**Data/Methods Critique**

*SOC 4881 – Population Studies Research Practicum*

**DUE**

*March 25*

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Complete this assignment on your own.

You will be assigned to read one “methods section” of a paper written by another group. I will share with you (via the class website) your assigned methods section on March 11.

Each group will have to improve their methods section before moving forward, and they will do so based on feedback from you (and me). In this assignment, your objective is to provide detailed, constructive, and critical (but respectful) feedback to the group whose methods section you will read.

Use the attached worksheet to provide your feedback. On it, address the following questions:

1. ***Did they follow the group assignment instructions?***

Below are the basic instructions from the “Methods Section” group assignment:

*To receive full credit, the document you turn in should include:*

1. *Your Front End (revised based on feedback you’ve been given)*
2. *Your methods section (~2,500 words)*
3. *References*

*The methods section should be about 2,500 words and should describe (1) what data you will use, how the data were constructed, and why those data are the best suited for answering your research questions; (2) how you will measure every concept in your research questions; (3) what analytic method you will use to answer your research questions; and (4) what problems you anticipate and how you will try to overcome them. If these things are unclear, you will not get full credit.*

Did they follow them? If not, what needs to improve?

1. ***Did they explain what data they will use (and why?)***

Did they name and describe the data they will use? Did they talk about where the data came from, and explain how records were linked across censuses and mortality records? Did they say how they arrived at their analytic sample … that is, how they selected cases to be included in (or excluded from) the analysis? Did they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these data versus alternate options? How could their explanation of these things be more clear and complete?

1. ***Did they explain how they will measure every concept?***

Did they explain exactly and completely how every concept mentioned in their research questions will be measured? Did they discuss the pros and cons of alternate ways of measuring those concepts? How could their explanation of these things be more clear and complete?

1. ***Did they explain what analytic methods they will use to answer each research question?***

Did they ---separately for each of their research questions---explain exactly what analytic method they will use to answer their research questions? Did they discuss the pros and cons of alternate ways of answering those questions? How could their explanation of their analysis plans be more clear and complete?

1. ***Did they explain what problems they anticipate and how they will overcome them?***

Did they describe potential problems that may arise in their analyses, and how they will handle those problems? How could their explanation of these things be more clear and complete?

1. ***Is the Methods Section well written, from a style and technical point of view?***

Is the methods section clear and logically organized? Is it easy to follow? Is it well written, from a technical (i.e., grammar, sentence structure) point of view? What might be done to improve the writing?

**GRADING**

This assignment is worth 10 points. Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 are worth **2** points each. The others are worth **1** point each. Credit will be based on how thoroughly you answer the questions. Note that none of them are simple yes/no questions; all ask you to provide suggestions for how the authors might improve aspects of their methods section. Turn in **just the worksheet** via Canvas.

Assignments turned in up to 48 hours late will receive half credit; those turned in beyond 48 hours late will not be accepted.

**WORKSHEET: CRITIQUE OF METHODS SECTION**

**Your Name:** [Here]

**Topic of Group’s Paper:** [Here]

1. ***Did they follow the group assignment instructions?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***Did they explain what data they will use (and why?)***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***Did they explain how they will measure every concept?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***Did they explain what analytic methods they will use to answer each research question?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***Did they explain what problems they anticipate and how they will overcome them?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]

1. ***Is the Methods Section well written, from a style and technical point of view?***

[Type your answer here. See the specific instructions above.]