

Writing materials sections when using psychological measures (questionnaires)

1. What is the full scale called? (full name followed by abbreviation)
2. Who is the author of the exact scale you are using? (cited appropriately in APA style!)
3. What are you measuring / what does the scale measure?
4. Are you using the whole scale or some of the sub-scales? If so, which ones and why only these?
5. How many items are there in the scale (or sub-scale)?
6. Provide an example of 1 or 2 items within the scale.
7. Are there any negatively worded items that require reverse scoring before analysis? How many?
8. What is the scoring mechanism? (how many possible responses are there? And how are they anchored?)
9. What are the possible ranges of scores (possible lowest to possible highest)?
10. What do lower and / or higher scores indicate?
11. What is the reliability of the scale? (report **your** calculated reliability and include information on previous reliability)

Example in full overleaf with 'question' numbers above noted to show the process of constructing a solid materials section.

Using Arnett's Inventory of Sensation Seeking to measure levels of sensation seeking in participants.

Materials

The Arnett Inventory of Sensation Seeking (AISS [1]; Arnett, 1994 [2]) was used to measure levels of sensation seeking in participants. For the purpose of this study, a full scale score of sensation was gathered, as well individual sub-scale scores for both novelty seeking and intensity seeking [3 & 4].

The full scale contains 20 items, with ten items measuring both intensity and novelty seeking [5]. The intensity sub-scale included items such as “when I listen to music, I like it to be loud” and “I can see how it would be exciting to be in a battle during a war”, with items such as “I think it’s better to order something familiar when eating in a restaurant” and “If I have to wait in a long line, I’m usually impatient about it” assessing levels of novelty seeking [6]. Responses for all items in the scale were given on a 4-point Likert scale from 4 = describes me very well to 1 = does not describe me at all [8], with scores subsequently ranging from 1 to 4 for each item, making final scores obtained from the total scale between 20 and 80, and between ten and 40 for each of the two sub-scales [9]. There were six negatively worded items contained within the full scale (three per sub-scale) which required reverse-scoring prior to analysis [7]. Higher reported scores indicated higher levels of overall sensation seeking, as well as higher levels of novelty and intensity seeking for each of the sub-scales [10]. Internal reliability for intensity seeking, novelty seeking, and overall sensation seeking were initiated to be .84, .76 and .81 respectively, which compares favourably to the reliability reported by previous studies utilising this scale (e.g., Arnett, 2001; Cronbach’s alphas of .85, .79 and .82) [11].