

## An experiment

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All papers are required to have an abstract. This short paragraph should state the main themes of the paper, provide some context to the research being described, mention the methods used, and go on to summarise some of the main conclusions. For experiments, the motivation for the study should be identified, the main hypotheses given, a general description of the design (conditions, sampling, etc.) given and the main findings stated. Some possible implications should be given to show the relevance of the study for other researchers and practitioners.

### **Introduction**

This short section should explain what the paper is for. Experiments set out to test assumptions, a theory or a model empirically. The reason for this experiment and the format of this paper should be summarised here.

### **Background**

The background section should review relevant literature in order to explain why this study was undertaken. Ideally, this review should cover not only the context (for example, previous findings) but also tools (such as standardised tests) and methods used in the research. Based on this review, the areas to be investigated should be clearly identified.

### **Methodology**

This section should state the hypotheses, present the design of the experiment, summarise the design of the materials (or intervention, etc.), and explain how participants were selected and assigned to conditions (and whether sampling was either blind or double-blind). The analytical techniques used might be briefly stated.

Practical and ethical issues should also be discussed. For example, problems of cross-condition contamination, missing data and control of context should be discussed, as should issues such as confidentiality, informed consent and whether ethical approval was sought.

### **Results**

The results section is normally structured as a series of sub-sections, one for each hypothesis, theme or source of data (depending on the emphasis of the experiment). Within each, the question being explored should be given, features of the data (positive and negative) highlighted, the data summarised (typically by means of a table) and the inferences supported by the data should be stated. Charts, graphs or figures can be included to illustrate points if this is considered helpful.

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Care should be taken to summarise data appropriately, so that tables summarising category data give ranges, medians and modes whilst tables summarising numerical data include means and standard deviations. Inferences based on analytical statistical methods should be followed by a bracket stating the name of the test and any necessary details (for example, Chi Squared, 2 d.f.,  $p < 0.05$ ). It is normally sufficient to give probabilities to two decimal places and to measure significance against 5% and 1% thresholds. Where possible, effect size should also be stated.

## **Discussion**

The discussion section should revisit the hypotheses in light of the findings, stating clearly what was supported by the evidence (and what was not). Unexpected findings should be explored in more detail, with care taken to distinguish between surprises that arose from problems in the method and those that might be attributable to some unanticipated cause.

## **Conclusions**

The conclusion should re-state what motivated the study and what was investigated. The main findings of the study should then be given. The remainder of the conclusions should focus on the implications of this, with reference to the research reviewed at the outset of the paper. It may also be appropriate to identify further studies that could be conducted, particularly where these address shortcomings in the work or issues identified in this study.

## **References**

These should be listed in the standard format:

Author, A. & Author, B. (Date) Title of article, *Title of journal*, Volume, page start – page end.

Author, A. (Date) *Title of book* (Place of publication, Publishing company).

Author, A. (Date) Title of chapter, in A. Editor A. (Ed) *Title of book* (Place of publication, Publishing company).

Author, A. (Date) *Title of technical report or other document* (Place of publication, Institution or other producing organisation).

Where references include online elements, cite them in the following format:

Organisation (n.d. – short for No Date) Available online: [www.URL](http://www.URL), late accessed date.

Author, A. (Date) *Title of technical report or other document* (Place of publication, Institution or other producing organisation). Available online: [www.URL](http://www.URL), last accessed date.