

Gap spotting Summary

TOPIC: Gap Spotting Typology

SOURCE: Sandberg & Alvesson (2011) - Ways of constructing research questions

KEY CONCEPTS:

1. Confusion Spotting

Identifying that existing research contains contradictory evidence or explanations. The goal is to resolve the confusion.

2. Neglect Spotting

Claiming that a specific area, variable, or level of analysis has been overlooked. This is the most common form of gap-spotting.

- "We know about X in context A, but not in context B."

3. Application Spotting

Extending a known theory or concept to a new empirical setting.

CRITIQUE:

While necessary for normal science, gap-spotting rarely leads to "interesting" theories (in the sense of Davis, 1971) because it does not challenge the reader's assumptions. It builds cumulatively but conservatively.