NORDICOM

GUIDELINES FOR TABLES

Tables should not repeat what is in the text, but only present new information or illustrate something that is difficult to describe in the text. Avoid using tables to present simple information that can easily be described in a paragraph. In order to meet the requirements of the EU Accessibility Directive, and to reduce the chance of errors being introduced during editing, tables should meet these guidelines upon final submission.

You may use the checklist at the end of these guidelines to ensure all requirements are met.

Contents

Table size

Each table to be included in the body text of the submission should fit on one page. Creating two or three small, simple tables is preferable to one large, complex table.

Larger tables may be included in appendices or supplementary material. In this case, each table should be provided in an individual, separate file clearly labelled with the author's last name and table number. The table should be referenced in the text, for example, "see Table A2 in the Appendix" or "further details are available in the Supplementary Material file in Table A4".

Nordicom is a centre for Nordic media research at the University of Gothenburg, supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers. **www.nordicom.gu.se**

UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

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Format and composition

Do not submit tables as screenshots or images.

Use the table function in Word to create tables, not the tab button or spacebar.

Keep formatting as simple as possible, and only use cell borders if needed for clarity (e.g., to divide groups). Otherwise, it is preferable that the only visible borders are horizontal lines above and below the top header cells, and at the bottom of the table.

There should be no empty cells. Use an en dash (–), not a blank space, to indicate missing or unavailable data within tables. Use "n.a." to indicate data that is not applicable.

Use periods for decimals, not commas.

Use commas to indicate thousands, not spaces or periods.

Avoid repetition in every cell. For example, if every cell in a column has "%", then it should rather be in the header cell only. If every column header has "%", then it should be included written out as "(per cent)" at the end of the title.

Titles, captions, and sources

Each table should have a title, caption (comments), and source. Include the relevant information in the following manner:

Table 1 *Short and concise title of table 1 (unit, if applicable)*

Column header	Column header	Column header	Column header
Row header	data	data	data
Row header	data	data	data
Row header	data	data	data

Comments: Present any general clarifying or supplementary text here, including the underlying data source (e.g., *N*-values, survey questions, response scales, etc.). Do not repeat the header or surrounding text. There is no need to include information that is easily understood from the table.

[a] Use superscript lowercase letters for specific notes relating to a specific element in the table. Label the element with a corresponding letter. [b] Subsequent notes continue in line.

* Use asterisks to indicate probability (*p* values), ** Subsequent notes continue in line.

Source: Include the source or sources, including if it was compiled by the author.

Titles should be informative, as brief as possible, and written in a consistent manner (additional details or information should be included in the comments below the table). If there is only one unit of measurement in the entire table, it should be included within parentheses at the end of the heading (if there are multiple units of measurement, they should be included where appropriate within the table). Below is an example of a table title that is too long and contains unnecessary information:

Table 1 *Information and interactive features provided on social media pages of mayoral candidates in the 2010 and 2014 elections (figures are the percentage of pages with each feature)*

Below is an example of the above title with explanatory information moved to the comments below the table:

Table 1 *Interactive features of mayoral candidates' social media, 2010–2014 (per cent)*

Comments: $N = 500$. Data was collected during the elections that took place in 2010 and 2014. The figures indicate the percentage of total pages that included each feature.

Structure

The table structure should be simple in order for readers using assistive technology such as screen readers to be able to access the information contained in the table. Avoid merged and split cells; rather, create individual smaller tables. Avoid including unnecessary information in the table that could be included in the title or comments instead. Table 1a is an example of a table that *looks* good, but is *not* accessible to a screen reader.

Table 1a *Table that can be easily understood by sight but will not be accessible to screen readers*

Regression analysis of digital news use, OLS, Beta coefficients				
Year				
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Morning paper, web				
Age	-0.006	-0.005	-0.005	66–75: -0.013* 76–85: -0.009*
Sex	0.188**	0.053	0.278***	0.214***
Education	0.101**	0.098**	0.113***	0.197***
Radio news, web				
Age	-0.007	0.003	-0.001	66–75: 0.006* 76–85: 0.00*
Sex	0.167**	0.076	0.132**	0.011
Education	0.075*	0.018	0.082***	0.084***

Even though Table 1a looks clear and logical to a person with sight, Table 1b shows the multiple problem areas. For example, the top header cell highlighted in yellow, which spans 5 columns, should be included in the comments instead. Below that, the blue header cell which spans 4 columns is obvious and does not need to be included at all. In addition, there are two empty, useless cells, highlighted in orange, and the grey highlighted cells show split cells after one row header. The subheaders, highlighted in green and spanning all 5 columns, can be difficult for some screen readers to read correctly. Instead of using headers like these, create two smaller tables instead, and include this information in the titles.

Table 1b *Table showing unnecessary information and merged and split cells*

Regression analysis, OLS, Beta coefficients				
	Year			
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Morning paper, web				
Age	-0.006	-0.005	-0.005	66–75: -0.013* / 76–85: -0.009*
Sex	0.188**	0.053	0.278***	0.214***
Education	0.101**	0.098**	0.113***	0.197***
Radio news, web				
Age	-0.007	0.003	-0.001	66–75: 0.006* / 76–85: 0.00*
Sex	0.167**	0.076	0.132**	0.011
Education	0.075*	0.018	0.082***	0.084***

Tables 2a and 2b demonstrate a more accessible and simplified option instead of the problematic structure presented in Tables 1a and 1b. The borders in Table 2a help illustrate a simple table structure with no empty, merged, or split cells. Table 2b illustrates what the final table should look like.

Table 2a *Digital news use of morning papers, 2014–2017*

Variable	2014	2015	2016	2017
Age 66–75	-0.006	-0.005	-0.005	-0.013*
Age 76–85	-0.006	-0.005	-0.005	-0.009*
Sex	0.188**	0.053	0.278***	0.214***
Education	0.101**	0.098**	0.113***	0.197***

Table 2b *Digital news use radio news, 2014–2017*

Variable	2014	2015	2016	2017
Age 66–75	-0.007	0.003	-0.001	0.006
Age 76–85	-0.007	0.003	-0.001	0.006
Sex	0.167**	0.076	0.132**	0.011
Education	0.075*	0.018	0.082***	0.084***

Comments: Tables 2a and 2b show an OLS (ordinary least squares) regression analysis with beta coefficients. The surveys carried out in 2014–2016 had one age group (66–85), and thus the values are the same. In 2017, age was split into two groups (66–75 & 76–85).

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05.

Table summary

Provide a short summary with the main conclusions of each table so that readers using a screen reader can choose whether to listen to the entire table or not. This summary will not be visible, but rather embedded in the PDF.

Contact

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the manuscript editor at kristin.clay@nordicom.gu.se

Submission checklist

Please check the following before your final submission.

Tables included within the body text fit on one page.

Tables are created with the table function in Word. Any tables created in Excel have been converted to Word.

There are no empty cells. Use an en-dash (–) to indicate data not available and "n.a." to indicate that it is not applicable.

Periods are used for decimal points.

Commas without spaces are used to indicate thousands.

Each table has a concise title, applicable comments, and source.

Table structure is as simple as possible, with smaller sub-tables prioritised over large, complex tables.

Everything under a column header relates to that header.

Everything after a row header relates to that header.

All cells are in alignment, and merged and split cells are avoided.

Units are provided within the table only if there are different units. Otherwise, units are indicated in the title.

A short summary is provided for each table. Multiple summaries are provided in one document.