

## **EVALUATING AND CRITIQUING NURSING RESEARCH**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

- Research refers to a systematic inquiry that uses disciplined methods to answer questions or solve problem.
- Research critique is careful, critical appraisal of the strength and limitations of a research study.
- Most studies have limitations and weakness.
- The authenticity of the research findings, need to be assessed by careful critical analysis as to broaden the understanding, determine evidence for use in practice and provide a background for conducting further study.
- No studies are without some imperfections.
- Research critiquing is not about finding faults in a study.
- Research critique is a mechanism to provide feedback for improvement. (Boswell & Cannon, 2010)

### **Definition**

- A research critique is a careful appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the study.
- The process of objectivity and critically evaluating a research report's content for scientific merit and application to practice, theory or education.

### **Elements in Research Critique**

- Substantive & theoretical dimension
- Methodological dimension
- Interpretive dimension
- Ethical dimension
- Presentational & stylistic dimension

### **Steps in conducting research Critique**

1. Read and critique the entire study. A research critique involves examining the quality of all steps of the research process
2. Examine the organization and presentation of the research report
  - a. Completeness
  - b. Conciseness
  - c. Clarity of presentation
  - d. Logical organization
  - e. Reference
3. Examine the significance of the problem studied for nursing practice.
4. Identify strengths and weakness of a study.
5. Be objective and realistic in identifying the study's strength and weaknesses.
6. Discuss the feasibility of replication of the study.
7. Discuss the usefulness of the findings for practice.

### **Critiquing Quantitative Research**

There are four critical thinking phases namely

- Comprehension
- Comparison
- Analysis and
- Evaluation

**Comprehension:** Understanding the terms and concepts in the report, identifying the elements or steps of the research process such as problem, purpose, framework and design.

**Comparison:** Requires what each step of the research process should be like and then the ideal is compared to the real.

**Analysis:** Involves critique of the logical links connecting one study element with another.

**Evaluation:** The meaning and significance of the study are examined.

### **Guidelines for a quantitative study critique**

**Title** - Is the title a good one, succinctly suggesting key variables and the study population?

**Abstract** - Does the abstract clearly and concisely summarize the main features (problem, methods, research conclusions)

**Introduction:** Problem statement, Purpose, Objectives, Hypotheses, Conceptual framework, Variables.

**Review of Literature:** Relevance, Recency- up to-date.

**Methodology:** Ethical consideration, Design, setting, Population and samples, Instruments & tools.

### **Data Collection, Data Analysis, Discussion, Application & utilization.**

**Evaluating Qualitative research:** For critiquing qualitative research, understanding of the qualitative approaches like grounded theory, phenomenology, or ethnography is very important.

Five standards have been developed to evaluate qualitative studies:

- 1. Descriptive vividness:** The study purpose, significance and interpretations must be articulated in detail and richness that the reader has the sense of personally experiencing the event and clearly understand the significance of the findings.
- 2. Methodological Congruence:** It requires knowledge of the methodological approach the researchers used and whether that approach was consistent with the philosophical basis of the study.
- 3. Analytical and interpretative preciseness:**
  - The analytical process involves a series of interpretations and transformations during which concrete data are transformed across several levels of abstraction

- The outcome imparts meaning to the phenomenon under study. It requires that the researcher involve others in the interpretative process and present a meaningful picture of the phenomenon under study
- 4. Philosophical or theoretical connectedness:** Requires that the findings developed from the study be clearly expressed, logically consistent and compatible with the knowledge base of nursing. Study assumptions, methodological procedures and interpretative/analytic approach must be consistent with the philosophical or theoretical basis of the study.
- 5. Heuristic relevance:** It is reflected in the reader's ability to recognize the phenomenon described in the study, its applicability to nursing practice and its influence on future research.

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