Psychology Research Methods - Paper 1

Overview

Write an APA-style report using (A) one of our data files (see Content folder on Blackboard) or (B) a data file you have accessed or developed elsewhere and gained permission to use from your lab instructor and Mike. The paper should include the following sections: Cover page, Abstract, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, and References. You can work alone or in a pair with someone in your lab section. If completing the Writing Intensive, make sure to review those requirements (e.g., no partners).

Cover Page

- See template and APA Style Manual

Abstract (maximum of 120 words)

- Begin with a general statement about why the domain of research is significant or important. Summarize the introduction of the paper. Briefly describe the sample of participants. Indicate your main findings. Describe why the results are important, surprising, or disappointing. Conclude by noting any limitations to the study, or by suggesting the next step for future research.

Introduction (typically 500-700 words)

- Move from general to specific. First, describe the importance of this area of research. Why should we care about this research? Second, summarize the relevant literature, particularly focusing on recent similar studies. Third, describe the limitations, weaknesses, or unanswered questions in prior studies, and indicate how this study helps to answer new questions or build on past research. Fourth, describe the specific hypotheses under study.

Method (no word limit)

- Briefly describe the participants in the study and the procedures used for obtaining the data. Feel free to directly copy anything from Mike's template, and tweak as needed. Then, describe each of the "measures" – how the variables were measured and what the scores mean.

Results (no word limit)

- Include any and all relevant basic descriptive statistics (*M*, *SD*, frequencies, percentages, etc.) to let the reader know how participants tended to score on each of the variables of interest. Then, report the statistical analyses.
- Run analyses involving at least five continuous variables. Report all appropriate correlations, and run at least two multiple regression analyses. You are welcome to do more if desired.
- Show off your statistical knowledge. Aim to impress.
- Attach a copy of the SPSS Output after the entire document.

Discussion (typically 400-600 words)

- Begin by reiterating the take-home message of the Results, re-citing references as needed. Then, describe the detailed results of the study without using any numbers or statistics, describe their implications, and again link to relevant literature. Then, describe the strengths and limitations/weaknesses of the study. Finally, suggest what future researchers could do to build on your results.

References (APA style)

- Minimum of 5 references to primary empirical articles (articles that describe methods and results for studies conducted by the authors). Often, more than 5 references would be helpful. Although review articles, books, magazines, and newspapers can be cited, they are not included in the 5-count. Cite appropriately in text.
- Cite a source any time you express an idea that is not your own, unless it is "common knowledge." Typically, a page number is also included if citing something specific (e.g., figure, statistic, quote) so that the reader can easily go find it. If copying anything directly, also use quotation marks.
- Do not use dictionaries or Wikipedia as sources (common knowledge)
- Do not use any other web sites as sources, without permission from Mike or the lab instructor

Other Requirements

- Make at least one table or figure. Some options include making a diagram of the hypotheses, making a table for the basic descriptive statistics for the study variables, making a correlation table, or making a path diagram with correlation coefficients present. Do not just copy/paste something from SPSS because Output is not of professional publication quality.
- Attach your SPSS Output and CITI documentation with your paper (10 points each)

Late Papers (30% off)

- These can be submitted by e-mail before midnight (email your lab instructor and CC Mike) and will be marked 30% off. Bring a hard copy to Mike at the next scheduled lecture. Late papers will not be accepted after midnight. Backup your work by email and/or flash drive to avoid disasters.

Additional Resources

- The APA style manual provides rules and helpful information related to each of the major sections of the paper, referencing, and tables/figures. In addition to the table of contents (front), the index (back) can be useful for finding specific information in the APA style manual.
- Some helpful examples are posted here: http://www.psychmike.com/apa_paper.php
- Scoring criteria are provided on the next two pages, which are modeled after the systems used by scientific journals and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) review process

Plagiarism Reminder

Plagiarism means copying another text without using quotation marks and citing appropriately. Mike recommends using quotes if you copy more than five words in a row, though some consider it plagiarism even if you change a couple words here-and-there. The best advice is to avoid coping anything directly. Skilled writers only incorporate quotes of the truly profound, not ordinary sentences from journal articles. Scientific writing that excessively incorporate quotes is often perceived as lazy, uncompelling, and underdeveloped. Moreover, it is a leading cause of plagiarism because amid all of the copying, it can be easy to miss a few quotation marks. Skilled writers look away from their source momentarily, summarize in their own words, verify that they did not copy directly, and cite appropriately.

PAPER 1 FEEDBACK FORM

Narrative Summary of the Major Strengths and Weaknesses of the Paper:

Fatal Flaws? [check those that apply]

- □ Plagiarism concerns (copying without using quotation marks and page numbers)
- □ Required analyses mainly absent
- □ Major sections are missing or grossly underdeveloped

Major Weaknesses? [check those that apply]

- □ Did not include at least five continuous variables
- □ Did not include at least two multiple regression analyses
- □ Multiple statistical errors (i.e., repeatedly misinterprets *p*-values, incorrectly describes effect sizes, misinterprets or fails to clarify the direction of effects)
- □ Mainly quotes large blocks of text, but uses quotes (low effort, non-plagiarism)
- □ No references or gross misunderstanding of referencing
- □ Disregard for APA style

Moderate Weaknesses? [check those that apply]

- □ At least one statistical error (e.g., misinterprets a *p*-value, incorrectly described an effect size, misinterprets or fails to clarify the direction of an effect)
- □ Table/Figure is missing
- □ Less than 5 references
- □ Very sloppy writing, appearance, formatting, or organization
- □ Multiple sections are very difficult to follow (vague, unclear what is meant, poor logic)
- □ Other:

Minor Weaknesses? [check those that apply]

- □ Low theoretical development: At least one IV and DV were practically synonyms (e.g., IV = happiness, DV = life satisfaction) or antonyms (e.g., IV = depression, DV = life satisfaction), so the findings were partly obvious
- □ Muddled theoretical development: It was difficult to see how one of the IVs could emerge before the DV in real life (e.g., IV = current depression, DV = early-childhood attachment)
- □ Quotes dull or routine text on more than one occasion, rather than summarizing the ideas using their own words
- □ Includes at least 5 references, but less than 5 that were empirical research articles
- □ At least one section is underdeveloped (either too few words or has substantial length but rambles and repeats)
- □ At least one section is difficult to follow (vague, unclear what is meant, poor logic)
- □ An inconsequential but peculiar error in understanding APA-style papers (e.g., Abstract is too long, something "weird" in the Method section, excessive unnecessary information in the Results)
- □ Misunderstands an important element of APA style, organization, in-text citations, or referencing
- □ Multiple sentence fragments
- □ At least one major technical error in writing, or numerous minor technical errors
- □ Table/Figure is present but conveys little useful information
- □ Other:

Negligible Weaknesses? [check those that apply]

- □ Aspects of the writing could be improved to enhance clarity, flow, or enthusiasm
- □ Limited "significance" – unclear how these findings relate to health or well-being
- □ Limited "innovation" – it is unclear that these ideas are novel and exciting, rather than simply replicating past studies
- □ Quotes dull or routine text on at least one occasion
- □ A few minor and inconsequential APA-style or referencing errors
- □ A few minor technical errors in writing (e.g., punctuation, grammar, spelling, informality, typos)
- □ Many of the references were more than 5 years old
- □ Table/Figure could be improved for clarity or aesthetic appeal
- □ Other:

PAPER 1 GRADE

NIH Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance	PSYC Score (%)
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses	95-100
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses	90-94
3	Excellent	Very strong with only one minor weakness	85-89
4	Very Good	Strong but with several minor weaknesses	80-84
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness	75-79
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses	70-74
7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness	60-69
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses	50-59
9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses or a fatal flaw	0-49

Percentage = _____ %

Initial Grade = _____ / 120.00

-10 (if missing SPSS Output)

-10 (if missing or incomplete CITI documentation)

Final Grade = _____ / 120.00