

Checklist for the critical evaluation of a research paper

MELACOM
SAY015/SAY515

1) *Structure and presentation*

- Is there an appropriate structure, with a clear introduction, a body and a definite conclusion?
- Are the major sections connected? Are the relationships between them expressed clearly?
- Do the major sections (headings and subheadings) all relate to the topic and contribute to answering the task or question?
- Does the presentation seem to follow any guidelines set by a journal?
- Is it nicely presented?

2) *Abstract*

- Has the author correctly summarized the study?
- Does it include a statement of topic and purpose?
- Does it include a description of the participants, materials and procedures and analytical methodology?
- Is there a summary of results and implications?

3) *Dissertation topic*

- Is the topic clear and well defined?
- Does it involve a problem, question, or hypothesis that points to what needs to be explored or discovered?
- Is the topic of genuine relevance or interest within the subject discipline?
- Does the introduction provide background information and define relevant key terms?

4) *Literature review*

- Has the author accessed the most recent literature of relevance to the topic, as well as seminal sources from the past?
- Is there reference to major books, articles, etc.?
- Does the literature review hang together, to show how the ideas and findings have developed, or is it merely a shopping list of books and articles?
- Is the review critical with other studies?

5) *Methodology*

- Is the choice of methods and research techniques well suited to the kind of problem being studied?
- Is the description of the methods adopted clear enough to take a blueprint and replicate?

6) Results

- Is there enough evidence to make a convincing case?
- Is everything presented directly relevant to the question in such a way that the reader doesn't have to flip back and forth to make his own connections?
- Is there an explanation of the results obtained?
- Are results or findings clearly and accurately written, easy to read, grasp and understand?

7) Conclusions

- Is(are) the original research question(s) answered?
- Are the hypotheses supported or rejected?
- Is there an explanation of why the results were as they were?
- Does the author explain what findings mean and their importance, in relation to theory and practice?
- Are the methodological limitations of the study mentioned?
- Are there suggestions for further research?

8) Referencing sources

- Are all the words, ideas and information sources used in the main text referenced?
- Is there a consistent referencing style in the main text?
- Is there a clear distinction between the author's thoughts and words and those of the author(s) cited?
- Are quotations properly introduced?
- Is there an appropriate use of reporting verbs to integrate sources?
- Are all works cited in the References section?

9) Language and style

- Is grammar used correctly (no basic grammar errors, such as subject-verb agreement, word forms, count/non-count nouns, tenses, prepositions, etc.)?
- Correct use of punctuation?
- Is spelling correct?
- Is there a wide range of precise vocabulary?
- Formal style, impersonal way, using the passive form of the verb, being critical or bringing in reflections and showing personal engagement?
- Is the language used direct and clear?
- Are ideas explained clearly and explicitly?
- Are sentences complete, grammatically correct sentences?

10) Logical progression of ideas

- Is there a clear expression and thought with logical progression? Is the content well organised throughout?
- Are paragraphs clearly connected and coherent with effective and appropriate use of transitional markers and other connecting words?
- Do the sentences flow smoothly and logically from point to point?
- Does each paragraph state its case clearly and completely, or should there be more evidence/detail?
- Are there adequate transitions between sentences and paragraphs?