

M. K. University of Biskra

(Module) Research Methodology

(Grade) Senior Undergraduate

(Major) Sciences of the Language

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WRITING A THOROUGH LITERATURE REVIEW

Note: *The lecture is presented as PPT.*

Definitions of Literature Review

A literature review is an evaluative writing about the existing published literature on the [...] topic (p. 22)

The review is an evaluative writing rather than a list of prior research results (p. 22))

Literature review involves the systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem

References

Jamison, J. (). Research methods in psychology for high school students.

(Gay 1976, cited in Ochove et al. 1992: 46)

Ochove, S. C., Punsalan, J.A, Regela, B.P, & Uriarte, G.G. (1992). Research Methods. Manilla, The Philippines

The literature review is one of the most important parts of any piece of academic writing i.e. reading and evaluating what has already been written about the topic of interest. Oliver Paul, 2012.

Efron and David (2018: 2) define literature review as “a systematic examination of the scholarly literature about one’s topic”. Therefore, literature review is an orderly detailed study of the specialized literature on the topic of research, which has been published by scholarly journals and academic circles.

... a good quality literature review is a piece of research in its own right.

Avery, H.

Literature review is by its very nature an evaluative study of previously published research. It aims to provide “... a justification for research (Jamison 2006 :7). In other words, literature reviewers need to provide an answer to why they conduct research in that particular topic. It is a quintessential part of research because it was provided through succinct summary, analysis and evaluation of the consulted literature. It is important because it situates the current research in comparison with previous research and how both are interconnected and/ or overlapping. In so doing, the research makes

clear his intentions and potential contribution to knowledge, which is the essence of scientific research.

Criteria of a Good Literature Review

According to Hart in *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination* (1998 : np), literature review needs to fulfill the following :

Distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done.

Discovering important variables relevant to the topic.

Enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary.

Establishing the context of the research problem

Overall, literature review enriches, matures, and guides the current research, which in the long run adds to its reliability and validity.

Literature review involves both **critical reading** and **critical thinking**. The literature reviewer needs to answer the following questions:

1. Who is the author?
2. What kind of evidence does s/he put forward?
3. What kind of research design does s/he follow?
3. What types of research techniques and tools does s/he use? And do they correspond to the nature of the research problem?
4. Are the samples relevant to the nature of the research?
5. How accurate and conscientious is the author in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data?
6. Are the conclusions convincing?
7. In the final analysis, is this research an authentic contribution to knowledge in any way?

Drafting Literature Review

In drafting the literature, primary and secondary sources can be reviewed chronologically or thematically. First-hand information and second-hand information can be traced in terms of time of publication or in terms of themes, i.e., research topic/ subject. In so doing, Literature review can be claimed to adhere to one of the following according to University of Southern California:

1. Argumentative Review

The argumentative review targets to accept or reject the arguments provided by the research.

2. Integrative Review

The integrative review blends different perspectives (evaluation, analysis, and synthesis) to come up with a consistent framework.

3. Historical Review

The historical review traces back throughout period of time a topic or theme with a view of placing the research problem in a historical context.

4. Methodological review

The methodological review questions the methodology, method, and data collection tools in an objective way.

5. Systematic Review

The systematic review undertakes to outline the clarity of the research questions, collect, report, and analyze data.

6. Theoretical Review

The theoretical review, as its name suggests, targets to examine related theories with a view of establishing a theoretical gap.

Main Questions of the Literature Review

- **Question One:** What has already been known about my topic (what has already been researched)?
- **Question Two:** How will my research project contribute to existing knowledge?
(p.36)

Reference

Ashley, L. D. *Planning your research* in Coe, R., Waring, M., Hedges, L. V. & Arthur, J. (). Research method and methodologies in education.

Why Reviewing Literature

- Demonstrate your understanding and ability to critically evaluate research in the field.
- Help you see how these fields and subfields interrelate

- Look at similar research literature surrounding similar topics which, although not directly related to your topic might be interesting to compare to your own
- Helps consider the available resources (Jamison, pp. 36-37)

Functions of Literature Review

1. It provides the conceptual/ philosophical framework of the planned research.
2. It provides [...] the information about past searches to the intended study. This process prevents unintentional duplication of the past related searches [...]
3. It gives a feeling of self-confidence
4. It gives [...] information about the research method used, population, sampling ...
5. It provides findings and conclusions of past searches which you may relate to your own findings and conclusion (pp. 46-47)

Reference

Ochove, S. C., Punsalan, T.G., Regela, G.P. & Uriarte, G.G. (1992). Research methods. Manilla, the Philippines

Purpose of Literature Review

“...your task is to build an argument, not a library.”

Reference :

Rudestam, K.E. and Newton, R.R. (1992)Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process. California: Sage, p49.The purpose of reviewing [...] literature is to justify the need to run an experiment (p. 22)

In a larger piece of written work, such as a dissertation or project, a literature review is usually one of the first tasks carried out after deciding on a topic. Reading combined with critical analysis can help to refine a topic and frame research questions. A literature review establishes familiarity with and understanding of current research in a particular field before carrying out a new investigation. Conducting a literature review should enable you to find out what research has already been done and identify what is unknown within your topic.

Reference

Jamison, J. (). Research methods in psychology for high school students.

How to Proceed with Literature Review

[...] the beginning researcher may start reviewing conceptual literature (encyclopedias) (Fox, cited in Ochove et al. 1992: 51)

- Select a topic and identify literature to review
- Analyze the literature
- Criticize the Literature
- Synthesize the Literature
- Document the Literature
- Reference (Galvin (1999) in Hancock and Algozzine (: 28))

Note: I need to ask questions for each step

Literature Review Form

1. Identification of the Reference

1.1 Author (s)

(author 1)	(author 2)
(author 3)	(author 4)
(author 5)	(author 6)

1.2 Year of Publication

1.3 Title

1.4 Publishing House

2. Structure/ Organizational Pattern of Literature Review

2.1. Objectives of the Literature Review

- What are you conducting the literature review for?
- In what way is this literature review beneficial to your research?
- Is there an information gap that you would like disclose?

2.2 Author's/ authors' Credential(s)

- Who is the author? Who are the authors?
- What is his/her/ their area of expertise?
- Why does s/he write the book or paper? To whom does (s)he/ do they address his/ her their work?

2.3 Theory Advanced

- a. What is the central/ core theme of the theory?
- b. What are the author's/ authors' main arguments?
- c. What have the author's/ authors' argument(s) add to your knowledge/ expertise?
- d. What research design or methodology does s/he adopt ? What research design or methodology do they adopt?
- e. What are his/her/ their main conclusions or findings?
- d. Does the evidence put forward match the objective of the reviewed research?

2.4 Critique of the Theory Advanced

- a. Are the arguments convincing?
- b. Does the evidence contribute in any way to your research?
- c. Is there an information gap in the reviewed research?
- d. Are data collection tools appropriate?
- e. Does the data analysis and interpretation bring answers to the research question?
- f. What are the upside and downside features of the reviewed research?
- g. Does the reviewed research enrich, mature, and guide your research in any way?