

Literature Review Critique Tool

Critique: balanced, including strengths and weaknesses, and constructive, providing suggestions for how the study might be improved.

1. Source (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Is the report from a peer reviewed publication?
- * Is the research current?

2. Research Problem

- * Is the problem identified clearly?
- * Is it significant--does the researcher provide a good argument for significance?

3. Literature Review (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Is it convincing that the author reviewed a sufficient amount of literature? (More than one source?)
- * Is it balanced, presenting literature that supports and that differs from the researcher's position?
- * Is the review written critically (giving strengths and weaknesses of previous work)?
- * Are references current, or a combination of current and classic?

4. Theoretical Framework (i.e. Socio-ecologic Model, Health Belief Model, Stages of Change) (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Is a theoretical framework specified?
- * Does the framework "fit" the problem? Include all relevant variables?
- * Are results interpreted in reference to the theoretical framework?

--Note: qualitative research, descriptive studies, and physiologic studies typically will not have a theoretical framework.

5. Hypotheses

- * Are hypotheses stated? If not, does the researcher provide sufficient information to determine what the hypotheses were?
 - * If stated, are the hypotheses clear? Specific? Testable?
- Note: qualitative research and many types of descriptive studies do not involve hypotheses. In a qualitative study the researcher may suggest hypotheses as a result of the research.

6. Design (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Is the design specified correctly?
- * What design was used?
- * Is the design appropriate to answer the research question?
- * Did the researcher attempt to control for threats to internal and external validity?
- * For Evidence Based Practice purposes, what is the level of evidence (note the level system used)

7. Sample (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Is the sample size adequate?
- * Is the sample likely to be similar to members of the appropriate population overall?

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- * Are the criteria for including and/or excluding people or items from the sample clear and appropriate?

8. Variables (Insert into Literature Library)

- * What are the independent and dependent variables?
- * Are the variables in the study appropriate to the problem?
- * Are the means to measure the variables appropriate?

9. Data Collection (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Are the instruments or other means for data collection described sufficiently?
- * Are reliability and validity of instruments addressed? Are these adequate?
- * Are data collection methods described clearly?
- * Are the data collection methods appropriate?
- * Could the researcher have affected the results of the study in some way related to the collection of data?

10. Data Analysis and Results (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Is the process used to analyze data clear?
- * Were the processes for data analysis appropriate to answer the research question?
- * Do the results provide an answer to the research question?
- * If tables are provided, are these clear and understandable?

For qualitative studies, some additional items for critique include:

- * Does the researcher provide sufficient examples of the data (for example, passages or quotations from interviews) to support the identified results?
- * Does the researcher describe processes that were used to avoid biasing or influencing the data obtained and the analysis procedures used? (Ex. Peer review, logs, memos, "member check")

11. Discussion and Interpretation of Findings (Insert into Literature Library)

- * Does the discussion "fit" with the data? Is it logical based on the data and results presented?
- * Does the researcher discuss the findings in regard to previous research?
- * Does the researcher discuss the findings in regard to the theoretical framework?
- * Does the researcher identify limitations of the study? How do these affect the quality of the study?
- * Does the researcher discuss implications for practice? Are these appropriate?

12. Ethical Considerations

- * Does the researcher indicate that approval was obtained from appropriate review boards?
- * Were the rights of human subjects protected (confidentiality)?

13. Application to Public Health

- * How similar are the conditions of the study (setting, sample, interventions, etc.) to our setting?
- * How feasible would it be to make a change in practice based on this research?