**Critical Review 2: Finding Quantitative Documents Worked Example**

The second assessment (Critical Review #2) is an exploratory exercise in which you will further your skills as a critical consumer of research in addition to developing your own research skills. In the second assessment, you will review media reporting of quantitative social research as well as the original research being reported.

**Step 1:** You need to first find a media article (newspaper report, magazine article, television/radio transcript) that has reported on published quantitative research. The media article should be relevant to your area of study (policing, criminology, social work etc). The media article (and the research being reported) cannot be one used in tutorials for teaching purposes. You must find your own media article/research report.

**Tips:** It is best to focus the search on the more ‘traditional’ news media. Avoid blogs, social media, press releases, and The Conversation. Look for a ‘traditional’ news media article written by a reporter (not an academic).

The library has generated a help sheet for this assignment – this can be found with your material for this assessment. I find it easiest to go straight to the website of a news outlet (ABC, Sydney Morning Herald, The Age etc) and search within this website.

Make sure you find your media article first then your research. It is almost impossible to find the materials if you work the other way around.

**Example:** Go to the ABC News website: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/>

Use the search function within this website located in the top right hand corner.

Add search terms related to the task, such as ‘research report’, ‘survey’, and a word related to your topic of interest or area of study. It is best not to use very specific or technical words (such as quantitative). In this example I used ‘research report’ and ‘survey’. I imagined I was a social work student and know that loneliness is a hot topic at the moment. So I also included ‘loneliness’ in my research terms.

ABC News site search: ‘research report’ and ‘survey’ and ‘loneliness.’

Scroll down and look at your hits. Look for any media article that discusses research in your area of interest/area of study.

I found:

*Young Aussies experience 'alarming' levels of loneliness, report says*

*A ground-breaking research report has found almost half of young people say they sometimes or always feel they have no one to turn to.*

*October 2019 triple j3 mminutes read*

*https://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/young-australians-at-risk-of-social-isolation/11561218*

Click on the media article. Check it against the criteria above. It needs to discuss quantitative research (it can be mixed method research but needs to include a quantitative element), be relevant to your area of study and not be used for teaching purposes. It should not be a press release, a social media piece or an article from The Conversation.

Then, check whether the media article contains enough information to find the original research to answer the questions in this assessment. Is the research described in any detail? If the research is only vaguely mentioned in one sentence there may not be enough in this media article for you to answer the required questions.

You also need to look for terms that identify the research so that you can then find the research on the web. Sometimes the media article will provide a link to the research but not always. You cannot use the media article if you cannot find a copy of the research it discusses. So this is vital.

In my example, the media article refers to “The Young Australian Loneliness Survey” conducted by “The VicHealth and Swinburne University”. This is enough information for me to find the research.

**Step 2:** You then need to find the original published quantitative research that was cited in the media article. The original published research MAY be in the form of a journal article or report.

**Example:** Using the terms above, I can now find the original research. I used a google search to do this with the search terms: “The Young Australian Loneliness Survey”.

The first hit in my google search took me to a summary of the study on the VicHealth website with a link to the full research report.

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/young-australian-loneliness-survey>

I then downloaded the full research report from this website and now have the two documents required for the assignment.

<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/-/media/ResourceCentre/PublicationsandResources/Social-connection/The-young-Australian-loneliness-survey-Report.pdf?la=en&hash=94F3B075524F419C67901C4E5741F2DF9D29BF2A>

At this stage you might want to do a quick double check to make sure the research is indeed quantitative.

Questions:

**Step 3:** You then need to write a 1,200 word critical review answering the questions in the learning guide.

Note the follow questions are mirrored in the marking criteria. So, if you follow these questions closely, you should address everything that is required.

The review must:

1. Discuss how the media article has used the published research including:

- What information/data did they use from the published research and why?

- What message is the media article trying to communicate?

- Has any data/information of the published research not been included in the media article?

- Why do you think this information has been excluded? Does the author provide justification?

- Has the media article provided adequate insights into the published research?

2. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the original published research. Your evaluation should make reference to:

- the research question

- the research method (e.g. sampling, procedures, analysis)

- the results

- whether or not the strengths and limitations you identified were addressed in the media article.

3. Propose alternative methods of data collection and/or analysis that could address the limitations of the original published research. Make sure you remember to do this. Students often forget this last step and lose some easy marks!

4. Use at least 5 relevant and well-chosen academic sources to support arguments made.