

CRIJ 5331

Instructor: Dr. Cheng-Hsien Lin

Research Proposal Writing Direction

Blue print paragraphs are additional for complete research papers

Due date for Paper Presentation PPT file: See syllabus or announced by the instructor

Due date for the completed report: See syllabus

Objective: To familiarize you with the process of survey research from conceptualization, questionnaire design, face to face interview, data entry, and elementary data analysis to report writing.

OUTLINE OF WRITING PROCEDURES

I. Introduction

Describe why the topic of your choice is a worthy studied social issue (which will essentially be your dependent variable). Write a brief introduction that introduces your topic and describes why it is of general interest or importance by relating the topic to any theoretical, social or practical significance. One page or so should be enough for this session.

II. Literature Review

Literature

Review past studies examining the topic and find out what variables have been studied that are related to the dependent variable(s). For example, alcohol abuse has been found to be related unstable family relationship, depression, failed school experiences, etc. You should summarize how you have learned from the literature you reviewed and what variables you are trying to study and analyze in your research. Especially, if you have some unique variables to be examined in your research but have not been studied in the past studies, you need provide reasons why this new variable needs to be examined.

Hypotheses

1. Select at least THREE factors (which will be your **independent variables**) that you believe will influence your **dependent variable**. Write a mini theoretical statement (check your theory book for reference) that can be just a couple of sentences explaining HOW and WHY each independent variable will affect your dependent variable. For example, it's not enough to say men will support legalization of prostitution more than women. You must also explain WHY.

2. Following your mini theory, prepare a hypothesis that is simply a one-sentence statement of the relationship you expect to find between each independent variable and the dependent variable. Here is an example of hypothesis, "Hypothesis #1: Men are more likely to support legalization of prostitution than women." You should have at least three hypotheses.

III. Method.

Write two paragraphs describing: (1) Data: where and when you conducted the interview, and how you selected your sample. (2) Measurement: how you measured each concept (describe the questionnaire items). (3) Analysis: how you conduct your statistical analysis (descriptive data: frequency/percentage of study variables; explanatory analysis: correlation between independent variables and dependent variables).

Data Collection (procedures for questionnaire construction and data collection)

1. Operationalization: Explain how you WORD your questions for independent and dependent variables (other than demographic variables), and explain how your questions are able to measure the concepts of those variables.

- List and describe all **independent** variables, *briefly describe how they were measured*.
- Many of your variables were operationalized into multiple different questions. Describe what those scale means (higher the number, the higher agreement the subjects responded to the question statements (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree in a scale)

2. Sample: Describe how you sampled your subjects. You may have to justify why the sampling methods (or classes being chosen) was chosen. Make sure you report the details of each step. Also, you should state how the class project is cooperated with everyone's effort to collect the data and how many cases were collected.

Analysis

Write two paragraphs describing: (1) Descriptive data analysis procedure. (2) Explanatory data analysis procedure.

IV. Expected Results: Write your expected result section to describe if your research hypotheses will be supported. This is for you to review if your hypotheses are strong enough according to your applied theories and past similar findings in this regard. However, if what you hypothesized is to challenge what have been found in the literature, you may want to be open-minded of you're your results (support or deny your hypotheses) may be. In that case, you may discuss what conditions can possibly to affect your results of being supporting or denying your hypotheses.

If you are to write a complete paper (and you are NOT asked to submit a completed research paper with completed research analysis), then the following sessions should be included in your complete paper. (For proposals, NO RESULTS are to be write up but only the Expected Results that should be quite brief).

1. Univariate analysis:

i) Report the characteristics of your sample by describing the percentage distribution from the frequency table for each of your nominal and ordinal variables including the recoded independent variable. You simply need to report the percentages (based on the percent column) in each attribute of a variable. For example, "43% of our samples were males and 57% were females." Make comment about the extent of the representativeness of your sample.

ii) Provide a complete interpretation of the frequency table about your *ratio* independent variable. Choose any row *except* the first row and show that you can interpret each column in the frequency table (frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percent columns). Report the following univariate statistics from the output: mean, median, mode, range, variance, and standard deviation. Calculate the confidence interval for the 95% confidence level based on the mean and the standard deviation.

iii) Report the percentage distribution (based on the percent column) from the frequency tables for the two dependent variables. Describe the general pattern of people's attitude about this issue, i.e. whether most people were on the supporting side or the opposing side.

2. Bivariate analysis: You need to use the information and statistics in the printout to test EACH of your hypotheses.

i) Report whether the results are consistent with the *directions* of your predictions/hypotheses. For each of the CROSSTAB tables, choose one row, either "agree" or "disagree", to report the percentages from each category of the independent variable. For example, "47% of the men compared 52% of the women agreed with the statement that both husband and wife should contribute to household income." Are the *patterns* of your results for the two dependent variables consistent with each of your predictions/hypotheses? For each hypothesis, if there are inconsistencies for one or both dependent variables, provide some explanations, comments or discussions.

ii) Report and interpret the significance level for chi-square. The interpretation of the significance levels should address the issue of how likely the relationship is due to sampling error and whether it is statistically significant at the .05 level. Can the results reject the null hypothesis or not? Is your hypothesis supported or not using the .05 significance level as your criterion? Don't forget that all of this must be done thoroughly for each hypothesis. For example, "the significance level for the gender effect on this statement was greater than .05. Therefore the null hypothesis that says there is no gender effect on people's attitude on this issue cannot be rejected and our hypothesis about the gender effect is not supported." Remember that you cannot "PROVE" anything. Your results only support or fail to support your theory. If a hypothesis is supported by using one dependent variable but not the other, you should provide some explanations, comments or discussions.

V. Expected Challenges and Their Solutions

You should describe what kinds of difficulties you might encounter in the whole research process. The more you can foresee those possible obstacles, the more likely you can prevent them or prepare some solutions when they occurs. This session can show the research evaluators how thoughtful you are while designing your research.

V. Conclusion

This section may begin with a brief summary, reviewing the highlights of your major findings regarding your hypotheses, both in terms of being consistent with the directions of your hypothesis and providing support for your hypothesis based on the statistical significance. For each hypothesis, if there are inconsistencies for the two dependent variables, reiterate your explanations, comments or discussions.

Discuss the shortcomings of the research, point out inconsistencies, account for anomalies, and suggest improvements in the research design. Finally, you may place the whole project into a broader perspective, mention the theoretical and practical implications of the study, and discuss possible future work.

Be sure to include a list of your instrument (questions) used in your study.

Notes: Total length of the written portion should not exceed 20 pages (typed, double-spaced). The suggested proportions are: intro = .05-1 page, Literature and theory = 5-7 pages, methods = 2-5 pages, results= 4-6 pages, conclusion= 0.5 -2 pages. Reference page(s) should be one to two pages depending on how many references you have. Page setup should be one inch for all margins and double space for all lines. Font size and style are 12 point Times New Roman. You should use **APA** format for paper text, tables and references.

All students should submit a data analysis OUTPUT file to **blackboard** to show the instructor what data analyses you have done for the research.

Additional Notes for Results (Statistical Analysis results from SPSS)

1. Frequencies

i) Generate frequency tables of those study variables (you may have with either a *bar* chart based on percentages or a *pie* chart for each of your *nominal* or *ordinal* variables, depending on your needs to emphasize your findings to the readers).

ii) Some frequency tables may be suitable for your *ratio* independent variable with a *histogram* and the following statistics: *Mean*, *Median* and *Mode* under the Central Tendency column. Select *Std. Deviation*, *Variance*, *Range*, *Minimum*, and *Maximum*.

2. Cross-tabulation results

You will report those significant correlations found in your research. For example, whether alcohol abuse is related depression? Whether males are more likely to use alcohol? Or if males are more likely to use alcohol heavily than females, etc. You should describe those findings and make sure the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable(s) are all reported.

Direction of how to do Cross-tabulation in SPSS program.

In the Crosstabs procedure, move *your dependent variables* to the **Row** box and move *the three nominal and ordinal measures of your independent variables* and your recoded independent variable to the **Column** box. Make sure to select **Column** percentage in the Cells window and select **Chi-square** in *Statistics* window.