

RESEARCH PAPER CRITERIA

During your psychology BA program, you are expected to write five research papers in the following modules:

- Behavioural dynamics
- Cognitive psychology
- Developmental psychology
- Personality psychology
- Social psychology

You have to obtain participants' **informed consent** in any study, where anonymity of the participants is at hazard (e.g., experiments, self-report studies where participants can be identified)

During your developmental psychology research paper you have to follow the rules that are described below:

If the participants are under 3 years of age, you have to inform the parent about the aims and procedure of the study in a written form, and parents can give their consent in written form.

If participant are between 3 and 14 years of age, you have to obtain the written consent of at least one parent, and you also have to obtain the verbal consent of the child.

Participants older than 14 years of age, both adolescents and parents give their informed consent. (In case of the adolescent it can be equivalent to filling out the questionnaires, if you provide sufficient information about the study on the title page). If the study is anonymous, passive consent from the parent is sufficient (the parent is informed in written form, and the parent has to sign, if he/she is against the participation of his/her child)

For consent forms consult your supervisor!

FORMAL CRITERIA (How you write)

I. Length and format of the research paper

The main text of the paper should be between 10 and 20 pages (excluding title page, references, appendices). Form: Times New Roman font, size 12, line spacing 1.5, 2,5 cm margins.

I.1. Structure of an empirical research paper:

- *Title page* includes title of the research paper, designation of the module (e.g., Social psychology research paper); name and EHA of the author; name and title of the supervisor
- *Abstract*: write the abstract on a separate page after the title page. Abstract should sum up the content of the research paper in no more than 150 words. Provide 3 to 5 keywords after the abstract.
- *Introduction / theoretical background* introduces and summarizes the relevant theories and previous research on the topic. It is not a hand-out prepared out of one or several publications. Try to synthesize, provide pros and cons for the different approaches. The aim of the theoretical background is to scaffold your hypotheses.
- *Research question and hypotheses*: author should present the aim of the study and the hypotheses in a well-structured and coherent form.
- *Method*: the author should present the sample and procedure (e.g., gender distribution; mean age and standard deviation; the procedure of obtaining participants), measures and/or stimuli (with example items/pictures etc.), statistical analyses used to analyse data.
- *Results*: the author should present a coherent summary of the results. Results should be presented preferably in tables and/or figures with captions. Results should be phrased at the level of phenomena rather than at the level of measures applied (e.g., 'men were more avoidant of intimacy' instead of 'men scored higher on the intimacy scale of ECR').
- *Discussion and conclusions* author should not only repeat the results but also discuss them. I.e., author should contextualize the results of the study in former study results and theories already presented in the introduction. Limitations of the study should be addressed (e.g., uneven gender distribution; reliance on the data from only one source). Conclusions should include practical considerations and/or further research plans relevant to results.
- *References*: APA style. At least 8 references should be cited.
- *Appendices*: Self-developed questionnaires, experimental stimuli should be presented as appendices.

I.2. Types of theoretical research papers

essays should present the applied form of a theory. E.g., prejudice at the workplace. Besides connecting theory and practice, author should present his/her own idea (it should be sufficiently underscored by empirical evidence).

critical essays should present the debate of two concurrent theories. In this case the author should highlight his/her own point of view with scientific arguments.

general theoretical analyses present the evolution of a classical field or theory over the last 20 years. E.g., the evolution of attribution theory in the last two decades. How has it changed? What have been the milestone studies in this field over the last 20 years? In the case of a general theoretical analysis at least 20 references should be cited.

In the case of essay or critical essay at least 10 references should be cited!

I.2.1. Structure of theoretical research papers:

- *Title page* includes title of the research paper, designation of the module (e.g., Social psychology research paper); name and EHA of the author; name and title of the supervisor
- *Abstract*: write the abstract on a separate page after the title page. Abstract should sum up the content of the research paper in no more than 150 words. Provide 3 to 5 keywords after the abstract.
- *Presentation of the topic, hypothesis, presentation of theories, pros and cons with own point of view*: according to the type of paper (see I.2.).
- *Discussion, conclusions*: summarize the 'take home message' of your paper.
- *References*: APA style. For the number of required references see section I.2.

II. The author should not plagiarize!

In the case of plagiarism the paper is automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1). In certain cases plagiarism can lead to suspension. In the case of plagiarism students only have the opportunity to write a new paper in the next semester. A statement of plagiarism should be attached to each research paper! You can download this statement from the website of Institute of Psychology.

What is plagiarism?

'Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional.' (source: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>)

What is not plagiarism?

In certain cases you might find the words of others as more appropriate to utter your ideas. That is perfectly OK. In the case of literal citations – in line with APA style – you have to give not only the author and date of citation, but also the page(s) you cite from (e.g., Watson, 1920, pp.

9-10). One single literal citation should not exceed four sentences. Literal citations over this limit are considered as plagiarism even if it is correctly cited (with page numbers).

III. The research paper should be written in English.

Both UK and US English is acceptable if it is used consequently. (Please use Word spelling check)

IV. The research paper should include all sections presented in sections I.1. and I.2.

If crucial sections (e.g., title page, references) are missing, the paper is automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1).

V. Submission deadlines are according to supervisors' requirements. Acceptance of papers submitted after deadline is dependent on supervisors' judgement

VI. Citations should be given in APA style (6th edition)

You should use citation in the following cases (not an exhaustive list):

- you literally cite a part of a written or oral publication (irrespective of length; you have to give page numbers as well)
- you summarize a part of a written or oral publication in your own words
- you present the theory or opinion of another person
- you use the theory or opinion of another person to build or support your own line of reasoning
- you use facts, statistical data, tables, figures of another person (you have to give page numbers as well)

For details about APA style consult the website of University of Sydney:

http://sydney.edu.au/library/subjects/downloads/citation/APA%20Complete_2012.pdf

ACADEMIC CRITERIA (What you write)

Supervisors evaluate the research paper in line with the following criteria:

- The author has sufficient knowledge of the theories presented in the paper
- The author uses the terminology of the field correctly
- The paper is coherent, has an explicitly stated or recognizable line of reasoning
- Statistical analyses are in line with the research question and data. Statistical analyses should be used and reported correctly.
- Based on the statistical results, The author should be able to decide whether hypotheses are supported or not .
- Statistical results should be interpreted correctly and should be discussed in the context of the theoretical background (theories, former research results).
- The author should reflect on the strengths and limitations of the paper (self-reflection).