Theme 05: Identifying the Literature

Key elements and language in a literature review

**Task 1**

*Read the literature review below from a journal article titled ‘Why young consumers are not open to mobile marketing communication’.*

**PARAGRAPH A**

There are still relatively few published studies of mobile phone use. Several have focused on differences in adoption patterns between young people and other users. For example, Mante-Meyer and Haddon (2001) found that adoption rates fell away among those over 20. Studies focusing on the social context of adoption have been conducted primarily among Scandinavian adolescent audiences, perhaps reflecting the quick acceptance of mobile phones in that part of the world. Studies by Oksman and Raitiainen (2001) in Finland, and Skog (2002) in Norway, suggested that teenagers are not homogeneous audiences for mobile phones: their attitudes and usage patterns varied widely according to factors such as social background, gender, urban/rural lifestyles, and technological literacy. These studies also highlighted how mobile phones have become integrated into young people’s everyday lives.

**PARAGRAPH B**

An alternative approach has been to treat mobile phones as a medium and identify the particular uses and gratifications they offer consumers. Uses and gratifications theory has been hailed as ‘one of the most influential theories in the field of communications research’ (Lin 1996, p. 574). It assumes that media audiences are active, seeking goal-directed gratification, that the choice of media lies with the individual, and that media compete with other sources for consequent satisfaction (Katz et al. 1973). The tradition has, however, attracted criticism in the past for theoretical and methodological flaws (O’Donohoe 1994). In particular, it has been associated with positivistic research approaches and self-completion questionnaire methods. Despite these criticisms, the emergence of new and interactive forms of media has revitalised this research tradition, since there is a good fit between its assumptions and the interactive, goal-orientated way in which new media such as the internet are used (Eighmey & McCord 1998; Ruggiero 2000).

**PARAGRAPH C**

Several studies have adopted a traditional uses and gratifications approach in examining mobile phone use. Leung and Wei (2000), for example, identified seven different gratifications: ‘fashion/status’, ‘affection/ sociability’, ‘relaxation’, ‘mobility’, ‘immediate access’, ‘instrumentality’ and ‘reassurance’. A study of texting in Germany (Höflich & Rössler 2001) identified broadly similar gratifications. Both studies focused on general adult samples, however, raising questions about the applicability of their findings to younger consumers.

**PARAGRAPH D**

Several other studies, from a wide range of disciplines, offer some insights into the appeal of mobile phones to this market. They point to the symbolic value of these products, with ownership of particular mobile phones communicating fashionability or individuality (Taylor & Harper 2001; Ling 2004). Using mobile phones may also help young people gain and maintain peer group acceptance (Oksman & Turtiainen 2004; Haste 2005). The ‘linking value’ of goods and services has been emphasised by Cova (1994, p. 307), who suggests that ‘to satisfy their desire for communities, postmodern individuals seek products and services less for their use value than for their linking value’. Applying this perspective to mobile phones, Jones (2002) argues that young people’s mobile phone use can be seen as ‘neo-tribalism’ in action, as it symbolises shared values and interests. Similarly, Taylor and Harper (2001) found that, for 11–18-year-olds, particular words and symbols became part of the tacit knowledge ‘owned’ by certain social networks, and were used when texting to signify group membership and distinguish others as ‘outsiders’. Furthermore, the potential to contact others in an emergency offers a sense of security and reassurance to young people, not to mention their parents (Haste 2005).

**PARAGRAPH E**

Several researchers have started to explore issues of mobile phone consumption, identity and general societal impact. Their work often highlights problematic as well as positive aspects of mobile use. Peer-to-peer mobile communications may include acts of malice and intimidation (Haste 2005; NCH 2005), for example, and signs of annoyance with commercial communications targeting young people are emerging (Monk et al. 2004). More abstract, but no less significant, concerns have been raised by others. For example, Agnelli (in Vanderbeeken 2004, p. 2; see also Agnelli et al. 2004) argues that mobile phones have led to the overlapping of digital and physical space, so that physical presence no longer implies attentiveness or availability, and distinctions between public and private space are eroded. Dholakia and Zwick (2003) review debates in the technological literature on whether mobile technology offers people greater freedom and creativity or enslaves them through the greater potential for surveillance and monitoring by the powerful. They suggest that ‘mobile communications means accessibility, and more importantly, the obligation to be accessible’ (p. 10), and also the erosion of boundaries between spaces for work, consumption and recreation.

**PARAGRAPH F**

There is, however, relatively little research evidence concerning the extent to which more problematic aspects of mobile phone use match young people’s everyday experiences. In particular, there is also little evidence on how – or whether – mobile marketing communications (MMC) fit into young people’s everyday mobile phone use. Literature to date has either focused exclusively on relationships between mobile marketing and consumers (Mort & Drennan 2004) or ignored its presence altogether. This study sets out, then, to locate young consumers’ experiences of MMC within the context of overall mobile use.

Source: Grant, I. and O’Donohoe, S. (2007) ‘Why young consumers are not open to mobile marketing communication’. *Journal of Advertising* 26 (2): pp. 223-246

**Task 2**

*Look at the list of features of a literature review. Note down in which paragraph they can be found.*

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| --- | --- |
| Feature | Paragraph |
| Introducing another group of studies following an alternative approach to those mentioned earlier |  |
| Commenting on a group of studies; a certain type of study has been done mostly in Scandinavia |  |
| Saying how the findings of one study are similar to the findings in another study mentioned earlier |  |
| Mentioning good points in a particular research approach |  |
| Making an introductory statement about research in your topic area |  |
| Saying which questions have not yet been researched (indicating a “gap in the literature”) |  |
| Stressing the “gap” in the research literature will be filled by own study |  |
| Giving an example of what one study found out |  |
| Mentioning in what ways a particular research approach (or theory) has been criticised |  |

**Task 3: Useful vocabulary and expressions**

*Complete the table below with expressions from the literature review.*

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| **Introductory phrases** |
| - There are still relatively few published studies of... |
| Introducing a study / group of studies |
| - Several studies have focused on...- - -  |
| Summarising the content of studies / rephrasing what other authors found/said |
| - Studies by Miller (2001) and Smith (2002) suggested that...- - - ---- |
| Commenting on existing literature |
| - This theory has been hailed as...- - - - - - -- |
| Highlighting a gap in the literature |
| - There is, however, relatively little research evidence concerning...- -  |
| Concluding phrases |
| - This study sets out, then, to... |

Tasks adapted from: Janik, C. (2008) What is a literature review? An introduction [Online] Available from: <http://www.textworks4u.de/wp-content/uploads/LiteratureReview/Literature_Review_Writing.html> [Accessed 06 June 2019]

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| Module Learning Outcomes Covered | Academic Literacies Covered |
| ML3 | AL1 |
| Choose an item. | AL5 |
| Choose an item. | AL8 |