THESE MATERIALS ARE EXAMPLES

They are intended to provide guidance for completing and organizing your application materials.

Example of a Research Proposal
For an Experimental Study
Consent Form

I hereby agree to participate in research that will be conducted by Chris Student, an undergraduate student in psychology. In this research, I will receive a packet of material containing some demographic questions, an inventory measuring some personality characteristics, and a story to read. After reading the story, I will be asked to complete a survey concerning the main character of the story.

The research will take place in one of the research rooms on the third floor of Amador Hall and will require 30 minutes of my time.

I understand that I will receive one half-hour of credit toward satisfying the Psychology Department’s research participation requirement by participating in this study.

I understand that I may not personally benefit from participating in this research, but it is hoped that the research may lead to a better understanding of relations between people.

Although some questions may make me feel uncomfortable, I understand that I may skip any question. I also understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time without any penalty other than loss of research credit and that the investigator may discontinue my participation at any time.

This information was explained to me by Chris Student. I understand that she will answer any questions I may have now or later about this research. Chris Student can be reached at Chris@gmail.com.

Signature: _______________________________ Date: ________________
Procedure

The purpose of this study is to assess the judged romantic and sexual interest on the part of the male character toward the female in a vignette based on a combination of three independent variables. The experimental design is a 2x2x2 between subjects design.

Prior to reading the vignettes, the NEO Five Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrea, 1992) will be administered to everyone. This inventory measures the five factors of Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Once all of the data have been collected, participants will be scored on the Extraversion and Openness scales and these scores will then be recoded on the basis of median splits into those who are more or less extraverted and those who are more or less open.

Participants will then read a vignette in which a female has apparently dropped a book while she was walking and a male picks it up and returns it to her. One independent variable is contained in the vignette itself. In one version of the story, during the return of the book the female provides behavioral cues that she might be romantically interested in the male (making eye contact followed by averting her eyes, touching her hair). In the other version of the story, the female acts in a neutral manner (no behavioral cues present) when she receives the book. The second independent variable in the study is the level of extraversion of the participants: they are coded as more extraverted and less extraverted. The third independent variable in the study is the level of openness of the participants: they are coded as more open and less open.

The dependent variable in this study is the amount of romantic and sexual interest that participants attribute to the male character portrayed in the vignette. A set of 14 questions concerning the feelings and impressions of the male in the story toward the female were developed by the present researcher. Responses to the items are assessed on a 5-point summative response scale using end-of-scale anchors of Very Little and Very Much.

When students enter the research room and are seated, the researcher will distribute consent forms to sign. After signing and returning them to the researcher, the consent forms will be placed together in a separate envelope to ensure that they cannot be traced back to the experimental materials of particular participants. Following that, the packet of materials will be provided to the participants who will be instructed to not place their name or any other identifying mark on the materials. This packet will include in the following order: a demographic sheet (see Attachment 1), the NEO Five Factor Inventory (see Attachment 2), one of the two vignettes (see Attachment 3) the order of which will be determined by a randomized block process, and finally the researcher-developed dependent variable survey (see Attachment 4).

After participants have completed all of their tasks, the packets will be collected and placed together in a different envelope from the one containing the consent forms; this will ensure that the packets will not be able to be linked to specific participants. The researcher will then orally debrief the participants, answer any questions they may have at that time, and hand out the debriefing page for participants to keep. Everyone will then be thanked for their participation and will be dismissed.
Debriefing

Purpose
The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of three independent variables: the level of extraversion of the participants, the level of openness of the participants, and the presence or absence of behavior cues provided by the female in the story to suggest that she may have been romantically interested in the male. The variable that was to be affected by these factors, the dependent variable, was the judged amount of romantic and sexual interest attributed to the male in the story as measured by the 14-item survey you completed after reading the vignette.

Hypotheses and Supporting Research
Research by Garcia and White (2007) indicated that their participants were more inclined to attribute sexual interest to story characters based on the nature of the conversation that the characters had. In the present research, I wanted to see if behavioral cues could produce a similar effect. I also explored the possibility that some personality characteristics of the participants, namely extraversion and openness, could also affect the degree to which readers of the story would attribute romantic and sexual feelings to the male character.

Prior to reading the vignette, you completed the NEO Five Factor Inventory. Two of the characteristics that it measures are extraversion and openness. People who are more extraverted are sociable and enjoy social gatherings; those who are more introverted are more reserved and tend to plan ahead. People who are more open are curious and have less conventional values; those who are less open are more conservative and prefer the familiar to the novel. I hypothesized that participants who are both more open and more extraverted would attribute more sexual interest to the male when the female exhibited behavioral cues of her possible interest.

To test my hypotheses, I used vignettes—short stories that were different only in whether or not the female provided behavioral cues of possible romantic interest. Once all of the data are collected, I will score the extraversion and openness scales and divide the sample into those who are more and less extraverted and more and less open. The data analysis will involve pooling the data from the participants. I will then perform the statistical analysis to test my hypothesis.

Psychological Services
If you have experienced any personal distress caused by the content or materials in this research and want to talk to someone, counseling services are available through the WELLness Center free of charge. Please contact Student Health and Counseling Services at 916-278-6461 for assistance.

Contact Information
The results of this study will be available the last week of the current semester. If you would like further information about this study or have questions regarding this study, please contact Chris@gmail.com at your convenience.
Example of a Research Proposal
For a Non-Experimental Study
Consent Form

I hereby agree to participate in research that will be conducted by Chris Student, a graduate student in psychology, and Pat Faculty, a professor of psychology. In this research, I will receive a packet of material containing some demographic questions and some inventories pertaining to such topics as my important life goals, how I approach some life experiences, how I feel about some experiences, and how I might react to certain situations I may encounter in my daily life.

The research will take place in one of the research rooms on the third floor of Amador Hall and will require one hour of my time.

I understand that I will receive one hour of credit toward satisfying the Psychology Department’s research participation requirement by participating in this study.

I understand that I may not personally benefit from participating in this research, but it is hoped that the research may lead to a better understanding of how people feel about various life encounters.

Although some questions may make me feel uncomfortable, I understand that I may skip any question. I also understand that I may discontinue my participation at any time without any penalty other than loss of research credit and that the investigator may discontinue my participation at any time.

This information was explained to me by Chris Student. I understand that she will answer any questions I may have now or later about this research. Chris Student can be reached at Chris@gmail.com.

Signature: _______________________________  Date: _______________
Procedure

The purpose of this study is to predict the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation reported by participants. The list below represents the dependent and predictor variables proposed in this study and the inventories that are used to assess them. Copies of these are included in Attachment 1.

Dependent Variables
Intrinsic motivation: The Aspirations Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).
Extrinsic motivation: The Aspirations Index (Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

Predictor Variables
Autonomy: Autonomy scale from the PRF (Jackson, 1989).
Dispositional resiliency: Hardiness Scale (Barone, Ursano, Wright, & Ingraham, 1989).
Dominance: Dominance scale from the PRF (Jackson, 1989).
Locus of control: Internal Control Index (Duttweiler, 1984).
Self-actualization: Vector 3 Self-Realization from the CPI (Gough, 1987).
Self-control: Self-Control Scale from the CPI (Gough, 1987).
Social identity: Aspects of Identity Orientation Questionnaire (Cheek & Briggs, 1982).

When students enter the research room and are seated, the researcher will distribute consent forms to sign. After signing and returning them to the researcher, the consent forms will be placed together in a separate envelop to ensure that they cannot be traced back to the research materials of particular participants. Following that, the packet of materials will be provided to the participants. Participants will be instructed to not place their name or any other identifying mark on the materials. These materials will contain a demographic sheet (see Attachment 2). On the pages following that sheet, the above listed inventories will be presented in a different random order for each participant.

After participants have completed filling out the inventories, the packets will be collected and placed together in a different envelop from the one containing the consent forms; this will ensure that the packets will not be able to be linked to specific participants. The researcher will then orally debrief the participants, answer any questions they may have at that time, and hand out the debriefing page for participants to keep. Everyone will then be thanked for their participation and will be dismissed.
Debriefing

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to predict the degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation reported by participants. Intrinsic motivation has to do with people valuing such goals as experiencing personal growth, making contributions to their community, and having enriched relationships with other people; extrinsic motivation has to do with people valuing such goals as achieving fame, acquiring wealth, and developing a good public image. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were measured by The Aspirations Index.

Hypotheses and Supporting Research

Interest in studying the goals associated with intrinsic and extrinsic motivation emerged out of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory focuses on the sense of choice and purpose that drives people to behave in the ways that they do as they live their lives. I hypothesized that some possible characteristics predicting these two types of motivation were how resilient people are to the ups and downs of life, whether we believe that we largely control our own fate or if we believe that much of what happens to us is due to chance, the degree to which we are reaching our full potential, how spiritual we are, how dominant we are or how much of a leadership role we take on in social interactions, and how much we tend to do things on our own rather than enlisting the aid of others. Each of the inventories that you completed measured one or more of these characteristics. The data analysis will involve pooling the data from all of the participants and then performing two statistical analyses, one to predict the levels of intrinsic motivation of the participants and the other to predict their levels of extrinsic motivation.

Psychological Services

If you have experienced any personal distress caused by the content or materials in this research and want to talk to someone, counseling services are available through the WELLness Center free of charge. Please contact Student Health and Counseling Services at 916-278-6461 for assistance.

Contact Information

The results of this study will be available the last week of the current semester. If you would like further information about this study or have questions regarding this study, please contact Chris@gmail.com at your convenience.
**Example of a Vignette In Which A Single Independent Variable is Manipulated**

Using vignettes is a common way to manipulate variables that would be difficult to manipulate in a real-world or role play situation. There are certain limitations to using vignettes. For example, participants read stories rather than directly experience events: vignettes thus distance participants from the experience. In addition, researchers ask the participants to either project what they or the main character in the story might do or feel in the described situation rather than directly measure what the participants would actually do or feel in a real situation. Despite such limitations, vignettes are relatively commonly and productively employed in psychological research.

Vignettes can carry or sustain independent variables by utilizing the following strategy. The vignette is written just once, telling a story in enough length and detail to meet the needs of the research. For each independent variable, one very small part of the story (e.g., word, phrase, sentence) is made to vary; this comprises the manipulation. Consider a design with a single independent variable. That small part of one vignette is completed as called for by one level of the independent variable, that small part of another vignette is completed as called for by another level of the independent variable, and so on until all of the levels of the independent variable are accounted for.

In the following example, with only one independent variable is manipulated, there is only one place in the entire story that differs between versions. That independent variable, the presence or absence of romantic cues, has two levels; therefore, there are two versions of the vignette. The single variation in this story occurs toward the end of the narration—immediately after the female character says, “Yes, that’s one of the books I just checked out of the library.” Note that after the two alternative exchanges (the two levels of the independent variable) the story ends with identical words in both versions. If the researchers had wanted to have an independent variable with three levels, it would have been necessary to have three versions of the story, each differing in precisely the same place.

Vignettes can incorporate more than one independent variable. For example, in the present case the researchers could also have manipulated the gender of the main character by varying the name that was used (e.g., Michael or Michelle) and using appropriate pronouns (he/she). Had they done this in combination with the manipulation already in the story, thus creating a design with two independent variables, there would have been four separate vignettes each representing the unique combination of romantic cues (present or absent) and gender of main character (male or female).

Note that the titles of the vignettes are provided (a) to guide you in learning from the example and (b) to show what you would present to the Human Subjects Committee as part of your proposal. In the actual study, the participants would obviously not be shown this information.
It was a lovely spring day on campus and Michael decided to sit on one of the benches in front of the university library to review his class notes for the test scheduled in a few days. But his attention was not fully absorbed in studying. So he would look down at his notes, look around at the students walking by him or at the trees, look down again at his notes, look up again, and so on. All told, it wasn’t a bad way to pass the time between classes. As a female student walked past him, he thought to himself that she had a quality that made her seem quite attractive. She was carrying a small stack of books that he presumed were just checked out of the library. Michael followed her with his eyes for a couple of seconds but, not wanting to stare, looked down at his notes for a moment. When he looked up, he noticed that there was a book lying on the ground behind her. Thinking that she might have dropped it, and believing that he now had an opportunity to make contact with her while doing the right thing, Michael hurriedly walked over, picked up the book, and trotted up to her. Gently touching her on the shoulder, he said, “Excuse me for bothering you, but I noticed this book on the ground, and saw that you are carrying a stack of books, and I thought that you might have dropped it.” Showing her the book, he asked, “Is this yours?” She looked at the book and said, “Yes, that’s one of the books I just checked out of the library.” Making eye contact she added “Thank you for picking it up.” She then looked down toward the book, ran her hand through her hair, smiled, and continued, “It was very thoughtful of you to make the effort to return the book to me. Thank you again.” She took the book from his hand and continued on her way.

Vignette with Romantic Cues Not Present

It was a lovely spring day on campus and Michael decided to sit on one of the benches in front of the university library to review his class notes for the test scheduled in a few days. But his attention was not fully absorbed in studying. So he would look down at his notes, look around at the students walking by him or at the trees, look down again at his notes, look up again, and so on. All told, it wasn’t a bad way to pass the time between classes. As a female student walked past him, he thought to himself that she had a quality that made her seem quite attractive. She was carrying a small stack of books that he presumed were just checked out of the library. Michael followed her with his eyes for a couple of seconds but, not wanting to stare, looked down at his notes for a moment. When he looked up, he noticed that there was a book lying on the ground behind her. Thinking that she might have dropped it, and believing that he now had an opportunity to make contact with her while doing the right thing, Michael hurriedly walked over, picked up the book, and trotted up to her. Gently touching her on the shoulder, he said, “Excuse me for bothering you, but I noticed this book on the ground, and saw that you are carrying a stack of books, and I thought that you might have dropped it.” Showing her the book, he asked, “Is this yours?” She looked at the book and said, “Yes, that’s one of the books I just checked out of the library.” She then added, “Thank you for picking it up.” She continued, “It was very thoughtful of you to make the effort to return the book to me. Thank you again.” She took the book from his hand and continued on her way.
Example of an Inventory Formatted
For Use in a Research Project

The example inventory appearing on the next page is the Aspects of Identity Orientation Questionnaire. The response scale with its anchors and the instructions for responding to the items appear as they were on the original version. The formatting (e.g., blanks to the left of the item number in which participants would write in the scale value that represented their feelings about the issue) illustrates one of several formatting possibilities. This scale was obtained from the following sources:

Instructions: These items describe different aspects of identity. Please read each item carefully and consider how it applies to you. Fill in the blank next to each item by choosing a number from the scale below:

1 = Not important to my sense of who I am
2 = Slightly important to my sense of who I am
3 = Somewhat important to my sense of who I am
4 = Very important to my sense of who I am
5 = Extremely important to my sense of who I am

1. My popularity with other people.
2. The ways in which other people react to what I say and do.
4. My reputation, what others think of me.
5. My attractiveness to other people.
6. My gestures and mannerisms, the impression I make on others.
7. My social behavior, such as the way I act when meeting people.