

Guidelines for Social Lab Introduction and Discussion

Introduction

Paragraph 1: Identify variables

Paragraph 2: Background literature

Paragraph 3: Provide rationale for your experiment

Paragraph 4: Hypothesis paragraph (purpose, hypotheses, rationale)

Discussion

Paragraph 1: Restate purpose, Summarize what you found, for each say if this was as hypothesized or contrary to the hypothesis

Paragraph 2: Describe your first correlation. What does it mean? How does it tie in with background literature?

Paragraph 3: Describe second correlation. What does it mean? How does it tie in with background literature? Connect to correlation 1.

Paragraph 4: Describe third correlation. What does it mean? How does it tie in with background literature? Connect to correlation 1&2.

Paragraph 5: Limitations & Future Directions

Social Lab Discussion Outline

Paragraph 1: Interpretation of the Results

Restate the purpose of your experiment, summarize what you found and state whether or not each hypothesis was supported

- *This is your opportunity to succinctly summarize your findings*

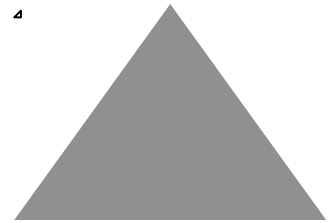
Middle Paragraph(s): Integration of Results with Literature

Show how your data has extended the literature in the field

- Integrate your results with literature and topics described in introduction
- Speculate what conclusions can be drawn from your data.
 - What do your data suggest is occurring (i.e. what does your correlation mean?)
 - This would also be where you are integrating the results of your 3 comparisons to make an overall interpretation or take-home message.
- Describe some of the limitations to your data

Adapted from "Writing in Psychology"

http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/msscha/psych/research_report.html



Final Paragraph: Final Conclusion Statement and Future Directions

Restate the overall take-home message for this experiment (in 1-2 sentences).

- *What's the one thing you want your reader to take away from your lab report?*

Describe what might be an interesting future direction for this study

- *What would you do next to expand on these results?*

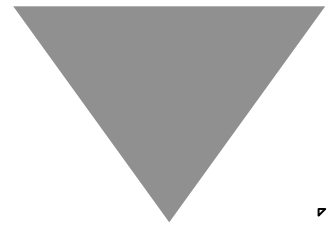
Suggestions:

Re-read your introduction before writing your discussion section and make sure it connects back to what you wrote in the introduction.

Think about how you will present your results (and in which order) – discuss it in an order that makes the most sense and generally moves from most important to least important result.

Indicate the organization by providing topic sentences (and/or sub-headings) so that the reader can follow the organization of the story of the discussion.

Conclude each paragraph with a summary sentence that sums up the 'take-home' message or main point of that paragraph.



Social Lab Introduction Outline

Paragraph 1: Establish the Topic

Identify the topic of the research article and generally why it's important (*significance*)

- Identify your personal behavior / characteristic and succinctly discuss how it may relate to personality / stress / wellbeing (establishing why it is important to study this behavior or characteristic)
- *Example:* Consequences of eating alone: how social isolation is associated with personality, coping strategies and perceived mental health
 - *Introduction to topic:* consequences of social isolation
 - *Significance:* Social isolation may vary by personality type (extroversion) and be associated with a reduced ability to cope with life stress, resulting in an overall worsening of mental health.
 - *Establishes why it might be important to examine social isolation*
 - Examination of dining patterns (# of times you eat alone / week – the personal behavior category) may be one strategy to examine social isolation.
- *Do not* state “In this paper, I am examining ...”, “I was interested in looking at ...”, etc.

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Paragraph 2+: Review the Relevant Literature

Informs the reader of what's been done previously (*what we know*), what is needed to understand the research question, and helps lead the reader to what remains unknown (*and hence, your research question*)

** May require more than 1 paragraph. You do not want to try to weave together disparate concepts in one paragraph!

- Provide a succinct summary of your research article's *main findings* – making sure to identify the key experimental result(s) that support the author's conclusion(s).
 - *Generally, you do not* discuss methods, unless it is necessary to distinguish it from your research question. For example, if the article you are reviewing is conducting a similar study, but in a different population, you would want to identify the research population.
- Make sure to focus on those findings that relate to your study. Extraneous information is not useful.

Paragraph 3: Point out the Gap (i.e., what's the motivation for your study?)

Identify what remains unknown (hasn't been examined in previous research)

Identify *why* understanding this unstudied area is important and how it would expand on the previous literature.

- Your previous paragraphs should feed into this, but you still want to make it *explicitly clear* to the reader what remains unknown

Final Paragraph: Identify the Purpose of the Experiment and Research Hypotheses

Identify the purpose of the study (what is the research question)

Identify the hypotheses (3) for the study

- Provide directionality in hypothesis (negatively correlated, positively correlated)
- Provide a rationale for each hypothesis (why do you think that?)
- *But do not imply causality (personal characteristic will cause a change in stress levels). Remember, correlation does not equal causation!*

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