

FROM THE EDITORS' DESKS

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Keys to Writing a Quality Abstract

From the Editors' Desks: Installment 1

By James F. Petrick and Nancy G. McGehee
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An abstract provides an important first impression of your research. If well-written, it can increase the chances of your manuscript being read and cited. **The abstract should be the last component you work on prior to submitting a manuscript and should be as concise and informative as possible. Each should include the following elements:**

- Introductory statement of the problem (hook sentence) which often includes the rationale for the research.
- Brief and concise explanation of the methods used.
- Summary of most relevant results.
- The most substantive implications of the study.

JTR's abstracts are limited to 150 words, all of which should be carefully selected. Here are some quick tips to assist you in choosing each of those precious words:

- Don't cut and paste from the manuscript, particularly the introduction. Use different, more concise wording.
- Avoid unfamiliar terminology, laundry lists of variables, and acronyms.
- Use past tense for results, present tense for implications.
- Write -> read -> edit -> read -> edit, etc.

Also check submission guidelines for how many keywords you can include:

- Include keywords that are **not** already in your title.
- Test the keywords via search engines to make sure they find similar articles.
 - Test and use phrases, if relevant (e.g., "destination image").
- If your study employed unique methods, include as a keyword/phrase.

Examples of good abstracts can be found here:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472875221133042>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472875221140903>

Always make sure you follow the specific submission guidelines for the journal in which you are submitting. JTR's Submission Guidelines, as well as editorial review policies can be found [here](#).

On Being a Conscious Reviewer

From the Editors' Desks: Installment 2

By Nancy G. McGehee and James F. Petrick
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And

Alana Dillete and Stefanie Benjamin
Editorial Board Members

There are many aspects to a good review of a manuscript. Over the coming months we'll cover a variety of these elements from time to time, but for this installment we are focusing on an under-emphasized topic that we are naming **Conscious Reviewing**. Recently there have been discussions on TRINET regarding systems of knowledge production and the dominance of Anglo- Saxon journals and the thinking that dominates those journals. While JTR is undoubtedly an English-speaking journal, we can, along with other English-speaking journals, work to be more conscious of different approaches to knowledge, self-reflect on our own biases, and as a result adjust our approach to reviewing. In many cases, a simple adjustment of a request can make a big difference.

Here are a few suggestions for your next reviewing assignment:

- When faced with a manuscript that needs editing for grammar, rather than assuming the authors aren't native English speakers and recommending a native English speaker to review/edit, ask instead that they seek **a professional review**. It takes away the assumption that the authors are not English-speaking. Many of us, regardless of our first language, could benefit from a professional editor.
- Whenever reviewing a paper that is targeting an under-studied area of research, resist the questions of "why did you only study Black travelers?" or "only women travelers?" or "only disabled travelers?" or "only indigenous communities?" This implies that these segments are less important than others, **when in fact these and many other segments are incredibly under- studied and need the spotlight shined on them**. Conversely, don't agree that a study is generalizable if the focus is solely on a broadly studied group like White European or American respondents.
- We all suffer from "reviewer bias." The trick is to recognize your biases and work to reduce them. Take advantage of on-campus or online resources, including those below, that can help you expose your unconscious biases. **Being aware is half the battle!**
- **Don't be THAT reviewer**. We've all had a reviewer who just comes across as mean. They will often use demeaning or condescending language to convey their message. Focus on constructive criticism.

- As a reviewer, consider requesting that the **authors of any paper include their reflexivity statements**. Even quantitative work could benefit from understanding the viewpoint of the researcher. Of course, it's important to recognize that sometimes these cannot be added until after the paper has gone through review as their reflexivity might reveal their identity and compromise the double-blind process.
- Ask authors to also address how **diversity, equity, inclusion, and systems of knowledge** were considered as part of the research journey and how it could be considered in future papers in the conclusions.

Unfortunately, we cannot include examples of conscious reviews as that would compromise the double-blind process, but we welcome other examples of good practices from our peers!

For more information on being a conscious reviewer, check out these resources:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0262407920315050>

<https://hbr.org/2021/09/unconscious-bias-training-that-works>

<https://icom.museum/en/news/reflecting-on-the-meaning-of-peer>

For more information on JTR's Submission Guidelines, as well as editorial review policies, click [here](#).

Finding the Sweet-Spot in Multi-Study Research: How Many Studies are Enough?

From the Editors' Desks: Installment 3

By James F. Petrick and Nancy G. McGehee
Co-Editors, Journal of Travel Research

The primary goal of multi-study research should be to draw reliable, valid (quantitative) or transferable, confirmable (qualitative) conclusions while advancing the field's knowledge in a succinct and parsimonious manner. The correct number, order, and format of studies can depend on multiple factors including: the problem studied, resources available, and the nature of the experiments or other methods conducted. **Here are a few general recommendations when considering multi-study research:**

- Read the literature first. The process of determining the most parsimonious number of studies to conduct should not be considered until gaps in the current literature have been identified and the true purpose of the study has been clearly defined and conceptualized. The research question should drive the research design.
- Visualize the multi-study relationship, including a figure or table that shows how the studies are inter-related, is extremely helpful for reviewers and readers.
- Clearly justify your multi-study approach. Discuss other options you considered and why you feel the approach taken was the best option.
- For quantitative studies, time and resources spent on conducting small, incremental advances is likely better spent on participant randomization, controlling for extraneous variables (e.g., increasing internal validity) and better understanding the interaction effects of the independent variables examined.
- For qualitative research, include discussion of triangulation, specifically why the triangulation you chose was the best for the research question.

In addition to the problem being studied, resources available, and the nature of the experiments conducted, the correct number and type of studies can depend on multiple factors including:

- Is there a need to study different populations, perhaps in different ways?
- Conversely, does the research question and study population dictate a bricoleur approach, that is, a multi-faceted view of one group?
- Would the research benefit from being replicated in different geographic locations?

As always, we suggest young scholars consult with their advisors, peers, and other experienced researchers to help determine which manipulations have the best potential to maximize knowledge development.

Examples of recent, strong multi-study manuscripts can be found here:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00472875221138788>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472875231207860>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472875231206542>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00472875231164987>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472875231206989>

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Writing Strong Hypotheses

From the Editors' Desks: Installment 4

By Nancy G. McGehee & James F. Petrick
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Hypotheses form the backbone of quantitative research. If well-conceived, they help establish a strong manuscript. Hypotheses should only be created after intense analysis of the current literature as well as review of the state of the subject currently in practice in the “real world”.

Hypotheses should:

- Be connected to an over-arching research question.
- Be testable and predictive; predict both the relationship and outcome.
- Include clearly measured independent and dependent variables.
- Be written clearly and simply.
- Consider the if-then format.

In addition to guidelines on individual hypotheses, it's also important to consider how the hypotheses interact with each other. Researchers should:

- Demonstrate how your hypotheses build upon previous research.
- Discuss other potential hypotheses you considered and why you ruled them out.
- Include a visual figure or diagram in your manuscript that shows how the hypotheses interact with each other.
- Clearly justify the variables used and demonstrate that they are both valid and reliable.
- Avoid “hypotheses overkill”. The number of hypotheses for each manuscript should be directly related to the theory or model examined, parsimonious, and contribute to the larger body of knowledge.
- Clearly justify any hypotheses included that are outside the theoretical framework; these should be used judiciously.
- Confirm that your moderating hypotheses identify relationships that are conditional (e.g., the relationship between X and Y depends on M), while mediating hypotheses suggest a sequential relationship chain (e.g., X is related to M and M is related to Y).

Hypothesis writing skills can be sharpened by observing and analyzing existing hypotheses.

Here are some hypothetical examples of poorly written hypotheses:

- H: *Visitors will be satisfied due to the quality of the service they receive.* For this hypothesis, it is difficult to know precisely what “satisfied” means and multiple factors other than quality are likely related to perceptions of quality.
- H: *Travelers who travel more frequently will have more experiences.* This is a tautological hypothesis as it states that if something happens, it will happen.
- H: *All residents who receive sustainable tourism training will have more respect for visitors.* This hypothesis is an overgeneralization and assumes a universal causal relationship.

Here are some published examples of good hypotheses:

- H: *Exciting (vs. calm) endorsement generates a more favorable impact on tourists’ impulsive buying* (Luo, Liu & Wan, 2023, p. 5). This is a clear, precise hypothesis that is based on emotional contagion theory. Luo, X., Liu, X., & Wan, L. C. (2023). Excited or Calm? Effects of Endorsers’ Emotions on Tourists’ Impulsive Buying. *Journal of Travel Research*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/00472875231213210>
- H: *Destination social responsibility (DSR) mediates tourists' internal LOC and their positive WOM* (Saleh, 2023, p. 1313). Based on attribution theory, this hypothesis suggests a clear mediating relationship of one variable, between two others. Saleh, M. I. (2023). Attribution Theory Revisited: Probing the Link Among Locus of Causality Theory, Destination Social Responsibility, Tourism Experience Types, and Tourist Behavior. *Journal of Travel Research*, 62(6), 1309-1327. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472875221119968>
- H: *Impulsivity moderates the relationship between risk message framing and perceived safety; specifically, high impulsivity tourists’ perceived safety in response to COVID-19 messages is higher than that of low impulsivity tourists* (Xie, Zhang & Huang, 2023, p. 807). The authors of this experimental study added a clarifying statement after this proposed moderation hypothesis. Xie, C., Zhang, J., & Huang, S. (2023). Effect of risk message framing on tourists’ travel intention: Roles of resilience and impulsivity. *Journal of Travel Research*, 62(4), 802-819. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472875221095212>

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Effective Academic Writing

From the Editors' Desks: Installment 5

By James F. Petrick and Nancy G. McGehee
Co-Editors, Journal of Travel Research

The quality of one's writing can be the difference between a manuscript being rejected or accepted. Good writing is clear, concise, and organized. Below are quick tips to aid in this process.

Academic writing should:

- Use precise language. Shorter sentences and paragraphs are typically more effective.
- Be logically organized. Use headings and subheadings with all paragraphs having a smooth flow of ideas.
- Use transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
- Have a clear statement of the problem at the beginning of the manuscript.
- Have consistent use of verb tense. Here's a great guide:
<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/verb-tense>
- Correctly use articles (a, an, and the). Here's another guide:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/using_articles.html
- Be edited. Multiple times prior to submission.

Academic writing should avoid:

- Unnecessary jargon and acronyms.
- The use of strong statements such as "always" and "never."
- Repetition. Be succinct and try not to repeat information already given.
- Tense shifts.
- Excessive conjunctions (However, Conversely, Nevertheless).
- Plagiarism. Use proper references and citations.
- Overuse of a thesaurus.
- Overuse of the word "the." "The" is definite and suggests there is only one of the noun being discussed. Hence, by stating, "the definition of x is...," you are inferring there is only one definition of x.

- Firstly, secondly, thirdly, etc. as ordinal verbs. First, second, third, etc. are typically preferred or better yet, choose from some of these:

<https://wordselector.com/other-ways-to-say-firstly-secondly-thirdly/>

Make sure you follow the specific submission guidelines for the journal in which you are submitting. A professional editing service is recommended; it can save time and rounds of revisions. *JTR*'s submission guidelines can be found [here](#).

Here are a few examples of recent, well-written articles in *JTR*:

- Frochot, I., & Lenglet, F. (2023). Getting Away from It All: Development of a Scale to Measure Escapism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875231218641.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00472875231218641>
- Sharma, A., Santa-María, M. J., & Nicolau, J. L. (2023). The Effect of Tangible Promotions on an Intangible Environment. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875231219240.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00472875231219240>
- Fan, D. X., Buhalis, D., Fragkaki, E., & Tsai, Y. R. (2023). Achieving Senior Tourists' Active Aging Through Value Co-creation: A Customer-Dominant Logic Perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875231214733.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00472875231214733>
- Clark, C., & Nyaupane, G. P. (2023). Cross-Border Tourism and Community Solidarity at a Militarized Border: A Photo Elicitation Approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875231195734.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00472875231195734>

Qualitative Research: Laying a Strong Foundation

From the Editors' Desks: Installment 6

By Nancy G. McGehee and James F. Petrick
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We are frequently asked about our thoughts on the best methods to use for qualitative research. As with many research queries, the answer is often “it depends”: it depends on the foundational aspects of the research being conducted. This includes ontological and epistemological perspectives, axiology, the methodological approach, and the role of theory. In other words, a researcher must be careful not to put the cart before the horse by jumping to methods before thoughtfully laying the conceptual foundation. As a starting point - and this is just a starting point - we have developed a table to aid in this process. The table only includes four very basic views, from positivism to critical. There are numerous other perspectives, many of which are sub-categories of these four, so we encourage you to explore on your own.

Generally, we see quantitative work emerging from positivist and post-positivist perspectives and qualitative work emerging from interpretivist and critical perspectives. Once you have established your position with each of these foundational layers, moving forward to specific methods will be much easier. Enjoy the journey!

Some brief definitions (Arini et al, 2022):

- **Ontology:** The “what am I looking at, what do I see” question
Any way of understanding the world, or some part of it, must begin with a foundation of assumptions. We are able to interact with each other because we have implicitly agreed-upon assumptions about the world. What is the form and nature of reality? What can be known about reality? Look at the world through the eyes of your dog or a baby to help illuminate your own ontological perspective.
- **Epistemology:** The “how do we study it” question
This is how we generate knowledge and is related to rationalism and empiricism. Rationalism is based on logic and mathematics. Hence, rationalists believe in “innate knowledge.” Empiricists use impressions of “sense-experience as the basis for infallible knowledge; the human mind is a blank sheet until marked by experience.” This is the process of knowing; understanding the nature of the relationship between the researcher and knowledge.
- **Axiology:** The why do we study it” question
The philosophical study of value. We choose to study things because we value them. We learn to value some research subjects or approaches over others based on societal norms and exposure.

An overview of the various perspectives:

Aspect	Positivism	Post-Positivism	Interpretivism	Critical Approach
Ontology	Objective reality exists and can be observed/measured.	Reality exists but may not be directly observable; influenced by perspectives.	Multiple subjective realities; reality is socially constructed.	Reality is shaped by power relations and social structures.
Epistemology	Empirical observation and measurement; value-free, objective knowledge.	Empirical observation but acknowledges biases; attempts to minimize subjectivity.	Qualitative methods; understanding subjective experiences; emphasis on meanings.	Uncovering hidden power dynamics; questioning existing structures and norms.
Axiology	Values should not influence research; objectivity is crucial.	Acknowledges researcher's values but seeks objectivity through systematic methods.	Researcher's values are integral to understanding; subjective interpretations.	Values are acknowledged and often used to challenge and transform social structures.
Methodology	Quantitative methods; experiments, surveys, statistical analysis.	Mixed methods; combines quantitative and qualitative approaches.	Qualitative methods; interviews, participant observation, content analysis.	Emphasis on emancipatory methods; participatory action research, critical discourse analysis.
Role of Theory	Empirically derived; theory is used to predict and explain phenomena.	Acknowledges the role of theory, but open to revising it in light of new evidence.	Emphasizes theory-building from the data; multiple valid perspectives.	Critique and challenge existing theories; seek transformative theories.

Always remember to follow the specific submission guidelines for the journal in which you are submitting. Read examples of work that have been published in the journal you are targeting; it can save time and rounds of revisions. *JTR*'s submission guidelines can be found [here](#).

Here are a few examples of recent, well-written qualitative articles in *JTR*:

- Dillete, A., & Benjamin, S. (2022). The Black Travel Movement: A Catalyst for Social Change. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(3), 463-476.
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/10.1177/0047287521993549>
- Soulard, J., Park, J., & Zou, S. (Sharon). (2024). Pride in Transformation: A Rural Tourism Stakeholder View. *Journal of Travel Research*, 63(1), 80-99.
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/10.1177/00472875221143487>
- Stanley, P., & Wight, A. C. (2023). Interrogating Racialized “Cultural Authenticity” Discourses Among Language-Learner Tourists in Australia. *Journal of Travel Research*, 0(0). <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/10.1177/00472875231194272>
- Usai, R., Cai, W., & Wassler, P. (2022). A Queer Perspective on Heteronormativity for LGBT Travelers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(1), 3-15.
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/10.1177/0047287520967763>

Here are also some additional resources and references:

Books:

- Aurini, J., Heath, M., and Howells, S. (2022). Selecting the right tools for the job. The How to of Qualitative Research (2nd edition). Sage. *An excellent resource!*
- Carol Bailey (2007). A Guide to Qualitative Field Research (2nd edition). CABI Publishing. *The Queen of Field Research in my opinion.*
- Kakali Bhattacharya (2017). Fundamentals of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group Publishers.
- John Creswell (2016). 30 Essential Skills for the Qualitative Researcher. Sage Publishing. *Creswell has numerous books and videos. As typical of Sage, very practical, concise advice.*
- Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson (2004). Qualitative Research Methods in Tourism. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group Publishers. *This is a classic; I go back to it time and time again.*
- Brent W. Ritchie, Peter Burns, and Catherine Palmer (eds.) (2005). Tourism Research Methods: Integrating Theory with Practice. CABI publishing.

Videos:

- Ontology and Epistemology: <https://youtu.be/cdmkdFJAdnw?si=P6f11yBaLXETu8rB>