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# ABSTRACT

ST-OPEN requires a structured abstract with a maximum of 300 words. The following structure should be used:

**Aim:** Briefly describe your study aim. What was your hypothesis? What did you try to determine? In studies without a hypothesis, you should describe what topic you aimed to explore and why.

**Methods:** Briefly describe your study design. For example, shortly outline the place of your study and how you collected the participants in your sample; describe its size and basic characteristics. Outline your data collection procedures. Shortly list the exact steps you took in conducting your experiments (i.e. the intervention and main outcome measures). List the variables you measured. Describe statistical procedures or other methods for testing your hypothesis. In qualitative studies, describe your theoretical background, sample (e.g. focus group/interview participants, included document (sources of such documents, e.g., archives…)), approach to analysis.

**Results/Findings:** Summarize your main findings. Have you confirmed or rejected your hypothesis? Present your main outcome and only give the most relevant numerical data. In case of studies that do not have a traditional hypothesis-testing structure, this title can be replaced with “Findings” where you shortly describe your study outcome.

**Conclusions:** Why and to whom is your study relevant and how does it expand existing knowledge? What new information have we learned? What should future research consider?

**Keywords:** Five to six keywords relevant to your study; one keyword can contain multiple words. We suggest using words that are not present in your article title, but still apply to your study.

# INTRODUCTION

This section should briefly describe your study background, following the inverse triangle structure suggested on our website (see [here](http://st-open.unist.hr/index.php/st-open/manuscript-preparation)). Starting from the general context of what is known in your research topic based on the most recent evidence, move towards the existing gaps in literature, or highlight what is not known. Finally, state your hypothesis in relation to this gap and outline what you decided to do. This section is supposed to be short and to the point. Assume your readers are at least familiar with your research topic – there is no need to explain everything in great detail.

If you use any type of abbreviation (including statistical terms, acronyms, etc.), explain them when you first use them and then only use the abbreviated form throughout the manuscript. For example – confidence interval (CI), standard deviation (SD), European Union (EU), and so on.

# METHODS

Describe your study methods in detail. State your study design and reasoning for using it. Describe your target sample – this could include human participants, units of literature (in case of literature reviews), archival materials, transcripts, or anything that you subjected to your study procedures. How did you collect the sample? If applicable, list your inclusion/exclusion criteria. For experimental studies, describe how you assigned the participants to the intervention and control groups.

Describe the procedures for acquiring and analysing data. What did you measure and how did you measure it? If applicable, describe the statistical analyses you conducted and why you chose them (depending on data structure/distribution). For qualitative studies, which approach to data analysis did you use? It is crucial you provide enough data for your study to be fully replicable. To achieve this, guidelines for good practices exist depending on the study design. We advise authors to search the EQUATOR Network website which contains many guidelines for reporting studies (including qualitative ones): <https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/>. These guidelines were meant to enhance the transparency and consistency in reporting, so they are a useful tool when applicable.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Below you will find examples of heading levels. We accept a maximum of three heading levels, with level 1 headings being reserved for the “**INTRODUCTION**”, “**METHODS**”, “**RESULTS/FINDINGS**”, and “**CONCLUSIONS**” titles. If these do not apply to your study, you can change them by selecting the title and typing over it, thus preserving the heading level.

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**Lists**

You can use either bulleted or numbered lists, as follows:

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For equation, use Word’s internal Equation Tool. Do not write equations in the manuscript text itself; use the “Insert Symbol” tool for that purpose.

# RESULTS

Briefly describe your study results. Here, you tell the “story” about the outcomes of your research, presenting it textually. When writing this part up, think about your key findings and how you would share them with others. The text of this section is not just a simple listing of numbers, but a summative and critical presentation of the most important results. The actual data and numbers should be presented in tables and figures, and **NOT** the text; do not duplicate this data in the text by filling it with unnecessary numbers. The tables and figures should be self-explanatory and understandable without necessarily reading the text itself. Furthermore, each figure and table should be cited in the text, for example “… as shown in **Figure 1**” or “…there was a positive trend (**Table 1**)”. You can also cite the Online Supplementary Document if needed: “…as shown in Figure S1 and Table S1 in the **Online Supplementary Document** (*1*)”, with the “S” indicating a figure/table/box in the supplement. Online Supplementary Document should be a single file, deposited in a public repository, such as Open Science Framework ([OSF](https://osf.io/)) or [Zotero](https://www.zotero.org/), and must be cited in the reference list.

# DISCUSSION

The discussion section flips the triangle from the introduction on its head (see [here](http://st-open.unist.hr/index.php/st-open/manuscript-preparation)). After briefly answering the research question or accepting/rejecting your hypothesis based on your results, you should proceed to discuss your findings in the context of current literature. How does it differ from existing research (in methods/results)? How does it add to existing knowledge? Does it support it or provide contrasting evidence?

You should also list the strengths and limitations of your study, even using a separate subheading if needed to separate this section. No study is perfect – every study has some biases, and you should really think which ones are present in your study. You can also highlight statistical procedures/study design choices you made to annul possible bias.

# CONCLUSIONS

This section should also be relatively short and concise – you can state your key finding in one sentence, after which you should explain its relevance (why and to whom) and suggest where future research should focus.

*(The manuscript has to have the following declaration after the Conclusion section:)*

**Provenance:** In case of bachelors’/masters’ theses, provide the title and the link of the original thesis, when it was defended, and in which institutions. In case of preprints, provide a link to the original preprint (delete if not applicable).

**Acknowledgements:** Acknowledge persons who have contributed to your research in some way, but do not fulfil the ICMJE authorship criteria (delete if not applicable).

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**Ethics statement:** If the study obtained ethical approval, you should specify the granting institution and the registry number here (delete if not applicable).

**Data availability:** If the study data can be accessed, specify how. We encourage authors to submit their data to open access repositories such as the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/), or to provide open data upon submission to be made available alongside the manuscript (delete if not applicable). We encourage the authors to share their data.

**Funding:** Please state any funding you received for your study, stating the funding institution and grant number. If no funding was received, please use one of the following statements: “We received no funding for this study.” Or “No funding was received for this study”.

**Authorship declaration:** List the contributions of all named authors using the [ICMJE authorship criteria](https://icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html).

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**REFERENCES**

ST-OPEN uses the Vancouver style for references. Below are some example citations, which we provide in more detail on our website: <http://st-open.unist.hr/index.php/st-open/citing-literature>. Please check that all citations are in proper numerical order, enclosed in square brackets. For both citation styles, please check that all references cited in the text are present in the reference list. If you use any citation software (EndNote, Zotero), please provide a version of the text without field codes (i.e. use the function to convert citations to plain text).

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*Journal article (if an article has more than six authors, list the first six ones, followed by “et al.”)*

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Please provide the figure number and caption (legend) after the references. All figures need to be cited in the text in correct order (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3…).

1. Figure number.
2. Figure caption (legend). Figure legend has three parts: title, explanation of the symbols, key statistics. The legend is written continuously (no paragraphs), with a period at the end.
3. Data field.
4. Vertical scale.
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**Figure 1.** The text of the figure should be in a single paragraph. If the figure has more panels, label and explain each of them: Panel A. Description. Panel B. Description, …etc. Figures should be submitted separately from the manuscript file and should be ready for reproduction in the published article. Only TIF or TIFF files in high resolution (300 dpi) are acceptable. If you do not hold the copyright to an image, submit a written permission for reproduction from the copyright holder. If you use figures published under Creative Commons licences, follow the CC practices for attribution related to the specific license, providing the image source and specific license in the figure description.

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For easier editing purposes, please place your tables at the end of the manuscript, the figure legends. All tables should be cited in the text in correct order (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

Each table should contain the following:

1. Table number and title (above the table, with no period at the end)
2. Column headings
3. Row headings
4. Data
5. Horizontal and vertical lines – do not use bold and shading
6. Abbreviations used in the table should be shown in the footnotes
7. Footnotes referenced in the table, below the expanded abbreviations, with symbols usually used in the following order: \*, †, ‡, §, ¶, ║, \*\*, ††, and so on

Use simple tables, with horizontal and vertical lines only. Please do not merge the table cells vertically – only merge them horizontally. There is an example table below.

**Table 1.** This is a table title – it should be a single sentence without a stop; if you need to provide explanations, use symbols (\*,†,‡,§,‖,¶,\*\*, etc) in the table and provide the explanation in the table footnote\*

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Provide abbreviations used in the table, e.g., SD – standard deviation, CI – confidence interval

\*The symbols in the table/footnote should not be in superscript.

†Do not vertically merge cells in the table! Use only horizontal lines.

‡You can horizontally merge cells in the table, such as for a spanner head over column subheads.

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