

REPORTS IN PSYCHOLOGY

What are reports?

Psychological reports are used to communicate ideas and research that has been investigated within a specific field of psychology. They help others to understand the research that has taken place and also help researcher's to gain the credibility they deserve for the research they have conducted. Within a psychological report it is essential you consider the reader at all times in order to help their understanding of the research being presented. For this reason, the report should follow a strict format which allows the reader to locate the information they need with ease..

Abstract

The main function of an abstract is to inform the reader of the basic outline of the experiment, in doing so it should enable them to decide if they want to read the report, if the reader decides they are interested in reading the report, the abstract should help the reader to understand the report and the information within it. The abstract should include a statement of the problem being investigated, the participants that were studied, the dependent and independent variables, the design of the study, the major finding and conclusions.

Results:

Results can be presented in various ways such as in a table or a graph, these should only be used if they are discussed within the report and should be used to help the reader understand the data and how it benefits the investigation. The results should then be analysed, this can be performed using inferential statistics. It is important to highlight which statistical technique is used and how you got to your conclusion. were the results significant or not, was this predicted prior to the research, does it relate to the literature discussed in the introduction etc. It is important to include any complication that may have occurred within the investigation, for example missing data and discuss how this may have influenced results along with a discussion of any anomalies such as illogical responses or miscoded data.

Introduction

Start the report by presenting the problem which has been investigated, why the study is important and a basic outline of how the problem is investigated. Following from this, there should be a literature review to demonstrate research used to build on knowledge surrounding the field prior to the investigation. It should be assumed that the readers contain a broad knowledge of the field in question, but not specific information regarding any citations including books, articles and research papers. This will allow you to analyse the relationship between the related studies and demonstrate a logical connection between past and present research.

Discussion:

The next section should be a discussion. The data should be further discussed and interpreted at this point in the report. It should be made clear what the data infers about the investigative problem, what are the implications of the findings and any opinions or interpretations that have been made should be stated. Within this section the specific problem being investigated should be discussed and it should be mentioned whether the researchers thoughts have changed or remained the same after the investigation. The findings should be related to previous studies within the field and compared as to whether the findings were similar or very different. Conclusions should be draw at this point and any limitations of the study should be noted.

Method:

The method should consist of three separate descriptions to make up the method of the experiment these sections should include, the sample used, the materials used, and the procedure. The description of the sample should make clear the population which it is representing, how it was formed. When discussing the materials used it should include any data that was collected, for example surveys, questionnaires and tests. The procedure should highlight the design of the study through the description of the methods used. The procedure should include all activities including what the participants were told, control mechanisms that were put in place etc. It should be detailed enough in order to achieve replication if attempted.

Referencing:

At the end of the report a clear reference list of all resources cited within the report should be made clear in a specific referencing style.

References used:

Rudner, L. M., & Schafer, W. D. (1998). How to write a scholarly research report. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 6(1), 13.