Main Finding Coding Manual

Abbreviations:

UT = Unique Identifiers (for Web of Science)

AU = Authors

TI = Title

PY = Publication Year

DI = Digital Identifier

Columns

(What to fill in where)

Column: coder

Fill in the initials of your first and last name.

Column: main\_findings\_short

This column is for a compact version of the main finding in this paper. It can in some cases already be found in the title or abstract but may also be found in later sections. Please use a direct quote from the paper. The finding should be expressed in one or two sentences maximum. In the case that the main finding can not be determined, please fill in “not clear”.

Example: “*Preferences and beliefs about financial risk taking mediate the association between anterior insula activation and self-reported real-life stock trading.*” (10.1038/s41598-018-29670-6)

→ Here the compact version of the main finding is actually the same as the title of the paper.

Column: main\_findings\_long

Here we have some more space to provide an extended version of the main finding. Use direct quotes from the paper (and put them between quotation marks). Very often the slightly more elaborate version of the main finding is rather in the discussion or conclusion section, instead of the title or abstract. There is no limit on how long this section can be but keep it reasonable (only quotes that actually specify the content of the main finding). In the case that the main finding can not be determined, please fill in “not clear”.

Column: findings\_in\_abstract

In this column we want to take note on whether the short version of the main finding could already be found in the title and abstract. *Code=1*, if this is the case. *Code=0*, if the short formulation for the main finding could not be found in these sections yet but had to be taken out of another section (e.g., the discussion). Note that even if you still had to confirm which finding the main one is with a different section, but then after confirmation you find that the main finding has been stated in the title or abstract already, it is coded as 1.

Column: coding\_rule

In this column we want to take note of how much of the paper had to be explored to be confident in what the main finding entails. *Code=1* (for *Rule 1: Title, Abstract, Discussion/ Conclusion*), if it was sufficient to read the title, abstract, and discussion/conclusion sections to be sure what the main finding of this study is. Code=2 (for *Rule 2: Introduction, Results, and Method, in addition*), if these sections did not sufficiently explain which finding was most important to the authors and more sections of the paper had to be consulted.

Column: is\_replication

If the study in question is already a replication study, we want to take note of that. *Code=1*, if the title and/or abstract explicitly mention that the main finding is a replication of a previous finding. *Code=0* otherwise.

Column: is\_exploratory

If the study in question is a purely exploratory study, we want to take note of that. *Code=1*, if the title and/or abstract mention that the study is “exploratory” or “hypothesis generating” or a synonym of this. *Code=0* otherwise.

*Potential column: finding\_is\_fmri*

*It would be good to know in how many cases the main finding is actually related to the fMRI studies in the articles, since this is the kind of design we are most interested in replicating. I (Peder MI) am just adding this as a suggestion for now. Consider it for the first 10 findings and whether it could be coded without adding too much work.*

Column: coder\_comments

If there is anything that you notice while going through this paper that you believe should be mentioned to whoever wants to use the information about this paper, please put a short comment in this column.

Guidelines   
(What to look for in the separate sections)

Title

Researchers often put their findings in the title already, or at least a part of them. Whatever the main title states can be used to guide your search from this point onwards. If, for example, one specific group of participants or one specific task is mentioned in the title, but others that were also investigated are not, the main finding will probably be about those mentioned in the title.   
The title can also show us that the authors might think of several things as equally important. Perhaps the main finding is a composite of several smaller findings.

Example: “*Same sex and cross-sex siblings: activity choices, roles, behaviour, and gender stereotypes.*” (doi: 0360-0025/86/1100-0495505.O0/0)

→ Since the authors already mentioned a lot of different variables in this title, they might give all of them equal importance. It also tells us, if they tested for more variables, the other ones are not considered to be equally important.

Abstract

Just like the title, the abstract can be used to guide your further reading. Since authors have to be concise in this section, they usually only include what they consider to be most important. If there are findings mentioned in the abstract, one of them will be the main finding. If you are very lucky, the authors may even call out what they consider to be their main finding by calling it that in the abstract. If not, let the order and wording used by the authors guide you a little.

Example: “*In both studies, we report an interaction where punishment sensitivity was adaptive for motor performance only when threats were detected early and there was opportunity to prepare for the upcoming stressor. Further, our results suggest that the benefits of punishment sensitivity are likely underpinned by the effective use of cognitive strategies.*” (doi: 10.1111/jopy.12318)

→ From the order and phrasing it seems like the authors believed the first one they mentioned (interaction) is the main finding. This would be an example of a paper where you could read the discussion as well to confirm this intuition. If it is confirmed, the first sentence of this example could be used as the compact version of the main finding in the spreadsheet.

Discussion

If there is a subsection or a separate section for the conclusions, start your search there. If the compact version of the main finding couldn’t be found in the abstract this is also a good place to look for it. Otherwise, either the beginning or the end of the discussion sections often summarize results. Look for phrasings like “*main result/finding*”, “*most important(ly)*”, “*most influential*” etc. Again, the order can tell you a lot. When summarizing, the authors often put the most important finding first.

Introduction

If the discussion section was not clear enough to figure out which result is considered to be the main finding, check how the hypotheses are formulated. If only one hypothesis is stated, the result corresponding to that should be the main result. If there are several, check for order and phrasing. The first one mentioned might be the most important one. Alternatively the authors could describe one as their “*main hypothesis*”, “*of particular interest*”, or something similar.   
There might not be any explicitly stated hypotheses but the authors might refer to the main aim(s) of their study or the research question which can provide further guidance.   
At the end of the introduction section, authors often shortly state what it is they will test. Whatever seems to be of most importance to them in the testing can also give you a hint since the finding related to that will probably be the most important one.

If there are several things the authors want to look at, check the order in which they explain them. Especially, if one thing builds up on another, the first thing they test for will be the most important one because it creates the basis of the rest and will be the most important one to replicate.

Example: “*Specifically, we tested whether the neural regulation (...). We then tested whether this interplay (...). Building on this, we tested whether this mechanism (...).*” (10.1093/scan/nsy025)

→ The first thing here is probably the most important one as the rest builds up on it.

Results

Similar to the previous sections, pay attention to the wording. If they call any of their analyses their “*main analysis*” or something similar to that, it will probably produce the result which they consider the main finding.

Findings about covariates, background checks, or anything that is a control of something are usually not the main finding, unless explicitly stated otherwise.