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2022/2023

**Chapter 3 : The Literature Review**

**Objectives:**

* Acquire skills related to searching for and identifying reliable academic sources.
* Improve the strategies and the skills of reading, note-taking, summarizing, paraphrasing and referencing.
* Develop techniques of critical review of literature.
* Develop skills related to observation, objective reasoning, scientific curiosity, argumentation and openness to discussion.

**Lesson one: Understanding the Literature Review and its Functions**

**The literature review** is a comprehensive study of technical and authoritative content related to research keywords. It provides prior knowledge and details of research progress about a specific topic in a particular domain. Literature review involves recording, examining, summarizing and evaluating the existing findings and providing expert judgment of their methods and findings.

**Remarks**

* A good literature review summarizes and reviews related studies and shows how their findings link to the problem being investigated. It should also present contrasting views about the topic. It is important to communicate to readers that different and even opposing perspectives on the topic are being considered, and that a valid basis exists for further study.
* Literature Review is not primarily a collection of quotations from other writers. While reporting about the findings and perspectives of others is an important part, it must be done in a way in which your own flow of thought and organization is evident. Paraphrasing ideas, and comparing and contrasting perspectives expressed by different writers are important considerations in constructing the Literature Review. Avoid plagiarism by giving credit when paraphrasing or quoting someone else’s ideas or words.

**Functions of the Literature Review**

* **Informing oneself about the existing theories and findings related to the topic.**

Going through the literature available on a topic helps the researcher to understand the theories and approaches related to the topic. It helps the researcher to be aware of how others have dealt with the topic, and of what knowledge they have acquired.

* **Placing the research within the existing body of knowledge and establishing its significance.**

Understanding the progress made in a specific domain helps the researcher to identify what aspects have been examined by other researchers and consequently identify where the gap is (where can I contribute to an existing knowledge?) This leads to working out the research problem again with more clarity and relevance to the existing body of knowledge. After obtaining the results of the research, they need to be compared to the findings of others to see how they fit with them.

* **Improving research methodology.**

Reviewing the literature is essential, not only in providing a context for the research subject and specifically limiting and identifying the research problem, but also in providing you with important information for subsequent parts of the research investigation The researcher gets acquainted with methods and procedures used by other researchers, their advantages and disadvantages. Therefore, they make an informed decision and selection for the appropriate method for their research.

Preparing the Literature Review section will require a longer literature search and more intensive reading than any other chapter of the project, but this reading should also inform other chapters of the study:

-To understand the rationale for investigating the topic and to inform the formulation of research question(s) (the Introduction section)

-For guidance in the design of data collection instruments (the Methods section)

-To identify how other authors explain their findings and relate them to the literature and the implications they draw (the Discussion and Conclusion sections).

**Homework:**

**Task 1: Define the following terms.**

**Primary sources of information.**

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**Secondary sources of information.**

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**Task 2: Answer the following question.**

**Which type of sources is used in the literature review?**

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