

Rhetorical moves in research paper discussions

Discussions deal with *points*; facts are *descriptive*, whilst points are *interpretive*.

Discussions should go beyond the results and be more than just a summary of the data.

They should be more:

- Theoretical
 - Abstract
 - General
 - Integrated with the field
 - Connected to the real world
 - Concerned with implications or applications
- } AND, if possible, some combination of all of these.

Move 1	Points to consolidate research space	Obligatory	
	a	Report your accomplishments by highlighting major findings	
	b	Relate and evaluate your data in light of previous research	
	c	Interpret your data by making suggestions as to why your results are the way they are	
	d	Anticipate and deal with potential criticisms	
Move 2	Points to indicate the limitations of your study	Optional but common	
Move 3	Points to recommend a course of action and/or to identify useful areas of further research	Optional and only common in some areas	

Discussion sections can be opened in several ways. The choice of strategy is entirely depending on how the author views the work.

1. Discussing existing literature
2. Offering a general conclusion
3. Reminding the reader of the original purpose of the research
4. A short summary of the study
5. Referring to overarching theory
6. A comment on methodology
7. Discussing a limitation of the data

Discussion sections provide the link specific findings and the high-level generality of the conclusion or summary. The following 'phrases of generality' may be useful for bridge this gap:

- Overall, ...
- In general, ...
- With ... exception(s) ...
- On the whole, ...
- The overall results indicate that ...

Move 2s (limitations of the study) can include discussion of the weakness of the research and what this means about what cannot be concluded from the data. Below are some useful examples of 'expressions of limitation':

- It should be noted that this study has been primarily concerned with ...
- The analysis has concentrated on ...
- The findings of this research are restricted to ...
- This study has addressed only the question of ...
- The limitations of this study are clear ...
- We would like to point out that we have not ...

- However the findings do not imply ...
- The results of this study cannot be taken as evidence for ...
- Unfortunately, we are unable to determine from this data ...
- The lack of ... means that we cannot be certain ...
- Notwithstanding its limitations, this study does suggest ...
- Despite its preliminary character, the research reported here would seem to indicate ...
- However exploratory, this study may offer some insight into ...