Assignment #3: Comparing Literature Reviews

Charles Titus

Grand Canyon University: RES – 861

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As a doctoral learner, it is important to understand the purpose of literature reviews and how they can help a dissertation. One way to show that one fully understands literature reviews is by looking at them and analyzing the literature reviews of other research studies. Doing this can allow a doctoral learner to have a good understanding of how literature reviews can be written, and how literature reviews can be different from one another. The purpose of this paper will be to look at and analyze the work of Watkins (2016) and Mulligan (2016) and look at the differences between a qualitative literature review and a quantitative literature review. After this analysis is complete, a rationale will be given for the differences between the two literature reviews.

It is important to look at each literature review individually in order to get a good idea of how they are different from one another. Watkins’ literature review was done using a qualitative method approach and started out by looking at the conceptual framework of the research. The approach Watkins used was mainly exploring the subject and reviewing the literature regarding the theories related to the research being conducted (Watkins, 2016). The purpose of the research was to look at professional learning community models and how they help develop teachers within education (Watkins, 2016). The literature review was written in a manner to provide a strong background on professional learning communities. The research that was looked at in the literature review was based on variables that had similar characteristics. There was a large amount of discussion in the literature review on the perspectives of teachers and how teachers working together actually had an effect on the students (Watkins, 2016). The entire literature review seemed to be written in a manner that allowed readers to see a deeper view of the problem that was going to be researched. Watkins’ literature review was largely narrative in format, using a discussion-based structure that is typical of qualitative research in general. Instead of analyzing quantitative data and statistics, the literature review identified, analyzed, and compared recurring themes and trends in the body of research.

By contrast, Mulligan’s literature review was done using a quantitative approach to analyzing the data. The author started out by looking at the theoretical foundations of the research that was going to be conducted (Mulligan, 2016). The author’s purpose of the research was to look at how servant leadership had an effect on students at the college level (Mulligan, 2016). The author spent a great deal of time in the literature review discussing the theory of servant leadership and the climate of classrooms (Mulligan, 2016). The research that was covered in the literature review placed an emphasis on numerical data, and the author included a great deal of statistics and associated evidence to help build the ground floor for the need for the research that was going to be carried out by the author (Mulligan, 2016).

By analyzing both literature reviews, it is easier to see the differences between the two. The main difference between the structures of the two literature reviews is that Watkins’ review used a qualitative design and Mulligan’s review was done with a quantitative approach. Watkins’ literature review provided a conceptual framework for the author to carry out the study, whereas Mulligan gave a theoretical framework in addition to quantitative data and statistics. The rationale for Mulligan spending more time reviewing literature on the theories and looking at numerical data is because of the importance of demonstrating a need for the research and an association between the variables and the theories being used. Another rationale for Mulligan using his approach is because quantitative research and quantitative literature reviews are based upon facts and reporting numerical data. The rationale for Watkins just exploring the subject in a narrative way is that qualitative literature reviews tend to be more setting the stage and creating a basic picture of the research that is going to be carried out. The main factors that contributed to the differences between the structures of the two literature reviews is that one of the studies was quantitative and the other was qualitative. There is a difference in how literature reviews are to be written based upon how the research is carried out.

As a doctoral learner, it is important to have a clear understanding of literature reviews and their purpose in regards to the dissertation process. It is important as a doctoral learner to be able to look at different literature reviews and be able to tell how they are similar and different. Having an understanding of how literature reviews need to be written based upon whether the research is quantitative or qualitative will be beneficial when it is time to write the literature review for the research that will be conducted by the student. Without a clear understanding of literature reviews, a doctoral student would likely face significant struggles and deficiencies when it comes time to write the dissertation.

**References**

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