

EPILOGUE

JOURNEY'S END... OR IS IT?

Well, emerging researcher, you've been on quite a wild ride. Take a moment to ponder all you have accomplished. Developing a research question, formulating and implementing a methodology, and analyzing the data stretched your creativity, judgment, and perspective. But these feats, notable as they are, pale in comparison to writing your report.

Think about it. You introduced readers to your research question by hooking them, contextualizing your question with extant research and theory, and convincing readers why your question was worth studying. You described how you went about answering your question in a way that others could replicate. You described what you found and supported your conclusions with a second language – statistics. You considered alternative explanations for your findings, critically examined limitations, discussed potential applications of your research, and – again – made readers care about your work. You wrangled with seemingly countless formatting rules. And, to top it off, you revised and reworked your prose to make it accessible to the widest audience. Wow.

Should your journey end here? It can, but it doesn't have to. In writing your quantitative research report, you have made yourself part of something much grander than you probably realized. You have become a member of the scientific community. Scientists not only conduct research, they share their research with anyone willing to listen or read. Would you present your research at a local, regional, or national conference? Is your work publishable in a scholarly outlet? Could you write a blog about your research?

Carl Sagan noted, "We live in a society dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology." As the next generation of social and behavioral scientists, you have the opportunity to change that. Take a step in that direction by partnering with your professor and taking your research report to the next level. Communicate your research so that you can push science *and* society forward.