
Comment

Researchmanship or How to Write a Dissertation in Clinical Psychology Without Really Trying

1. Skim through the paragraph headings and summaries of articles in the last couple of issues of the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, the *Journal of Projective Techniques*, and *Journal of Personality*. This is known as *surveying the literature*.

2. Select the measurement device most frequently used in recent work (preferably one that is self-administering and requires no effort to score or interpret, like the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale). This assures your study of *timeliness*, *topical relevance*, and *publishability*.

3. Find some other fashionable instrument or procedure with which the first has never been correlated, also preferably one that gives a quantitative, objectively derived score. State that this score will be adopted as a measure of *self-actualization*, or some other fine sounding and not too easily defined concept, and note that, when you say "self-actualization," you mean it only in the restricted sense of your test's score. This puts your work on a sound *operational basis*.

4. Get a group of subjects—any old subjects who happen to be available. Divide them into an experimental and a control group, taking elaborate precautions to match them for mean age and years of schooling, whether these variables have anything to do with your problem or not. This procedure solves all of the problems of *experimental design*.

5. Give the two tests to both groups, scaring hell out of the experimental group by solemnly assuring them that your dependent variable is a test of intelligence, leadership, innate decency, and sexual potency and that they have all scored below second percentile and you are sorry but you feel honor bound to report them to the dean. This process, called *experimentally manipulating the independent variable*, is really good clean fun because after the papers are handed in you tell them that it was just a little trick, all for science.

6. Then you correlate X with Y under your experimental and control conditions, reporting the coefficient and its PE to four decimal places. This shows you to be a *rigorous, mathematically exact* sort of scientist.

7. If your correlations are not quite different enough, rescrutinize the data to make sure that you have not inadvertently included subjects who were *insufficiently*

motivated, and eliminate the ones who were fouling up the results.

8. Now write it all up, predicting whatever finding you happen to get, which makes it permissible for you to use one-tailed tests of significance throughout. Make it as long, ponderous, and dull as possible; dedicate it jointly to your spouse and your advisor, "without whose help this work could not have been completed," and you are in.

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Uniformity of Style in Professional Writing During the First Century

As one concerned with teaching scientific writing to graduate students in psychology, the present writer has advocated strongly (*Science*, 1958, 127, 1458-1459) the uniformity of style expressed in the APA's *Publication Manual*. The elimination of idiosyncracies and carelessness from term papers and theses certainly is as desirable as their absence in professional journals and provides good training for the preparation of articles for publication.

To graduate students, however, APA style seems to represent, among other things, stultifying rigidity, the height of anxiety reducing compulsivity, the severity of a harsh superego, and the epitome of the D_a personality. As is apparent, these petulant remarks have been uttered by students in clinical psychology classes. However, such emotions are probably shared by experimentalists and statisticians as well as by their more qualitatively minded colleagues.

Many graduate students have expressed the further thought that style manuals are a new straight jacket for insuring modern conformity and extinguishing the creative spark of individuality. This thought is incorrect entirely.

The exactness demanded in professional writing and the absolute assurance of the advantages of uniformity in style can be traced back to the extraordinary care with which Jewish scribes transmitted their sacred writings. In talmudic works the most exacting procedural rules were established, determining for all a uniformity of style. Between A.D. 90 and 100, a synod, convened at Jamnia, established instructions in various matters of form. A list of these standardized procedures has been presented by Allegro in his *The Dead*