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Final Research Proposal

The main objective of this course is to help you become familiar with the social science research process and develop research skills along the way. The material from this course has been purposefully assigned to help you build toward your final research proposal. A proposal is an important document in research that you present to funding agencies, internal review boards, community agencies and research partners, and many other organizations. It communicates a problem that exists, what current knowledge there is on the topic, how you think a study may help solve that problem, and your proposed research methodology and design to carryout said study.

Although not required, I strongly recommend you utilize your prior assignments (research question from the study (article) review and critique, midterm literature review, and design a survey) in completing this final research proposal paper.

Note that the Hypothesis is a critical step in this paper (see information below), and the Methods and Data Analysis sections should be a substantial portion of your paper, given that this course is a research methods and design course. I'm hoping for at least 1-1.5 pages. Demonstrate to me your thought process and that you have learned and can apply the key terms and concepts from this course. Go back to each chapter. Reflect on the important key terms ad concepts. Applying multiple course concepts directly and clearly (and correctly) will likely earn you a high grade.

Instructions For Your Paper

- Your paper must abide by all the elements of an APA Style Research Paper, 7th edition
 - See instruction on CANVAS for further information. Read and use your 7th edition APA publication manual to help with this.
- Your paper must be your own and in your own writing
 - Minimum of 5 pages **not including the title page, abstract, reference page(s), and any additional pages for tables, figures, etc...**
- You must have a minimum of **5 primary source** original research articles as your references
 - You may use the same articles from your previous assignments (article review and critique, midterm literature review)
- Your study and any analyses must be **quantitative**. We have not sufficiently covered **qualitative** research in this course for you to design such a study for this project. Discuss what you learned.
- **Your paper must include the following sections:** Title Page, Abstract, Introduction/Literature Review (with your purpose and study hypothesis written at the end of the introduction), Methods (including participants, materials, and procedures sub-sections), Proposed Data Analysis, Conclusion, References.
 - See “Content of Your APA Style Research Proposal” section below for further detail on each section

Tip!

The key to writing this paper is being very familiar with your body of literature. This means you should read, read, read!! Read broadly, but also read some articles closely numerous times to gain mastery over their details. Essentially, you read to learn, which allows your brain to then make new connections, which allows you to then write an original analysis by synthesizing old ideas into new ones.

Let your brain chew on the info to generate creative, original ideas

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Then write

Then write

Read, read, read!

Read, read, read!

1. Use an Impersonal Style

Provide straight forward descriptions

Do not include phrases like “I think,” “I believe,” “I did,” “This is important to me,” etc.

Do not write in the style of personal journal

2. Verb Tense

Use past-tense for the Introduction

Use present or future tenses when describing your proposed methods and expected findings

“The data suggest that...”

This is because these sections are currently happening and being proposed for the future. Once you study is all complete and if you wanted to write up the full research study with results, discussion/conclusion section, etc you would then change methods to past tense.

3. Avoid Biased Language

Don’t say: “Participants only completed one survey”

Do say: “Participants completed one survey”

Remember, write according to APA Manual 7th edition formatting guidelines – you will be graded on this (see the Word document in Week 2 on Canvas – “APA 7th edition formatting – the basics” as well as other resources I have posted for help in addition to your APA manual).

- This paper must follow strict APA formatting, including title page, references, etc...
- 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Georgia fonts are recommended, and same font is to be used throughout the body of the paper. Use double-spacing throughout including title page and references, 1-inch margins on all sides of the page (top, bottom, left, and right – this may not be your default in Word). Do not play with margins, font, line spacing, etc. I have seen many tricks and do not appreciate them. Just do the work the correct way. You are here to learn this stuff

- Use numbers (123) for any double digit number, precede a unit of measurement, represent statistical or mathematical functions or quantities, or represent dates, times, ages, scores on a scale (other specific situations apply – see page 178 of APA manual).
- Write out for single digit numbers (nine) or if a number starts a sentence (one-hundred-twenty-three).
- Use people first language (“individuals with developmental disabilities...” NOT “disabled individuals”)
- Write with purpose and clarity (formal writing). Every word you write should have a purpose and be meaningful.
- Avoid jargon, avoid colloquial expressions, no slang

Order and Format of Headings and Sub-Headings

APA Headings	
Level	Format
1	Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings Text begins as a new paragraph here.
2	Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading Text begins as a new paragraph here.
3	<i>Left-aligned, Boldface, Italic, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading</i> Text begins as a new paragraph here.
4	Indented, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading Ending with a Period. Text begins on the same line after the period and continues as a regular paragraph.
5	<i>Indented, Boldface, Italic, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading Ending with a Period.</i> Text begins on the same line after the period and continues as a regular paragraph.

Guidelines For Citations Within Your Report

Big Picture

- *In general* you should provide a citation for ANY IDEA, CLAIM, OR FINDING that is not yours.
- Example: “The goal of present study is to investigate how reinforcements at 5 years of age can influence children’s pro-social behavior. It has been found that children who do not receive reinforcement for pro-social behavior tend to exhibit less helping behavior (CITATION NEEDED).”
- If the writing is part yours and part someone else’s idea, claim, or finding, you still must reference their contributions. Otherwise the reader assumes it is 100% yours, which is

untrue.

- **When in doubt, CITE!** You will rarely get in major trouble for citing too much. You can get in a lot of trouble for not citing.

How To Cite Ideas, Claims, or Findings

Method 1. State your claim, then put your citation in parentheses after your claim

- It has been demonstrated that immediate recall is limited for 5-year-old children (Jones, 1998).
 - Put the author(s) last name and year of publication, separated by a comma. For citations that end a sentence, put a period or other end punctuation after the closing parenthesis.
- With multiple authors, an ampersand (the symbol “&”) is used before the last author’s name for citations in parentheses.
 - (Ng & Lee, 2001) – Two authors, no comma between names. Comma between name and date
 - (Ng et al., 2002) Three or more authors, use “et al.” after the first authors name, and do not list the rest (the reader can find them in the reference section if they want to see them)
 - For groups: (Stanford University, 2020)
- For page numbers: Put after year, noted by “p.”
 - Example: (Jones, 2019, p. 10-11).

Method 2. Use your source as the subject of your sentence

- Gonzales (1998) found that immediate recall is limited for 5-year-old children.

Rules

- When you have two authors and you use authors as your subject in your sentence, use the word “and” (not “&”) and put the date in parentheses
 - Ng and Lee (2001) found that...
- Three or more authors, use “et al.” after the first authors name, and do not list the rest (the reader can find them in the reference section if they want to see them)
 - Ng et al. (2002) found that...
- 2 authors
 - Always cite both authors for every reference.
- 3 or more authors
 - Always cite the name of the first author then “et al., date”
 - (West et al., 2008)
- **When you are citing more than one publication within the same parentheses**, you list them in alphabetical order by the first author’s last names and separate the items with a semicolon.
 - (Jones, Smith, & Brown, 2002; Terry & Jones, 1999)
- In addition, to highlight work directly relevant to your point, place those citations first within parentheses in alphabetical order and then insert a semi-colon and a phrase such as “see also” before the first of the remaining citations, which should also be in alphabetical order. This strategy allows authors to emphasize, for example, the most recent or most important research on a topic, which would not be reflected by alphabetical order alone.
 - (Sampson & Hughes, 2020; see also Augustine, 2017; Melara et al., 2018; Perez, 2014)

Content of Your APA Style Research Proposal

Your proposal should address each of the following sections. How you do this and the amount of text within each section will vary from person to person and research topic to research topic.

- **Title Page**
-
- Every page must have a page number flush on the right side of the page
-
- Running heads are not required in the 7th edition for student papers. You do not need to use a running head.
- Title
 - Concise and specific statement that describes your study as accurately and as completely as possible
- You may use either the professional or student title page format. I recommend the student format for this course (see page 30 of the APA manual).
 - The title of your paper will be in the center of the page. Below the title include:
 - Student Name(s)
 - Name of College, University, or Institution
 - Course number and name
 - Instructor name (Justin Gauthier, PhD)
 - Assignment due date written in month, date, year format (e.g., November 4, 2020)

- **Abstract**

A brief comprehensive summary of the contents of the paper.

- New page after the Title Page.
- “Abstract” centered and at the top.
- Typically no more than 250 words.
- Written as a single paragraph **without indentation** on the first line.
- Brief, comprehensive summary of paper contents including:
 - The research topic/question investigated
 - Brief information about the methods and procedures
 - Expected findings
 - Any expected implications of the findings (why will they be important?)
- Keywords are words, phrases, or acronyms that describe the most important aspects of your paper. They help a reader find your work during a database search (for research papers that get published).
- Up to 5 lowercase keywords at the bottom of the abstract after the label “Keywords:” (in italics)
- **Do not include keywords in your assignments in this course** – APA 7th edition no longer requires them for student papers, only published research.
- **Introduction/Body of Paper**
- Start on a new page after the title page and abstract pages.

-
- Title again centered at the top, with level 1 formatting (see below).
-
- Indent each new paragraph after, double space after each line and paragraph.

General Guidelines For Organizing Your Introduction

- Introduction of topic
 - Provide a description of your general topic area, what you are investigating, and why it is important
 - Overall, organize your introduction section by going from general to specific
 - Fully explain your general topic area – explain all your constructs
 - Then give specific examples of studies
 - Then explain your research and how it will add something new to the body of literature
- Literature review
 - Build your argument/idea!
 - Report the ideas, findings, and results of articles related to your topic
 - Be integrative! How do the studies you've researched relate to each other?
 - Don't just report the studies in sequential order – synthesize the information (especially when explaining your general topic area)
 - Avoid nonessential details
- Purpose
 - Literature review culminates by stating the purpose of your study
 - Explain the specific problem you are trying to answer
 - The literature review should support the purpose of your research
- **Hypothesis – This is a critically important step. You will form a TESTABLE hypothesis based on the literature you have read and what you want to study. The rest of your research paper will depend on this part. You must choose a research design and use research methods that are appropriate for the hypothesis you create. Based on this research design, you will also choose the correct statistical analysis (e.g., pearson's r, t-test, ANOVA, chi-square) to test the hypothesis. Use the information from this course and your prerequisites.**
 - Introduction concludes with a statement of your hypothesis
 - “Based on.....we predict that...”
- **Method**
- Word “Method” is centered on the page in bold, level 1 heading
- Don't start a new page (only 1 space above and below)
- Methods: Essentially, this is a “snap shot” of how the study will be conducted. The purpose is to help your reader understand how you will conduct your entire research study.

General Guidelines

- Always write the number verbally when stating it at the beginning of the sentence

- “Fifty-two participants will complete the survey.”
- Use the numerical form of the number if it does not occur at the beginning of the sentence
“Fourteen females and 15 males reported smoking on campus.”

Use appropriate levels of sub-headings for sub-sections, such as those below

Participants

- Total number of participants
- How they will be recruited
- Are they being paid?
- How many in each group? Who was in each group?
- At a minimum include:
 - Age, Gender, and Racial make-up of your sample(s) – if important to consider
- You may include other characteristics if they are relevant to your study
 - Socio-economic status, etc.

Materials

- List and describe all materials used (surveys, demographics, etc)
- List and describe any apparatuses used (stopwatches, equipment, etc.)
- Describe the materials
 - Explain in detail your measurement procedure
 - What did the surveys ask? Etc...
 - Are you counterbalancing anything?

Procedures

- Overall, Summarize what the participants did. Include enough information so that someone unfamiliar with your study would understand what participants did.
- Do not need to include information about handing out informed consent or debriefing, but you can if you wish.
- If you used only a survey, your procedures will be very brief.
- Your explanations should be framed by explaining what happened *to the participants* (First participants were lead into a waiting room. Next, participants...)
- Explain specific experimental manipulations

Given that this is a proposal and not a complete research study/report, you will NOT write anything for Results and Discussion sections. Instead, you will have a section titled Data Analysis, where you will discuss your proposed analysis methods once data has been collected.

Data Analysis

- “Data Analysis” is centered on the page, bold, level 1 heading
- Don’t start a new page (only 1 space above and below)

For example, some topics:

- Discuss your groups/sample (e.g., random sampling, random assignment, etc)
- As applicable, discuss existing associations and expected associations among variables. Are you accounting for these in any way? Are they informing your research design/methods choices?
- Properly discuss your variables (e.g., independent, dependent)
- Are there control groups? Why or why not?
- Speak about reliability and validity and if there are any threats to these, and how you will account for them.
- What types of scales are you using? (e.g., ordinal, interval, another?)
- How are variables comprised? Are you using several or manipulating variables to create composite variables?
- **Describe each of your study designs statistical tests (pearson's r, t-test, ANOVA, chi-square, etc..) Why are you using each type of analysis/test? What do you EXPECT to find from each test you would run based on your hypothesis.**
- If you counter balanced the survey, will you need to do anything about this for your analysis? Hint. Probabaly.

There are MANY MORE topics available. Most of everything we have covered in the course if fair game.

Given that this is a proposal and not a complete research study/report, you will NOT write anything for a Discussion section. Instead, you will have a section titled Conclusion, where you will briefly summarize focus on explaining to the reader WHY this study is new, unique, and what the findings will DO. Why are they important? What will your study contribute to the scientific literature? To the community and world? Etc... This section can be brief, 5-10 sentences is fine. More is okay if you want to write more. Also make sure to address the limitations of your study and how it may impact future research (if you have any thoughts about this).

Conclusion

- Word "Conclusion" is centered on the page
- Don't start a new page (only 1 space above and below)
 - Open with a clear statement of need for your study and support for your hypothesis
 - Explain the *implications* of your data
 - Be sure to explain all aspects of your data
 - Go from specific to general (generalize to the world, etc...)
 - Explain the immediate implications of your findings
 - Then explain how your findings relate to other research
 - Limitations and Improvements
 - Explain the weakness of your study
 - Are there alternative interpretations?
 - Discuss ethical limitations that influenced your choices
 - Discuss other factors as appropriate (e.g., statistical power)
 - Future Research
 - Where should the research go from here?
 - What is still unanswered?

References

- The word “References” is in the top, center of a new page. Use the page break function in word.
- List your references in alphabetical order (use the last name of the first author of each reference).

If all authors are the same, list in order by year published.

What goes into a reference?

For a journal article, let’s break down the following reference:

Brown, R. P., & Pinel, E. C. (2003). Stigma on my mind: Individual differences in the experience of stereotype threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 39(5), 626-633. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000126>

Author 1 last name, first and middle initial, Author 2 last name, first and middle initial. (YEAR STUDY WAS PUBLISHED). Title of journal article with only the first letter of sentences capitalized. *Name of Journal Published In – These Words are Italicized and Capitalized*, Journal Issue #, pages this article is in the journal. doi (is digital object identifier – easy way to find an article. Older articles are unlikely to have these – they started using these a decade or so ago).

Another example at breaking down a periodical journal article reference:

Author last name, First initial. middle initial. (Year of publication). Title in lowercase, except when uppercase needed for punctuation. *Italicized and Capital Journal Name*, Journal Volume #(Journal Issue #), pages, DOI

1 Author:

Journal (research) Article Refence Examples start on page 313

1 Author:

Smith, J. L. (2004). Understanding the process of stereotype threat: A review of mediational variables and new performance goal directions. *Educational Psychology Review*, 16(1), 469-484. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000126>

2 Authors:

Brown, R. P., & Pinel, E. C. (2003). Stigma on my mind: Individual differences in the experience of stereotype threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 39(5), 626-633. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000126>

3-20 Authors, no DOI, Journal volume (41), but no issue number available:

Ben-Zeev, T., Fein, S., & Inzlicht, M. (2005). Arousal and stereotype threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41, 174-181.

21+ Authors:

Drescher, K. D., Foy, D. W., Kelly, C., Leshner, A., Schutz, K., Litz, B., Brown, R. P., Pinel, E. C., Ben-Zeev, T., Fein, S., Inzlicht, M., Ben-Zeev, T., Fein, S., Brown, R. P., Smith, J. L., Foy, D. W., Kelly, C., Leshner, A., Schutz, K., Smith, M., Kerry, R., Stone, P., Pinel, E. C., ... Stefan, K. M. (2005). Arousal and stereotype threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 41(3), 174-181. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000126>

Following the reference section, you may need to include tables, figures and/or appendixes. The order goes: Tables, Figures, Appendixes

- Can either be placed in text after their first mention or at the end of a paper, after the reference section, in the appendixes, with each individual table on its own page.
- Top, flush left margin, type the word **Table** in bold and the number of the table
- On the next line type the table title *in italics, with no punctuation at the end*
- On the next line include the table in APA-format (see APA manual for specifics based on what data you are presenting).
- Some general tips: Numerical values should be centered and decimal aligned in each column, carry each number of decimal places to the same amount, usually 2.
- Attempt to fit everything onto 1 page, if possible.

See page 210 in the 7th edition APA manual for updated and accurate table examples.

Figures

- Each figure on its own page
- Top, flush left margin, type the word **Figure** in bold and the number of the table
- On the next line type the figure title *in italics, with no punctuation at the end*
- Below the figure you can write a brief caption of the figure to explain it (optional)

Figure 1

FIGURE GOES HERE

Note. This figure demonstrates the mean scores for both males and females on both the gay male and lesbian questionnaires as they relate to personally knowing a gay man or lesbian. Participants who indicated that they personally know a gay man or lesbian had significantly lower prejudice responses ($M = 40.11$) than participants who indicated that they did not personally know a gay man or lesbian ($M = 45.10$).

Appendix

- Word Appendix appears at the top center of a *new page* in bold text (level 1 formatting, again)
- Multiple appendixes are identified by consecutive letters, A, B, C, and so on. (e.g., Appendix A; Appendix B)
- Usually includes any materials or measures you used (surveys, etc.) that don't fit into the body of a research paper. You may reference them in text (see Appendix A).

Grading Rubric for Final Research Proposal



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