

Content Analysis Final Report

Worth: 60 pts. (30% of your course grade; remember that an additional 15% of your course grade comes from the in-class presentation of your coding scheme (*not* the findings of your mini-analysis))

Due: 4 pm, Tuesday, December 8

Initial Proposal due: 4 pm, Thursday, September 24

Each student will develop a complete content analysis coding scheme, and apply it to a relatively small sample of messages. This scheme may be of either type—"human" coding or computer text coding (CATA). The scheme is the real centerpiece of the report, and needs to be *fully* developed and ready to go. You need to consider both content and form variables.

Please write a *report* rather than a traditional paper—actually number each section. The report should include the following sections:

1. Rationale
Provide a simple statement of your interest in this message content area.
2. Literature review
Be as complete as possible (although this does not need to be a thesis-level review). Note that you do *not* need to find prior CAs that did exactly what you plan to do. Much of your literature may cover the "third-order" linking of your chosen content to source or receiver.
3. Hypotheses/Research Questions
Drawing on the literature review, build a theoretical perspective or rationale, and develop at least one hypothesis or research question for your CA.
4. Conceptualizations and Operationalizations of variables
Give conceptual definitions for your major variables. Consider the internal validity of your conceptualization/operationalization pairings. Within this section, provide an analysis of your *choice* of variables. Consider your selection of form vs. content variables, variables that are more manifest vs. latent in tone, universal variables, medium-specific critical variables, other critical variables, variables from past research, and emergent variables.
5. Codebook and Coding form(s) OR Dictionaries
Present the codebook and coding form(s) as appendices. At this point in the report, comment on how they are to be used, and your choice of how "elaborated" the coding form is. OR
Present your dictionaries as an appendix. Comment on how they will be applied.
6. Sampling
Define the population, describe the sampling frame, indicate the choices of various units (i.e., units of sampling, units of data collection, units of analysis), explain your choice of random sampling method.
7. Reliability—Human Coding Only

- Conduct appropriate reliability assessment on ALL variables, using a small subset of messages. Use the PRAM program for this.
8. Validation—Indicate how your measures/dictionaries have been or should be validated against other indicators. Consider issues of face validity, criterion validity, content validity, and construct validity.
 9. Results
Back to the hypotheses/research questions—were they supported, or how were they answered?
 10. Discussion
Here, you should do several things:
 - A. Discuss your findings in light of available theory and past research. What do we know now that we didn't know before?
 - B. Describe revisions that (a) were made in your CA scheme as a result of the in-class presentation, and (b) you would make if you were to use the scheme again in the future.
 - C. Explain how your findings could be used in an “integrative” approach to content analysis. Describe some “next steps” that would begin to build a model of a communication process to which your content analysis could contribute.
 11. Bibliography (APA style, please; however, do include a Bibliography rather than a References page)
 12. Appendices--Codebook, Coding Form, and/or Dictionaries