Past Academic Research Experience

In my first experience with academic research, I had worked with a group of people to complete a research project for an experimental psychology course. The research topic we chose to do our experiment on was judgments of punishment. We conducted a true-experimental 2x2 within-subjects factorial design. We wanted to investigate whether socioeconomic status or the type of crime of an offender had a leniency effect on judge’s perception of punishment. The independent variables were socioeconomic status (low and high) and type of crime (involuntary manslaughter and the illegal sale of guns). The dependent variable was the perception of punishment as measured by a punishment severity ratio scale. Our results from running an ANOVA statistical analysis showed that offenders of low socioeconomic status were treated more leniently than offenders of high socioeconomic status across both types of crime. Also, the results showed that offenders who had committed the illegal sale of guns were treated more leniently than offenders who had committed involuntary manslaughter across both levels of socioeconomic status. After having submitted an APA style paper for a class requirement, our group had to present our research through a poster and a presentation. Afterwards, I participated in a research competition organized by the university’s Psi Chi chapter.

In my second experience with academic research, I was at another university and had to complete another experimental psychology course there. I worked with the entire class on completing an ultimatum bargaining research project. We investigated whether offers in ultimatum bargaining were similar or different between contexts where the responder of an offer is random-natured and human-natured. We conducted a true-experimental between subjects-design study with the between-subjects factor independent variable being minimal acceptance level causation. There were two levels of minimal acceptance level causation – random generated and human nature generated. The results of the study generally supported my hypothesis as there was no statistical difference between ultimatum bargaining between the contexts where the minimal acceptance level was caused by a random roll of a dice or the judgment of a person.

In my third experience with academic research, my developmental psychology professor had already compiled the data for the class. This data came in the form of multiple surveys that were completed by participants. I chose to do my research project using the parenting styles and aggression survey data. I wanted to investigate whether common and overlapping associative factors between parenting styles and aggression types lead to correlations between the two. For example, when authoritarian parenting is associated with weak communication skills and direct aggression is associated with low verbal and social skills, would authoritarian parenting and direct aggression be associated with one another? Hence, this study was a non-experimental correlation study with one set of variables constituting parenting styles (authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, and permissive parenting) and another set of variables constituting aggressions styles (direct aggression and indirect aggression). Pearson’s r correlation analyses were calculated and generally revealed statistical insignificances.

My last experience with academic research was in a social and personality psychology lab. In the research project for this class, I had decided to work by myself in do a research study from the beginning to the end. I chose the topic of self-control. I wanted to investigate the effects of beliefs about self-control capacity on ego depletion. Before conducting the experiment, I compiled the experimental materials, which consisted of a welcoming, instructions, ego-depleting tasks, a self-control measure, and a questionnaire. I conducted a true-experimental 2x2 between-subjects factorial design. The two between-subjects factor independent variables of the study were ego depletion and self-control resource belief. The two levels of ego depletion were an ego depletion control condition and an ego depletion treatment condition. The two levels of self-control resource belief were unlimited self-control resource belief and limited self-control resource belief. The dependent variable of the study was the extent of ego depletion measured by an adopted version of the Stroop task. Unfortunately, the results of the study did not support the hypotheses I made. I made the hypothesis based on an integrated view of self-control. There was the major limited of a very small sample size that precluded me from making any major implications from the study.