

## PSCY 301: Research Methods

Department of Psychology, The College of New Jersey

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### How to Review a Research Paper:

#### Suggested guidelines

Information drawn from L. Shebilske (1997). How to review a journal article. ISSPR Bulletin, 13(2), p. 19 - 20 and B.A. Maher (1978). A reader's, writer's, and reviewer's guide to assessing research reports in clinical psychology. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 46, 835-838.

Your job as a reviewer is to evaluate

- (1) the mechanics of the paper (e.g., adherence to APA style, grammar)
- (2) the soundness of the study (conceptually, methodologically)
- (3) the effectiveness of presentation

Consider the following questions when reviewing a manuscript:

1. How well is the article grounded in theory?

2. How complete is the review of previous empirical work? Are notable studies missing?
3. Are the hypotheses or research questions explicitly articulated? Were they appropriately derived from theory?
4. Is there a description of how measures were selected? Are the constructs in the hypotheses suitably operationalized? Did the author demonstrate the validity and reliability of all measures?
5. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of the sample, the recruitment procedures, and the research design.
6. Identify the advantages and disadvantages of the statistics used for studying the problem. Were appropriate significance tests used and reported?
7. Are the statistical results presented effectively? Are the figures and tables accurate, essential, and understandable?
8. Should additional analyses be included? Should any analyses be eliminated?
9. Are the results interpreted correctly? Do the interpretations relate to the theoretical and empirical background of the study and to the hypotheses? Have alternative explanations been considered and discussed?
10. Does the paper further our understanding of the phenomena? Does the paper have the potential to stimulate further research?
11. How well was the article written? Was it interesting? Did you enjoy reading it?

Try to rate the manuscript on the following scales, using a 5-point Likert-type scale:

1 2 3 4 5

Poor

Excellent

(A) Theoretical importance

(B) Methodological soundness

(C) Adequacy of literature review

(D) Innovativeness/originality

(E) Quality of ideas

(F) Clarity of writing

(G) Interest value

(H) Overall contribution