

# EXPERIMENT

## Description and Example

There are three common types of research that are published in psychology journals. These are empirical research studies, reviews of the literature, and theoretical articles. These papers are most often written in "APA format." [APA stands for American Psychological Association.](#) This format is used in most science oriented journals, not just psychology. Typically, students are more familiar with MLA format.

Your assignment is:

1. To think of at least one question - you can do more than one - and it can be on any topic that interests you. It is absolutely your choice what you ask. These questions can range from - "Who will win the super bowl?" (ask fast!) to "Do you believe in the death penalty?" Ask at least 10 people/subjects your question.
2. Write up your results in a page or two. Below you will find the format explained and an example written by a student. You should follow the format exactly. Then you will need to post your results to the Discussion Board page of blackboard.

The research that you have done is an example of an empirical research study. This is a report of original research. Such reports are expected to be to the point and broken into standard sections. The usual sections or parts of an empirical research study are:

### **Introduction**

The introduction sets the stage for your research by stating the problem, briefly reviewing the previous research in the area, and is generally expected to show how your research will test or answer some of the issues in the area. Your introduction should introduce the reader to the topic you are pursuing.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this section is to explain what you did so clearly that people reading the report could replicate (duplicate) your work. Describe the subjects or participants (age, sex, race, education level, socioeconomic status, any relevant characteristics- DO NOT INCLUDE ANY NAMES), how they were selected of the study or where (in general terms) the data was collected, how many actually participated and how many withdrew through the course of the study, and the procedures that were used.

### **Results**

This section reports your findings. This could include a graph if that is appropriate. You are looking for any patterns that have occurred in your data.

## Conclusion or Discussion

In this section, you are asked to present an "informed" opinion of what the results mean. You also have an opportunity to explain how you would conduct your research if you had the chance to do it all over again. What would you change to improve the research?

**Some notes:** 1. It is a good idea to get into the habit of typing your papers. Many professors expect this. If you do not know how to use the computer, the people in our Academic Computer Center will show you or you can ask me. This gives you the advantage of presenting a more professional looking product and having a back up copy of your work. ***If you do not use the computer, invest in XEROX copies of any/all work that would be difficult for you to recreate.***

**2. Never use personal pronouns in science writing. Instead of "I", use the experimenter or researcher.**

3. Become familiar with APA format.

4. Please be aware that I consider this a very important assignment.

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This is an experiment that was completed by a former student. I felt that it was a good example of what was typical from a freshman in psychology. Note the format.

## SOCIETY'S VIEW ON THE RECOVERY OF PEDOPHILES

### INTRODUCTION

The experimenter was intrigued by a recent law passed in the state of Virginia requiring that communities be notified when a person convicted of child molestation moved into their neighborhood. The experimenter wondered how the convicted pedophile might be received; would he or she ever be accepted into the community in question or would he be an outcast? The experimenter doubted that asking this question directly would evoke completely truthful answers, and therefore decided to ask the subjects whether or not pedophiles could ever be cured, assuming that a person who believed that pedophiles could not be cured of their urge to molest children would not welcome such a person into their community.

### METHODOLOGY

The experimenter asked the question, "Do you think pedophiles can ever be cured?". There were ten subjects in all, ages ranging from eighteen to sixty-five. All were white, middle class, and were employed in the state of Virginia. There were seven women and three men polled; five out of ten polled had children. All subjects were selected at random.

## RESULTS

All of the subjects said no, they did not believe pedophiles could ever be cured. The experimenter had expected more diverse answers. Two of the subjects did state the answer with some reservation, finding it difficult to generalize all pedophiles into one category, but still believed the answer was no more than yes.

## CONCLUSION

If the assumption of the experimenter is true, and people that believe pedophiles can not be cured do not want pedophiles moving into their community, than it would seem the new law is going to create some uncomfortable feelings for the communities that the paroled pedophiles move into. It will be interesting to see if the new law makes it virtually impossible for anyone convicted of child molestation to be accepted into a community.

If the experimenter could do the experiment over again, she would ask more questions to more people. For example, it would be interesting to ask the subjects if they would mind if a convicted pedophile moved into their neighborhood, and how would they act towards the person. It would also be interesting to ask the subjects that believed pedophiles could not be cured if their prison terms should be lengthened, or what sentence they should receive once convicted. Also, more people should be polled to gain a a better perspective on a community's viewpoint. It might be interesting to go door to door to every house in a community and ask the questions to people in their home environment to see if the answers differ from subjects in controlled environment (or an environment outside of their home).