

# Villa College

## Research Digest

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VC Research Digest provides updates on current and ongoing research projects of Villa College staff and students, and provides fresh research ideas and snippets to help expand the horizon of research and inquiry

### EDITORIAL

## Creating Social Impact Through Research

**Dr Ahmed Shahid, Dean of Research, IRI, Villa College**  
*Editor (VC Research Digest)*

Making a meaningful contribution to knowledge and to the society through gathering evidence for existing or putting forward new theories and informing policy action are among the key drivers of research endeavours. In particular, those who are engaged in social research put emphasis on enhancing our understanding of various social phenomena through systematic method of discovery that provide new insights into social transformation and development. As such, academic institutions are increasingly committing to promoting scholarly research with practical applications and social impacts.

The Times Higher Education's Social Impact Ranking (THE-SIR) is a new ranking system that captures universities' impact on society based on their success in delivering the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup> through their research and academic administration<sup>2</sup>. The rankings are targeted for research-intensive global universities and are dominated by indicators of research excellence in at least 4 SDG areas. The overall ranking is based on institutions' data for SDG 17 (mandatory) plus their best three results on the remaining SDGs.

Villa College has the intention to participate in the THE-SIR ranking to accentuate its commitment to teaching and research excellence, while moving towards recognisable international quality benchmarking. This is also an excellent platform to strategically align our teaching and research efforts towards global standards and expectations. Moreover, efforts to seek the THE-SIR ranking is a step in the right direction towards creating extra momentum for Maldives to achieve the SDGs, thereby improving the lives of everyone in the country.

As part of the drive towards THE-SIR, Villa College will focus on promoting research related to the following SDGs:

- Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 5: Gender Equality
- Goal 13: Climate Action
- Goal 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions
- Goal 17: Partnership for the Goals

The number and quality of research projects undertaken, papers published and the level of citations (CiteScore) on the above SDG areas are key measures that would contribute to the ranking. Academic researchers and students affiliated with Villa College are encouraged to realign and focus their current and future research projects to the above SDG areas. THE-SIR ranking indicators and methodology are detailed [here](#)<sup>3</sup>. Should you require further information on THE-SIR, please contact the research team at IRI.

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1 United Nations, 'Sustainable Development Goals' (2015) <<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>>.

2 Times Higher Education, 'Impact Rankings: FAQs' (2022) <<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/impact-rankings-faqs>>.

3 Times Higher Education, 'Impact Rankings Methodology 2022 - Version 1.3' (2022) <[https://the-impact-report.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Impact+2022/THE.ImpactRankings.METHODOLOGY.2022\\_v1.3.pdf](https://the-impact-report.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Impact+2022/THE.ImpactRankings.METHODOLOGY.2022_v1.3.pdf)>.

# Cultural Historical Activity Theory in Research: Its Origin

**Dr Ibrahim Latheef**

*Dean, Centre for Postgraduate Studies, Villa College*

## **Introduction**

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) is concerned with “the relation and interaction between humans and their material and social environment” (Kuutti & Engeström, 2006, p. 44). From this perspective, phylogenetically and ontogenetically, a human mental process emerges, exists, and develops in and through practical actions and social interactions with the environment. The authors who conceived CHAT as a framework, trace their influences as far back as 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century classical German philosophy, from Kant to Hegel, and which in turn is rooted in the writings of Soviet-originated cultural-historical psychologists, by Marx and Engels, whose subsequent writings elaborated the concept of human activity (Leont’ev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978). According to Engeström and Miettinen (1999), there are three periods of western philosophy and theory generation critical in the origins in CHAT, firstly Kant and Hegel, secondly Marx and Engel in mainly 19<sup>th</sup> Century industrial Britain, and thirdly Vygotsky, Leont’ev and Luria in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia as discussed in the following.

## **Origin**

The most significant contributions from Kant were the idea of “subject” used as the current ethical meaning, who is the morally responsible agent and bearer of the right. As a result, Kant had moved issues related to consciousness from natural science to “subject-object relations” (Blunden, 2005). Following Kant, Hegel was the first person to theorise this subject-object relation from a cultural historical perspective (Blunden, 2007). He also argued that the concept of “idea” and “subject” were conceived only after they had been established historically. Hegel argued that the “human mind was able to represent the objects of culture, because it was after all the activity of the human mind which created and constituted them” (Blunden, 2005, p. 1).

Secondly, within German political and economic philosophy, Marx reinforced this notion of social relations, elaborating on the concept of reality in his Theses on Feuerbach and developing the notion of “sensuous human activity, practice” (Foot, 2001, p. 6). However, Marx challenged Hegel for “the materialist

doctrine that people are products of circumstances ... [he] forgets that it is people who change circumstances” (Marx, 1845 cited in Blunden, 2010, p. 1). Cultural historical theorists adopted Marx’s view of activity and consciousness as dynamically interrelated (Leont’ev, 1974). According to Veresov (2005), there are at least three concepts in cultural historical theory that, while not exclusive to CHAT, significantly reflect Marx’s ideology: (1) the role of human activity (practice) in mental development, (2) the social origins of mind, and (3) cultural signs/symbols as psychological tools.

Thirdly, Vygotsky had a broader view of personality and human consciousness than Marx. In 1924 Vygotsky joined with Luria and Leont’ev to develop the distinctively cultural-historical view of human mental development we see in CHAT today. Vygotsky and his colleagues formulated a theory through which practical human labour activity is used to explain cognition. Due to political pressure during and after his lifetime, Vygotsky’s work was banned in the Soviet Union and only reemerged in 1956 after two decades (Krause, Bochner, & Duchesne, 2003). The first English translation of his work was published in 1962, and it is only during the last 30 years that his work began to gain recognition worldwide. Since then, his work has been studied, interpreted, reacted to, and expanded.

After being conceived through the three distinctive periods, CHAT as currently used in research was developed by Vygotsky. His original core thesis being the notion of “mediated action”, Vygotsky’s work expanded on how people use their own social activities, by changing their own conditions of existence, can change themselves. Vygotsky argued that culture was passed down through signs, and that learning was not just instructions, but the adoption of meanings learned through mediation. Vygotsky also went further, adapting Marx’s political theory concerning collective changes and material production to capture the practices individuals face in their environment while learning to participate in joint activities (Stetsenko, 2005). The concept of mediation is illuminated by Vygotsky (1978) in his famous triangular model of “a complex, mediated act” which is commonly expressed as the triad of subject, object, and mediating artefact. The concept of mediated

action depicted in the triangle disrupted the traditional association between response and stimuli by introducing the assistance of a tool. Vygotsky first discussed issues around activity in detail in his publication *Consciousness as a problem of psychology of behaviour*, although this concept had existed in his writings since 1896 (Kozulin, 1986).

## Conclusion

CHAT has its roots as far back as 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Central to CHAT is that consciousness arises from an externally practical activity and the unity of the “consciousness” and the “activity” (Leont'ev, 1977). As Kaptelinin (1996) describes, “consciousness” refers to “the human mind as a whole”, and “activity” is “human interaction with the objective reality” (p. 107). Based on this perspective a person alone cannot be the unit of analysis, in isolation from these actions and the context in which the actions occur (Engeström, 1987). CHAT is therefore a suitable framework for understanding the ways in which humans use tools and apply in the context and influence consciousness while working towards a common goal. Since its origin, the theoretical framework used in current research is a result of a lot of further historical-cultural-technological interactions, interpretations, reactions, and expansions.

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# Doing Simple Secondary Data Research Projects

**Dr Fazeela Ibrahim**

*Research Associate, Institute for Research and Innovation, Villa College*

All research will involve the collection of data. Much of this data will be collected directly through some form of interaction between the researcher and the people or organisation concerned, using methods such as interviews, focus groups, surveys, and participant observation. These methods are used in the collection of primary data, and herein lies the opportunity for the researcher to develop and demonstrate their research skill. Subsequently, primary data that are archived for future use can be utilized by other researchers for the purpose of their research. The already existing data is known as secondary data, which can be summarized and analysed by other researchers to increase the overall value of their research.

## **Secondary Data**

Secondary data, unlike primary data, is data that is collected by other researchers, like surveys and surveillance of a particular population, and they might make that data available to other researchers to use for their own studies (Jonston, 2017). So, anytime you obtain data that was collected for another study or perhaps a completely different purpose, that is referred to as secondary data.

## **Types of Secondary Data**

Secondary data sources can include data that is collected by survey questionnaires administered by other researchers to answer their questions, but sometimes these data can also be used to answer other questions that were not directly analysed by the researchers who collected the data (Boslaugh, 2007). Hence, if you are able to obtain access to that data, it can be used to answer your own research question(s)

by analysing it.

There are many secondary data sources that can be used for research purposes. Archival data and record systems can be used as good secondary data sources for research. These data include birth, death, and medical records. Researchers are now more engaged in using archival data and record systems due to its availability in forms of electronic systems (Das, Jain, & Mishra, 2018; Nair, Hsu, & Celi, 2016). As the data from governmental bodies and agencies, private sectoral organizations, and other institutes are becoming more available on online platforms, the abundance of its availability has made it convenient for researchers to extract and analyse relevant data for their own research purposes.

In addition to archival data and record systems, billing and transaction records could also be used as a source of secondary data. One of the most common sources of billing and transaction records is health care claims or medical service claims (Ryu, 2017; Smith & Barry, 2020). Billing and transaction records provide a detailed set of information that researchers can use to explore trends and patterns to answer some interesting questions about the quality of care, types of care different patients receive, costs incurred for medical tests, etc.

## **Where Will you Find Secondary Data?**

One of the most popular ways of collecting secondary data is using publicly available open data. Public use datasets are prepared with the intent of making them available to the public. Many countries now have open data policies and health authorities, and governments and local authorities put much data online. There are a

variety of specialized databases and archives that focus on providing data. Two examples are highlighted below.

**Maldives National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)**: You can analyse data from your own local bureau of statistics. By visiting the NBS website you can find additional links that take you to [census data](#) and other surveys ([resort employee survey](#), [economic survey](#), [agriculture survey](#), etc) that you can reanalyse for your purpose. Accurate census data are critical for programs that aim to identify areas eligible for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans; housing subsidies; job training and employment services; energy cost assistance; and community economic development. Accurate census data also are critical to allocating funds for social services for women and children, assisting the elderly, and the disabled as well as allocation of funding for numerous educational programs such as vocational and adult education.

**Demographic Health Survey (DHS) Dataset**: For thirty years, the [DHS \(Demographic and Health Surveys\) Program](#) has collected data on fertility, family planning, maternal and child health, nutrition, HIV, and malaria. The goal of DHS surveys is to make [datasets available](#) to support better decision-making about health policies and programs, which, in turn, will lead to improved health outcomes. To make DHS data easier to find and use, DHS developed an e-learning course, [DHS Data Users](#) that provides an overview of the DHS project so that the program staff, policymakers, and researchers are better able to use the data for further analysis to make evidence-based decisions.

### Pros and Cons of Using Secondary Data

Secondary research is cost-effective and that is one of the reasons that makes secondary data a popular choice among a lot of researchers and organizations. Not every organization can pay a huge sum of money to conduct research and gather data. Nevertheless, some important factors need to be considered in the use of secondary data (Pederson, et. al., 2022; Tripathy, 2013). The table

below clearly outlines them.

*Table 1 Pros and Cons of using Secondary Data Sources*

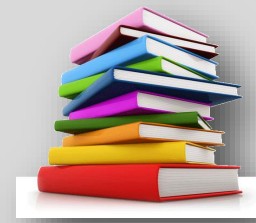
Pros	Cons
Most of the secondary data sources are easily available online making it easier to conduct research in a timely manner, without the longer timelines for collecting original data.	Secondary data may not always be a perfect fit for your research needs. There might be missing key measures that you are interested in studying.
Secondary data is usually of high quality as a lot of resources go into collecting the data. Also, these are very large surveys which is an advantage in terms of doing statistically significant analysis with confidence that the results and the sample are representative of the general population.	Since secondary datasets are made available, a lot of times many of the variables are pre-coded and you do not necessarily have access to the raw data. Sometimes if the coding document is not available you do not know exactly what those variables represent.
Most secondary data sources are longitudinal in the sense that they follow people over time at multiple points in their lifespan, which is also an advantage from a statistical analysis perspective. You can use more sophisticated methods to look at generation trends and changes over time and as a whole society.	It is also critical to understand how the information was originally collected. If you do not have complete familiarity with the data collection process, how those data were obtained and the sampling plan, it will be a challenging task to do further analysis retrospectively.

## Conclusion

It is important to make note of the limitations when presenting the information from secondary data and what the potential impact on the interpretation of the results can be. Nevertheless, secondary analysis can make important contributions to knowledge as well as provide directions for future research and programs.

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## FROM THE WORLD OF RESEARCH

### **Neoliberal exception? The liberalization of Macau's casino gaming monopoly and the genealogy of the post-socialist Chinese subject**

**Tim Simpson**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Following Portugal's return of Macau to the People's Republic of China in 1999, the local government liberalized the city's casino gaming monopoly and opened the industry to foreign investment. As a result, Macau has become the world's most lucrative site of casino gaming revenue, and a model for other regional states which are pursuing casino gaming-driven development. This article entails a post-structural analysis of neoliberal governance in Macau and a genealogy of the resulting post-socialist consumer subject. Framed by a critical engagement with Aihwa Ong's theory of "neoliberalism as exception," analysis reveals that Macau's economic growth was enhanced, not by optimizing technocratic rationalities, but by reactive measures taken up by different actors, at several different scales, to address three governance crises of public order, public finance, and public health. What appear to be neoliberal interventions in the Macau economy are often exposed as contemporary iterations of latent governmental forms. These various factors form a dispositif, or apparatus, of subjectification.

Keywords biopolitical, casino, genealogy, integrated resort, urban laboratory, neoliberalism, spatial ontology  
Simpson, Tim. "Neoliberal Exception? The Liberalization of Macau's Casino Gaming Monopoly and the Genealogy of the Post-Socialist Chinese Subject." *Planning Theory* 17, no. 1 (2018): 74-95.

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SCAN ME



# Sampling, Sample Size, and Data Saturation in Qualitative Research

**Dr Aishath Nasheeda**

*Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Faculty of Educational Studies*

The strength of qualitative research has always been its ability to produce complex, rich descriptions of individual's experience on a given research issue (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995; Yin, 2011). At the same time, the most debatable areas of qualitative research are sampling, sample size, and data saturation.

While there are different interpretations and beliefs on how samples should be selected, the basic principles of selecting the sample size have been developed to enable researchers to justify the chosen size of the sample. All qualitative samples are selected based on the purpose of the study. Hence, the samples are determined by the capacity that it can provide rich-in depth information, relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. Unlike quantitative study samples, which involves a statistically generated set number as sample size, qualitative researcher seeks information rich cases. Thus, qualitative research samples depend on methodological, theoretical, epistemological and practicality of inquiry (Vasileiou et al., 2018) allowing the researcher the flexibility on the size of the samples. Nevertheless, there have been numerous conceptual guidelines and principles on qualitative sample size – the most obvious one being data saturation. This article presents my understanding and justification on the take on sampling, sample size, and data saturation. While this is just one perspective, it is important to understand that no one model fits all.

## **Sampling**

Sampling is the most crucial step in any research project as it is impossible to study the entire population. The essentials of sampling in quantitative studies are for representation and generalisability to the entire population, while qualitative studies aim to

understand the meaning attached to complex issues through why and how questions (Roy et al., 2015). For example, sampling to understand meaning attached to complex issues includes understanding participant's perception of self, society, and the environment, as meaning is defined by the context and ideas that shape the participant's sense of identity. These identities are fluid, based on the experience and exposure the participant acquire in the world. Looking at the contrasting ideologies of sampling in quantitative and qualitative studies, what stands out is the goal of each of the research design. According to Luborsky and Rubinsterein (1995), qualitative study samples are based on four distinct philosophies: 1) all qualitative response carry inferential meaning as events and activities can only be understood through experiences, 2) experiences are interpreted actively by the respondent, 3) interpretation is a collaboration between researcher and the respondent, and 4) interpretations are based on exposure and experiences. To address these philosophies, three most commonly used sampling methods are purposive sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling.

### ***Purposive sampling***

Taherdoost (2016), suggests that in purposive sampling, groups participants are selected according to a preselected criteria – inclusion criteria relevant to the research question. Therefore, purposive sampling size is determined by theoretical saturation.

### ***Quota sampling***

This is a form of purposive sampling, but the researcher determines how many participants to include in the study based on predetermined characteristics such as age, place, gender,

marital status, etc of the participants so that the total sample will have the same distribution, whom the researcher believes would be able to provide information relevant to the research questions.

**Snowball sampling**

Snowballing is known as chain referral sampling which is also a type of purposive sampling. In this method, researcher asks participants to use their contact and social networks to seek other potential participants. Snowballing is used with groups that are not accessible to the researcher through other sampling strategies.

**Sample Size**

Usually qualitative research consists of smaller samples when compared to samples in quantitative research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007) and involves selection of participants to obtain relevant and diverse information on an issue. It is a decision focusing on integrity, composition, and depth of data (Roy et al., 2015). In qualitative studies, the focus is on collecting extensive detail from few samples. The intention of qualitative research is not to generalize the information but to elucidate detailed specific particulars of the study of interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018). There is no rule of thumb on how many samples to select but rather a matter of saturation (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

Table 1 illustrates recommended sample sizes for different approaches to qualitative research in Creswell and Poth (2018).

Approach	Sample size
Phenomenological	3 to 10 cases
Grounded Theory	20 to 30 cases
Ethnography	Single culture sharing group
Narrative	1 or 2 cases
Case study	4 to 5 cases

**Data Saturation**

Data Saturation is a concept developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 for grounded theory approach

(Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). It is the most common guiding principle for assessing the quality and adequacy of purposive samples in qualitative research. According to Roy et al., (2015), saturation reflects the quality or depth of the data. Data saturation occurs when researchers obtain repeated information that they can anticipate (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Roy et al., 2015) hence, any new information is not generated. Therefore, the view on data saturation centres around how much data is required to determine redundant data. Saunder et al., (2018) describe four different models of saturation that can occur.

1. *Theoretical saturation* – rooted in grounded theory, theoretical saturation occurs when dimensions of concepts and conceptual relations can be fully described, and during the analysis the complexity and variations of these concepts are explained. Here the focus is more on sampling.
2. *Inductive Thematic saturation* – confined to codes and themes rather than to a completeness of an existing theoretical categories. In this model saturation is confined to the level of analysis.
3. *Priori thematic saturation* – a reversal preceding logic in which data is collected to exemplify theory at a lower-order code instead of refined theory. In this model the focus is on sampling rather than analysis.
4. *Data saturation* – identifying redundancy as in, no new information can be driven from data. As the name suggest the focus is placed on data collection.

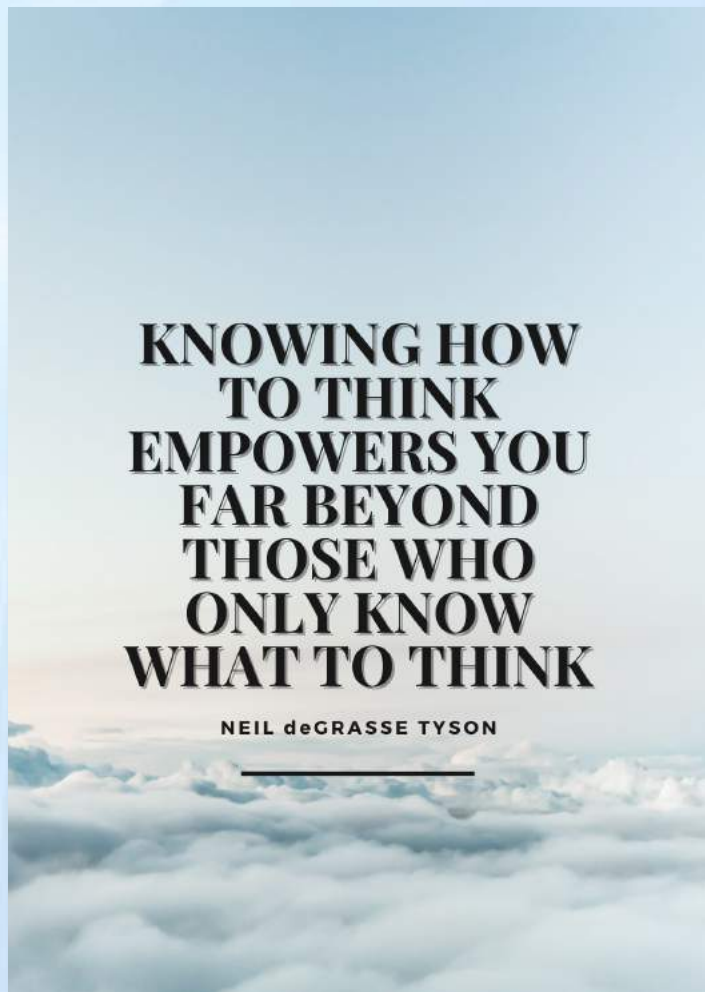
While data saturation is useful during the design of the research, theoretical saturation is handy for data analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Roy et al., 2015). However, there are several opinions on data saturation within the qualitative research approaches due to the flexibility of research design and the uniqueness of the participants experiences (Saunder et al., 2018). Hence, data saturation depends on a number of factors such as selection criteria, demographic population, and the focus of the study: in depth vs



theory (Dworkin, 2012; Mason, 2010). Therefore, the significant factor related to data saturation is the extent to which data is viewed as an event or a process.

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# Conquering the Fear of Publishing

**Dr Mamdooha Ismail**

*Research Associate, Institute for Research and Innovation, Villa College*

Do you feel that despite following rigorous scientific processes and getting good feedback from your supervisors, your journal manuscript is still ‘not good enough’ to be shared with the public? Do you wonder whether you know enough or whom to send the publication to? Are you anxious about having to face criticism and scrutiny from reviewers? There is no need to fret or to lose sleep over it, as you are certainly not in this boat alone. The fear of one’s manuscript being criticized or rejected is an emotion encountered by many academic authors—the experienced and the inexperienced alike. Authors get very discouraged and disappointed to learn their manuscripts have been rejected at the pre-peer review stage. So how do we go about addressing this matter?

Publishing academic papers is an integral part of the research process. Through the publication process the works of researchers get refined and peer reviewed, and they get the opportunity to share their ideas and knowledge with the rest of the scientific community. Publication also helps in preserving one’s work in the permanent records of research in the field, thereby involving you in the active research community, expanding your professional network and enhancing collaboration with peers in the field.

Despite its importance in the research process, getting published is not an easy task. Publication requires following fundamental and inevitable rules of research and publication protocols. Research follows strict criteria and stringent measures to ensure quality, standardization, and transparency (Duracinsky et al., 2017). The peer review process requires the ability to present academic work in the format that satisfies the requirements of a journal, making the process a challenging task for many authors, especially in the early stages of their research career (Drosou, Del-Pinto, Mohammed, Goodall, & Marlow, 2019). Hence, regardless of which discipline you come from, all academic writers do confront several hurdles and difficulties when it comes to publishing. Nevertheless, there are several practices that can be helpful in overcoming the fear of

publication. As such some of the factors that can be considered in publication are:

## **New and original**

In publishing, it is necessary to ensure that the work is new or original, whether it is new results or new methods. A strong manuscript is considered to be one that presents novel, clear, useful, and exciting message in a logical manner (Newman, 2010). Hence if your work is too similar to existing articles, there is a possibility that the journal may not accept your manuscript.

## **Target journal**

When selecting a journal, it is crucial to choose the right one for your work. One should examine the journal’s aims and scope to be sure that the research is relevant to the journal’s audience. Depending on the type of your submission, whether it is a research, review paper, brief report or book review, ensure that the journal publishes your chosen kind of paper. In addition, you should also consider if the language is too technical or is appropriate for the audience and whether the research is too country specific for a global audience (Rawat, 2020). One way of identifying a suitable journal is to check one’s own references. One can also check the journal’s acceptance/rejection rate when choosing a suitable journal.

## **Is the journal peer-reviewed?**

Despite being a time-consuming process along with its flaws, peer review is crucial to uphold the quality of literature. Peer review is critical for sustaining the high standards of scholarly communications, for maintaining the quality of individual journals, and for support of the researchers who have authored the papers (Rawat, 2020). It is considered as a prerequisite for integrating new research findings in academia, which also helps in reducing plagiarism (Drosou et al., 2019). Reviewing is also an opportunity to identify your shortcomings in writing.

Authors are benefitted from the expertise and recommendations provided by peer reviewers. In general, peer reviewed journals are associated with credibility in academia, thus is an important factor to consider when selecting a suitable journal to publish your article.

### **What is the journal's Impact Factor?**

The impact factor (IF) is often used as an indicator of the importance of a journal to its field. In order to make the most of your talents and opportunities, it is logical to aim to conduct the highest possible impact research (Didegah & Thelwall, 2013). IF is a measure of how frequently papers published in a journal are cited in the scientific literature. The higher the number of citations or articles coming from a particular journal, or impact factor, the higher it is ranked. So, when deciding the best journal for your paper, IF is a powerful tool that can guide you through the process.

### **What makes a good manuscript?**

The structure or the organization of the manuscript matters to reviewers. Writing for successful publication requires a well-designed, original study that is well written in an interesting manner. The manuscript should capture the attention of the reviewers. Hence, the paper needs to be structured correctly. The general structure of a full article includes:

- Title
- Authors
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Main text (Under main text)
  - ◊ Introduction - A strong introduction that engages the reader
  - ◊ Methods - clear, logically organized, and complete method which can be replicated by another
  - ◊ Results - clear and concise
  - ◊ Discussion (Conclusions) - relevant, with significance and implications of results
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Supplementary material

In addition, as researchers it is important to master academic writing skills. Your manuscript needs to be free from vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation

and style mistakes (Zemmouchi-Ghomari, 2016). It is recommended to keep the language simple, concise, and easy to understand. Language quality is crucial in publishing and you should ensure to report your findings as clearly as possible.

### **Ethics**

When it comes to publishing, authors should ascertain the credibility of their research findings. Therefore, in selecting journals, you should evaluate the journal's integrity, history, as well as ethical practices. A quality journal will contain information as to ethics on their website, including information as to issues such as plagiarism, conflicts of interest, internal review board approval, informed consent, human and animal subject research, confidentiality, data and image manipulation, and other crucial ethical considerations (Suiter & Sarli, 2019). One should aim to select a journal that adheres to the principles of research integrity and publication ethics.

### **Dealing with rejection**

The idea of being criticized by reviewers or being rejected by editors is enough to stop many writers from making any submissions. Rejections are always connected with disappointment, nevertheless, as academicians and researchers it is practical to be open to the possibility of being rejected. You must train yourself to handle criticism and rejection in a positive manner. You need to accept criticism as feedback given for enhancing the manuscripts. You should carefully read the referees' reports and find out the fundamental issues so that you can re-work on the manuscript or decide if you must go for an alternative journal. A creative way for avoiding disappointments is to identify three possible journals where the aim and scope fit with your manuscript and rank them in order so that you can start a new submission process immediately, should you receive a rejection (Duracinsky et al., 2017).

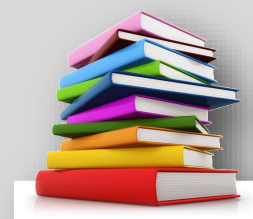
### **Publish or Perish**

Writing for academic journals is highly competitive. Nevertheless, as researchers it is vital to publish on a regular basis to succeed in an academic career. Additionally, the success of a publication very much depends on the stature of the chosen journal because publishing in journals that are not reputable can impact the credibility of one's research. Several aspects of a journal including the scope, audience, peer review

process and duration, structure and indexing along with others are of utmost significance in publishing. Finally, rejection is also part of the process, thus we need to re-establish ourselves mentally after a rejection and move forward with a positive attitude for as quoted by Curzon and Cleaton-Jones (2012), “without publication research is sterile”(p.4).

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## FROM THE WORLD OF RESEARCH

### Principles of Experimental Design for Big Data Analysis

*Christopher C. Drovandi, Christopher C. Holmes, James M. McGree, Kerrie Mengersen, Sylvia Richardson and Elizabeth G. Ryan*

#### ABSTRACT

Big Datasets are endemic, but are often notoriously difficult to analyse because of their size, heterogeneity and quality. The purpose of this paper is to open a discourse on the potential for modern decision theoretic optimal experimental design methods, which by their very nature have traditionally been applied prospectively, to improve the analysis of Big Data through retrospective designed sampling in order to answer particular questions of interest. By appealing to a range of examples, it is suggested that this perspective on Big Data modelling and analysis has the potential for wide generality and advantageous inferential and computational properties. We highlight current hurdles and open research questions surrounding efficient computational optimisation in using retrospective designs, and in part this paper is a call to the optimisation and experimental design communities to work together in the field of Big Data analysis.

Drovandi, Christopher C., Christopher C. Holmes, James M. McGree, Kerrie Mengersen, Sylvia Richardson, and Elizabeth G. Ryan. “Principles of Experimental Design for Big Data Analysis.” *Statistical Science* 32, no. 3 (2017): 385–404.

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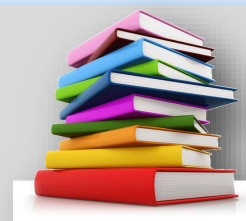
- Be between 700-850 words in length
- If a completed research project, it must at minimum include:
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  - ⇒ Research background and problem statement (including lit. review)
  - ⇒ Aims and Objectives
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  - ⇒ Conclusions
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  - ⇒ Research title
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  - ⇒ Aims and Objectives
  - ⇒ Research question/hypothesis
  - ⇒ Methodology
  - ⇒ Expected findings and implications
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## FROM THE WORLD OF RESEARCH

### The relationship between self-care, positive family environment, and human wellbeing

*Nissa Yaing Torres-Soto, Víctor Corral-Verdugo Nadia Saraí Corral-Frías*

#### ABSTRACT

Self-care behaviors are fundamental for a healthy lifestyle. These behaviors can lead to improved physical and psychological health, which can in turn lead to individual and social wellbeing. The present paper proposes self-care as a set of behaviors that help sustain a positive environment (i.e., a sustainable behavior) wherein individuals who take care of themselves can aid in maintaining the positivity of the environment. Thus, taking care of oneself, others and the natural environment may result in wellbeing and environmental quality. This study aimed to investigate the role of self-care as part of a network of behaviors that help to maintain a positive family environment and wellbeing. A sample of Mexicans participated ( $n = 290$ ). Results indicated that a positive family environment influences and is influenced by wellbeing and by sustainable behaviors that include self-care, caring for others and caring for the natural environment. These findings provide evidence of the inclusion of self-care as part of sustainable behaviors within a positive family environment.

Torres-Soto, N.Y., Corral-Verdugo, V. and Corral-Frías, N.S., 2022. The relationship between self-care, positive family environment, and human wellbeing. *Wellbeing, Space and Society*, p.100076.

Read on... <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wss.2022.100076>

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## Institute for Research and Innovation Villa College

Male' Maldives

Email: [iri@villacollege.edu.mv](mailto:iri@villacollege.edu.mv)

Email: [research.digest@villacollege.edu.mv](mailto:research.digest@villacollege.edu.mv)

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