

PSY407 Larger Report - Handout of Full Instructions

Project Overview

Begin by identifying an area of practice that could benefit from the tools and techniques now in our repertoire as applied social scientists. The idea is to look for opportunities in the goings-on of organizations around you (a public organization, a private one, a nonprofit in your community, a student group—any place where you see the potential for science to improve operations). Summarize the current state of affairs and describe ongoing operations in that place. Then explain how the administrators of this organization/place could adjust or improve their operations using social-behavioral science.

The improvement you describe could draw on a body of literature (a series of findings) from psychology, or it could motion to incorporate certain analytical techniques from the psychological tradition. *Be specific*. One idea is to initiate the measuring or quantifying something that has previously been going un-measured. You could also propose to use of some kind of data that are currently being collected but not analyzed or used to serve a particular end (e.g., to evaluate how well the organization is meeting a goal, or to understand the feedback of those who use the organization's services, etc.). The most important thing to do here is to *be specific*—about your proposed improvement, and the methods behind it.

All of your reports should have **at least three** empirical papers from peer-reviewed journals supporting them along the way. These can be methods papers, original research reports, meta-analyses, or conceptual perspectives—but all must be published in peer-reviewed journals. Cite all work used to make your claims (if you make a lot of empirical claims in your writing, then you should have far more than three citations).

Nuts and Bolts

The expected length is 3-5 pages (not including references). All work should follow APA guidelines.

Outline

Part I (~1-2 pages) – Provide essential background, summarize the specific organization/workplace/area of operations you will focus on. Set the stage for the idea/plan you will propose later in the paper. Introduce “the problem.”

Part II (~2-3 pages) – Present “the solution.” Outline your suggestion/proposed improvement. This improvement should be one that leverages social/behavioral science (either a body of work that can weigh in on the problem, and/or any specific methods that could be used to improve the way things are done). The most important thing to do in this section is *get specific*. Provide enough information so that someone could take your report and present to someone who works in the area you've chosen.

Part of this section should be sure to outline any key limitations, contingences, or other barriers that could stand in the way of smooth implementation of your idea. Consider downsides and unintended outcomes (be realistic). If applicable, describe what kind of ongoing monitoring and analysis plan might accompany your proposed change (i.e., how could one test if your proposed change is working?) Get specific about measurements, and the practical constraints that surround measurement. The goal is to form a proposal that could feasibly be carried out by a group of people (like us) given moderate funding and support.

Example Topics

**In class we will discuss more examples (& ideas that students bring forth).*

- Ex1: New York Philharmonic and their implementation of blind auditions.
<https://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2013/oct/14/blind-auditions-orchestras-gender-bias>
- Ex2: Measuring different signage posted on receptacles around campus by the UO Zero-Waste Program, and its effects on proper sorting of recyclables.
- Ex3: In conjunction with a nonprofit or student group that is seeking donations, one could propose evaluating three different versions of an email (a direct messaging campaign), perhaps basing the content of these different versions in the psychological literature. Measurement could indicate if one version of the email text appears more effective than others at eliciting donation dollars.

Rubric

Criteria	Points	Section
Defining the problem: what is not working or what could be better, what is the <i>status quo</i> ?	20 points	P1
Highlighting the space for opportunity: why is this a tractable problem that could be improved using the social science toolkit?	15 points	P1
Quality of your solution: Innovativeness of proposed solution, originality of idea, demonstrated ability to draw on sources and construct a well-considered, practical, and informed proposal that is concrete and specific	30 points	P2
Discussion of limitations, contingences, or other practical barriers that could stand in the way of smooth implementation of your idea	15 points	P2
Willingness to draw on scholarly research and support your ideas; to provide evidence to claims and to incorporate background theory and methods	10 points	P1 and P2
Writing style, smooth transitions, clear communication, proper grammar and APA format	10 points	P1 and P2
Total	100	