Results Sections

A *Results Section* is an important component an APA-style research report. Your results section is where you present your data, explain your analyses, and briefly interpret them. Results sections oftentimes follow a pretty specific formula:

1. Descriptive statistics

Oftentimes, people begin their Results sections by referring to a table that includes descriptive statistics and correlations for all variables in the study (e.g., "See Table 1 for descriptive statistics and correlations"). You *may* include a correlation table for your study, if appropriate. But you do not have to (e.g., you can include a different table).

2. Briefly review your hypotheses

Very briefly remind readers of your research questions and hypotheses. If you have multiple hypotheses, it can help to give readers an outline of which analyses you are going to perform in order to organize your Results section.

3. Explain your analyses

It's very common to explain to readers specifically how you analyzed your data. If you were graduate students or professional researchers, we'd ask you to describe your regression in technical terms (e.g., "I standardized positive affect and regressed it onto dummy codes for whether someone was alone, with friends, or with their romantic partner. Thus, my analyses captured the standardized difference in positive affect depending on who participants were with."). However, since this is an introductory course, you can give a basic description like, "I used regression to examine standardized differences in positive affect as a function of whether participants were alone, with friends or with romantic partners."

4. Present your results

Present the results of your statistical analyses (e.g., regression) with effect sizes and 95% confidence intervals. Because you are analyzing your data with regression and dummy-coded predictors, you will present your results as a *b* with 95% CI (e.g., $b = 0.20$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.25]). Use plain English when presenting your results, and make sure you clearly describe what each statistic is testing. It can sometimes be useful to include tables when presenting your results! Note that you should *always* describe your results in the past tense (e.g., "Men were taller than women," NOT "Men are taller than women"). You're describing what *was* true in your sample, not necessarily what *is* true about the population.

5. Briefly interpret your findings

You should briefly interpret whether your findings are statistically significant or not—and tell readers in plain English what each result means. You should tell readers whether your statistics supported or failed to support your hypotheses. Do not go beyond a basic summary, though! Speculation on *why* your results turned out similarly to or differently from what you expected should come in your Discussion section. It can sometimes be helpful to include figures when interpreting your findings (you must include at least one figure in your paper).

6. Repeat!

Repeat steps 3-5 for all of your hypotheses

7. Exploratory follow-up analyses

If you want to perform exploratory, follow-up analyses (e.g., including control variables in your models), do so in separate sections, following Steps 3-5 for each exploratory analysis. You do not have to perform exploratory analyses for your study (but you certainly may do so).

Sample Results Narrative

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations for all study variables are presented in Table 1. Replicating previous research, attachment anxiety and avoidance were moderated correlated, r = .34, 95% [.20, .48].

Do Men and Women Differ in Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance?

We hypothesized that, as compared with women, men would be higher in attachment avoidance and lower in attachment anxiety. To analyze our data, we regressed anxiety and avoidance onto gender. Anxiety and avoidance were standardized before being entered into the models. Gender was dummy-coded (0 = women; 1 = men). The parameter estimates from these models can be seen in Table 2.

As can be seen in Figure 1, men were one quarter standard deviation lower in attachment anxiety than were women (b = -0.25, 95% CI [-0.39, -0.11]). Men were not, however, statistically significantly more avoidant than women (b = 0.15, 95% CI [-0.01, 0.20]). Thus, our hypotheses were partially supported. Men were less anxious than women, but they were not necessarily more avoidant.

Exploratory Follow-Up Analyses

For our final series of analyses, we tested whether the associations between gender and attachment anxiety and avoidance could be explained by several control variables. For example, it might be the case that men are older than women and age causes them to be less anxious. Using the same model as above, we included relationship status, relationship length, and age as control variables. All variables were standardized before being entered in the model. Controlling for these three variables did not change our pattern of results (respective *bs* for anxiety and avoidance*:* b = -0.24, 95% CI [-0.38, -0.10; b = 0.14, 95% CI [-0.02, 0.28]). Thus, these variables cannot explain why men and women differ in attachment.