based on actual bosses in work settings, many works base conclusions on student samples surveyed on vignettes of hypothetical leaders, attitudes about ideal leaders, or ratings of task leaders in laboratory settings' (2011: 1556). They provide five citations at the end of this sentence in order to support this claim. The criticism that the authors make thus focuses on the ecological validity of prior studies (see Chapter 3), which they claim calls into question the quality of existing research on this topic.

The authors go on to set out in much more precise terms how the research on which this article is based differs from this preceding research, and the research questions that it addresses.

> In the present study, subordinates rated their own female and male bosses, allowing us to examine whether biases exist against actual female leaders and, if so, under what conditions and management styles these biases are likely to emerge.
>
> (2011: 1556)

In so doing, the authors draw attention to a methodological deficiency in existing knowledge and tell us that they are going to correct this situation. The authors then go on to review the literature on role congruity theory.

Role congruity theory

In this literature review section of the article, the authors present existing research that addresses the topic of role congruity theory, which is the body of literature on which their study builds. Notice that it is not titled 'literature review'—instead the title reflects the specific theoretical focus of the article. The first paragraph explains the notion of role incongruity, where individuals act in ways that are incongruent with their sex roles as defined by society. They go on to suggest that role congruity theory predicts that female leaders suffer two kinds of prejudice: descriptive bias, 'where they are stereotyped as having less leadership potential than men'; and prescriptive bias, 'when female leaders are evaluated less favorably because leadership is seen as more desirable for men than for women' (2011: 1556–7). The rest of this section of the article is devoted to describing the existing literature in more detail and further elaborating on its methodological and empirical limitations.

Goals of the present study

In the second sentence of this section the authors clearly state their intentions:

> The goal of this paper is to examine respondents' ratings of their own current boss's competence and of their relationship with their boss, as well as their attitudes toward male and female managers more generally.
>
> (Elsesser and Lever 2011: 1558)

Their intention in doing so is to test whether stereotyping occurs in real-world settings, where people are rating their own supervisors. The researchers propose three sets of hypotheses.

- *Hypothesis 1a.* 'When rating one's own boss, respondents' ratings of male and female managers will not differ with regard to competence.'

- *Hypothesis 1b.* 'Competence ratings for male and female managers will not differ regardless of whether they work in male- or female-dominated environments.'

- *Hypothesis 1c.* 'Competence ratings for male and female managers will not differ regardless of the manager's style (sensitive or direct).'

- *Hypothesis 2a.* 'When rating one's own boss, respondents will not differ on reports of the quality of their relationships with male and female bosses.'

- *Hypothesis 2b.* 'Relationship ratings will not differ for male and female managers regardless of whether they work in male- or female-dominated environments.'

- *Hypothesis 2c.* 'Relationship ratings will not differ for male and female managers regardless of the manager's style (sensitive or direct).'

- *Hypothesis 2d.* 'Relationship ratings will not differ for extremely competent male managers and extremely competent female managers.'

- *Hypothesis 3a.* 'When stating their preference for managers in general, respondents will show a preference for male over female managers.'

- *Hypothesis 3b.* 'The general preference for male management will be strongest for those in male-dominated environments, by those with no previous experience with a female boss, and by those who currently report to a male boss.' (Elsesser and Lever 2011: 1558–9)

These hypotheses are intended to test whether gender bias is less in studies 'using actual bosses in actual organizations' (2011: 1558) than in experimental studies based on 'hypothetical managers or laboratory created leaders' (2011: 1557). They suggest a connection between bias against female leaders—the dependent variable—and relationships between employee and their bosses, whether they work in a male- or female-dominated environments, the manager's style (sensitive or direct), and the manager's competence, which constitute the independent variables in this study. We thus end up with a very clear research agenda, which has been arrived at by reflecting on existing theory and research in this area.

Methods

In this section, the authors outline the methods that were used in conducting the research and provide details about the data that they draw on. They begin by explaining that the data on which the paper is based came from a US-based national survey that was distributed online using a popular American news site, msnbc.com. The remainder of this section is then divided into three separate sub-sections titled: 'Participants', 'Measures', and 'Analyses'. The first of these subsections provides information about the participants, including a table detailing the industries they worked in. The second explains the measures used. For example:

> Relationship quality with the current boss was assessed with the item 'How would you rate your relationship with your current boss?' Responses were on a scale from 1 (Poor) to 7 (Excellent).
>
> (Elsesser and Lever 2011: 1561)

The third subsection of the methods sets out the analyses used in the study, including the statistical tests that were used (t-tests, chi-square, factorial ANOVA—see Chapter 15 on tests of statistical significance). The paper also includes some analyses of what the authors describe as 'qualitative data', in the form of responses to open questions included in the survey (see Chapter 12). While we do not focus on this aspect here, it does illustrate the relative difficulty in clearly separating quantitative and qualitative methods in practice (see Chapter 26).

Results

In this section, the authors provide a description of their findings, setting out results in tables, and then consider what the results mean for the three sets of hypotheses. They move through the hypotheses in turn, discussing whether the hypotheses were supported or not. In this kind of research, the basis for theoretical conclusions is hypothesis testing, so careful consideration of whether each individual hypothesis is disproven or supported is essential to drawing conclusions.

Discussion

In this final section, Elsesser and Lever return to the issues that were presented in the introduction and theory sections. They begin with a short, clear summary of their findings in response to the question that has been driving their investigation:

> The answer to our title question (Does gender bias against female leaders persist?) is both 'yes' and 'no'.
>
> (2011: 1571)

The remainder of the paragraph is devoted to explaining in more detail how gender biases persist when participants are asked to imagine their ideal manager, although gender bias is less likely when evaluating their own boss. The authors go on to explain that their results are consistent with previous research 'that shows much larger gender bias in studies of hypothetical or abstract leaders, and little or no bias in studies of actual bosses, and should serve as a reminder that caution must be taken in extending laboratory results based on hypothetical bosses to actual organizational scenarios' (2011: 1571).

In the last few paragraphs of the paper, Elsesser and Lever discuss a surprising aspect of their findings which relates to the identification of a bias favouring 'cross-sex management'—male participants favouring female bosses and female participants favouring male bosses. At this point Elsesser and Lever begin to speculate about

about the reasons for this finding. The explanation that Elsesser and Lever offer for this surprising finding concerns 'intra-gender competition between women' and citing studies that suggest 'female employees devalue the competency of others of their own gender to enhance their own comparative worth' (2011: 1572). Overall, the findings as summarized in the first two subsections of the results suggest that (a) a slight majority of participants do not have a preference for the gender of their boss; and (b) of those participants who do have a preference for the gender of their boss, there is a general preference for male bosses.

The penultimate subsection of the 'Discussion' is titled 'Limitations and strengths'. Here, in addition to highlighting the strengths of the study, the authors discuss aspects of their research design that limit the findings and the conclusions that can be drawn, e.g. selection biases that arise because participants had to have access to the internet, leading to under-representation of certain groups. In the final subsection, 'Implications', the authors claim that their study offers 'encouraging evidence of changing attitudes towards female leaders ... indicating a feminizing of the management role, with our participants favoring sensitive over direct managers, regardless of the manager's gender' (2011: 1574–5).

Elsesser and Lever do not have a separate 'Conclusion' section. Instead, the main conclusions are presented as part of the overall discussion. The article ends with acknowledgements to *Elle* magazine and msnbc.com for access to the 'Work and Power Survey' as well as to other individuals, including peer reviewers, who helped the authors to develop their work. This is followed by a list of references to literature cited in the article.

Lessons

It is worth spelling out the lessons that can be learned from Elsesser and Lever's article.

- There is a clear attempt to grab the reader's attention with strong opening statements, which also act as signposts to what the article is about.

- The authors spell out clearly the rationale of their research. This entails pointing to the significance of role congruity theory and the persistence of negative attitudes towards female leaders and managers, highlighting methodological limitations associated with existing literature and consequent gaps in our understanding.

- The research questions are spelled out in a very specific way. In fact, the authors present hypotheses that are a highly specific form of research question (although hypotheses are framed as statements, to allow testing, they can nonetheless be thought of as a form of research question). As will be noted in Chapter 8, by no means all quantitative research is driven by hypotheses, even though outlines of the nature of quantitative research often imply that it is. Nonetheless, Elsesser and Lever chose to frame their research questions in this form.

- The research methods employed, the nature of the data, the measurement of concepts, the sampling, and the approaches to the analysis of the data are clearly and explicitly summarized.

- The presentation of the findings is orientated very specifically to the hypotheses.

- The discussion returns to the hypotheses and spells out the implications of the findings for them and for role congruity theory examined earlier in the paper. It is easy to forget that you should think of the research process as closing a circle in which you must return unambiguously to your research questions. There is no point inserting extraneous findings if they do not illuminate your research questions. At the same time, the discussion provides an opportunity for a degree of speculation in response to surprising or unanticipated findings arising from the study, using existing literature to substantiate these claims.

- While there is an element of rhetoric in the writing that seeks to convince and persuade, statements are made in a non-judgemental way in accordance with the conventions of the logico-scientific genre of writing.

- Finally, there is an attempt to consider the limitations of the study, in addition to its strengths. It is also common at this point to consider the implications of the study, e.g. for business or managers.

There is a clear sequential process moving from the formulation of the research questions (in the form of hypotheses) through the exposition of the nature of the data and the presentation of the findings to the discussion. Each stage is linked to and follows on from its predecessor (but see Thinking deeply 7.3). The structure used by Elsesser and Lever is based on a common one employed in the writing-up of quantitative research in business journals. It involved just one final section entitled 'Discussion', in which the authors drew their conclusions, but in other articles the discussion and conclusion may be separate sections.

An example of qualitative research

Now we will look at an example of a journal article based on qualitative research. Again, we are not suggesting that the article is exemplary or representative, but that it exhibits some features that are often regarded as desirable qualities in terms of presentation and structure. The article is one that has been referred to in Chapter 1: a study of academic identity work by Clarke et al. (2012). The article is based on a semi-structured interview study and was published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Management*. The structure of the article runs as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Loving to labour: identity in business schools
3. Methodology
4. Research findings
5. Discussion
6. Summary and conclusion

What is immediately striking about the structure is that it is not dissimilar to that of Elsesser and Lever's (2011) article. Nor should this be all that surprising. After all, a structure that runs

Introduction → Literature review → Research design/
methods → Results → Discussion → Conclusions

is not obviously associated with one research strategy rather than the other. One difference from quantitative research articles is that the presentation of the results and the discussion of them are frequently rather more interwoven in qualitative research articles. We will see this in the case of Clarke et al.'s article. As with Elsesser and Lever's article, we will examine the writing in terms of the article's structure.

Introduction

The first paragraph gives an indication of the existing literature on which this article is based—related to the effects of new public management on academic work. However, before the start of the introduction, the authors present a direct quote from a play by Alan Bennett, *The History Boys* (2004). The words are those of a school headmaster who begins with the question, 'Shall I tell you what's wrong with Hector as a teacher?' and goes on to complain that his work is 'unpredictable, unquantifiable', which is problematic from a managerial perspective. This is an interesting and relatively unusual way to introduce an academic article; it illustrates the possibilities for being slightly creative in your writing—an issue we shall return to at the end of this chapter. The quote is not explained, or even directly referred to in the article; instead the reader is left to interpret it. It thus makes for an evocative and intriguing start to the article.

This first paragraph of the introduction is short, comprising just two sentences, and each is followed by a series of citations to existing literature. This enables the authors to immediately say what the article is about and where its focus lies. The authors then go on, in the second paragraph, to introduce the empirical research on which the article is based (a study of academic staff in UK business schools); the identity literature which provides the theory that is used in the study; and the objective of the article, which is to understand how 'academic subjectivities are sustained or transformed' as a consequence of the conditions in UK business schools. Three further paragraphs of the introduction are devoted to providing more detail on the authors' position before, in the final paragraph of this section, setting out the structure for what is to follow:

> We begin by providing a summary of what we understand by the concept of identity or identities ... A section on the methods adopted and how the data was collected and analysed precedes our presentation of the main data from the research interviews ... In the discussion section we reflect on how academics are increasingly confronted with managerialist intensifications of audit, accountability and performance demands ... Finally in a summary and conclusion we examine the development of identities that are potentially resistant to these changing conditions, as well as on their implications for future academic work.
>
> (2012: 6)

Although for the purpose of this analysis we have been selective in our direct quotation from the introduction to this article, it is useful to look again at what each of these elements achieves.

- The direct quotation from a play right at the start catches the interest of the reader and hints at what is to follow.

- The first paragraph situates the study and provides a specific research focus—the effects of new public management on academic work.

- In the second paragraph the authors introduce their empirical study, the theoretical perspective that informs it, and the research objective (question).

- In the final paragraph of the introduction, Clarke et al. provide detailed signposting to indicate how the remainder of the article is structured. Phrases like 'We begin by …' and 'Finally …' let the reader know that this is what they are doing. The reader thus knows what to anticipate and this makes the argument easier to follow.

Loving to labour: identity in business schools

As with Elsesser and Lever's article, the title of the literature review reflects the topic of study. Here the authors set out their perspective on identity in organizations and provide some details about the organizational context of UK higher education, including changes in the way that performance is measured. Statements such as 'Identity is central to life in organizations …' are followed by citations, which provide a clear, evidential warrant for the claims that are made. This section is relatively short but it is crucial in providing the foundations upon which the rest of the article builds.

Methodology

This section comprises three subsections that reflect the sequence of research steps involved: 'Research design', 'Data collection', and 'Data analysis'. In these sections the authors explain several elements of the methods they used.

- They set out the epistemological position taken (interpretive) and their rationale for focusing on their own organizational context, as business school academics themselves. This provides a degree of reflexivity (see later in this chapter), through which greater confidence in the findings can be claimed.

- They state how participants were selected (purposeful and self-selecting), the gender composition of the sample, and the number of UK business schools represented.

- They specify the nature of the data collected (including number of semi-structured interviews, when conducted, duration).

- They describe their approach to analysing the data (thematic analysis using NVivo—see Chapters 24 and 25).

Research findings

The research findings section is subtitled 'Love and labour' and the findings are presented in three separate sub-sections: 'Eros—romantic love', 'Agape—unconditional love', and 'Pragma—pragmatic love', using this typology to categorize and analyse the data. In each case, direct or verbatim quotations from the interview transcripts are used to illustrate and reinforce the theme presented. For example, the following sentence indicates the type of identity work that is observed in the data.

> Practices reflecting high commitment were pervasive in the data, with some participants narrating more extreme stories denoting an intense dependency on their work for meaning (Terkel, 1972).
>
> (Clarke et al. 2012: 9)

This is immediately followed by a data quote from one of the research participants to illustrate the point previously made. Italics are used to indicate that this is a direct quote:

> I work incredibly long hours … I would prefer a more balanced life. You know, if I had an opportunity I would love to have children. I would like to be in a relationship but this [my job] has sort-of taken over in a way.
>
> (Lecturer, 2012: 9)

This is a common way of presenting qualitative data. However, as illustrated in Thinking deeply 7.5, the presentation of verbatim quotes can take other formats. Through the presentation of themes illustrated by verbatim quotes, the 'Research findings' section points forward to some of the arguments that are taken up in the 'Discussion' and the 'Summary and conclusion' sections. The 'Research findings' section also refers back to the previously discussed identity literature. This section includes more citations to the literature than the equivalent section in the quantitative article by Elsesser and Lever.

Discussion

This section of Clarke et al.'s article discusses the findings in the light of the study's research objective, which was to understand how academic identities are being sustained or transformed as a consequence of new public management in UK business schools. The key themes that have been developed through the data analysis—romantic, unconditional, or pragmatic love of academic work—are reiterated and reinforced. The second paragraph begins as follows:

> In exploring the identities of academics in UK business schools what is beyond question is the deep affection and love that most participants expressed for their working lives. Throughout the interviews, our respondents drew on different notions of love in describing their academic selves, three of which we selected out for analytical attention.
>
> (Clarke et al. 2012: 12)

This section is heavily referenced and slightly longer than the initial literature review section. This is an indication of the importance of the discussion in emphasizing the

7.5 THINKING DEEPLY
Using verbatim quotations from interviews

In presenting their findings, Clarke et al (2012) use verbatim interview quotations to illustrate the themes identified in the data. This is a common approach. However, many articles published in North American journals tend to take a slightly different approach. Here, the tone and mode of presenting the findings is very formal and conforms to traditional, mainstream expectations of what a research article should comprise. In particular, there is a 'definite harkening to a more positivistic style' in the presentation of findings, which is associated with a 'generic and impersonal' use of quotations (Adler and Adler 2008: 13, 14). One way in which this is revealed is through presentation of verbatim quotations in a formal manner in tables rather than *en passant*. An example can be found in Table 7.1, which is taken from Maitlis and Lawrence's (2007) multiple case study ethnography of three British orchestras. The article was published in a highly regarded journal and adopts what Adler and Adler (2008) refer to as the 'mainstream ethnography' frame. This can be discerned in the more formalistic tone than is usually encountered in the other writing frames. The article is about how 'sensegiving' takes place in organizations—that is, how leaders and others frame perceptions for others. One of the key themes identified was the competence of the leader, and this theme had three components (referred to as 'first-order concepts': see Key concept 24.6). Maitlis and Lawrence provided 'representative quotations' for each of the three components in a table (see Table 7.1). This style of presenting quotations has become noticeably popular in some leading journals. It is likely that there are several reasons for this: the provision of a table provides a sense of something equivalent to the more commonly encountered table summarizing the results of a statistical procedure; it provides a more formal style in keeping with the prevalent tone of such journals; and possibly it gives less of a sense that the quotations are anecdotal or 'cherry-picked'.

Corden and Sainsbury (2006) conducted research into qualitative researchers' use of such quotations. They found that researchers employ verbatim quotations for interview transcripts for a variety of reasons, such as to illustrate a point; to give voice to participants; to provide evidence; or to deepen readers' understanding. When Corden and Sainsbury examined a wide range of publications in the social policy field, they found a wide variety of approaches to the use of quotations. There was a great deal of variety in how those quoted are referred to and in editing conventions, such as the removal of 'er' and 'erm' and of false starts, as well as whether pauses or laughter are indicated. Thus, there is a wide variety of practice in the use of verbatim quotations. Corden and Sainsbury recommend that researchers should decide which approach they want to use and why, and be able to justify the choice made if necessary.

overall argument of the article and demonstrating how it contributes to our understanding of this subject, i.e. how it contributes to knowledge.

Summary and conclusion

In this section, the authors summarize their findings and draw out the implications that arise from them. They also reflexively analyse their own situated position as 'insider' researchers (see Chapter 19), noting the inherent tensions in seeking to commentate on the audit and performative culture in UK business schools by writing and publishing an academic article which 'serves to reproduce the very practices we criticize' (Clarke et al. 2012: 13). They also speculate on the broader significance of their findings as a potential form of organizational resistance. They end with a restatement of their main conclusion:

the institutionalization of the evaluation of academic output means that academics' identities are continually on the line, and individuals are often only perceived to be as 'good' as their last publication —despite academics possibly being successful in teaching or administration.

Clarke et al. (2012: 13)

This is followed by a warning about the potential negative implications of new public management in UK business schools:

as a consequence of this preoccupation, if notions of the aspirational academic recede or are reshaped too dramatically, then it is possible that passion and love for the job, with many of the meanings surrounding what it means to be an academic, are also at risk of further erosion.

The article ends with an acknowledgement to the editor and peer reviewers and a list of references to literature cited in the article.

TABLE 7.1
The use of verbatim interview quotations in a table

Data supporting the theme 'perceptions of a lack of leader competence'

Associated first-order concepts	Representative quotations
Poor organizational decision process	2.1 '[The associate leader] expressed concern over the lack of information from the office and wondered whether enough was being done to seek out potential leaders to work with the orchestra.' (minutes, BSO orchestra committee meeting) (BSO5)
	2.2 Commenting on the appointment decision process for an orchestra leader: 'It's one incredible grey area. Nobody seems to kn-ow what's happening with that and no one seems to know whose responsibility it is .... Eventually, the principals just made it so clear that basically they weren't happy [that the appointment was not made] .... But we have a theory that he may have promised the guy the job first, and got himself into a pickle.' (interview, BSO orchestra committee member) (BSO5)
	2.3 Commenting on a decision not to terminate a player, a LSO player board member commented: 'There was a decision over this player. The vote was taken and it went against the wishes of the chairman, and he said, 'Well okay, we'll call a council of principals meeting' .... Most of the principals are more than happy to sit on the fence. They've got a hard enough job. They don't want to put their oar in and stir things up, so of course the vote went the other way. Now I think that's a misuse of power, if you like. You're widening the goal posts and moving them at the same time. I was more than a little pissed off about that because it didn't seem to be fair. What was the point of having a [board]?' (interview, LSO player board member) (LSO5)
Poor outcomes of leader decision making	2.4 'Programming is [the senior producer]—you couldn't ask for better repertoire. [The senior producer] is very successful. He has organized some very good programmes and concerts.' (interview, BSO player) (BSO1)
	2.5 'Looking back on all this. I would say that those judgments [of the chief executive] were fatally flawed for our organization on two counts: [the principal conductor's] availability and commitment, and his financial cost.' (interview, PSO player director) (PSO2)
	2.6 'It was like lambs to the slaughter. The contract [the principal conductor] was offered should never have been accepted.' (interview, PSO deputy CEO) (PSO2)
	2.7 'If you look at the main [home city] concerts, something has happened there, and we've lost our thread, because we had three distinct series .... So I think the [PSO], represented by the board and the senior management, has a duty to make sure that the repertoire actually fulfils the artistic strategy.' (interview, PSO player chairman-elect) (PSO1)
Lack of leader expertise	2.8 '[We need] someone who knows what they're doing, who has sufficient commercial grasp to know the effect of what they're doing, and appreciates the need to create a programme for [the PSO home city] that will also apply in [other regional towns]. It's that thorough vision that is lacking at the moment, causing all sorts of orchestral problems.' (interview, PSO finance director) (PSO1)
	2.9 'You have someone here [the chief executive] who has no understanding of orchestras at all.' (observation, musicians' union representative, PSO players meeting with musicians' union) (PSO6)

Source: Maitlis and Lawrence (2007: 67); reproduced with permission.

Lessons

As with Elsesser and Lever's article, it is useful to review some of the lessons learned from the article by Clarke et al.

- As in the illustration of quantitative research writing, there are strong opening sentences, which attract our attention and give a clear indication of the nature and content of the article. There is some scope for creativity in order to grab the reader's attention, but this must be balanced against the need to conform to academic writing conventions.

- The rationale of the research is based on the idea of new public management, and the need to understand the effects of this new form of management on academic identity.

- The research question objective is specified, but this is more open-ended than in Elsesser and Lever's article, which is in keeping with the general orientation of qualitative researchers.

- The research methods are outlined, and an indication is given of the approach to analysis.

- The presentation of main themes corresponds to the overall research objective, but the typology that is developed is an opportunity to build theory inductively through data analysis. This is quite different from the article by Elsesser and Lever, which sought to test theory deductively using a series of hypotheses.

- The discussion section allows concepts and theories to be developed into a more general argument about the nature of academic work and the effects of audit and performative cultures.

- The summary and conclusion section gives the author a final opportunity to recap the arguments made in the article, in a way which convinces and persuades, i.e. it is highly rhetorical (Key concept 7.1).

Reflexivity and its implications for writing

It is an increasing expectation (especially, but by no means exclusively, among qualitative researchers) that researchers display a degree of reflexivity in their research writing (Alvesson et al. 2008). In a general sense, reflexivity is about thinking deeply about the process of knowledge generation in research and questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about research. Reflexivity has several more specific meanings in the social sciences. The term is employed by ethnomethodologists to refer to the way in which speech and action are constitutive of the social world in which they are located; in other words, they do more than merely act as indicators of deeper phenomena (see Chapter 22). The other meaning of the term carries the connotation that business researchers should reflect on the implications of their methods, values, biases, and decisions for the knowledge that they generate about the social world, and that they should try to be aware of how personal idiosyncrasies and implicit assumptions affect their approach to study. Reflexivity also entails sensitivity to the researcher's cultural, political, and social context. As such, knowledge from a reflective position is always based on the researcher's location in time and social space. Also, unlike reflection, which takes place after the interaction or activity has passed, reflexivity is exercised in the moment as well as afterwards. Most importantly, according to Riach (2009: 359), reflexivity 'requires a fundamental requestioning of what is knowable in a given context'. This notion is especially explicit in Pink's (2001) formulation of a reflexive approach to analysing

visual images (see Chapter 19) and in Plummer's (2001) definition of a reflexive approach to life histories (see Chapter 20).

Reflexivity is related to the concept of postmodernism (Key concept 2.8), which in one sense can be seen as a form of sensitivity—a way of seeing and understanding that results in a questioning of the taken-for-granted. Postmodernism questions the very notion of the dispassionate social scientist seeking to uncover a pre-given external reality. As a result, 'knowledge' of the social world is relative; any account is just one of many possible ways of rendering social reality.

There has been growing evidence of reflexivity in organizational research in the form of books that collect inside stories of the research process, detailing the nuts and bolts of research as distinct from the often-sanitized portrayal in research articles. Reflexivity encourages greater awareness and acknowledgement of the role of the researcher as part of the construction of knowledge. In other words, the reflexive attitude is highly critical of the notion that the researcher extracts knowledge from observations and conversations with others and then transmits knowledge to an audience. Instead, the researcher is viewed as implicated in the construction of knowledge through the stance that he or she assumes in relation to the observed and through the ways in which an account is transmitted in the form of a text. This entails an acknowledgement of the implications and significance of the researcher's choices as both observer and writer.

Writing differently

We have argued above that in practice the conventions of writing up qualitative and quantitative research are not so different as one might assume. Moreover, we have presented some general guidance on how you might present your research. It is important, however, to note that we are not proposing that there is a single 'formula

or 'recipe' for how you should write. Indeed, some scholars argue that the conventions of academic writing have become too restrictive, leading to a homogeneous and formulaic approach to writing, sometimes referred to as a 'boilerplate' which stifles creativity (Alvesson and Gabriel 2013; Corbett et al. 2014). It seems clear that papers which are presented in a 'scientific' format are more likely to be regarded as credible than those which are not (Harley and Hardy 2004). However, it is also possible that these conventions result in forms of writing that are difficult to read and understand. Billig (2013) argues that across the social sciences, the use of technical jargon and convoluted sentences has proliferated under conditions of higher education expansion and the requirement upon academics to continuously publish research. The use of such language means that new researchers often struggle to become proficient in the academic language that they are required to use. Related concerns have been raised in business research, where Dane (2011) argues that much academic writing is stilted, distant, and difficult for practitioners to read. He recommends that authors use fictional writing as a source of inspiration and learn to think more creatively about their written work to enable a shift away from monotone stylistic conventions of article-writing towards creative innovation. For those early in their research careers, it may make sense to 'play it safe' by not straying too far from conventional approaches to writing up your research. As you develop your skills, however, you should not be afraid to think about presenting your ideas in creative ways which challenge these conventions to a certain degree, in order to better engage with your audience. Whatever writing style you eventually adopt, we cannot emphasize enough the value of practice in learning the craft of academic writing, for as Billig observes, 'William James once said that if there was anything good in his own style of writing, then was "the result of ceaseless toil in rewriting"' (Billig 2013: 6).

✅ CHECKLIST
Issues to consider for writing up a piece of research

○ Have you clearly specified your research questions?

○ Have you clearly indicated how the literature you have read relates to your research questions?

○ Is your discussion of the literature critical and organized, so that it is not just a summary of what you have read?

○ Have you clearly outlined your research design and your research methods? This includes:

  ○ why you chose a particular research design;

  ○ why you chose a particular research method;

  ○ how you selected your research participants;

  ○ if there were any issues to do with cooperation (e.g. response rates);

  ○ why you implemented your research in a particular way (e.g. how the interview questions relate to your research questions, why you observed participants in particular situations, why your focus group guide asked the questions in a particular way and order);

  ○ if your research required access to an organization, how and on what basis was agreement for access forthcoming;

  ○ steps you took to ensure that your research was ethically responsible;

  ○ how you analysed your data;

  ○ any difficulties you encountered in the implementation of your research approach.

○ Have you presented your data in a manner that relates to your research questions?

○ Does your discussion of your findings show how they relate to your research questions?

○ Does your discussion of your findings show how they shed light on the literature that you presented?

○ Are the interpretations of your data that you offer fully supported with tables, figures, or segments from transcripts?

○ If you have presented tables and/or figures, are they properly labelled with a title and number?

○ If you have presented tables and/or figures, are they commented upon in your discussion?

○ Do your conclusions clearly allow the reader to establish what your research contributes to the literature?

○ Have you explained the limitations of your study?

○ Do your conclusions consist solely of a summary of your findings? If they do, rewrite them!

○ Do your conclusions make clear the answers to your research questions?

○ Does your presentation of the findings and the discussion allow a clear argument and narrative to be presented to the reader?

○ Have you broken up the text in each chapter with appropriate subheadings?

○ Does your writing avoid sexist, racist, and disablist language?

○ Have you included all appendices that you might need to provide (e.g. interview schedule, letters requesting access, communications with research participants)?

○ Have you checked that your list of references includes *all* the items referred to in your text?

○ Have you checked that your list of references follows precisely the style that your university requires?

○ Have you followed your supervisor's suggestions when he or she has commented on your draft chapters?

○ Have you got people other than your supervisor to read your draft chapters for you?

○ Have you checked to ensure that there is not excessive use of jargon?

○ Do you provide clear signposts in the course of writing, so that readers are clear about what to expect next and why it is there?

○ Have you ensured that your university's requirements for submitting projects are fully met in terms of such issues as word count (so that it is neither too long nor too short) and whether or not an abstract and table of contents are required?

○ Have you ensured that you do not quote excessively when presenting the literature?

○ Have you fully acknowledged the work of others so that you cannot be accused of plagiarism?

○ Is there a good correspondence between the title of your project and its contents?

○ Have you acknowledged the help of others where this is appropriate (e.g. your supervisor, people who may have helped with interviews, people who read your drafts)?

⊕ KEY POINTS

• Good writing is probably just as important as good research practice. Indeed, it is probably better thought of as a part of good research practice.