

Title of Paper (up to 12 words)

Your Name, Including Middle Initial

School

Abstract

A concise summary of each section of your paper, using up to 250 words. Note that you do not indent the first line.

Title of Paper

Your first paragraph (or two) should be an introduction to the broad topic of your paper. Many people write the introduction after writing the rest of the paper! Information in your introduction should provide a foundation for the hypotheses of your experiment. In your introduction, your goal is to convince readers that your research topic is (a) interesting and (b) important. You may choose to begin your paper with a story, quotation, or relevant statistics about your topic. You can think of your paper as a story about your dependent variable.

You generally will present broad background information about the topic in the first paragraph of so. You will include at least two sections in the body of your paper. You will summarize relevant information from prior research studies in the first section, which we refer to as the “literature review” portion of a paper. You will present your detailed research proposal in the second section (details are provided below). Some overall formatting rules to keep in mind are: (a) use Times New Roman font, size 12; and (b) double-space the entire paper.

Information about the Literature-review Section

Content. In the first section of your paper, you should provide a literature review of prior research and theory that relates to your experiment. The information you present should be from diverse sources (e.g., journal articles, book chapters, web sites). Make sure it is clear to the reader how information is related to your experimental hypotheses or procedure. So, if you are using their method, then talk about their method; if they found similar results, talk about their results; if they operationally defined their DV like you want to, then talk about that, etc. To make this section of your paper effective, you should explicitly relate information from various sources to each other and to your proposed research. After you discuss past research, you should make it

clear how your study is the next logical one, that your study improves upon past studies, that your study fills obvious holes left by the others.

Citation of sources. You should cite references throughout the body of your paper. There are two ways to cite a source. The authors can be listed in the sentence, with the year in parentheses: “The Davis (2001) web site presents information about American Psychological Association (APA) style rules.” Alternatively, the citation can be entirely in parentheses: “The web site presents information about American Psychological Association (APA) style rules (Davis, 2001).” These are the only two acceptable ways to cite sources in APA style. When citing a journal article, you should never include the title of the paper or the first names or initials of the authors.

There are additional important rules when sources have more than one author. When listing multiple authors in the text, write out the word “and”: “Brown and Milstead (1968) examined . . .” When listing multiple authors in parentheses, use the symbol “&” rather than the word “and”: “The research findings were consistent with hypotheses (Brown & Milstead, 1968).” Another important rule applies to sources with three or more authors. The first time you cite the article, list all three authors (e.g., Green, Campbell, & Finkel, 2001); any subsequent time you cite the article, list the first author followed by the words “et al.” (e.g., Green et al., 2001).

Citation rules become even more complex when it comes to citing web sites. Web sites often do not have authors or dates listed. If a web site has no author listed, use the first few words of the title in your citation: “APA style rules have changed dramatically (“APA Guide,” 1999).” If the web site has no date listed, use the letters “n.d.” in place of the year: “APA style rules have changed dramatically (APA Guide, n.d.).”

Almost all of the information in the literature-review portion of your paper will be from outside sources; it will be necessary to cite at least one source in each paragraph. (The exception to this rule would be if you are writing a “short” research proposal and have been told by your instructor that outside sources are not required.) You should be selective in the information you choose to include from each source. Avoid quoting information from an article; it is rarely necessary and is likely to disturb the flow of your paper. Also, avoid including information from a source that is not relevant to your experiment; it is unnecessary to completely summarize all articles that you cite. You may write only one sentence about one article, but an entire paragraph about another, more relevant article. It is possible that several sources provide similar information. If this is the case, then summarize the information and cite multiple sources at once: Research suggests there is a relationship between X and Y (Davis, 2001; Davis & Rusbult, 2001; Green et al., 2001). Note the format of this multiple-article citation: articles are in alphabetical order and are separated by semicolons.

Proposed Method

In the second section of your paper, you should provide details about your proposed experiment. It would be appropriate to label this section of your paper “Proposed Research” or “Method”, using the level of heading that was used for the title of the paper. It is a good idea to highlight the way in which your experiment will extend past research; for example, you could include a one sentence statement claiming that past research has focused on _____, but left out _____. The first paragraph or two of this section should include your hypotheses and your reasoning (theory). The next paragraphs should present information about your research method. It is likely that you will use subsections such as the ones that I include below.

Participants

You should include information about who the participants will be in your experiment. How many participants will be in your study? Summarize whether you want a certain number of men or women, a certain number of people from different races, and so on. How will participants be recruited for your study? Summarize whether you will place ads in the newspaper, recruit in online chat-rooms, ask for volunteers in class, and so on. Will participants receive compensation for being in your study?

Design

In this section, you should include information about your independent variables: the levels of each, whether they are between or within-participant, and whether participants will be randomly assigned to levels. If your experiment has more than one independent variable, which is likely, then include a design statement (e.g., This will be a 2 Time of Day (morning vs. evening) x 2 Amount of Coffee (1 cup vs. 3 cups) between-participants design"). Will participants be randomly assigned to conditions? This section will be very short!

Procedure

Include all of the details about what participants will experience in your experiment. You should include enough detail that someone could conduct your experiment using your paper as a guide. The order of this section should be the order of activities that participants will experience. You should use future tense throughout this section. What will be the setting of the experiment (where will it take place)? What questionnaires will participants complete? Include sample items (make them up if necessary). What instructions will you give participants? Include a short script if the wording is important to your procedure. If you are using questionnaires or

procedures that have been used in prior research, be sure to cite the article(s) in this section. It may be appropriate to include other subsections after this one as well.

Results

In the Results section, you will summarize what are your predicted results. Typically, you also will explain the planned statistical analysis strategy. If you include a figure at the end of the paper it (e.g., your graph of expected results), be sure to refer to it in the text (e.g., “please refer to Figure 1”).

Discussion

In the Discussion section, you will broadly evaluate your proposed experiment. What are the strengths and limitations of your experiment? Are there other ways to test the same hypothesis? What future experiments might be important? Are there any ethical concerns about your procedure? You should touch back on ideas that you mentioned in your introduction as well.

References

- Byrne, D., & Nelson, D. (1965). Attraction as a linear function of proportion of positive reinforcements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1*, 659-663.
- Chou, L., McClintock, R., Moretti, F., & Nix, D. H. (1993). Technology and education: New wine in new bottles: Choosing pasts and imagining educational futures. Retrieved August 24, 2000, from <http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/papers/newwine1.html>
- Heider, F. (1946). Attitudes and cognitive organization. *Journal of Psychology, 21*, 107-112.
- Kelley, H. H., & Thibaut, J. (1978). *Interpersonal relations: A theory of interdependence*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Rusbult, C. E., Martz, J. M., & Agnew, C. R. (1998). The investment model scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. *Personal Relationships, 5*, 357-391.
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Note: Normally you include on your Reference page only sources that are cited in your text. For the sake of including a range of examples, I listed random examples of references here.