

Summary

Many articles in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* report findings for multiple outcomes or findings that are complex in nature (such as interaction effects). If multiple hypotheses are tested, a single table can summarize quite readily which hypotheses were supported. A summary table can help the reader obtain a quick overview of the general pattern of findings. Summary tables also may be useful in guiding the writing of the discussion section.

Goals of a Summary Table

- Simplify complex findings
- Minimize numerical information
- Maximize parsimony
- Prepare the table so that it stands on its own
- If possible, summarize the findings in terms of effects sizes. How effect sizes are judged should be clear in the text and not dependent only on level of statistical significance.

Two examples follow. The first example summarizes findings from three hypotheses that were tested separately for boys and for girls. The second example summarizes differences between partners from heterosexual nonparent couples and partners from gay, lesbian, and heterosexual parent couples across a fairly large set of outcome scores.

Table 1

Summary of the Effect Sizes Associated With Hypotheses by Gender Regarding Change in Viewing Violent Video Games

Hypothesis	Gender	
	Girls	Boys
Viewing increases linearly from age 8 to 13	Small	Large
Viewing reaches maximum at age 13	Large	Small
Viewing decreases after the age 13	No	Small
Whites view violence with more frequency	No	Small
Whites view more intense violence	No	Large
Parental control reduces viewing	Small	No
Parental support reduces viewing	Strong	Strong
Parents' education reduces viewing	Small negative	Small negative
% of peers viewing increases viewing	Strong	Moderate

% of peers viewing x age	No	No
increases viewing		

Table 2

Summary of Significant Type-of-Partner Contrasts (Magnitude of Effect Size)

Variable	Type-of-Partner Contrast		
	Gay (G) vs. Nonparent Heterosexual (NP)	Lesbian (L) vs. Nonparent Heterosexual (NP)	Parent Heterosexual (P) vs. Nonparent Heterosexual (NP)
Individual differences			
Private self-consciousness	G > NP (small)	L > NP (small)	
Extraversion		L > NP (small)	
Openness	G > NP (small)	L > NP (medium)	
Relationship schemas			
Affective expression			P < NP (small)
Dyadic cohesion		L > NP (small)	P < NP (small)
Autonomy	G > NP (small)	L > NP (small)	P < NP (small)
Equality		L > NP (medium)	P < NP (small)
Costs		L < NP (small)	
Conflict resolution			
Positive problem-solving		L > NP (small)	
Demand/withdraw			P < NP (small)
Positive communication			P < NP (small)
Source of social support			
Own family	G < NP (medium)	L < NP (small)	
Partner's family	G < NP (small)	L < NP (small)	

Note: Gay and lesbian partners cohabited but were not parents. Heterosexual partners were married.