

Research Methodology – Examination Answer Key

Master 1 (Civilization & Literature) | 2025/2026

Question 1: The Funnel Approach (6.67 pts)

The funnel approach is a method used to move from a broad field of study to a precise and researchable question. It starts with a general discipline and gradually narrows down to a specific problem.

For example, a student may begin with English Literature, then focus on Victorian Literature, then on gender representation, and finally formulate a research question about female characters in specific novels.

This approach helps students define a clear, focused topic that can be realistically studied within limited time and resources.

Question 2: Positivism vs. Interpretivism (6.67 pts)

Positivism is a research paradigm that assumes reality is objective and measurable. It relies mainly on quantitative methods and aims to explain or predict phenomena through observable data.

Interpretivism, on the other hand, considers reality as subjective and socially constructed. It relies on qualitative methods and focuses on understanding meanings, contexts, and interpretations.

In civilization and literature studies, interpretivism is generally more appropriate because texts and cultural phenomena require interpretation rather than measurement. Meanings depend on context, and multiple interpretations are possible.

For instance, analyzing cultural identity in a literary work involves interpreting symbols, historical context, and perspectives, which aligns with interpretivist research.

Question 3: Formulating Hypotheses (6.67 pts)

A hypothesis is a clear and testable statement that predicts a relationship between variables. It is based on theory and previous research and is mainly used in quantitative studies.

A good hypothesis should be clear, testable, concise, and grounded in existing literature. It usually states whether a relationship exists between variables.

There are different types of hypotheses, such as the null hypothesis, which states that no relationship exists, and the alternative hypothesis, which states that a relationship does exist. Hypotheses can also be directional or non-directional.

Hypotheses are used in quantitative and experimental research but are generally not used in qualitative or interpretivist studies, where research questions are preferred.

Examples include hypotheses about the effects of reading habits on empathy or the relationship between media discourse and public opinion.

General Grading Notes

- Full marks are awarded for clear and accurate answers
- Partial credit is given for incomplete but correct responses
- Points are deducted for unclear language or conceptual errors
- Variations in wording are accepted if the meaning is correct

Total Exam Score: 20 points

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