

Writing up the Research

CHAPTER

13

What You Should Know!

At this point the reader has been introduced to all of the steps for conducting a research study. Collecting the data is only half of the battle for many researchers. Writing the results for presentation or publication can often cause anxiety for the first-time researcher and the seasoned veteran alike. Following the steps offered in this chapter should make the task of writing the results easier and less daunting. After completing this chapter, the reader should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the purpose of the title page and describe its structure.
2. Explain the purpose of the abstract and describe its contents.
3. Explain the purpose of the introduction and describe its contents.
4. Explain the purpose of the literature review and describe its contents.
5. Explain the purpose of the methodology section and describe its contents.
6. Explain the purpose of the results section and describe its contents.
7. Explain the purpose of the conclusions section and describe its contents.
8. Explain the purpose of the references and describe their structure.
9. Explain the purpose of tables and figures and describe their contents.
10. Explain the purpose of appendices and describe their contents.

The Research Paper

The topic has been chosen, the research design implemented, and the data collected and analyzed. Now one thinks, "Here comes the hard part." For many people, students and scholars alike, conducting the research is seen as

the easy or fun part, and they think it would be great if someone else could handle writing the study. Experience suggests that students, in particular, embrace the tasks of designing and collecting the data, fear the analyses, and loathe having to provide a written explanation. Procrastination can be a problem at the beginning of a project (i.e., trying to decide what to do) and at the end (i.e., trying to decide how to organize and write the research paper). However, because the written project is generally the required final goal, whether fulfilling a course requirement or attempting to get the study published, it must be taken as seriously as the research itself. Keep in mind, the transition from data to words is not as difficult as it may seem (Bachman & Schutt, 2008; Bickman & Rog, 2009; Kline, 2009; Morgan, Reichert, & Harrison, 2002).

Because each person has his or her own writing style, the authors will not attempt to tell the reader how to go about writing. They do, however, suggest an order for one's paper and the components that should be included. The basic order should be title page, abstract, introduction, methodology, results, conclusions, references, and appendices. This chapter provides not only an overview of what should be included within each of these components, but also an American Psychological Association (APA) writing style example from a previously unpublished paper. Before writing a final paper, the writer should consult the most current writing manual of the style that is to be used (e.g., the APA style manual was in its sixth edition as of the revision of this text).

The Title Page

The title of a research paper, article, thesis, or dissertation should tell the reader in clear and concise terms what the research is about. Often, individuals who are perusing journals or article abstracts do not have (or do not take) the time to read the abstracts. The title is what draws their attention to the paper as possibly being of interest to them. The author's identity and affiliation then follow. If the research has been funded by an external organization, this information is also indicated on the title page. The journal, organization, or instructor to whom the completed research is being submitted may have specific requirements as to how this page is to be structured. An example of a title page can be found in Box 13-1.

Abstract

The abstract is a summary or synopsis of the information being presented in the paper. The abstract presents the paper's major arguments, describes the methods used, and may provide key points of any analysis results (if applicable). An example of an abstract can be found in Box 13-2. Note that

Example of a Title Page**Personality Testing of Police Candidates:
What's Being Used and Why**

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Box 13-2

Example of an Abstract

Despite the current number of states that require psychological screening for police candidates, there is no consistent process. The lack of a consistent or standardized process has been blamed for some police candidates being rejected by one psychologist only to be approved by another psychologist. This presentation offers results from a national study examining what clinical psychologists are using to conduct the pre-employment psychological assessment and their reasons for the use.

this abstract is limited to one paragraph. Generally, the abstract is between 100 and 250 words in length.

The Introduction

This section varies in length, depending on whether there is a page limit for the article and how much information is available on the topic. Regardless of length, this section needs to establish the research problem, the literature that supports its existence, and the reason to research the problem.

The introduction and literature review may be contained within one section or broken into two sections. The researcher uses the introduction to present the topic and research question to the reader and to inform the reader about what to expect from the paper. This introduction is followed by the literature review, in which the writer offers a body of support for the research.

In some cases, there may be very little support; if so, that fact must be acknowledged. In other cases, the writer has to decide how to limit the extensive amount of evidence that is available. Finally, the literature review section should end with a summary paragraph that indicates what research is being described and how it was accomplished. An example can be found in Box 13-3.

Box 13-3

Example of an Introduction and Literature Review

According to authoritative sources (Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, 2009; Reeves & Goldberg, 1996) there are more than nineteen thousand police agencies in the United States employing more than one million full time police officers (Crime in the United States, 2008; Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online, 2008; State and Local Law Enforcement Statistics, 2008), a sizable part of the entire population of the United States. Moreover, any individual in the United States could potentially interact with a police officer on any given day. Therefore, it could be argued that the psychological characteristics of those selected to become police officers are or should be of importance to every individual in this country. It follows that those who evaluate the psychological characteristics of police officers, along with the process used, should be the best available.

Moreover, being a police officer is a difficult career (Alpert, Dunham, & Stroshine, 2005; Birzer & Roberson, 2006; Koper, 2004; Orrick, 2008). Police officers frequently deal with the more negative aspects of human nature and often must do so with a non-emotional or objective approach, while deeply constrained by law and policy (see e.g., Buetler, Nussbaum, & Meredith, 1988; Dantzker, 2005; Koper, 2004; Orrick, 2008; Varela, Scogin, & Vipperman, 1999). As Buetler et al. (1988) argued, the unique nature of policing demands a selection process to find the individuals who are capable of coping with the demands of police work in a satisfactory manner. Hargrove and Hiatt (1989) noted that police officers have constant contact with people and are often in volatile situations; thus, they concluded the assessment of an applicant's interpersonal skills is important in the screening process. Issues of police use of force, corruption, and suicide raise questions about the psychological well-being of those who become police officers (Cochrane, Tett, & Vandecreek, 2003). Finally, Tanigoshi, Kontos, and Remley (2008) suggested law enforcement is one of the most dangerous, stressful, and health-threatening occupations in existence.

It is evident that those selected to become police officers should be thoroughly screened through pre-employment evaluations prior to being hired as police officers or police officer trainees (Corey & Honig, 2008; Miller, 2006; Parisher, Rios, & Reilly, 1979; Reiser, 1973, 1982; Scrivner & Kurke, 1995). However, while psychological testing in screening potential police recruits was first recommended and used on a very limited basis as early as the 1930s, and apparently is popular today (Aumiller et al., 2007; Corey & Honig, 2008; Craig, 2005; Curren, 1998; Dantzker, 2005; Miller, 2006b; Parisher, Rios, & Reilly, 1979; Reiser, 1973, 1982; Scrivner & Kurke, 1995; Zakhary, 2007), use of psychologists for pre-employment police screening first gained the most attention when it was recommended by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973). Standard 20.1 Entry level Physical and Psychological Examinations states

Every police agency should require all applicants for police officer positions to undergo thorough entry-level physical and psychological exams to insure detection of conditions that might prevent maximum performance under rigorous physical and mental stress.

- I. Every agency, by 1975, should furnish and require, as a condition of employment, that each applicant pass through a physical and psychological exam. This exam should...
 - c. Include a psychological evaluation conducted under the supervision of a **licensed, competent psychologist or psychiatrist** (bold added by author) (p. 498)

Since then, it appears the number of police agencies requiring psychological pre-employment evaluations increased for many years (Hickman & Reaves, 2006), reaching a total of about 67% of all police agencies by 2004, the latest year for which

such information is available (Hickman & Reaves, 2006; IADLEST, 2005). According to the same sources, just over half (26) of all states required statewide pre-employment testing of police recruit candidates.

A study by Cochrane, Tett, and Vandecreek (2003) of 355 police agencies determined that more than 90% of those agencies required a psychological evaluation of applicants. However, they also found that a majority of the 90% were not following public policy or psychological assessment guidelines and recommendations previously proposed by commissions, such as using psychologists or testing for personality (Cochrane et al., 2003). In their 2006 study Hickman and Reaves found that only 67% of local police agencies required pre-employment psychological evaluations and only 26% used a personality inventory as part of the screening. In fact, the majority of agencies using a personality inventory indicated it as a separate category from the psychological evaluations.

It appears that a substantial number of law enforcement agencies are using pre-employment screening in officer hiring processes. This is certainly in keeping with the findings of Macan, Avedon, Paese, and Smith (1995) which identified the attraction of the most qualified applicants to be a key goal of any organization. However, they observed that research on police applicant selection has predominantly focused on psychometric selection. Furthermore, they concluded that the assessments tended to rule applicants out rather than screen them in. That is, the assessment tools used were intended to eliminate clearly unsuitable candidates rather than to identify those likely to perform satisfactorily as law enforcement officers. Consequently, it appears hiring the most qualified applicants would rely, in part, on systematic and appropriate use of 2006; Rostow & Davis, 2004).

There is no nationally recognized and generally followed set of recommendations as to what questionnaire(s) or evaluative protocols should be used in doing pre-employment screening of law enforcement officers, whether for "screening-out" those who are psychologically unfit for such work or for identifying and "screening-in" those candidates who are likely to perform satisfactorily in the role of police officer (Dantzker, 2005; Dantzker & McCoy, 2006; Decker, 2006; Dempsey & Forst, 2007; Peak, 2008 Rostow & Davis, 2004). Therein lies a problem and a potential means to begin solution of that problem.

This paper presents findings from a national study of psychologists who self-identified as providing services to police agencies, to include pre-employment screening, as either an in-house psychologist or full-time consultant. Despite the small sample size, the breadth of the sample suggests a consistency throughout the country supporting the current literature of no agreed upon means of conducting police pre-employment psychological screening.

Methodology

Despite the relevance and importance of the introductory section, one should consider the methodology section as the mainstay of the paper. The writer should discuss the hypothesis or hypotheses, the research design, and the data-gathering technique. The methodology section describes the research population, the sampling frame, and the questionnaire or other methods used to gather the data. Within this section the researcher can fully explain where, when, how, and why

the data were acquired and analyzed. The methodology section may be written up in one complete section, or it may be subdivided with different sections focused on specific elements of the methodology, such as the research design, hypotheses, variables, and analysis. An example can be found in **Box 13-4**.

Results

Whether the results are presented in a separate section or part of the methodology section is a matter of preference. Either way, in this section, the writer describes the sample's characteristics, the statistical techniques used, the analysis results, and whether the results supported the hypotheses. The results section includes any tables, graphs, and charts used to describe the data. An example can be found in **Box 13-5**.

Box 13-4

Example of a Methodology Section

While there are a multitude of methods available to conduct research, one of the most popular social science approaches is through survey research (Banyard & Grayson, 2009; Dantzker & Hunter, 2006; Gillham, 2009; Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). This study used the survey method with a modern twist, use of the Internet. The questionnaire used was created specifically for this research focus and was made available to potential respondents through SurveyMonkey.Com, which has been used by the American Psychological Association itself to conduct survey research. The data was analyzed using descriptive and comparative statistical methods.

The data for this study was collected through a questionnaire created specifically for this research. It consisted of thirty-three items accessible through the Internet site of SurveyMonkey.com. The items were related to the independent and dependent variables.

Box 13-5

Example of a Results Section

The target sample was a combination of individuals randomly drawn from members of the APA belonging to Division 12 ($n = 1000$), and all members at the time of the Police and Public Health section of Division 18 ($n = 204$) and all U.S. members of the Police Psychology section of the IACP ($n = 188$). The total number of individuals contacted via e-mail with a request to participate in the study was 1392.

From among the 1392, 39 individuals responded by e-mail stating that they would not participate in the study and 94 e-mails were returned as undeliverable. Subtracting the non-participants and undeliverable e-mails produced a respondent sample of 1259. Of the 1259, 228 (18%) individuals responded to the survey with 181 (79%) fully completed questionnaires. Among the 181 completed surveys, 77 (43%) met the specific criteria sought for comparison with 40 (52%) being identified as Clinical Psychologists and 37 (48%) falling under the Police Psychologist label. Thirty states were represented with two respondents indicating they provided their services nationally.

To maintain anonymity a minimum number of descriptors were obtained. The four of main interest in this study were gender, organizational membership, years providing services to police agencies, and the type of agency served. Male respondents were dominant (80%), 57% belonged to both APA and IACP, the majority (60%) had been providing these services for over 10 years, and the majority (63%) provided these services to more than one type of agency. (See Table 13-1)

A primary question of interest regarding the pre-screening psychological process is whether it should be for screening out candidates or screening them in. In response to ranking the reasons for the evaluation 71% ranked to screen out as the number one reason while only 21% ranked to screen in as the number one reason. (See Table 13-2)

The main question of this study was what evaluative measures the respondents used and the reason for its use. Based on the literature four major categories of measures were represented: intelligence, aptitude, personality, and projectives. For each category an "other" response was also available. Twelve specific measures, divided among the four categories, were provided. Among the twelve measures, only five were identified as being used, four of which were personality measures. The other specific measure was an intelligence test. As for the reasons for their use, respondents had seven choices: research support, predictability, mandated, cost, job validity, norming, and other. The choices were collapsed into two categories: research support and other.

Beginning with intelligence testing, 13 respondents indicated they use the WAISIII/IV, 12 of whom do so because of the research support. Twenty-six respondents indicated using some type of IQ test, 21 because of the research support. For aptitude, only four respondents indicated using any type of measure, but no reason was given. (See Table 13-3)

Personality testing has the longest history within police psychological screening. The MMPI has been the most written about and most often cited for its use in police screening. Results from this study continue to support its popularity. Among the four specific personality measures, the MMPI was indicated as being used by 50 respondents (over 60%) with 46 choosing research support as their reason for its use. The next most used measure was the CPI. Despite that the four measures provided tended to be among the most often cited in research 26 respondents indicated using a personality test not listed such as the Inwald Personality Inventory which is one of the few normed specifically for law enforcement/policing. Finally 25 respondents indicated using a short sentence completion test because of research support while five use a projective measure. (See Table 13-3)

The last question of interest was whether respondents would support the creation of a standardized approach to conducting pre-employment screening. Respondents were given five choices: Would Support it, Great Idea, Reasonable Idea, Mixed Feelings, and Terrible Idea. Interestingly only 17 (23%) thought it was a terrible idea. (See Table 13-4)

Conclusions

The final section of the body of the research paper is usually the conclusion. Generally, this section offers insights about the research, discusses whether it produced the expected results, and notes any possible problems. This section can also be used to discuss implications of the research and to provide a forum for suggestions for future related research. Some authors choose to divide this information into

Box 13-6

Example of a Conclusion

Despite the amount of research published related to police candidate pre-employment screening, there still seems to lack research with a strong direction toward consensus and/or standardization of the process. What should be used and why remains a hot topic for debate. This study's results tended to support previous research showing an array of items used but primarily because of the research support which doesn't necessarily prove the item is the best measure to use for police pre-employment screening. Furthermore, there is the question of whether this process should be one of screening out or screening in candidates. The measures identified in this study are primarily used for screening out which leads to the question, would these same measures adequately work to screen in candidates? Obviously, more research is required perhaps beginning with answering the question, to screen in or screen out. Answering this question would certainly assist in addressing what measures should be used for the process and whether standardizing the process is even possible.

two sections: discussion and conclusions. There is no wrong or right here; it is simply a matter of preference. An example can be found in Box 13-6.

References or Bibliography

Unless the topic has never been addressed in research before (which is unlikely), there are always some sources that help to support the research. These sources are what help establish the literature review. When citing other sources—whether quoting, paraphrasing, or simply as an outlet for affirming what is already known—the sources should be recognized. Sources should be noted throughout the paper using various citation methods and at the end in the form of a reference list or bibliography. The format depends on the source to which the paper is being submitted (e.g., publication, instructor, organization). Failing to cite sources can lead to charges of plagiarism, which is the act of presenting someone else's work as your own; every writer should strive to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism.

Most papers written for criminal justice and criminology follow the APA style for reference citing in the text and at the end of the paper. Reviewing the introduction section, one observes how two different formats are used. One is for paraphrasing or using someone else's ideas and giving credit (name[s] of the author[s], publication date) and the other is for direct quotes (name[s] of the author[s], publication date, page number[s]). For the reference list, only those sources cited in the body of the text should be included. The information listed should include the name(s) of the author(s); year of publication; name of the publication (for articles, the article title comes first, followed by the publication title); and publication information (for books, the city, state, and name of publisher; for journal articles, the volume and issue number and the page numbers). An example can be found in Box 13-7.

Example of a Reference List

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Box 13-7

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Tables and Figures

Most likely, the research paper includes at least one table or figure. As previously noted, these items can be placed within the text, kept separate and noted where they should be inserted, or placed at the end of the paper. Regardless of their location, tables and figures need to be clear as to their content and readily understandable. Tables 13-1 through 13-4 are from the example paper illustrated throughout this chapter.

TABLE 13-1**Sample Demographics**

Variable	Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender		
Female	22	29.3
Male	53	79.7
Membership		
APA	27	35.5
IACP	06	07.9
Both	43	56.6
Years Providing Psych Services		
< 1	03	03.9
1-5 yrs	15	19.7
6-10 yrs	13	17.1
> 10 yrs	45	59.2
Types of Agencies Served		
Municipal	17	22.7
County	07	22.7
State	04	05.3
Combo	47	62.7

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TABLE 13-2**Ranking of Reasons for Pre-employment Psych Evaluation**

Order	To Screen Out	To Screen In	Legal	Baseline
(1)	53 (70.7)	15 (20.8)	12 (17.1)	01 (01.5)
(2)	18 (24.0)	26 (36.1)	20 (28.6)	04 (06.1)
(3)	03 (04.0)	22 (30.6)	25 (35.7)	12 (18.2)
(4)	01 (0.13)	09 (12.5)	13 (18.6)	48 (72.7)

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TABLE 13-3**Measure Used and Reason**

Measure	No. that Use	Reason	
		Research	Other ¹
WAISIII/IV	13	12	01
OIT*	26	21	05
OAT**	04	n/r	n/r
MMPI	50	46	04
PAI	31	23	08
16PF	25	18	07
CPI	32	23	09
OPT***	26	17	08
SSCT****	25	20	05
Projective*****	05	n/r	n/r

¹Includes predictability, mandated, cost, validity, norming, and other

*Other Intelligence tests such as the K-Bit, Shipley, Wonderlic, other

**Other Aptitude tests such as ESI, Wonderlic, other

***Other Personality tests such as Hilson, COPS, Inwald, other

****Short Sentence Completion such as Rotter, Sacks, other

*****Rorschach, Edwards, Bender-Gestalt

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TABLE 13-4**Standardization of Evaluation Process**

Response	Frequency	Valid Percent
Would Support It	20	26.7
Great Idea	01	01.3
Reasonable Idea	04	05.1
Mixed Feelings	33	44.0
Terrible Idea	17	22.7

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Appendices

This final section is not a requirement of every paper. However, it is often useful to include a copy of the questionnaire or other tools that should be shared but do not belong in the body of the paper. There are no limitations to the number of appendices a paper can have, except for those established by the instructor or the journal.