

## Academic dishonesty: Dos and Don'ts of Writing a Report

This document demonstrates how you should and should not write a report. The main aim of the document is to highlight some of the things that Universities suggest are academically dishonest actions, which may potentially get you into trouble. To demonstrate the right and wrong ways of writing a report, we have taken work from Hensher et al. (2003). We will be using the abstract of the article in our demonstration which is reproduced in Figure 1.

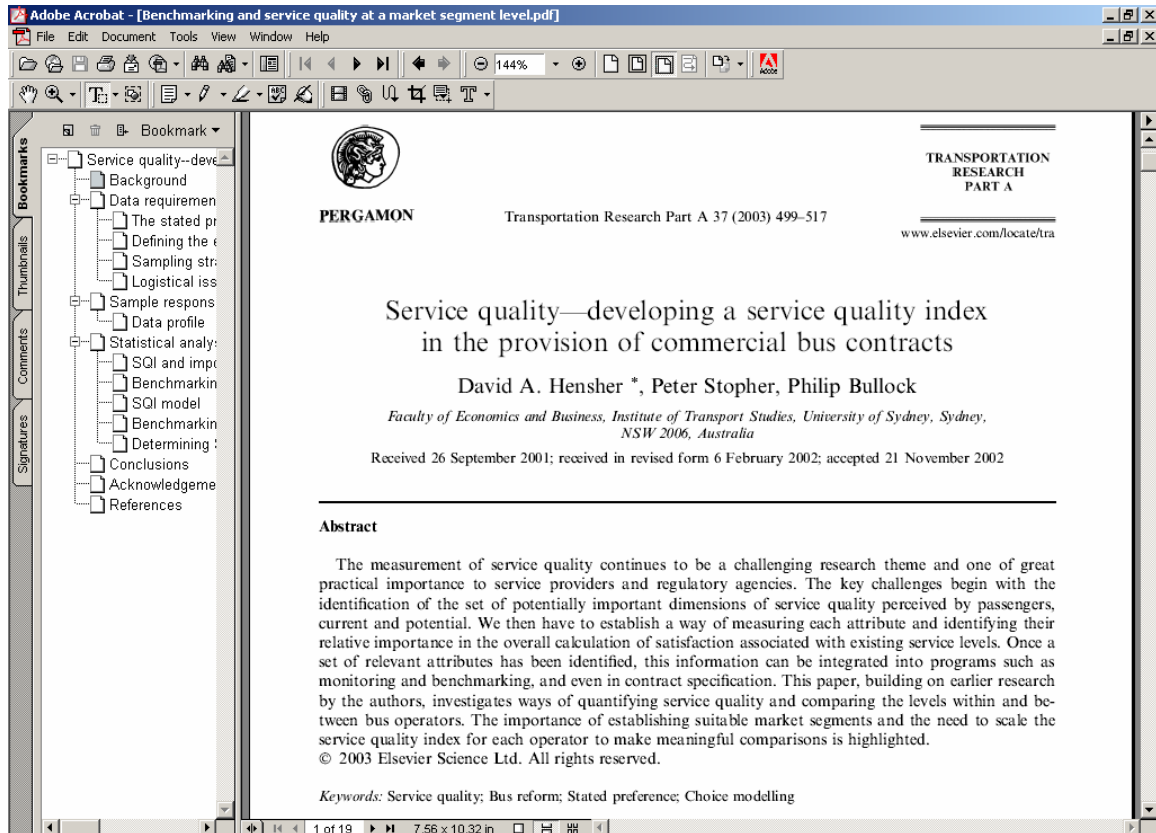


Figure 1: Hensher et al. (2003) article

Over the next few pages, we will show you how not to present information that can be found in this article. After we demonstrate how not to summarize this information, we will show you how you could go about using this article in your work.

# What **NOT** to do

In the following pages, we will show you what you should avoid doing in using the information that can be found in Hensher et al. (2003).

**You should not do the following:**

The measurement of service quality continues to be a challenging research theme and one of great practical importance to service providers and regulatory agencies. The key challenges begin with the identification of the set of potentially important dimensions of service quality perceived by passengers, current and potential. We then have to establish a way of measuring each attribute and identifying their relative importance in the overall calculation of satisfaction associated with existing service levels. Once a set of relevant attributes has been identified, this information can be integrated into programs such as monitoring and benchmarking, and even in contract specification. This paper, building on earlier research by the authors, investigates ways of quantifying service quality and comparing the levels within and between bus operators. The importance of establishing suitable market segments and the need to scale the service quality index for each operator to make meaningful comparisons is highlighted.

**Here, we have taken the entire text and copied and pasted it. This is not our work, but rather the work of Hensher, Stopher and Bullock. We don't deserve the credit for this work as we did not write it. Worse yet, we haven't even bothered to acknowledge that this is someone else's work.**

**You should not do the following:**

“The measurement of service quality continues to be a challenging research theme and one of great practical importance to service providers and regulatory agencies. The key challenges begin with the identification of the set of potentially important dimensions of service quality perceived by passengers, current and potential. We then have to establish a way of measuring each attribute and identifying their relative importance in the overall calculation of satisfaction associated with existing service levels. Once a set of relevant attributes has been identified, this information can be integrated into programs such as monitoring and benchmarking, and even in contract specification. This paper, building on earlier research by the authors, investigates ways of quantifying service quality and comparing the levels within and between bus operators. The importance of establishing suitable market segments and the need to scale the service quality index for each operator to make meaningful comparisons is highlighted.” (Hensher et al., 2003)

**Whilst better than the previous attempt, in that we have indicated that this is someone else’s work, using large sections of other peoples ideas and words will not convince us that you have understood what it is that you are trying to communicate to us. Whilst it is fine to quote someone else, for research reports, you should only quote one or two sentences, and then only use one or two direct quotes throughout your entire document.**

**You should not do the following:**

Understanding service quality levels is important for organizations given that it is the service levels, which directly affect consumers of the goods and services of these organizations. The measurement of service quality continues to be a challenging research theme and one of great practical importance to service providers and regulatory agencies. The key challenges begin with the identification of the set of potentially important dimensions of service quality perceived by passengers, current and potential.

**The first sentence is ours, but the second is copied and pasted from the original text written by Hensher et al. (2003). We did not write it, so we do not deserve credit for it. It was not our idea nor is it our words. Further, we have failed to acknowledge that this is not our words or ideas. Whilst you may think that this is better than the first “don’t” we showed, you would be wrong. Theft is theft. It doesn’t matter whether you steal the tire off a car or the whole car, you are still stealing. Doing this will get you into the same amount of trouble as stealing the whole paragraph.**

**You should not do the following:**

Understanding service quality levels is important for organizations given that it is the service levels, which directly affect consumers of the goods and services of these organizations. The measurement of service quality continues to be a challenging research theme and one of great practical importance to service providers and regulatory agencies. The key challenges begin with the identification of the set of potentially important dimensions of service quality perceived by passengers, current and potential (Hensher et al., 2003).

**Again, the first sentence is ours but the second is not. This is better than the previous “don’t” but again, we have not used our own words but those of someone else. This is also stealing and will probably result in a failing grade also.**

**You should avoid the following:**

Understanding service quality levels is important for organizations given that it is the service levels, which directly affect consumers of the goods and services of these organizations. Nevertheless, many organizations have great difficulty in measuring the levels of service that they offer. A good starting point for many firms is to begin by identifying the appropriate set of attributes related to the organizations services on offer that should be measured.

**Everything in the above paragraph is written in our own words. Nevertheless, whilst the first sentence comes from our own ideas, the ideas from the second sentence arose because we read Hensher et al. (2003). Had we not read this, we probably would not have had the idea. Therefore, we should acknowledge that this idea came from someone else, not us. Remember, you will not get into trouble by over referencing, but you will get into trouble by under referencing.**

# What you **SHOULD** do

In the following pages, we will show you what you should do in using the information that can be found in Hensher et al. (2003).

**This is acceptable:**

Understanding service quality levels is important for organizations given that it is the service levels, which directly affect consumers of the goods and services of these organizations.

“The measurement of service quality continues to be a challenging research theme and one of great practical importance to service providers and regulatory agencies. The key challenges begin with the identification of the set of potentially important dimensions of service quality perceived by passengers, current and potential” (Hensher et al., 2003).

**Here we have used a direct quote from Hensher et al. (2003), and have properly acknowledged doing so. You can do this, but we would expect not more than one or two direct quotes throughout a report. Whilst this is acceptable, it would be better if you summarized this in your own words as well as referenced where the idea came from.**

**This is better:**

Understanding service quality levels is important for organizations given that it is the service levels, which directly affect consumers of the goods and services of these organizations. Nevertheless, many organizations have great difficulty in measuring the levels of service that they offer. A good starting point for many firms is to begin by identifying the appropriate set of attributes related to the organizations services on offer that should be measured (Hensher et al., 2003).

**Here we have used our own words as well as acknowledged that the idea was not our own but came from someone else. This will not only NOT get you into trouble, but will get you much better grades than everyone else. We could also do the following, which is just as good.**

Understanding service quality levels is important for organizations given that it is the service levels which directly affect consumers of the goods and services of these organizations. Nevertheless, many organizations have great difficulty in measuring the levels of service that they offer. Hensher et al. (2003) suggest that a good starting point for many firms is to begin by identifying the appropriate set of attributes related to the organizations services on offer that should be measured.

## References

Hensher, D.A., Stopher, P. and Bullock, P. (2003) Service quality—developing a service quality index in the provision of commercial bus contracts, *Transportation Research Part A*, 37, 499–517.