

A “not very good” Literature Review Example

This example is designed to show you many of the mistakes that are commonly made on this assignment. Read the callout boxes for comments on some of these errors and be sure to read the “better” version of the same write-up that follows.

Please note: In order to approximate the usual number of lines on a page while using a readable font, the example uses 1.5 spacing -- you should always use double (2.0) spacing on this and all APA writing assignments in this class.

There should be a running head (a short title) and page number in the header on every page. On the first page, it should also say “Running head:” but every page thereafter should have only the short title.

Only the “Running” in “Running head” should be capitalized and should be followed by a colon. The running head itself should be in all capitals. So it should look like...

Running head: BODY IMAGES OF THERAPISTS DANCERS

All the words in the title should start with capital letters (except for of, and, etc.). Use “and” not “&” in the title. Also, use a colon, not a hyphen, in a complex title. So, the this title should look like...

Body Images of Therapists and Dancers: A Literature Review

Also, this isn’t a very descriptive title. The dancers were judging their own body images while the therapists were looking at the body images of clients

The author’s name should be double-spaced below the title. The affiliation should be double spaced below the author’s name and should not be abbreviated.

Top, bottom, and side margins for all pages should be at least 1 inch and should all be the same.

Help with the Literature Review & Proposal assignment

Here are two versions of a write-up in APA format and style of the information you critiqued from the two articles in Design Critique #1. The first is “not very good” and the second is “much improved”. Hopefully yours will look more like the second!

Running Head Body images of therapists and dancers

Body images of therapists & dancers -- A Literature Review

Pat R. Student

UNL

The words "Running head" should only appear on the title page. So, this should look like...

BODY IMAGES OF THERAPISTS DANCERS 2

The word "Abstract" should be centered a double-space below the page header

The first line of the abstract **is not indented!!**

The abstract is a "preview" of the main points of the literature review, the integration of the reviewed literature and any proposed research, and should tell something of the content of each of these.

The abstract is usually no more than 120 words.

Literature reviews published in APA journals include an abstract. Some instructors want an abstract included in assignments and other don't -- you should check each time.

Running head: BODY IMAGES OF THERAPISTS DANCERS 2

Abstract of the Review

Two articles related to body image perceptions were reviewed and a proposal for additional research was made.

Additional Hints for Better Writing (and Higher Scores):

- **Beware plagiarism!** Put things in your own words and cite whoever you read that gave you the idea!
- Opening sentences and transitional sentences are very important for leading the reader through your presentation -- often these can be about the "real world" to help the reader follow what you are talking about.
- Roughly 15% of your grade for this (and future) assignments can be earned or lost simply on the basis of APA formatting and style -- **review the handouts carefully when writing**
- **Proofread** your paper or have someone else do it! Typos, misspellings, incomplete or run-on sentences, and awkward sentence construction can cost you valuable points.
- **Give your writing a "cold read."** Ever read a paper after you've gotten it back and been appalled at the things you said that just didn't make sense? Errors you can't believe you made? Other things you should have said, but didn't? Getting your writing done a day or two early and then looking at it again the night before it is due (a "cold read") will often help with these problems. Also you will likely do a better job proofreading you paper if you do this.

Don't use "Introduction" as the heading for the first section of the paper. The title of the paper, as it appears on the title page, should be centered a double-space below the page header

There should be a brief introduction to the topic, why it may be important to theory and/or practice. This is also a good place to tell the reader if you are planning to introduce a new organization or theoretical perspective for the reviewed literature, propose additional research, etc.

Adopt a "professional tone" for this type of writing.

The subheading should tell about the topic of the paper rather than the authors

Incorrect in-text reference: Simply use "Fletcher and Diekoff (1998) studied..."

The amount of detail you provide in a review will depend on many things. For full credit in this assignment you need to provide more information about the participants (#, ages, relevant demographic info) and the methods (describe the measures and procedures more!) than is shown here

Remember, when reading a research report we try to learn not only from the findings of those authors, but from the literature they review in their introduction. Find a way to talk about the findings and research described in *their* introduction!

Another incorrect in-text reference: Use "A study by Pierce and Daleng 1998)..."

Be careful that the right margins don't get sloppy.

Running head: BODY IMAGES OF THERAPISTS DANCERS 3

Introduction

I wanted to review a couple of articles about body image as a basis for proposing some research on the topic

Fletcher & Diekoff

An article by Chris Fletcher and George M. Diekoff from Midwestern State University titled "Body-type Stereotyping in Therapeutic Judgments" describes a study done to see if people rated ectomorphs and endomorphs lower than mesomorphs. Specifically, they wanted to know if clinical judgments are affected by body-type stereotyping.

Graduate students and professional therapists were the participants. Each participant rated line drawings of each of the three body types. The rating scales were 21 5-point scales to assess clinically relevant personal characteristics. The statistical analysis revealed that both groups rated mesomorphs the highest on most of the 21 scales. The authors related their findings to prior research.

Pierce & Daleng

The second study I read by Pierce and Daleng (1998) looked at body image distortion in elite female dancers. They thought that dancers would probably have very distorted body images, eating disorders, and exercise dependence. Ten female ballet dancers were shown a nine-figure silhouette scale. They indicated which figure was most like their current body image, and which figure was most like their ideal body

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“Way” too informal. Also incomplete, both real and ideal ratings were obtained, so report the results of both.

Remember that the “integration” is the set-up for the proposal. Unless you have 2-3 paragraphs of integration you probably will want to combine the “integration” and “proposal” under one heading.

These are very superficial similarities and differences. More info about the similarities in design and findings would be necessary for full credit. There is no integration here, just a repetition of descriptive facts about each and the general statement in the last sentence -- without any explanation of what is a “body image effect” or how the two findings were “the same”.

Yes, the section includes the research proposal, but make up a title that tells the reader something about the integration and the proposal.

Avoid using “this” or “that” -- the reader may not know to what you are referring. Use transition sentences to help the writing flow better.

This isn't a very interesting research hypothesis, especially as it is presented. Also, how does this relate to the research with therapists? The purpose of the lit review is to “set up” the proposal, and so information from all the articles should contribute to the proposal. Switching populations isn't going to get you lots of points -- look again at the assignment sheet to see the different kinds of hypotheses.

Although technically correct, **this is too generic** for a paper. You know who the population is...tell the reader! Such as, "Male ballet dancers will rate their ideal body images as significantly thinner than their current body images."

References should start on a separate page (be sure to include a page header and a page number on each page).

Running head: BODY IMAGES OF THERAPISTS DANCERS 4

body image. All of the dancers thought they were too fat.

Integration

Both articles were about body image. The first used therapist's ratings of men, the second used female dancers' ratings of themselves. Both found the same evidence of body image effects.

Research Proposal

This raises an interesting question. Would male dancers also prefer to be thinner?

I propose a study to answer this question. Male ballet dancers will rate their current and ideal body images on the male version of the silhouette scale used in Pierce and Daleng (1998). I hypothesize that there will be a significant mean difference between the current and ideal body images in the population represented by the sample, such that participants will rate their ideal body images as thinner than their current body image.

References

- Fletcher, C. & Diekhoff, G. M. (1998). Body-type stereotyping in therapeutic judgments. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 86, 842.
- Pierce, E. F. & Daleng, M. (1998). Distortion of body image among elite female dancers. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 87, 769-770.

A "Much Improved Version" of the Literature Review and Proposal

The following is an example of a "review, integration & proposal" based on the same two articles. This version contains all or almost all of the requested information, and consists of a much more appropriate writing style. Read the boxes, and compare the text to the other version to see the differences and improvements!

More descriptive running head and title. Correct formatting.

The abstract hints at the results of the integration and mentions the topic of the proposal.

Running head: SELF AND OTHER BODY IMAGE PERCEPTIONS 1

Self and Other Body Image Perceptions:
A Review and Proposal
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SELF AND OTHER BODY IMAGE PERCEPTIONS 2

Abstract

Differences in ideal body image for males and females might account for the differences between body image perceptions of these groups. In addition, perceptions of body image may influence judgments about other's personal characteristics. A study is proposed to explore when our biases about body image develop.

A great opening: the first sentence "previews" the point of the paper.

Good description of sample and methods.

Describes research hypothesis, summarizes results, gives conclusion about support for the RH:, and tells what the finding might mean. Do this for each article you review!

SELF AND OTHER BODY IMAGE PERCEPTIONS 3

Self and Other Body Image Perceptions: A Review and Proposal

Men and women have different ideal body images. These differences and this may influence how they differentially perceive, evaluate and make judgments about other people based upon their body images.

Body Image of Elite Dancers

Pierce and Daleng (1998) studied body image of female dancers, predicting that these dancers would have rather distorted images of their bodies. Ten female members of a professional ballet company were asked to pick out their current and ideal body images from a nine-figure silhouette scale. The different silhouettes on the scale showed increasing percentages of body fat. A measure of body composition (percent of body fat) was also taken from each dancer. There was a significant difference between the dancers' current and ideal silhouettes. The dancers rated their current body image as containing a higher percentage of body fat than their ideal image, even though all of the dancers had excellent body composition by normative standards. The results supported the researchers' hypotheses, as well as prior research suggesting that female dancers are highly likely to have distorted body images, possibly contributing to eating disorders

Transition sentence: lets the reader follow the author's train of thought.

The two studies are well integrated here, and the integration leads nicely into the proposed research.

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and exercise dependence.

Body Image Judgments by Therapists

While the "ideal" body type, at least among female dancers, is very slender, some studies suggest that the "ideal" body type for males may be a more muscular one. For example, one study (Fletcher & Diekoff, 1998) predicted that therapists' judgments of clients would be affected by the client's body type. Line drawings of three male body types -- endomorphs, mesomorphs, and ectomorphs -- were shown to twenty-three professional therapists and thirty-five clinical psychology graduate students. Each participant was given one of each type of line drawing, and asked to rate each on 21 personal characteristics. Results of the factorial analyses of variance showed that mesomorphs (the muscular or athletic body type) were rated more favorably than the other two types on the majority of the personal characteristics. The authors concluded that, consistent with other studies, judgments by clinicians (and clinicians in training) can be affected by a client's body type. Clinicians may view male clients who are muscular as more mentally healthy than male clients who are notably thin or notably overweight.

The Developing Influence of Body Image

These two studies of body image of men and women share a

In a short paper, such as this, with only a few references, repeating the key ideas from each article in the “integration” will seem redundant and repetitive -- but do it anyway! Clarity is most important.

This is a fairly sophisticated RH: -- having identified multiple versions of an effect (body image distortion and influence) the author suggests an idea of when/how it occurs and a way of testing that suggestion.

SELF AND OTHER BODY IMAGE PERCEPTIONS

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theme: adults may let their own body image, and images of others' bodies, influence their decisions. Fletcher and Diekhoff (1998) found that clinical judgments may be affected by the male client's body image while Pierce and Daleng (1998) suggested that female ballet dancers have distorted body images.

A developmental researcher might then ask when these biases about body image that are shown by adults develop and become ingrained. Specifically, a future study could assess body image using the current/ideal body image method described above (Pierce & Daleng, 1998) in adolescents and younger children. A sample of 200 participants, with 50 from each of four grade levels (sixth through ninth) would allow an adequate comparison across groups, as well as across genders. There would be two main hypotheses. First, grade level will be positively correlated with amount of body image distortion, such that adolescents would have more distorted body images than the younger children in the sample. Second, females will have a significantly higher level of body image distortion than males in this age range.

Notice that this version is not much longer than the "needs help" version! The use of more complex sentence structures allows two ideas to be merged into single comprehensible sentences. In addition, this version provides much more information about the two research articles and the newly proposed research.

Notice the amount of detail about the design & methods of the proposed study, as well as clear statements of each hypothesis.

References start on a new page, with the proper heading.

SELF AND OTHER BODY IMAGE PERCEPTIONS

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References

- Fletcher, C. & Diekhoff, G. M. (1998). Body-type stereotyping in therapeutic judgments. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 86, 842.
- Pierce, E. F. & Daleng, M. (1998). Distortion of body image among elite female dancers. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 87, 769-770.