MIXED-METHODS RESEARCH CRITIQUE

1. Research Issue and Purpose

What is the research question or issue of the referenced study? What is its purpose? (Sometimes ONLY the purpose is stated clearly and the question must be inferred from the introductory discussion of the purpose.)

1. Researcher Pre-understandings and / or Hypotheses and Research Questions

Does the article include a discussion of the researcher’s pre-understandings? What does the article disclose about the researcher’s professional and personal perspectives on the research problem? What are the hypotheses (or research questions/objectives) of the study? (Sometimes the hypotheses or study questions are listed in the Results section.)

2. Literature Review

What is the quality of the literature review? Is the literature review current, relevant? Is there evidence that the author critiqued the literature or merely reported it without critique? Is there an integrated summary of the current knowledge base regarding the research problem, or does the literature review contain opinion or anecdotal articles without any synthesis or summary of the whole? (Sometimes the literature review is incorporated into the introductory section without being explicitly identified.)

3. Theoretical or Conceptual Framework

Is a theoretical or conceptual framework identified? If so, what is it? Is it a nursing framework or one drawn from another discipline? (Sometimes there is no explicitly identified theoretical or conceptual framework; in addition, many “nursing” research studies draw on a “borrowed” framework, e.g., stress, medical pathology, etc.) If no specific framework is identified, the literature review can be considered the framework.

4. Participants

Who were the participants? Is the setting or study group adequately described? Is the setting appropriate for the research question? What type of sampling strategy was used? Was it appropriate? Was the sample size adequate? Did the researcher stipulate that information redundancy was achieved?
5. **Protection of Human Research Participants**

What steps were taken to protect human research subjects?

6. **Research Design**

What was the design of the study? If the design was modeled from previous research or pilot studies, please describe.

7. **Instruments, Data Collection, Data Generation Methods**

What methods were used for data collection/generation? What instruments and/or other measurement strategies were used in data collection? Was information provided regarding the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments? If so, describe. Was triangulation used?

8. **Credibility**

Were the generated data credible? Explain your reasons.

9. **Data Analysis**

What methods were used for data analysis? What evidence was provided that the researcher’s analysis was accurate and replicable?

10. **Findings**

What were the findings?

11. **Discussion of Findings**

Was the discussion of findings related to the framework? Were those the expected findings? Were they consistent with previous studies? Are serendipitous (i.e., accidental) findings described?

12. **Limitations**
Did the researcher report limitations of the study? (Limitations are acknowledgments of internal characteristics of the study that may help explain nonsignificant and other unexpected findings, and more importantly, indicate those groups to whom the findings CANNOT be generalized or applied. It is a fact that all studies must be limited in some way; not all of the issues involved in a problem situation can be studied all at once.)

13. Implications

Are the conclusions and implications drawn by the author warranted by the study findings? (Sometimes researchers will seem to ignore findings that don’t confirm their expectations as they interpret the meaning of their study findings.)

14. Recommendations

Does the author offer legitimate recommendations for further research? Is the description of the study sufficiently clear and complete to allow replication of the study? (Sometimes researchers’ recommendations seem to come from "left field" rather than following obviously from the discussion of findings. If a research problem is truly significant, the results need to be confirmed with additional research; in addition, if a reader wishes to design a study using a different sample or correcting flaws in the original study, a complete description is necessary.)

15. Research Utilization in Your Practice

How might this research inform your practice? Are the research findings appropriate to your practice setting and situation? What further research or pilot studies need to be done, if any, before incorporating findings into practice to assure both safety and effectiveness? How might the utilization of this research trigger changes in other aspects of practice?