

CONTENTS OF A PROTOTYPICAL RESEARCH DOCUMENT

(shared courtesy of Pat Mokhtarian, UC Davis)

Abstract B should include meaningful results (quantitative where possible), not just a description of what you did. Think in terms of "sound bites".

Introduction

- < Background/context
- < Research questions or hypotheses addressed by this document
- < Your specific contribution relative to previous related work
- < Organization of the rest of the document

Literature Review

- < To the extent possible, develop a common framework within which to review the various studies (see S. Handy example of LU impacts on travel).
- < Review may fall into two categories:
 1. Subject area (e.g. telecommuting patterns; studies of attitude-behavior relationships in transportation and marketing)
 2. Methodology (e.g. use of survival theory in transportation; the estimation of structural equations, the use of time-dependent endogenous variables, etc.)
- < As a matter of course, reviews of empirical studies should include the following information as applicable:
 - B when and where the data were collected,
 - B specifically from what kinds of people,
 - B sample size,
 - B type of survey (e.g. activity diary)
 - B analysis methodology, and
 - B direction of significant results.

For example: "The sample comprised 1,632 employed adults living in the Berlin metropolitan area, responding to a 1998 mail-out/mail-back questionnaire. Binary logit models of the intention to purchase a fuel-cell vehicle were developed. The authors found that income and a concern for the environment were positively associated with an intention to purchase, while age and number of children in the household were negatively associated."

- < Ideally, don't just cite facts, but critique the methodology and/or inferences. E.g., "Numerous studies (e.g., A, 1991; B, 1996; C, 2003) have found that people living in denser, more mixed-use neighborhoods make fewer auto trips and travel shorter distances by auto. However, the straightforward comparisons used by most of those studies cannot resolve the issue of self-selection: is it the built environment in denser neighborhoods that reduces the

need for an automobile, or do people who are *predisposed* to travel less by auto choose to live in neighborhoods that allow them to exercise reasonable alternatives? The answer has important implications for policy...” etc.

Substantive Stuff

e.g.:

- < Conceptual model
- < More detail on your hypotheses and how you will test them
- < Implementation/operationalization:

Variable definition, data collection
Assumptions, *why* you made certain key decisions
Limitations of your approach, threats to validity

- < Empirical results:

Statistical test outcomes
Interpretation B what does it mean that this coefficient is significant or that that sign is counterintuitive? What results are consistent with your hypotheses, which are inconsistent and what plausible explanation might there be for that? Look at what's *not* significant (but hypothesized to be) as well as what *is*. Do unexpected findings emerge, are new research questions suggested by the results?

- < Summarize each chapter at the end of the chapter

Summary and Conclusions

- < Summary of key results B try to look at big-picture generalities here rather than just repeating a bunch of micro-level quantitative findings.
- < Reminder of *major* caveats
- < Implications for policy, practice, theory (or methodology)
- < New questions raised, directions for future research

Sources B see other document on proper citation practices