

## Book Review

### Postprint.

For published article see:

Yao, R. (2011). [Review of *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition* by American Psychological Association] *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 39(4), 442-443.

One of the first things users of the sixth edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (referred to as “the new edition” in the rest of this review) will find is that it is considerably shorter. American Psychological Association (APA) specific information that is accessible online is removed from the new edition. General principles and guidelines on textual and visual presentation are emphasized. Researchers that follow the APA publication manual will also find this edition more user-friendly. All information on a single topic is gathered together and placed in the same location. In contrast to the previous edition, where information on elements of a manuscript was scattered in several chapters, the new edition designates chapter two to discuss guidelines of the manuscript elements from the title to the appendices and supplemental materials.

The new edition is more streamlined and reorganized in a way that takes a more holistic focus on and better parallels the flow of work in the research process. The new edition begins with the idea stage and ends with the publication stage in an effort to help researchers, that are new to the process, understand this process. The discussion of the guidelines flows from the recognition of various types of articles and ethical and legal standards to the structure, content and mechanics of style of the manuscript, and ends with sharing the results in a scientific journal and crediting the resources utilized.

In this new edition, useful contents and features have been retained. For example, basic rules of APA writing style, detailed examples of various types of citations, and sample papers are provided. However, efforts have been made to reorganize the structure and add more content to make the manual more useful for researchers. It appears that this edition has incorporated changes in the field. In particular, chapter one provides an overview of writing for the behavioral and social sciences, chapter three simplified the heading style to make it more compatible with and effective to electronic publication, and chapter six expanded the discussion of electronic sources of information. Technological advances and the increasing use of visual images have created a need for changes in the rules for presentations. Chapter five offers extensively expanded guidance on the presentation of electronic data. In addition, both the complexity and visual nature of electrophysiological, radiological, and other biological data brought about special challenges to be presented. Particular attention has been paid, in chapter five, to presentation of these data in an effort to meet the need of a single well-established convention on such data presentation.

Compared with the fifth edition, guidance on ethics, including duplicate publication, plagiarism and self-plagiarism, and determining authorship and terms of collaboration is significantly expanded in the new edition. Chapter one provides a thorough definition of authorship, followed by detailed examples of substantial professional contributions and contributions that do not constitute authorship. Comprehensive guidelines on how to determine the order of authorship is also presented.

New guidelines on journal reporting standards are provided in chapter two to help researchers with clarity and precision in description of their empirical work. Guidance on the discussion of statistical methods is extended. All tested hypotheses and estimates of appropriate

effect sizes are expected to be reported. Chapter four presents new guidelines for reporting inferential statistics such as  $t$  tests and  $\chi^2$  tests. Sufficient information is called for to increase readers' ability to not only understand the analyses conducted but also construct some estimates beyond what is provided in the paper. A general guidance on presentation of results using tables and figures are added to chapter five before the detailed discussion on the types and layout of tables and figures.

Chapter six provides guidance on all aspects of citations in great details. Guidelines on electronic reference formats are significantly expanded in this chapter. To embrace the trend of electronic journal publishing and adapt to the more timely dissemination of research results, the digital object identifier (DOI) is considered as a reliable source and locator of information. A comprehensive set of examples on references, especially those on electronic formats (e.g. data sets, measurement instruments, and online discussion forums), are presented in chapter seven.

The last chapter focuses on the description of the publication process, from the function and process of peer review to the decision to accept or reject a manuscript. Furthermore, authors' responsibility to prepare the manuscript according to specific journal guidelines is explained in greater details in this chapter. The discussion on complying with ethical, legal, and policy requirements is expanded, compared to previous versions. Guidelines on working with the publisher when the paper is in press are given at the end of the chapter.

To summarize, the new edition is a more condensed and yet more comprehensive, up-to-date and user-friendly version of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Users will greatly benefit from using this edition due to its clarity and precision in the organization and presentation of information. In future editions, it would be beneficial to

include guidelines for reviewers on understanding the key points of reviewing a manuscript and how to provide a quality review of a manuscript.

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