Theme 05: Identifying the literature

Critiquing research articles

*Complete the table below to guide you when critiquing a research article.*

**Journal article title:**

**Author(s):**

**Year of publication:**

**Publication:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Section and questions | Comments |
| **Abstract** |
| * Does it present the research questions and purpose of the research?
* Does it detail the methods adopted?
* Does the abstract present the findings?
* Does it present a discussion of the findings?
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| **Introduction** |
| * How well does it justify the purpose of the research?
* How clearly does it present the research questions?
* How comprehensively does it review relevant theories?
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| **Literature review** |
| * Is the literature review broad, yet focused on the issue?
* Is there historical as well as contemporary material to put the area of study into context?
* Is there convincing evidence to support assertions?
* Does it fairly represent opposing views?
* Does the literature review use a theoretical framework?
* Does it reveal gaps in the knowledge which this research will fill?
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| **Methodology: Research design** |
| * Is the research design adequately described and justified?
* Is it qualitative, quantitative or mixed method (both quantitative and quantitative)?
* Have the authors considered the appropriateness of each design, and explained how the chosen design suits the research questions?
* Are you convinced that the design is appropriate to the research?
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| **Methodology: Sampling** |
| * How were respondents selected?
* What sampling type was used? For example, probability or non-probability?
* Is the sampling type sufficiently described and justified?
* How many respondents were selected?
* Is the sample representative?
* Sampling strategy can only be appraised if it is adequately described, therefore consider if you *can* critique the sampling strategy
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| **Methodology: Data collection** |
| * Were the methods (for example, interviews, questionnaires) used to collect data sufficiently described and justified?
* Why were the methods selected? Do you think they were appropriate to the research questions?
* How many interviews or questionnaires were undertaken? What type of interview was selected: structured or semi-structured? Is the type of interview selected appropriate?
* Was the research setting fully described? Are the merits of the research setting considered? For example, did the setting help or hinder data collection?
* How the researcher gained access to respondents? Are there any ethical or validity issues associated with their approach? For example, did they use gatekeepers?
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| **Methodology: Pilot studies** |
| * Were the methods sufficiently tested?
* Are the pilot study procedures fully described and justified?
* Were the pilot studies appropriate?
* What did the researchers learn from the pilot studies?
* Were the pilot study results adhered to or ignored?
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| **Methodology: Ethics** |  |
| * Was due care and attention given to the ethical issues involved in the research? Were ethical procedures comprehensively documented?For example, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and transcript validation
* Did the researchers consider the ethical issues related to *all* aspects of the research? For example, access to respondents, seeking informed consent, protecting confidentiality in data analysis and in presenting findings
 |  |
| **Methodology: Analysis** |  |
| * Once the data was collected, how was it analysed? For example, coding, statistical tests
* Are the analytical procedures adequately described and justified?
* Do you *fully* understand *precisely* how the data was analysed?
* Why were the analytical procedures chosen?
* Do you think these procedures were appropriate to the data?
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| **Findings** |
| * If the researcher includes particular forms of analysis, such as graphs or tables, in the article, are they related to the research question? (Such material cannot be presented in isolation.)
* Are all findings accompanied by analytical comment (otherwise it is just a very long list of data!)
* Are the findings clearly presented? Are they presented in context?
* Can you assess whether or not the findings are representative of the data? For example, are the findings from all data collection methods presented?
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| **Discussion** |
| * Is the discussion placed within a broader context? Is it closely related to the literature review?
* Would you arrive at the same conclusions?
* Are there are limitations to the research, and are they addressed in the discussion?
* What has this research added to the body of knowledge?
* How could or should it affect future research? Does it suggest any potential future research projects?
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| **Overall evaluation (strengths and weaknesses of the research)** |
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| --- | --- |
| Module Learning Outcomes Covered | Academic Literacies Covered |
| ML3 | AL3 |
| Choose an item. | AL4 |
| Choose an item. | AL11 |