

Project Discussion Section

Total Grade Points: 100 Points (21.3% of Project grade; 10% of the Final Course Grade)

Due Date: Sunday, June 27, 2021, by 11:59 P.M.

Instructions:

Download the Sample Discussion section document and the rubric

The *Discussion* section of a Research Report does a lot. It will restate the hypotheses that were being investigated as it describes the findings of the research. Please note that the statistics are reported in the *Results* section, so they are not typically repeated in the Discussion. The findings are described in written terms, not numerical ones.

The *Discussion* will also refer back to earlier research (some of which might have originally been mentioned in the *Introduction* section) and attempt to explain whether the current findings support earlier or research or not. If not, why not?

The *Discussion* will then go on to point out possible weaknesses or flaws in the current research, sources of error, etc. If the results contrast with previously published results (see last paragraph) this might be part of the explanation and you can talk about that.

The *Discussion* will also suggest possible improvements on the current research that might be done if it were to be repeated, as well as next logical steps in the research.

Example opening paragraph (using the example analyses presented in the *Results* instructions):

The researcher hypothesized that as optimism increases consumption of chocolate also increases. It was also hypothesized that self-identified men would have a higher consumption of chocolate than self-identified women or non-binary individuals and that chocolate consumption would increase as age increases. The correlation found between consumption of chocolate and optimism was as expected: if one were higher, the other would be higher as well. With respect to gender identity, results indicated that individuals who identify as men had a significantly higher rate of consumption when compared to those who identify as women or non-binary. However, the results indicated that the hypothesis regarding age and chocolate consumption was incorrect: there was no relationship between age and chocolate consumption.

➤ For your *Discussion* section:

- Begin with a restatement of the purpose of the present study and the hypotheses.
 - Briefly restate the results.
 - Mention whether the hypotheses were supported.
 - Do *not* repeat all the numerical statistics that appear in the Results section.
 - See example on previous page
- Then, relate your results to the work of others (this will involve the inclusion of references/citations to the work of these other researchers, most of whom will have been discussed in the *Introduction*); explain how your study fits into the existing structure of knowledge in the area.

Students may talk about the research studies they discussed in their *Introduction* section and how the current findings relate to those studies. Students may also reference articles not used in the Intro section if they find some to be relevant.

- Next, discuss the limitations of the study, especially factors that affect the generalization of the results. Talk about the improvements that could be made to the study.
- Typically, one would want to report 1 to 3 limitations. This project was designed with several limitations, so *you are expected to discuss at least three of them*.
 - If there was no statistical significance for one or more of your hypotheses, discuss issues with the methods of the study that may have led to the non-significant findings.
 - Remember that there may be nothing wrong with the study if the results are not statistically significant... it may be that there really is no relationship between the two variables.
 - If the results are *different* from what was expected, discuss whether limitations or errors may have led to the unexpected findings (erroneous hypothesis, methodological issues, etc.).
- Finally, suggest further research that could be done.

Technical details

- The minimum length for the *Discussion* section is 650 words.
 - Points will be deducted if the *Discussion* has fewer than **650 words**.
 - The word limit of 650 words is VERY low... shooting for the “minimum” amount of effort is likely to result in a minimum level grade... If you would prefer to be directed to a better target number, I would recommend at least 800 words, or more.
 - This word-minimum *does not* include the Title page, References section, or *quoted material*.
- When writing the *Discussion* section, use the following style and format guidelines:
 - Use the formatting guidelines outlined in the *APA Publication Manual*, 7th edition
 - Continue to practice including a title page for a professional paper, with running head and page numbers. These are not required in this assignment, but will be required in the final project submission.

- Refrain from using quotations except when absolutely necessary. Putting things in your own words, paraphrasing, illustrates understanding and mastery, quoting material generally only illustrates that one can “cut and paste.”
- Paraphrased material must still be identified with a citation to its source
- Use college-level writing style and grammar
- Use the same font you used in the Introduction, Method, and Results sections
- Save your work regularly
- The file *must* be in *Microsoft Word* (.docx or .doc) format when submitted to the dropbox.

When a student is ready to submit their assignment, upload the saved Microsoft Word document (.docx or .doc) to the [Project – Discussion] dropbox in Canvas.

This assignment must be completed and submitted individually as indicated in the course syllabus. Let the instructor know if there are any questions or concerns about this assignment.