

THE METHODS SECTIONS IN MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING RESEARCH ARTICLES: RHETORICAL VARIATIONS BETWEEN TWO SUB-DISCIPLINES OF BUSINESS

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Abstract

Recently, studies on rhetorical structure of research articles (RAs) have attracted a great attention of researchers. Among the sections of RA, the Introduction section has been investigated extensively while much fewer studies have been done on the Methods section. Besides, the majority of the existing studies focus only on a single discipline or on a comparison between two disciplines. Very little, however, has been conducted to compare the rhetorical structure between two sub-disciplines from one academic field. In this study, therefore, the Methods sections from Management and Marketing, two sub-disciplines of business, were analyzed and compared to identify the rhetorical variations due to disciplinary concepts and practices between these two sub-disciplines. Two sets of corpus were compiled, each with ten Methods sections from two prestigious journals in the fields of Management and Marketing, respectively. Lim's model (2006) for the rhetorical structure of the Methods section in Management was adopted as the analytical framework. Results of the analysis showed that the chosen analytical framework could not offer sufficient explanations for the rhetorical structure of the Methods sections in the two sub-disciplines of business, even revealing some discrepancies between the framework and the actual texts. Only 30% of the Methods sections in the Management corpus appeared to fit the selected model while in the Marketing corpus, the Methods sections had a greater diversity of rhetorical patterns due to the requirements for publishing in the two selected Marketing journals. The findings in this study may have some implications for writing the Methods sections in the business discipline, such as the need for explicit instruction of writing conventions of this particular section and the guidance to realize the rhetorical differences between these two sub-disciplines for more effective sub-discipline specific writing.

Keywords: The Methods Section, Research Article, Management, Marketing, Disciplinary Variations