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? |  | |
| **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? |  | |
| **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? |  | |
| **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? |  | |
| **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 | |  |
| **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? | |  |
| **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? | |  |
| **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? |  | |
| **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? |  | |
| **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? |  | |
| **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 |