

BOOK REVIEW

Leslie, Z. L. (2010). *Communication Research methods in Postmodern Culture: A revisionist Approach*. Pearson/ Allyn & Bacon: Boston, MA. ISBN: 13: 978- 0- 205- 61564- 3, 244 pages, Price: USD49.99

REVIEWED BY

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Larry Z. Leslie, PhD, is currently Associate Professor Emeritus in the School of Mass Communications, University of South Florida, Tampa. His area of expertise lies in media ethics, communication research methods, public opinion and postmodern culture. His other works include *Mass Communication Ethics: Decision Making in Postmodern Culture* (2nd Ed, 2004, Pearson/ Allyn & Bacon) and *Celebrity in the 21st Century: A Reference Handbook* (2011, Pearson). In many institutions of higher learning, students develop a negative predisposition towards the research methodology course as mundane and tiresome and conduct researches without fully understanding or equipped with the needed skills. Students on the other hand also fail to find new realistic ways to link the interrelationship between explanations and the studied phenomenon. Thus, this book materializes from the author's notion that traditional research methodology courses in colleges and universities need to be re-addressed from an interesting yet practical approachable manner. The postmodern cultural approach to research aims to adjust traditional methodologies and hopes to shed light into creating effective researchers who are not only thinking, but also who could design and carry-out studies effectively in an information rich, cross- cultural environment.

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

There are FOUR main sections of the book which are Foundations, Methodologies, Writing a Research Report and Applications. A brief summary of each section is provided as below:

Foundation

This section introduces readers to postmodern culture, its history and the rationale for modifying traditional research methodologies. Taking into context the social science paradigm, this section further introduces definition of key terms addressed in this book which are communications research, culture and the postmodern environment. Lastly, explanation is given as to how this new research outlook- its results or interpretations could be applied in a postmodern context.

Methodologies

This chapter explains the extent to which the act of imbibing the traditional research perspective into the postmodern cultural research perspective would affect the conventional Quantitative and Qualitative traditional methodologies. In order to provide a better spectrum between both research perspectives, a thorough comparison is made between the strength and weaknesses of a variety of research methodologies that range from focus groups, surveys, historical, oral and textual analyses, reader-response, deconstruction and feminism.

Writing a Research Report

This section emphasizes the importance of organizing, structuring and the wording of a research report that is clear, concise and conducive to the common reader. It also outlines the reasons of necessitating an effective report in a changing consumer market, the need for an audience analysis, an insight into report formats and their variations. It also includes the precise skills needed to be equipped with knowledge in correct grammar, writing mechanics and language or writing styles.

Applications

This section provides the “how to” of writing the individual and group research proposals. The parts and sub- parts of an ideal research proposal is suggested and explained- introduction, literature review, in-text citations, data gathering plan and how these parts interplay in addressing the research gap.

EVALUATION

Overall, this book may not be suitable if read as a basic text to discover postmodernism. On the other hand, the author must be credited for

successfully and efficiently addressing some of the basic tenets of postmodern movement, which among others, aim to elevate the text as a tool that explains phenomena, the application of literary analyses and propose an argument against existing methods and evaluations. In particular, the book addresses aptly today's complex culture, given the context of rapid globalization and internationalization that is taking place in almost any disciplines of study. This is important as postmodernist viewpoints are highly applicable in areas of psychology, management, human resources, communication and education as current research trends in these realms are highly concentrated on behaviorism and one that cuts across interdisciplinary fields and mixed methodologies. The book also suggests new perspectives as it compares the traditional and postmodernist thinking, its new emphasis on qualitative analyses and the philosophical considerations that include designing and selecting research methodology are well-suited for graduates undertaking new research projects. Furthermore, the review and questions sections at the end of each chapter encourages creative and critical thinking and offers self-reviews which enhances self- discovery and points for departure in research planning. Finally, the book is conducive to undergrads at all levels of study as it uses simple, straightforward and clear language with good everyday examples. However, the author could have included written samples or texts at the end of each chapter to distinguish postmodern applications from traditional analyses.

CONCLUSION

This book cleverly balances the gap between the old and new traditions in research methodology. By not rejecting the importance of quantitative analyses completely, it emphasizes that consideration must be given to qualitative analyses as new meanings and discourse could be discovered in texts and individual or focus group interviews. It also provides answers for researchers who are looking for new areas and perspectives, rendering the practicality of this book. This book is apt for students both local and international as it focuses on the frequent cross- cultural interactions, be it at the work-place, research or learning institutions, which is almost unavoidable today.