

ATPS Conference October 2016

Psychology Research Assignment

A personal commentary by Simon Robinson

Comments from
SQA

Plain and left shifted

Comments from Simon
With help from others – I owe you!
And apologies to egg-sucking grannies.

Italicised and right-shifted

Context:

Course assessment — Coursework

Review performance of the assignment post diet 2016 and the suitability of the revised assignment briefs for Higher, and any changes emerging from this will be for implementation in session 2016/17.

Psychology Review Report May 2016



Simples!

In some cases candidates over-complicated their designs with multiple research variables under investigation.

So stick to the brief-or-its-alternative and keep it straightforward.



Some candidates produced rather 'formulaic' assignments with apparent similarities within cohorts.

Share the marking criteria but ensure individual candidates write their own way.

There were a number of assignments with ethical breaches

Which has been raised before: no under 16s and stick to BPS guidelines.

Ethics is 10% of the final grade so get the guidance right!

a number of candidates ... included an 'abstract', which is not a requirement of this assignment and is not awarded any marks.

That's old Higher and uses up the word limit.

there were some candidates incorrectly using the terms 'relationship,' 'prove' and 'significance'

'correlation,' 'support' and only if supported with a statistical test

Candidates demonstrated clear strengths in the discussion section of the assignment and, in particular, the evaluation of their primary research.

So it's not just the design/method.



Many candidates did not clearly show the link between previous research described and the formulation of their aim and research hypothesis. Candidates should demonstrate how previous research has informed the design of their research.

Like the Unit 1 assessment criterion that links the topic, approach and theory.

Methods sections of a large number of assignments were poorly written with candidates listing materials and procedures instead of describing with enough detail to enable replication.

Ethical guidelines need explaining in context, not just listing

While results' sections generally demonstrated clear ability in displaying of results and analysing data, some candidates appeared to find interpreting results in relation to their research hypothesis demanding.

Make that statement of whether the results support or reject the hypothesis (which candidates won't do from their Science experience).





Many candidates did not clearly show the link between previous research described and the formulation of their aim and research hypothesis. Candidates should demonstrate how previous research has informed the design of their research.

Hypothesis as tIVaDV or tCoVaAcoCoVaB

Then clearly re-state the same variables in the method and ensure these same variables are table headings and graph axis labels.

(This might be very Sciences-informed!)

Methods sections of a large number of assignments were poorly written with candidates listing materials and procedures instead of describing with enough detail to enable replication.

Encourage the use of sub-headings to help structure and completion of the method to target the available marks.

Full and detailed description of the materials used though provide originals in appendix.

Ethical guidelines need explaining not just listing

While results' sections generally demonstrated clear ability in displaying of results and analysing data, some candidates appeared to find interpreting results in relation to their research hypothesis demanding.

*Ensure the same variables are table headings and graph axis labels.
Check and work backwards from graph to table to method to hypothesis.*

The candidate must produce the report in the style and format of a psychological report. The format of the report should follow a conventional style, ie title, contents page, introduction, methods, results, discussion, references and appendices.

The voice used throughout should be passive: it should be written in the third person and in the past tense.

Is this up for discussion?



The report should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words long, excluding references, footnotes and appendices.

Which is about 5 sides of A4 type with maybe as many again as appendices for standardised instructions, consent and debrief forms, materials, raw results and references

The candidate must provide the word count for the completed report,

On the candidate cover sheet

If the word count exceeds the maximum by 10%, a penalty will be applied.

General Assessment Information 2015

Understanding Standards materials December 2015

Contents page

Introduction

Ensure the supporting research is relevant to the topic of the assignment.
Link all the research together in the aim.

Method

Clear description and explanation as necessary
Full ethical consideration





Contents page – leave it until last.

Introduction

No Null Hypothesis required (old Higher)

Method

Use sub-headings to maintain structure and completion.

Results

*IV and DV from method become headings and labels – look for agreement .
Only tabulate what is to be plotted (2 column table) – everything else into the
appendix.*

Make that comment about the results supporting or rejecting the hypothesis.

Can we debate the place of Excel and statistics?

We aren't assessing mathematical and drawing skills.

Candidates still need to select and label the right type of graph.

Excel lines of best fit can have an R^2 value shown to support a correlation.

Who does statistics long-hand?

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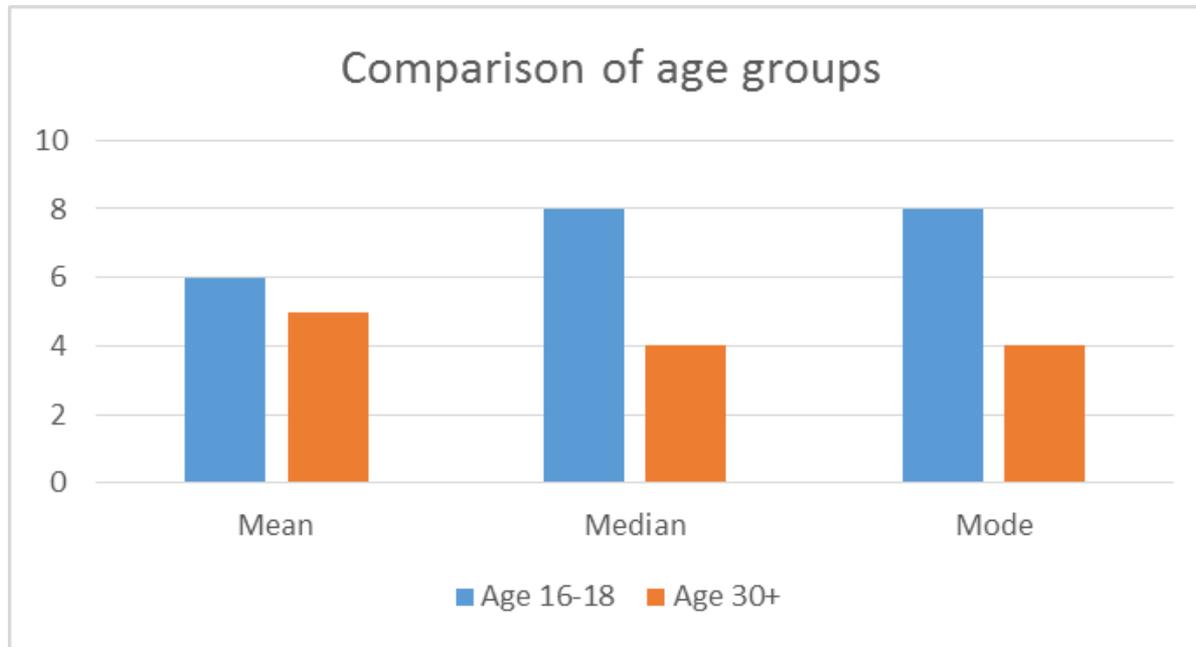
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The aim of this study was to find if there is a correlation between how unattractive an animal is and how feared the animal is. The hypothesis was that the more unattractive an animal is the more feared it will be. The null hypothesis was that there will be no correlation between how attractive an animal is and how feared it is.

Given the previous studies in mirror-tracing random forms by O'Boyle and Hoff (1987), the hypotheses was that females would be neater and therefore score higher on average on a measure of mirror drawing skill.

All participants were consenting adults aged 16, and over, that were told the true purpose of the study before and after this survey took place to ensure they were giving informed consent. They were all approached in a honest and straight forward manner. They were not deceived in any way and were informed of their withdrawal and confidentiality rights.

It was clear they could withdraw during the study or request their data not to be included in the final report. This study was in no way harmful to them, neither physically nor psychologically. As they all are acquaintances of the researcher, there would be no problem should any participant need to seek future feedback.



The results from both the average table and the scatter graph show that there is clearly a relationship between age and levels of prejudice, refuting the null hypothesis.

The results of this experiment may not be valid as they may have been affected by participant bias. All of the participants knew the teacher and may not have wanted to offend him. In addition to this, it could be possible that some participants may have known the teacher's age prior to the experiment or may have known facts about the teacher which would have allowed them to make an educated guess.

Although this study mimicked previous research for design and sampling methods, there were a few differences. All the previous studies based their research on the Life Satisfaction Scale survey (Diener et al, 1985) which composed of only five questions. This questionnaire seemed extremely basic while mainly geared towards the participants present circumstances.

