

PSY 418 Spivey

Instructions for Research Report 2

This paper is a complete research report; it contains all of the sections included in Research Report I Full including tables and figures. Once again, note that you should cite references throughout the paper (e.g., in the Introduction when outlining prior research, in the Method section when writing about the measure you used, in the Discussion when interpreting your results). Below is a summary of each section that is required. Some of the information is repeated from earlier handouts. You are encouraged to refer to instructions for each of the previous reports, which may be more thorough, and to your TA's comments on previous papers.

Abstract (p. 12 in APA)

In this section summarize your research study in 120 or fewer words. The abstract should be a synopsis of the entire paper. One sentence on each of the following is probably sufficient:

- Background/problem being addressed
- Hypothesis
- Method
- Results
- Implications

Introduction (p. 15 in APA)

In this section you will build a case for conducting the study. It should include a) a description of the problem and purpose of your study; b) a review of relevant literature (i.e., describe some studies and integrate those findings with those from the other sources); c) a conceptualization of the variables (including operational definitions of key terms); d) a brief description of the method; and e) predictions, stated as hypotheses, about possible outcomes.

It is important to organize this section in a way that builds a case for your hypothesis while still addressing research that may disagree with your hypothesis. Use your references effectively throughout the introduction to support your case. Using references does not mean simply citing them all. Rather, you should describe the context in which they occurred and explain their findings in connection with your study. Answer the question, "why are these results important to the current study?" Be somewhat reflective; if another researcher found results that contradict the rest of the literature and are not congruent with your hypothesis, point out something that may have contributed to their findings. **You must cite all eight references in the introduction, not including citations for any measures.**

Toward the end of the introduction (i.e., in the last one or two paragraphs), briefly describe the current study. The reader should be able to answer the following questions: What are the IVs and DV? In what way will they be operationalized? What is the general design of the experiment? What are the specific predictions? For the operational definition, you should have already conceptualized your variables within the context of previous literature and theory, but you should restate your specific definition if it is not clear or if it differs from previous researchers. When describing the research design, do not go into excessive detail about the method. Your hypotheses should be the last sentences in the Introduction. Make sure that you state not only that you expected differences but, also, the direction in which you expected those differences.

Method (p. 17 in APA)

The key to writing this section is that someone else reading the Method section should be able to recreate the experiment. For this section, you will need to identify three subsections:

Participants – Begin this subsection by giving the total number of participants and, in parentheses, the number of males and females. State the population to which your participants belong (e.g., college undergraduates). Also, explain how the participants were sampled (e.g., recruited from an introductory psychology course or around campus). Finally, give sufficient demographic information to describe your sample (e.g., mean age, number of participants belonging to specific ethnicities). Do not discuss how the participants were assigned to the experimental conditions in this section, and do not present any information about the participants in terms of procedures.

Materials – In this subsection cover ALL the relevant information in the development of the materials. Describe any stimuli you used, how they were developed and applied, and why you chose those stimuli. If you used a questionnaire to

measure your dependent variable, explain what it was designed to measure, how it was designed, and how it was scored. Also, give some examples of the items on the questionnaire. If you used a published questionnaire, cite the questionnaire.

Procedure – In this subsection address how the participants were assigned to the different conditions (e.g., randomly assigned to experimental conditions or assigned based on scores on a questionnaire). Include all relevant procedural information, including a step by step description of what the participants did in the study and all relevant instructions to the participants.

Results (p. 20 in APA)

In this section describe all the relevant results that were obtained. Include results that do not support your hypotheses, as well as those that do. This section should describe how your data were analyzed (e.g., that you used a 2x2 ANOVA with an alpha level of .05) and should provide descriptive statistics (means, *SDs*), degrees of freedom, obtained *F* values, and *p* values.

Example: $F(2, 28) = 3.18, p = .05$

Also, you will need to provide at least one table and one figure for the results section of this paper (refer to them in this section). The table may depict descriptive statistics (such as means and standard deviations), or it may be an ANOVA table. The figure should be a line graph of the interaction, whether or not it was significant. If you had a significant main effect, you may include an additional figure to illustrate this effect.

Pay attention to figure and table formatting guidelines in the APA manual. You should use more than one table and one figure only if doing so adds to the overall effectiveness of your presentation.

Discussion (p. 26 in APA)

Here you recap the major findings with an emphasis on tying things together. Start off by restating the purpose of your study and restating your hypothesis. Then, summarize your results in nonstatistical language. Evaluate the implications of your findings with respect to your original hypothesis. Point out similarities and differences between your findings and those obtained by other researchers. Discuss why your findings matched or did not match theirs. Do NOT compare your results point-by-point to each study reviewed in the Introduction; instead, focus on results and trends in the literature and how your study may or may not fit with existing research. Also, when evaluating your findings, consider the method you chose and how that may have played a part in the way the results turned out. Discuss (but do not dwell on) possible limitations of the experiment. Limitations are factors that may have altered your results, such as an unrepresentative sample (e.g., all participants had a GPA between 3.0 and 4.0). Point to several specific directions for future research. The end of this section is where you are allowed the most creativity. Finally, end with a concluding paragraph or couple sentences that bring everything together. Remember to cite your references throughout.

References (pp. 28 and 215-268 in APA)

You must include at least *eight references*. You must list references in accordance with APA style as outlined in the APA manual. These references must be from empirical journals listed on PsychInfo. References used only to cite a questionnaire DO NOT count as one of the eight.

Overall Effectiveness

As mentioned in a few places throughout these guidelines, you will be evaluated on how well your report flows, as well as on the consistency of your argument and your follow-through with the main points. You are expected to write in a professional manner (i.e., avoid use of casual language). Additionally, you should include any supplemental information that could add to the effectiveness of your study, such as additional tables or figures. This is the section where you will also be evaluated for the team's preparation throughout the stages of the research process (e.g., individual contribution, participation, cooperation, communication).