



# STUDIA DOCTORALIA

## PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE



### EDITORIAL

## Embarking on a journey of changes in scientific writing. The new APA Publication Manual, 7th edition

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*"Whether we hate or love APA Publication Manual, it means we have feelings towards it and that's a start."*

Writing is one of the marks of human civilization, which enables us to communicate with each other. Scientific writing on the other hand is a critical aspect of research. It encompasses a whole range of forms, including theses, books, journal articles and grant applications. It is used to document and communicate ideas, findings, and activities to others. It equips students, researchers, and professionals with communication and thinking skills. Research has adopted different guides based on the field of study. Social sciences such as psychology, anthropology, sociology as well as education and other fields use guidelines offered by APA (American Psychological Association). APA was founded in the United States of America in July 1892 and represents the most significant scientific organization of psychologists in the United States.

APA Publication Manual 6th edition, initially published in 2009, had been the peak of scientific writing standards, helping researchers and students alike to document their research and findings. After ten years the 7th edition came into play with several minor and major changes as well as a new, more accessible colored text.

Apart from a fresh, user-friendly, colored manual, the new edition offers new insights on the principles of scholarly writing and publishing, paper elements and format, journal article reporting standard, writing style and grammar, guidelines on bias-free language and mechanics of style, to name a few. The next paragraphs highlight the most notable changes in APA 7th edition.

Research is complete only when scholars share their findings with the scientific community. Students are also important members of this community. Although most of

their work isn't formally published, by writing papers students engage in scientific inquiry, self-reflection and critical thinking. Besides quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, new principles of scholarly writing and publishing address student papers and dissertations, offering information on ethical compliances and guidance on data share (both quantitative and qualitative research).

Regarding paper elements and format, the title page has been updated for professionals, and a new student title page is provided. The author's note includes more information such as ORCID IDs, disclosure of conflicts of interest. Probably one of the most noticeable changes is the font used in writing. Apart from 12-point Times New Roman, new format options such as 11-point Calibri, 11-point Arial, 10-point Lucida Sans Unicode, 10-point Computer Modern, or 11-point Georgia are now available to use. Last, but not least, two new sample papers are provided with examples for student papers as well as professional papers.

Journal article reporting standards (JARS) have been significantly updated, covering qualitative and mixed methods research. JARS now offers new insights on writing the abstract and introduction, as well as results and conclusions. For quantitative research studies, Table 3.1 (APA, 2019, p. 77) offers a compact structure on how to tackle each part of the research paper while, for qualitative studies, a separate table has been provided (Table 3.2; APA, 2019, p. 95). For mixed-models design, Table 3.3 (APA, 2019, p. 106) offers a comprehensive structure enabling researchers to efficiently adapt their studies.

One of the most important key features offered by APA Publication manual is the writing style and grammar, helping students and researchers alike to have continuity,

flow, conciseness, and clarity in exposing their ideas and arguments. The standalone chapter offers information on how to use verbs, pronouns, construct sentences while suggesting ways of improving one's writing abilities. A common issue among amateurs is wordiness and redundancy. Wordiness refers to using more words than necessary while redundancy emphasizes the use of multiple words with the same meaning. The new edition comes with new examples of how to analyze, identify and avoid these common issues.

Probably the most crucial guideline provided by APA Publication Manual 7th edition is the use of a bias-free language. It encourages authors to write about people with inclusivity and respect. Existing guidance on age, disability, gender, racial and ethnic identity, and sexual orientation have been updated while new guidance is provided on participation in research, socioeconomic status, and intersectionality. The new edition recommends avoiding negativistic terminology (e.g., "wheelchair-bound" or "confined to a wheelchair"; use the term "wheelchair user" instead) and emphasizes the difference between person-first identity and identity-first languages (e.g., "a person with autism" vs. "autistic person"). It also provides terminology for transgender and gender-nonconforming people.

Authors should be also sensitive to intersectionality (i.e., how individuals are shaped by and identify with a vast array of cultural, structural, sociobiological, economic and social contexts).

Mechanics of style include punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, numbers, and statistics in text ensuring authors for precise and consistent writing. New changes include formatting of linguistic examples, and quotation marks are now used around examples rather than italics just to name a few. Style guidelines help authors to avoid distraction or confusion for readers. For example, authors might use the spellings "healthcare," "health-care," and "health care" interchangeably through their work (with "health care" being APA style). Although the meaning is the same, such variation can impact the quality of reading.

Last, but not least, a series of changes have been made for references and in-text citations where the publisher location is no longer included in the reference; the in-text citation for works with three or more authors is now shortened right from the first citation (from Taylor, Kotler, Johnson, & Parker, 2018 to Taylor et al., 2018); surnames and initials for up to 20 authors (instead of 7) should be provided in the reference list; DOIs are formatted the same as any URL.

Although APA Publication Manual is meticulously and carefully written which can annoy researchers in structuring their work, it is nonetheless the pinnacle of scientific writing having the role of standardizing the way scientists report their findings, results, ideas, and observations. It represents means to analyze, develop or critique other research papers in order to contribute to relevant un-biased findings.