**Template for Write-up of Original Research**

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**Exercise:** Analyze and discuss your original research, and think about broader political implications of research on this topic

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**[100 points total]**

**Objective**

Analyze research results and think critically about the implications (and limitations) of your findings. These skills are valuable if you go into a variety of fields that rely on survey or behavior research (political consulting, public health, program evaluation, marketing, etc.). The skills are equally useful for being an informed consumer of research that you read about in the news, in government reports, or in academic publications.

**Before you start**

In this assignment, you’ll analyze a survey experiment that was part of our class’s research survey. Use your group’s contribution as a starting point, but you can feel free to use other sections of the survey and results too if you want. Just be sure that you talk through your expectations and findings in a coherent way.

This assignment is structured similarly to the research articles you presented in class. It is a good way to practice telling others about your own research findings.

Remember that **each student receives a separate grade for this assignment – there is no group component** to this grade. You can collaborate as a group in analyzing the results, but your write-up must be **in your own words**.

**Section 1: Introduction and background research**

To begin, summarize in a sentence or two what is the policy problem or behavioral puzzle that you are focusing on. Why is this issue important? (about 1 paragraph)

***[5 points]***

Then, give a brief literature review (about 2 paragraphs) where you tell your readers what scholars already know about this topic. Note that while you can draw from class readings for this section, you likely will need to conduct some background research. Google Scholar is a good place to start, or you can look up some of the other papers cited in the relevant articles you’ve read for class.

***[5 points]***

Finally, use a paragraph to *briefly* describe the survey experiment you analyze in this paper and to summarize the experiment results (you will go into much more detail later).

***[5 points]***

**Section 2: Describe your experiment**

In a few sentences, describe the hypotheses you wanted to test about 1) the relationship between some treatment and a political outcome (political attention, attitude, action, etc.), and 2) what psychological component you expect to affect this political outcome (bias, heuristics, cognition, emotions, etc.).

***[5 points]***

Next, briefly describe how you designed the treatment in your survey experiment. What did you randomize, and why? What, specifically, is this experiment supposed to test?

What choices or trade-offs did you make in designing your treatment? What concerns do you have that this treatment is really testing what you think it tests?

***[5 points]***

Now, tell the reader what else you measured that is relevant to your hypotheses (key outcomes, key demographics, etc.). How were these variables measured? (You can include question wording as a footnote if you would like.)

***[5 points]***

**Section 3: Share your results**

First tell the reader what kinds of people took your survey, and how many people you studied. What kinds of people *didn’t* take your survey? You can summarize some of the descriptive statistics shown in the survey report (Files -> Final Project).

***[5 points]***

Calculate and report the average outcome value for each treatment group. If you want, report the standard deviation or standard error for each group’s outcome, too (how wide a spread are you seeing across individuals’ responses?).

***[5 points]***

Next, run a t-test where you compare the average outcome for the different treatment categories. Report the result. Is the difference between groups statistically significant? (Can you be 95% confident that there is a real difference between the two groups’ results?)

***[10 points]***

For fun: If you were interested in some kind of interaction, you can talk about how the effects are different for different sub-groups (liberals and conservatives, for example).

You can complete this section just using Excel – no problem. You also can use Stata or R if that’s easier for you. If you use Stata or R and want to run a regression analysis too, this is a great opportunity to practice that skill (and find more interesting relationships)!

Usually the results section will have a chart or table. Including a table with your results (mean and standard error for each group) or a chart helps communicate your findings quickly.

**Section 4: Discuss political implications of your results**

If your results *are not* significant, do you think that this is due to a small sample size (the means are pretty different for the two groups, but the difference isn’t statistically significant), or do you think there really was no treatment effect? If there was no treatment effect, do you think that is because of how you designed the experiment, or because the underlying relationship you hypothesized is wrong?

If your results *are* significant, do you expect to also see these results if you surveyed a more representative sample of the U.S.? Consider whether you expect factors like ideology, geography, age, or education to affect how people respond to your treatment. Why or why not?

***[5 points]***

Regardless of whether you found a significant result or not, what is the implication of your findings for politics? What does it mean for politics that your treatment does or does not affect the outcome you studied?

***[5 points]***

Give an example of a real world situation where people’s attitudes, attention, or behavior would (or wouldn’t) change if they were exposed to a message or policy like what you tested. Basically, what would your treatment and your outcome look like in the real world?

***[5 points]***

Finally, think back to your literature review. Does your finding complement or contradict existing research? Cite a few specific studies to support your points.

***[5 points]***

**Section 5: Propose follow-up research**

This was a first effort at political psychology research. Now, imagine you had a budget of $50,000 and connections that would let you work with any community or population in the U.S. that you want (or globally, for that matter). What is the political treatment you would want to test? What is the outcome you would hope to see? How would you measure this outcome? Cite research justifying why you would expect to see this outcome (you can use some of the citations from earlier in the paper if you want).

***[10 points]***

In conclusion, discuss why this outcome is relevant for politics in 2018: are you hoping to persuade people, energize voters, foster dialogue, etc.? Where is this kind of intervention most likely to work, and how will it change the political landscape?

***[5 points]***

**Extra evaluation criteria *[5 points each]***

* Demonstrates thoughtful analysis and critical thinking
* Communicates ideas clearly in writing
* Meets assignment guidelines