

Sample Peer Review  
By [author deleted]  
Reviewer [reviewer deleted]

*Strengths*

- You described your topic area and explained the purpose of the study very clearly.
- Your writing style is professional, yet easy to understand. Good job!
- You balanced the implications of the findings with limitations of the study effectively. I got a nice sense for what you think the study does show as well as its possible flaws.

*Title Page and Other APA Format Notes*

- Your title should describe the study, yours is too general.
- Check what belongs in the page header and the running head (the latter needs to be in all caps).
- Don't write the course or instructor name; only your affiliation is listed below author(s).
- Make sure that you put statistical abbreviations like *M*, *SD*, *t*, *r*, and *p* in italics, and includes *df* in parentheses.
- Round off statistical results to 2 decimal places, but give 3 decimals for *p* values.
- Double-check formatting of all citations (which include each author, year, and page numbers for quotes) and references; there were a lot of little errors in the format of references. For example, you don't need to say where you downloaded a journal article from, and you only list initials for authors' first and middle names.

*Abstract*

- You're allowed 120 words and you wrote fewer. You can expand the abstract to better describe your study.
- You wrote too much about your background and methods, too little about results and nothing about conclusions. Try using 1-2 sentences for each section of the paper (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion).
- Make sure to keep everything in past tense.

*Introduction*

- In the third paragraph on p. 3, it is not clear what "general problem" you are referring to. Is this a theoretical problem or an applied problem, and will your study actually address it?
- On p. 5, your interpretation of the previous findings sounds paradoxical. Can you explain what you see as consistent, and what you see as inconsistent in past results? Do you think this is because of different methods used in the earlier research than more recent research? Is it because of researchers' biases?
- There was not much attention to the theories that have been developed in this area. You listed findings, but didn't connect studies together using any theory.
- Try describing each hypothesis a little more, instead of just listing them all. Are these truly hypotheses, meaning that you predict the presence/absence/direction of a result, or are they more exploratory research questions?

### *Method*

- You don't need a Design subsection here, because your study does not involve multiple factors varied in a complex way. What you wrote here really belongs in the Materials and Procedure subsections.
- In the Participants subsection, don't speculate on characteristics of participants that were not measured. For example, don't guess about age or ethnicity based on college norms.
- Your Materials subsection should describe the types of questions that you created, including a few examples, and the response scales that were used. Then, put the actual questionnaire in an Appendix and cite that for full details. Because two of your questionnaires have been used in published studies, just describe them (number of questions, response scales, scoring rules, reliability and validity) and cite the original authors without using an Appendix to show all questions.
- You might consider combining the Materials and Procedure sections, because they're almost the same thing in a survey study like yours.
- Don't include the consent form or debriefing information in the paper (or in an Appendix); these details are not important in the report. Instead, just say that informed consent was obtained and that participants were debriefed.

### *Results*

- You could organize your statistical results better in two different ways:
  1. Note what hypothesis or research question is being addressed by the analyses.
  2. Don't put them together according to what kind of test you used, but by hypothesis.
- Try writing the results first without any statistics in it, and then go back and put in the numbers where they belong (usually in parentheses and/or at the ends of sentences, separated by commas).
- I think there might be some problems with the analyses that you chose, but I'm not sure. Why are the df different for the t-tests (independent groups) and correlations? (They should be  $N - 2$  for both.)
- I don't think you should have done ANOVAs for the final series of tests, because that requires categories to compare means across. Maybe these should be correlations instead?
- General note on results: It was not usually clear why you ran a test or what the results meant. I'm not always sure of this myself and can't offer much advice, but I think you should double-check this.

### *Discussion*

- You said little about what your results mean. Before you get to the limitations of your study, talk about what you think your study does show. What was learned?
- Some of your limitations are true of all class projects and don't need to be explained in detail. For example, pretty much all of us have small samples of college students, but that's not necessarily as big a problem as you imply. Also, you note that older people or people from other races or ethnic groups might give different answers—do you have any specific reasons to think so, or are you just guessing at random?
- Do you think that your questionnaire gave you reliable and valid data? Is there any way for you to evaluate this? At the very least, you can talk about the possibility that you might have found small correlations because of some measurement error. You talked about possible

bias, but that's different from random error and I think you should mention how each poses a problem, but a different problem.

- Try ending on a more positive note. Most of your Discussion section talks about limitations, but don't you think there was anything of value in your study or its findings? Maybe future studies could improve on this in certain ways? Or, maybe your results will turn out to be correct even though there were problems with the study. I guess what I'm saying is that all studies have problems, but you didn't consider the good aspects of your study or mention what you think anybody can learn from your project.

### *Tables & Figures*

- I liked your table, it was easy to read and understand. Make sure that you follow APA format for your tables. For example, you should give the *SD* for each *M* that you present. Also, line up decimal points in columns.
- I don't think you need figures to show differences between men and women, because there are only two bars in each graph. Instead, you could make one table that shows all of the comparisons between men and women, even those that were not statistically significant.
- The figure for the interaction effect of sex by major area was really helpful. Maybe the caption should explain the dependent variable more? I think it was a score you calculated from a questionnaire, but that was not explained so I didn't know what the numbers on the y axis meant.