Lab 6: Final Papers

Preliminary Details

• Final Paper is worth 120 points or 24% of your Total Grade in 395
• A HARD COPY is absolutely due on May 7 by 9:45 am
• No Late Papers Will Be Accepted
• Papers will be graded on writing quality and correct use of APA style (20 out of 120 points). Including:
  – Proper In-text Citations
  – Correctly Formatted Reference Page
  – APA Style Requirements for Writing

Learning Objectives of the Final Paper

• Identify a research question and generate a testable hypothesis
• Review the relevant literature
• Identify a research design to test the hypothesis
• Identify a sampling scheme
• Identify the major analyses that will be used to test the hypothesis
• Interpret the results of the study assuming that the analyses did and did not support the hypothesis
Formatting Details

- Technical Details: Double-spaced, 12 point Font, 1 inch margins.
- Main Text: 10-12 pages text (10 pts off if paper is less than 10 pages or greater than 12 pages)
- Main Text refers to the body of the paper. It does NOT include the References section, Cover page, and any Tables/Figures.
- Tables and Figures are NOT required.

Important Rule!

- Do not use ANY DIRECT QUOTATIONS in your paper. Paraphrase everything and cite original source. Put things in your own words.
- This is a direct quotation: For instance, Arnett (2004) argued that young people “want their work to be an expression of themselves, to fit well with their interests and abilities, to be something they find satisfying and enjoyable” (p. 162).
- Minimum Deduction of 20 points for ignoring this rule.

Academic Integrity
(from your PSY 395 syllabus)

- Any student caught plagiarizing aspects of the final paper will receive a ZERO in this course. The Department of Psychology adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. For extensive details see Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site.
- Make sure you:
  1. Know what plagiarism is.
  2. Don’t do it.
Do NOT “double-dip”

• Do NOT turn in the same paper for two different classes. This occurred during the Spring of 2009 and it ended very badly for some students. This is a form of academic dishonesty that will result in 0 points on the paper.

Step 1: Pick a Topic

• Pick a psychological topic that is interesting to you.
• The Topic should be focused on just 2 variables (1 Independent Variable and 1 Dependent Variable)
• If you absolutely do not have a topic scan the Table of Contents of journals like Psychological Bulletin or Review of General Psychology.

Pick a Topic (Continued 1)

• Your question could concern a cause and effect association that could be studied with an experiment:
  – Examples: Does playing violent video games cause aggression? Does taking a multivitamin increase IQ? Does Therapy X work better than Therapy Y for treating ADHD?
Pick a Topic (Continued 2)

• Your question could also concern an association that could be studied with a correlational design.
• Examples: Is Low SES related to depression? Is spanking related to aggression in children? Is IQ related to crime? Is age related to changes in memory?

Remember: One IV and One DV

• In all of these examples there is one independent variable and one dependent variable.
• That is, there is the idea that variation in one variable causes variation in the other variable OR the idea that variation in one variable is associated (i.e., statistically predicts) with variation in the other variable.

Step 2: Conduct a Literature Search

• Find articles in PsycINFO
• Go to http://er.lib.msu.edu/. Then under "Browse other e-resources by subject" go down to "Psychology" and click on GO.
• PsycINFO should be an option
• Use search terms to find relevant articles.
• Hint: You can limit the search results to "peer-reviewed journal articles"
Check Out This Article from July 2006
*Psychological Bulletin*

- This would work...
  - One IV: Ethnic/Racial Group
  - One DV: Body Dissatisfaction

What Do You Need:

- 3 to 5 peer-reviewed journal articles for your literature review. Paper copies MUST be turned in with final paper.
- At least one article must have been published in 2009 or 2010
- These references must come from established scholarly psychology journals – NOT from the Internet, television, radio, magazines.

Good Source versus Bad Source

- Bad: Newspaper and Magazine Articles, Random Internet Sites, TV programs (e.g. “Dr. Phil”)
  - Why? Subject to more biases, often not scientific studies, credibility often questionable
- Good: Journal articles
  - Why? Peer-reviewed
  - Many journals have full text availability through the MSU library
Step 3: Read, Think... Develop a Hypothesis

• Figure out what has been done. This way you will be able to figure out what you CAN do to make a contribution.
  – Hint: Look at each article’s Discussion. There is usually a discussion of limitations and future directions.
• Propose a Testable Hypothesis
• Format:
  – H0: There is no association between IQ and crime in the population
  – H1: There is a negative association between IQ and crime.

Step 4: Write the Introduction (Read Chapter 20)

• Introduce big idea in first paragraph
• Summarize what has been done. Indicate the study that needs to be done (i.e., the study you will do)
• Describe why this kind of study can add to the literature
• Use citations to support your arguments. Why?
• State Hypotheses at the end
• Big Idea: Craft an argument for why your research is important.

Deadline for Introduction Review

• By the Week of March 29 you should have a HARD COPY of the Introduction completed IF YOU WANT YOUR TA TO REVIEW IT.
Step 5: Write Method Section

- Describe how you will actually conduct your study.
- First describe the population and/or sampling plan.
- Describe: One hundred fifty undergraduates (50% women) from a large Midwestern university participated for partial course credit. One hundred were white, forty were African American, and ten were Asian American. Average age of participants was 20.2 years (SD = 1.35; Range: 18-56).

Describe Procedures

- Describe: The effects of anxiety on math test performance were examined using a randomized two-group experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to receive an anxiety manipulation or a control condition. Anxiety was manipulated by informing participants that they would gain/lose money as a result of their performance whereas those in the control condition were simply told to try their best.
- Provide text of actual manipulation

Describe and Justify Measures

- Explain how each construct was operationally defined.
- If you use existing measures try to get complete set of items. Provide evidence of reliability and validity. Justify why this is a good measure of construct X.
- If you create your own measures -- Justify why you need to do this! Describe all items and response options. Explain how you would obtain reliability and validity information.
Describe and Justify Measures

- Decent: To assess the participants’ self esteem, the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) will be used. The RSES assesses feelings of self-worth and self-acceptance at the individual level (Rosenberg, 1965). Each item is on a 4-point scale, which reflects the extent of the individual’s agreement with each statement. Rosenberg (1965) reported internal consistency reliability ranged from .85 to .88.

Step 6: Write Plan of Analysis

- Identify the statistical procedure that you will use to evaluate your research hypothesis.
- Common Options: correlation/regression techniques, t-tests, Analysis of Variance
- Discuss these with your TA as the time gets closer. Some topics will also be covered in future lectures.

Deadline for Method Review

- By the Week of April 12 you should have a HARD COPY of the Method and Analysis section completed IF YOU WANT YOUR TA TO REVIEW IT.
Step 7: Write Discussion

- You will engage in a thought experiment:
- 1. Imagine that you rejected your null hypothesis.
- 2. Imagine that you failed to reject your null hypothesis.

Imagine that you rejected your null hypothesis

- What does this mean? How does this fit with previous research? What are some qualifications? What else could explain what happened? Are there limits to the generalizability of these findings? What else needs to be done?

Imagine that you failed to reject your null hypothesis

- What does this mean? What could have caused this? How does this fit with previous research? What are some qualifications? What else needs to be done? What could you have done differently?
- Here you have to make a judgment – do you think the idea was wrong or whether the study was flawed?
- Remember: The absence of evidence IS NOT evidence of absence.
Step 8: Write Up References Page

- Use APA style correctly
  - Refer to lecture
  - Refer to APA Publication Manual (in Library)
  - Use online references but be careful...
    - http://staff.lib.msu.edu/harris23/general/citation.htm
    - http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

Step 9: Assemble Everything

- Make Cover Page with Name, Lab TA, and Title
- Include Body of Text
- Include References
- Put page numbers on all pages
- Include copies of all cited articles

Step 10: Turn it in!
Deadline

• Absolutely due on May 7 by 9:45 am
• Papers turned in by the 9:10 am on the last day of lecture (29 April) will receive 10 Bonus Points!
• Also the date of Exam 3.
• NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED

Homework

• Pick a research topic that would be suitable for this paper (1 IV and 1 DV). Find 1 recent journal article (2009 – to present) that addresses this topic. Read that article.
• Note: You can change your topic after you complete this exercise but this exercise will give you a chance to:
  — 1. Help figure out your topic
  — 2. Learn something about psychology

Short Write Up (2 Text Pages Maximum + Reference Page)

• Describe your topic. Describe why this topic is interesting or important. (2 Points)
• Identify your IV and the DV (1 Point)
• Describe the research article. Explain why it relates to your topic (6 total)
  — Describe the sample (1 point)
  — Describe the operational definitions of the IV and DV. Comment on reliability and validity. (2 points)
  — Describe the findings. Relate to your topic. (2 point)
  — Describe their discussion of future directions and/or limitations (1 point)
• Construct Reference Page for this article (1 point)