

Research Proposal: Final APA-Style Paper Psyc318W (60 points)

Guidelines for completing your APA-style research proposal appear below. Do not forget to use feedback from previous assignments to help you write this proposal.

Scenario:

You are a researcher who is advocating for a new study. You believe this study will advance the science of psychology in your area of interest. In order to pursue your research interests, though, you will need to get approval (and a small grant) from the internal granting office. The granting office will assign a group of scientists who are familiar with psychological topics to review your proposal. While these scientists are not experts in your area of psychology, they are experts in research design and methodology. They will scrutinize your logic and your research decisions.

Deliverable:

To write a successful proposal you must review empirical studies for a very specific area in psychology. Use this previous knowledge – findings and theories – to develop a logical and scientifically valuable research project (survey, observation, experiment, quasi-experiment). Because the proposal is in psychology, you should prepare it in APA style and format. Importantly, the proposal should have a targeted research question with a thorough literature review and an appropriate research question.

Resources:

- PowerPoint slides from class provide guidance/reminder about what goes in each section of the paper (“Notes: APA-Style Paper and Presentation”)
- Previous assignments and associated handouts
- Purdue Online Writing Lab
- APA Manual

Instructor Support and Submission:

- **Papers cannot be submitted late.**
- Do not hesitate to email me or come by my office with questions, issues, or concerns.
- I will review drafts given reasonable lead time (e.g., up to 5 days before due date).
- Good luck!

Outcomes:

- Develop and write a specific research proposal based on previous psychological findings and knowledge of research methods and design.
- This major project helps accomplish the following course learning objective: CLO #1, 2, 3, 4, 7 (critically evaluate research and claims, understand role of systematic empiricism, understand ethics for conducting research and reporting results, understand limitations and strengths of research designs, provide written reports in APA style)

Guidelines

Title Page

Follow standard APA style including appropriate margins, running head, page number, title, name, and affiliation.

Abstract

The abstract should only be 150 words. It should summarize the most important details of the study. The goal of the abstract in a research proposal is to convey the reason why the study should be conducted and how you plan to conduct that study. In this case, the abstract should conclude with a brief statement of your predicted results.

Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to provide adequate background and justification for why the experiment is being conducted. Whatever it takes to accomplish that goal is essentially what should go in the introduction. What you often see in introductions is the following: 1) introduction to the problem/issue – e.g., why is this question important to study?, 2) description of studies that have investigated this problem or a very similar problem, 3) description of studies most similar to the present study, 4) brief description of the present study and the study hypotheses. If you get to #4 and it feels disjointed – e.g., the reader has to make a large “mental leap” to see how you came up with your hypotheses – that can be an indicator that you have not adequately introduced your topic and may need to include more studies, theory, or simply more explanation. Introductions also typically are organized such that the previous research you discuss becomes more closely related to your proposed project as you approach the end of the Intro. If more than one area of research is used to support your study (e.g., emotion processing, word recognition, and electronic communication), you might consider organizing the introduction according to those areas of research. Similarly, if you were examining different theories, you would discuss those (and the research supporting or refuting those theories) before you introduce your own study and hypotheses. Taking this “topical” approach to the introduction can be a challenge as it is not always clear what order you should present/discuss those topics. If you find you are still struggling with this, review the Extended Outline Assignment.

At this point you might be wondering what articles to discuss in your introduction. Remember that the introduction is a place where you are relatively selective; you should only include discussion of those articles and results that are most closely related to your research project. While you are first developing a research idea you can be less selective because, often, the existing research will guide your topic



development. What this means for your paper is that you should not cite every single article you have found, only cite the most relevant articles. Similarly, there may be articles that you have found since you submitted your previous assignments; there is no reason why those articles cannot be included in your proposal as long as they are relevant. When writing a research paper it is almost always the case that you have to continue searching the literature while you are writing and running and analyzing the experiment. That is the only way to produce a quality paper and to make sure you have consulted all of the most relevant sources.

For a project of this size I expect a 4-6 page introduction with 6-8 references. There is absolutely no reason to include more than ten references in a paper of this length.

Method

Although you will not execute the proposed study, you will need to provide a full method section. As always, the method section should provide all of the detail necessary for someone else to replicate your study. Typical components of a method section include: Participants, Materials, and Procedure. Refer to the class lecture for a reminder of what each of these components might include (“Notes: APA-Style Paper and Presentation”). It is important to note, that in research proposals, the method section is written in future tense (e.g., *participants will watch a video and respond to a survey*) instead of past tense (e.g., *participants watched a video and then responded to a survey*).

Conclusion

Typically conclusions begin with a recap of the results explained in ordinary language. Because you will not have results, your conclusion should begin with a short description of the predicted results. Be sure that your predicted results align with your research hypothesis. After that you can speculate about how the results of your study would contribute to the scientific study of your area. Would your results invalidate a theory? Could the results be applied to a real-world situation? Be very careful with your speculations, though, taking care not to overstate the importance or impact of your potential findings. For instance, it would be inappropriate to say that we now know how everyone in the world would respond in a given situation; it would be inappropriate to say that we now understand how all relationships work ... you get the idea.

The conclusion should be between 1 – 2 pages in length.

Reference Section

Follow APA-style guidelines in the reference section: 12-pt Times New Roman font, evenly double spaced, hanging indentation, appropriate capitalization and italics, complete citation information.

Formatting

Follow all APA-style guidelines when writing your paper. This includes basic formatting (12-point Times New Roman Font; 1 inch margins; appropriately formatted title page; running head, headings, page breaks, and page numbers). Use the correct verb tense throughout your paper. Avoid using biased language, define all technical terms, and ensure that information in your paper appears in the appropriate sections.

Include proper APA style in-text and parenthetical citations in your introduction. After the conclusion, include a reference page. It should contain a list of all the references used in your paper; the references should be presented in proper APA style! If you do not remember the

intricacies of APA style, I recommend checking out Purdue University's OWL website (the APA section). It contains one of the most comprehensive set of APA style guidelines that I have ever seen.

If you include tables, figures, or appendices in your paper, be sure to follow all APA-style formatting guidelines. The guidelines dictate where these items should appear in your document, how they should be referenced and how they should be formatted.

Rubric (expanded version)

APA Style

9 points

Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1 inch margins, Double spaced

1 = full marks

0.5 = Font or spacing error

0 = no marks

APA style in-text and parenthetical citations

3 = full marks

2 = improper citation

1 = missing citations

0 = no marks

APA style reference section

4 = full marks

3 = 1 major error

2 = 2 major errors

1 = 3 errors

0 = no marks

Appropriate page sections and page/section breaks

1 = full marks

0 = no marks

Length

3 points*

Abstract: 150 word maximum

*Introduction: 4-6 pages

**(-10 points for each page short)*

*Conclusion: 1-2 pages

**(-3 points for each 1/2 page short)*

3 = falls in ranges

0 = falls outside of ranges

References

6 points

Minimum of 6 peer-reviewed references

3 = full marks

2 = 4 refs

1 = 3 refs

0 = no marks

Each should be relevant to your study

3 = full marks

2 = 1 questionable

1.5 = some relevant

0 = no marks

Introduction

24 points

Style & Mechanics - Is the writing coherent, cohesive, clear, and concise with good mechanics (spelling and grammar)?

4 = full marks

3 = minor issue with mechanics, conciseness, or clarity

2 = many minor or one major issue

1 = serious issues

0 = many issues; needs major revision

Discussion of previous research

Does the writing demonstrate an understanding of the topic and the references included in the paper?

7 = full marks

6 = minor issue with 1-2 refs

5 = minor issues with several references

4 = demonstrates some understanding

3 = major issues with 2+ references

1 = many conclusions are unfounded by discussion of research

0 = no marks

Does the author discuss the referenced material in a way that adequately and logically introduces the experiment?
5 = full marks 4 = most refs fit with experiment 2 = limited logical flow 0 = no marks

Are the references summarized and discussed at the appropriate level of analysis?
3 = full marks 2 = more than one minor issue with level 0 = no marks

Is a hypothesis (or hypotheses) for the study provided?

Is the hypothesis a natural and valuable extension of previous research?
5 = full marks 3 = hypothesis present but ill formed 0 = no marks

Methods

11 points

Is enough information provided to replicate the study? (e.g., Materials, procedure, participant selection)

*7 = full marks 6 = minor issue 4 = 2+ minor issues or major issue
2 = difficult to understand 2+ sections
0 = too few details or too poorly written to understand method*

Are all components of the method section reported?

*4 = full marks 3 = missing component 1 = missing 2 components
0 = missing 3+ components*

Conclusion

7 points

Is the writing coherent, cohesive, clear, concise, free of grammatical and spelling errors?

1 = full marks .5 = several issues with mechanics and clarity 0 = no marks

Discussion of predicted results – Does author provide logical summary of predicted results? Are the hypothetical results discussed in terms of the original hypothesis?

*5 = full marks 4 = minor issue with interpretation
3 = missing interpretation or relation to original hypothesis
1 = major issue; incorrect conclusion 0 = no marks*

Discussion of implications

*1 = full marks .75 = minor issue
.5 = major issue with application or situating within literature 0 = no marks*