

## Methods and Techniques of Social Research

### Guidelines for ‘Review Essay’

As part of their assessment for this Course Unit, students are required to prepare a ‘Review Essay’ of an article that uses a quantitative approach that will be provided by the lecturer. This ‘Review Essay’ should not exceed 1500 words (excluding the Bibliographic References), and should be structured as follows:

1. *Bibliographic reference of the article being reviewed (use APA reference style)*
2. *Brief description of the paper*

Please cover all the topics below. If information on a particular issue is not mentioned in the paper, this should be mentioned.

*a. Aims/Research Question/Hypotheses*

Specify what is the aim of the paper, what is the research question that the authors try to respond, and what are the hypotheses that are being tested.

*b. Analytical model*

Specify what is the dependent variable of the model estimated by the authors and what are the independent variables that are assumed to influence the dependent variable.

*c. Methodology*

Specify what is the data that is used, how is the dependent variable measured and what is the research method adopted.

*d. Key Findings*

Specify what are the key findings of the paper.

### 3. Critical Assessment

In this section, you need to provide a critical assessment of aspects which you find more positive, or negative in the paper. Here is a list of topics, and questions you will want to consider. You do not have to cover all these topics, only those that you see as relevant for your paper. For a more in-depth discussion of these topics, see Coughlan et al (2007).

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Topics to consider</b>
<b><i>Purpose/ Research Problem</i></b>	Is the purpose of the study/research problem clearly identified?
<b><i>Logical consistency</i></b>	Does the research report follow the steps of the research process in a logical manner? Do these steps naturally flow and are the links clear?
<b><i>Literature review</i></b>	Is the review logically organized? Does it offer a balanced critical analysis of the literature? Is the majority of the literature of recent origin? is it mainly from primary sources and of an empirical nature?
<b><i>Theoretical Framework</i></b>	Has a conceptual or theoretical framework been identified? Is the framework adequately described? is the framework appropriate?
<b><i>Aims/objectives/ research question/ hypotheses</i></b>	Have aims and objectives, a research question or hypothesis been identified? If so are they clearly stated? Do they reflect the information presented in the literature review?
<b><i>Sample</i></b>	Has the target population been clearly identified? How were the sample selected? Was it a probability or non-probability sample? is it of adequate size? Are the inclusion/exclusion criteria clearly identified?
<b><i>Ethical considerations</i></b>	Were the participants fully informed about the nature of the research? Was the autonomy/confidentiality of the participants guaranteed? Were the participants protected from harm? Was ethical permission granted for the study?
<b><i>Operational definitions</i></b>	Are all the terms, theories and concepts mentioned in the study clearly defined?
<b><i>Methodology</i></b>	Is the research design clearly identified? Has the data gathering instrument been described? Is the instrument appropriate? How was it developed? Were reliability and validity testing undertaken and the results discussed? Was a pilot study undertaken?
<b><i>Data Analysis / results</i></b>	What type of data and statistical analysis was undertaken? Was it appropriate? How many of the sample participated? Significance of the findings?
<b><i>Discussion</i></b>	Are the findings linked back to the literature review? If a hypothesis was identified was it supported? Were the strengths and limitations of the study including generalizability discussed? Was a recommendation for further research made?
<b><i>References</i></b>	Were all the books, articles alluded to in the study accurately referenced?