

# Qualitative Critique: A Heuristic Tool for Doctoral Students to Use in Improving their Research Skills

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## Abstract

Early in a doctoral program, it is important for students to understand heuristically how to critique published research. There are several reasons that undergird this important task. First, students of research must be able to integrate findings into practice; second, they must be able to determine the impact of the research on the field, and third, students must be able to decide how the research is related and impacts their own studies. Fourth, the ability to critique published research, and internalizing such a process, provides the students with tools to improve their own research. Fifth, as students develop their review/critique of literature for the dissertation, it is important that they incorporate a critical assessment of the published research. They must know whether the research is viable to support their own work or to refute their findings. Based on these needs, Irby developed a tool for doctoral students that would assist them in evaluating qualitative research studies, named, the Irby Qualitative Research Critique (IQRC). In teaching students the use of the tool, they are provided with a qualitative research article. They are asked to use the IQRC for reviewing the article. In this paper, we share the IQRC and examples of what a beginning doctoral students work in critiquing qualitative studies might entail. The IQRC (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007) includes 14 components.

## 1. Introduction

Since many dissertations and articles follow the American Psychological Association's (APA) Publication Manual, 6th Edition, the first component is to place the reference in APA format.

### The Problem

The students are asked to restate the problem. They are asked the following guiding questions: What is the problem or need? Is it stated clearly? Is it logical? Is it convincing?

Although qualitative research may begin with an intention to explore a particular phenomenon or topic through the collection of data in order to generate ideas or concepts or theories, there always lies a problem. The problem might be in simply attempting to better and more deeply understand the phenomenon or topic. Whatever the problem is, it is critical for students to understand that the problem is the why of the study and is the convincing argument that aids readers in understanding the value of the research conducted.

The student should first restate the problem which might be taken directly from the article, and then the student should provide a critique response. Following is a simple example. The students will place actual components of the problem in the critique and then provide a response. The actual components provide me or the evaluators of the students the ability to see if they are able to locate the component. The response,

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however, is what is critical; therein, lies the ability to see growth in the students' abilities to discern if components are appropriate for the study.

### **Critique Response**

As indicated in the actual component reported directly from the article, the problem statement of this study was that \_\_\_\_ leadership is a widely discussed leadership style; however, it has not been examined from the position of an educational administrator. The researcher noted in problem statement that it is important for superintendents to model characteristics of \_\_\_\_ leadership. The researcher builds a case to conduct research with educational administrators related to their consideration of \_\_\_\_ leadership in the introduction, problem statement, and the review of literature.

### **The Purpose**

This component reflects the purpose of the study which should flow from the introduction and the problem. This component assists students in viewing the connectedness of the problem and purpose. The questions asked for this component are: What is the use or purpose? Does it focus the research? Does the purpose follow the problem statement logically? Are you convinced from the researcher this study is worthwhile? As this critique is read, note that the student moved slightly away from the purpose and began analyzing the structure of the paper; however, this is part of the critique. If the purpose is not clear from the beginning of a paper or dissertation, the reader does not have the road map to know where the researcher is going.

### **Critique Response**

The purpose of qualitative research is not to prove or disprove a theory, but rather to explain, describe, or understand a phenomena or situation from the individual's perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The researcher quoted another author when discussing the "Significance of the Study." He discussed the need for providing a research base that supports servant leadership as a viable educational theory. The "Significance of the Study" was easily located and noted. The problem statement and research questions are listed first. I have always been fascinated with \_\_\_\_ leadership and feel that this is a worthwhile topic. However, the structure of this article does not seem sound. There is also a section entitled, "Purpose of the Study" located following the significance.

Methodology. Here the researcher stated that the purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between qualities that administrative staff in public school systems associated with effective school superintendents and characteristics of \_\_\_\_ leadership. The purpose should be up front in an article; therefore, the focus was lost as I read through the review of the literature. It did not follow the problem statement. It was difficult to determine from the purpose, and if the study was worthwhile. Again, the structure of the work was confusing.

Another example of a critique in which the student provides a favorable review of another study follows:

### **Critique Response**

The purpose of this biographical historical research was to explore the teaching experiences of female African American teachers who taught before, during, and after desegregation in the South. A secondary purpose was to develop a Theoretical Model of Adult Resilience in Education that may transcend race, gender, economics and sociopolitical ramifications. Both purposes mentioned above definitely focus the research, and the purpose follows the problem statement logically. I am convinced by the researcher that this study is worthwhile.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Generally, theoretical frameworks are difficult for students to determine in their own research. Sometimes theoretical frameworks are separate sections in an article, but sometimes, they may be found as a part of the entire review of literature. The following questions are asked of the students: What is the theoretical framework based upon? (Explain it) If there is none stated, please indicate that, and try to surmise what it might be from the literature presented.

### **Critique Response**

\_\_\_\_(1995) compiled a list of 10 attributes of \_\_\_\_leadership, which provided the theoretical framework of this study. Because the entire study is grounded in this book, I would not consider this study to be well grounded in theory. I had trouble finding additional literature from this author.

### **Critique Response**

Through narrative inquiry, the theoretical framework of resilience guided the study.\_\_\_\_ (2012) developed the theoretical framework from an ecological and development perspective. The theoretical framework consisted of seven themes. The themes were importance of religion, flexible locus of control, ability to view adverse situations positively, autonomy, commitment, change, and positive relationships. The author also used grounded theory methodology during the research.

## **2. Prior Research or Review of Literature**

The purpose of the review of literature is to determine what the established knowledge base is on a topic with its strengths and weaknesses. The literature review is generally guided by the research questions or the purpose. The literature review cannot be just a summary of the literature on the topic in general; it should have be a critique. There should also be a reported methodology or technique for reviewing the literature. The questions asked in this component are: What previous work has been done leading up to this study? Is there any major body of research missing? Is there a method that the author used for conducting the literature review/ Verbally shared with students are the following clarifying points related to review of literature: (a) look for organization, (b) look at the types of publications, (c) look for “who” is being quoted, (d) determine if the researcher has illuminated controversies or only supporting viewpoints for the literature,

### **Critique Response**

The Review of Literature seems to be quote after quote. There is no structure, technique, or method mentioned by the researcher. The information that is paraphrased has little to do with the research questions. The researcher began each chapter with a quote. I have never seen this in a study. It was a useful tool that set the mood of each chapter, so since this is a qualitative study, it is important to set the tone.

There were 16 sections in the review of literature. Each section contained multiple quotes. In fact, I think so many quotes were used it hindered readability at times. While the author did a good job of covering \_\_\_\_ leadership, I thought a couple of things were missing. First, the researcher should have discussed the history of the superintendency and how it has evolved from an authoritative position to one of \_\_\_\_ leadership. Secondly, the researcher should have credited the business community with evolution of the superintendent's position. \_\_\_\_ leadership was a term first discussed in the business world as it applied to the customer. Its transition to the educational setting would have been relevant to this literature review.

### **Critique Response**

According to the author, this systematic review of literature revealed that resilience studies tend to focus on adolescent children or overcoming a cruel past as resilient adults. The review of literature is delineated with the construct of resilience, the theoretical framework of resilience, the area of qualitative theory, and the historical, social, and legal overview of education, specifically pertaining to African Americans. While the

study took a different perspective on resilience, there does not appear to be any major body of research missing.

### **3. Method, Research Questions**

Research questions in qualitative studies should connote the phenomenon being studied and will likely contain the words, who, what, how, or why. Students would not likely find words of a definitive nature included in the questions, such as to what extent, to what degree, or the effect of. Questions that guide the review of this component are: What is/ are the research questions? List them. Are the research questions specific and clear? Why or why not? Are the research questions related to the purpose? Explain.

#### **Critique Response**

The author lists the research questions:

The three research questions are:

1. How do \_\_\_\_ who have been externally identified as exemplary rank themselves on characteristics associated with \_\_\_\_ leadership?
2. How do \_\_\_\_ working with the \_\_\_\_ who have been externally identified as exemplary rank those \_\_\_\_ on characteristics associated with \_\_\_\_ leadership?
3. How does each \_\_\_\_ regard the role of \_\_\_\_ leader?

The five Subordinate Questions are:

1. What led the \_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_?
2. What is each \_\_\_\_ philosophy of \_\_\_\_ and how does he/she implement \_\_\_\_?
3. What role do \_\_\_\_ play in each \_\_\_\_ decision-making process?
4. What is \_\_\_\_ perceptions regarding the concept of \_\_\_\_ leadership?
5. How does each of the \_\_\_\_ view \_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_ leaders?

I think that the research questions are clear, and they allow for a variety of perspectives. However, I would like to see more specific questions that address how they have handled specific situations. With the purpose being: investigate the relationship between qualities that administrative staff in public school systems associated with effective school superintendents and characteristics of \_\_\_\_ leadership, it appears that some of the research questions are related directly to the purpose, but the majority are not. Additionally, it appears that some of the subordinate questions veer from the topic. I believe for this article and this specific journal, it appears to be too many research questions.

#### **Critique Response**

There are four research questions: (a) What were the teaching experiences for each educator before, during, and after desegregation in the South?; (b) What themes does each educator exhibit that contributed to her longevity in education?, (c) Do resilience themes emerge from the interviews of each educator?, and (d) Do the experiences of these three educators inform the development of an emerging adult resilience theory? These research questions are specific, clear, and are definitely related to the purpose of the article

### **4. Methods, Data Collection, and Analysis**

Data collection in qualitative research is usually accomplished via observations – both participant and direct, interviews, focusgroup, documents, photographs, or video media. Qualitative research analysis should be rigorous and based on the theoretical framework that guides the data collection, analyses, and interpretation. The questions for this component for the student critique follow: Are the participants and

sampling techniques appropriate and accurate? Is the research approach clear? Explain the approach and if it is appropriate for the study; was something else more appropriate? Are the methods the best choice in the study? What improvements would you suggest?

### **Critique Response**

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) wrote, “Qualitative researchers attempt to seek out their own subjective states and their effects on data, but they never believe they are completely successful” (p.34). This is a qualitative study focused on four exemplary \_\_\_\_\_. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants. I think that this was the best way to identify participants for this study. The research design was not made clear. \_\_\_\_\_ were administered two surveys: one measured \_\_\_\_\_ leadership characteristics on a Likert scale and the other was a self-assessment. I am concerned that these instruments were not qualitative. The third survey was given to the \_\_\_\_\_ (not mentioned in the research questions or the purpose) in each respective school district. This 99-question survey measured their attitudes in relationship to \_\_\_\_\_ leadership. However, in the methodology the researcher only lists Survey 1 and Survey 2.

The researcher also held a phone conversation with each \_\_\_\_\_ to determine if “they had a heart for their people and put the needs of others first.” Face to face interviews were then conducted with four \_\_\_\_\_. I question whether a phone conversation was the best way to determine if a superintendent qualified as a \_\_\_\_\_ leader. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) stated that in-depth interviewing is a form of data collection that exemplifies the characteristics of qualitative research. However, I am concerned that the researcher only interviewed four \_\_\_\_\_. I think the best approach would have been to obtain a list of \_\_\_\_\_ who had been “\_\_\_\_\_ of the Year” from the state, and then to survey the people in those districts to determine if they felt the \_\_\_\_\_ was a \_\_\_\_\_ leader. Those recommendations would then be used to determine which leaders displayed characteristics of \_\_\_\_\_ leadership. The methodology was extremely vague and erroneous for this type study.

### **Critique Response**

There is not a notation in this article noting the research design. However, the author stated that the historical biography method was selected to give an in-depth account of the perceptions and activities of each informant. A descriptive report using the actual words of each informant gave considerable authenticity to the reporting. There are three participants mentioned in the article. They were selected by means of a purposive sample. The participants were selected for their relevance to the research questions, theoretical framework, and explanation. The author originally had only one participant, but was able to get the other two names from the first informant. This method of purposeful sampling is referred to as the snowball strategy. Both of these techniques were appropriate and accurate for this study.

The author collected data through guided interviews with each informant. The interviews were both audio and video taped, transcripts were provided for member checking. The interviews were also coded for resilience domains. The author also used historical documents to verify informants’ testimony. Field notes were also used to record nonverbal cues from the informants. Additionally, the author triangulated all of the data and used domain analysis to discover themes. All of these methods are solid and effective for capturing the essence of each participant.

The research design is clear and is the best choice for this study. This was a great study, and I cannot suggest anything to improve it.

### **Definitions**

Definitions are important in any study. They are an advanced organizer for understanding the study. In articles, they are usually included within the text, but for dissertations or theses definitions usually constitute a section. The questions to contemplate in this component are: Which terms are identified? Are the definitions operational? Are the definitions included within the introduction or within the methods section of the report? If there are no terms, then did the researcher include those in the written text? What terms are appropriate for this study?

### **Critique Response**

A definition of terms was not included in this article. I feel that this only adds to a significant list of structural problems. This term was defined within the text: Exemplary \_\_\_ - Selected as \_\_\_\_\_ of the Year in \_\_\_\_\_. However, that was the only term found defined in the article. It would have been much better to have some definitions because it would have helped in understanding the study.

### **Critique Response**

There are 16 terms I found that were defined in the article at appropriate points. The terms are: (a) Adversity, (b) African American, (c) Black Feminist Perspective, (d) Critical Race Theory, (e) Desegregation/ Integration, (f) Developmental Perspective of Resilience, (g) Ecological Perspective of Resilience, (h) Flexible Locus of Control, (i) Internal Locus of Control, (j) Jim Crow, (k) Member Checking, (l) Interpretive/Constructivist Perspective, (m) Optimistic Bias, (n) Resilience, (o) Rural Texas, (p) South, and (q) White. The definitions are included in the introduction, the review of literature, and the methods sections. They were needed to understand the study.

### **Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Reliability Issues in the Study**

There are a number of credibility and reliability issues in the design that students should attend to in a critique. Specific questions to answer in the critique are: What does the author say regarding issues of credibility, trustworthiness, or reliability? Respond to each of these issues. Pay attention to specific triangulation techniques, validity issues, and credibility issues. Notice how the students critique using specifics from the literature.

### **Critique Response**

The researcher's initial reference to validity and reliability is in regard to the instrument used for the interviews. The researcher stated that the questions were piloted and then described the modification made to the questions.

\_\_\_\_\_ discussed the strategies employed to minimize any threats to validity. The strategies listed included: (a) triangulation, (b) more than one method of data collection, (c) multiple data sources, (d) negative case sampling, (e) member checking, and (f) reflexivity. There was no mention of peer review and pattern matching. \_\_\_\_\_ did mention the three main types of validity and how each was addressed: interpretive, descriptive, and theoretical. However, the concepts of internal and external were not mentioned at all.

Krefting (1991) listed a number of criteria originally defined by Guba (1981) to establish trustworthiness. Although not specifically mentioned in the terminology of Guba, Slater did address many of the critical criteria listed below for credibility which Guba (1981) equated with internal validity.

Prolonged and varied field experience. Although not specifically stated as prolonged the field experiences were varied. No mention was made of the time involved in the data collection

Time sampling. No mention of the time.

Reflexivity. \_\_\_\_\_ did specifically mention the use of this strategy to increase validity.

Triangulation. \_\_\_\_\_ did employ this technique by methods triangulation.

Member checking. \_\_\_\_\_ did employ this technique by having the participants review the transcripts from the interviews.

Peer examination. Although not specifically mentioned, I assume the researcher has some group that acted in some degree in this capacity.

Interview technique. This technique was not articulated in the study but may have occurred during the group sessions.

Structural coherence. There were no unexplained inconsistencies noted in the study which would have needed an explanation.

Referential adequacy. No mention. \_\_\_ did address some of the critical criteria listed below for transferability which Guba (1981) equated with external validity.

Nominated sample. This technique was not specifically mentioned. Since \_\_\_ used volunteers from the population to be studied there was a threat to the external validity which was a limitation of the study.

Comparison of sample to demographic data. \_\_\_ did describe her sample with rich demographic data and selected the sample making sure each major ethnic group was represented.

Time sample. No mention was made of this technique.

Dense description. \_\_\_ did describe the attitudes of the participants in direct quotes. The results section contained a rich assortment of participant quotes.

\_\_\_ did address some of the critical criteria listed below for dependability which Guba (1981) equated with reliability.

Dependability audit. \_\_\_ did describe the data gathering in sufficient detail.

Dense description of research methods. \_\_\_ did describe the data gathering in sufficient detail.

Stepwise replication. There was no mention of this technique. Given that \_\_\_ was the lone researcher during this study-- the fact that two teams were not formed is not unusual.

Triangulation. This was employed as stated above.

Peer examination. This was employed as stated above.

Code-recode procedure. There was no mention of revisiting participants and reexamining them about major issues.

## **Critique Response**

### **Guba's Trustworthiness**

The author has a section in the study in which he discussed qualitative validity and reliability. What follows is very similar to Krefting (1991) referred to as Guba's model of trustworthiness. Krefting did a great job of placing the quantitative definitions next to the qualitative definitions in the form of a table. \_\_\_ (2004) basically outlined Guba's model of trustworthiness in the study.

The author using prolonged and substantial engagement along with persistent observation with the informants established credibility. The author using member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulations strengthened credibility. Likewise, the author strengthened credibility by using the exact verbal accounts of the informants. Credibility is also established because the author used multiple excerpts from the interviews, and used her experience as an African American female to relate to the informants. The guided interview was purposeful and the data were triangulated to develop themes. The themes were triangulated with literature, historical documents, and pictures to strengthen the rigor of the study.

Transferability is established because the rich descriptions provided had relevance to other contexts. The themes developed are relevant similar situations in both the North and the South.

Confirmability was established through an audit trail of documents, recordings (audio and video), honesty, and photos. The author kept all of the transcribed data as well as the documents, all recordings for future review. Likewise, the questionnaire validity is based on the honesty of the informants. Photos and court cases substantiate their testimony.

Dependability was provided when an inquiry can be given with the same or similar respondents in the same context. The study should be able to be replicated. The same questions were asked of each respondent so that the inquiry was consistent. Finally, the time span and common knowledge of the harsh realities of

American society before, during, and after desegregation provided a rich backdrop that further confirmed and clarified the data gathered.

### **Validity**

Johnson (1997) outlined several things that test the validity of qualitative research. Descriptive validity refers to the factual accuracy of the researcher. \_\_\_ (2004) made every effort to ensure the factual accuracy by using member checking, peer review, recording the interviews (audio and video), transcribing the interviews, and by using triangulation.

Interpretive validity refers to accurately reporting the meaning attached by the informants to what is being researched. \_\_\_ (2004) used many direct quotations from the informants to provide a rich description of the informants' voice. Likewise, the author used participant feedback or member checking to make sure the informants' agreed with what the researcher said about them.

Theoretical validity is the degree to which a theoretical explanation developed from the research. \_\_\_ (2004) thoroughly explained and developed the theory of resilience. The author also established theoretical validity by using a peer review strategy.

\_\_\_ (2004) did a great job describing the lives of the three informants in the study. In doing this, the author was able to show that the resilience of the teachers could have been the result of the many hardships and injustices they had to endure. Internal validity was established by using the many methods of data collection including interviews, questionnaires, and observations.

### **Reliability**

Ambert, Adler, Adler, and Detzner (1995) outlined the steps for understanding and evaluating qualitative research. Ambert et al. pointed out that qualitative research must be very detailed about the strategies used so that rigor is evident. \_\_\_ (2004) was extremely detailed in every section of the article. Grounded theory was evident. Resilience theory was developed from the perspective of the informants' testimony. The study is full of quotes, clear examples, and vivid illustrations from the participants.

The research committee due to the breadth and depth of the inquiry determined the sample size of the study. The initial purpose to generalize to resilience theory allows for a small sample size even though the results can be generalized to a larger audience.

\_\_\_ (2004) was able to establish a strong relationship to the informants. The author was able to interact and become a part of the situation without invading their privacy. The procedures used by the author are clearly outlined in the study. The author also used her gender and ethnicity to relate to the experiences of informants. Clearly the author was very familiar with the literature, and used direct quotes to give voice and meaning to the plight of the informants.

### **Threats to Validity**

\_\_\_ (2004) discussed both researcher bias and the subjective nature of qualitative research design as possible threats to validity. In order to reduce these threats, the author used multiple data sources including separate interviews, school records, historical documents, photos, and court cases. The author also used verbatim transcripts of the recordings which allowed for participant review, multiple readers, and the use of multiple direct quotations in the article.

### **Method Instrumentation**

Instruments and protocols in qualitative research are generally flexible and may be considered open, semi-structured, or structured. If comparability is a part of the research, then the instrument is bound by a more structured content; if the point of the research is to gather large amounts of data with a variety of viewpoints, the instruments may be more fluid. Nonetheless, the instruments must be able to yield valid and reliable data from the participants. The questions for this component for critique are: Describe the instrument



for interviews, focus groups, etc. Were they pre-existing, or specially created? How were they related? How was reliability established?

### **Critique Response**

\_\_\_ employed three separate instruments: personal essays written by students, a questionnaire of 10 open-ended questions, and focus groups. The essays were written from an original prompt created for this study. The questionnaire was based on the motivation scales presented in \_\_\_ developed by researchers from the School of Education at the \_\_\_\_\_. The questions that were used for the focus groups were initially tentative; until the first portion of the data was available. The final questions were modified based on the initial findings. All open-ended questions were piloted along with those that were used in the focus sessions. Modifications were made to the questions based on the responses of the pilot group sessions.

### **Critique Response**

The research first received consent to conduct research at the district administration level and from the campus principal. The campus principal and lead counselor were interviewed to request names of students for the participation in the study. All students were or had taken Advanced Calculus. Six student and four alternates were chosen from the list. A letter of introduction, demographic questionnaire, and interview guide, consent forms and a self-addressed stamped envelop were mailed in a packet to the students selected for the study. Invitations were mailed to the individuals that returned a signed consent form and completed the demographic questionnaire. The invitation included the information about the interview session including the time, date, and location of the interviews. A list of questions was used. Each session was video recorded and a contact summary form was used for recording written notes from the interview. How reliability was established was through the consistency of the time, place and interview atmosphere of the setting as well as the same questions with each participant. A grounded theory was developed that could be generalized to Hispanic students in the development of academic achievement.

### **Ethics**

In this section, the students are asked to review the research for ethical concerns. Ethics should be considered around the following: (a) determining harms and benefits to the participants, (b) informed consent, (c) privacy and confidentiality, and (d) the discernment of power in the relationship of the observed and the observer. Some journal editors will request a statement that the study has undergone a human subjects review. The questions for critique are: Does the author discuss ethical issues? Do you see any ethical issues in the study? Are the ethical issues properly taken care of?

### **Critique Response**

In the Methods section, the researcher included a, "Protection or Participants' Anonymity." Basically, he stated that the identity of everyone involved will be concealed. The researcher should have added a section entitled, "Ethical Considerations" in which he addresses all ethical aspects surrounding this study.

### **Critique Response**

Each educator reviewed and signed a consent form for the interview. Additionally, each informant gave permission to use their names, photographs from their personal collection in the study. The Human Subjects Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ University reviewed and approved the entire study. There were no other known factors that would cause ethical problems for any of the informants.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

Limitations and delimitations are boundaries of the study. They are related directly to outcome threats to the data. Interpretation can be limited by specific factors that should be discussed in these sections of the research by the researcher. Delimitations are those that the researcher imposes on the study thereby

narrowing the focus of the studied phenomenon or topic. Limitations may relate to study elements such as the participants, research methods, and/or the setting. The critique questions include: What limitations/delimitations are identified? How do these limit generalizability and does it matter? To what extent do the limitations/delimitations (stated or unstated) affect the value of the research?

### **Critique Response**

The researcher listed five limitations of the study. He also noted that it is not possible to generalize qualitative research beyond the stated population. This is a common mistake, I believe, in qualitative research. Researchers discuss generalizability when, in fact, the specific focus is on better understanding or a deeper truth to a specific phenomenon with a specific group of people. It is my opinion that this study has little value to the research community because of its poor design.

## **5. Results and Discussion**

In this section of the study, the researchers should be citing actual data, low inference descriptors, as supporting documentation for themes or categories that emerge from the data. The discussion should explain why the phenomenon is responding in the way it is, how the phenomenon would be or were addressed by participants in the study or in another setting similar to the one studied, and why the findings align with other research conducted in the specific field. The questions the students must address in this component are: Are the research questions answered? How sufficiently? How and sufficiently? Is existing literature brought into the discussion? Are supportive representative statements used from the data when appropriate?

### **Critique Response**

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) defined data analysis as “the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to enable you to come up with findings” (p.147). The following process was utilized for data analysis in this study. Results from the study were based on semi-structured, open-ended interviews, two self-assessment surveys of \_\_\_ and one survey with responses of the \_\_\_\_\_. The Results section was found in the following categories:

Quote

Research Questions

\_\_\_ Leadership Characteristics

Summary of the Characteristics of \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership

Findings- \_\_ Survey

\_\_\_ Team Findings

Interview Sessions

Unanticipated Findings

Summary

Quote

Most quality qualitative studies have more information than was provided. Therefore, I looked at two other articles and developed an idea as to how this article could have been improved. Because the structure of this article was so poor, I felt it was necessary to compare structures with other studies. This study could have been structured in the following manner:

Introduction

Statement of Problem

Statement of Purpose

Significance of Study

Research Questions  
Theoretical Framework  
Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions  
Summary  
Review of Literature  
Methodology for Review of Literature  
History of the Superintendency  
Evolution of the Superintendency  
Characteristics of \_\_\_\_ Leadership  
Summary  
Method  
Research Design  
Participants  
Ethical Considerations  
Data Collection  
Data Analysis  
Instrumentation  
Reliability and Validity  
Summary  
Findings for Research Question 1  
Findings for Research Question 2  
Findings for Research Question 3  
Conclusions and Implications  
Summary of Results  
Discussion  
Implications for Practice and Policy  
Conclusions

## **6. Implications and Recommendations**

Implications and recommendations are difficult for new qualitative researchers. The tendency is to take a poetic license and draw implications that a far from the bounds of the purpose and the problem or the study. On the other hand, implications or findings for application should not just point to one specific elucidation of the phenomenon, rather they should raise consciousness, move the reader to action, and bring new issues to light. The questions for critique in this component are: What are the implications from the research for practice, and what recommendations for theory, further research, and practice are presented? Are the implications related to the purpose? Do they increase your awareness and provoke your thoughts or move you to some action?

### **Critique Response**

The implications section of this study was very vague. It stated that \_\_\_\_ leadership theory appeared to be worthy of consideration by \_\_\_\_\_. Recommendations for future study included: (a) \_\_\_\_ internships with \_\_\_\_ leaders as models, (b) case studies of \_\_\_\_ leaders and their life experiences, (c) A study to determine whether leadership is a calling in which individuals respond, not to a title, but to a position that allows them to lead and serve individuals. The implications were related to the purpose. Though the implications are vague and the study, in my opinion, has a less than desirable design, I do believe that they provoke my thoughts in relation \_\_\_\_ preparation.

### **Critique Response**

The implications and recommendations are (a) the need to support all members of the learning community for the advancement of education and (b) the need for further study. The most interesting finding in my opinion was the importance of a “can-do” attitude toward the Hispanic students. This finding led to a change in programs designed to support student’s success (\_\_\_, 2011). Terms used were “promise-based” language with “no excuses” for failure. One cannot underestimate the value of another person believing in your ability to succeed regardless of your origin. This moved me to action to consider my own proposal and research along these lines of research.

### **Summary**

Using such a critique format has assisted many students in better developing their evaluative skills of published research. As they then review the literature for inclusion in their own dissertation, they are able to use a critical eye to determine if the inclusion of a specific qualitative research study is worthy of mention. They also can critique their own work as they move through the dissertation process.

### **Reference**

Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B. J. (2007). *Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies for students in the social and behavioral sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.