Literature Review Tips & Resources

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Agenda

- What is a Literature Review?
- How to Organize a Literature Review?
- Types of Literature Reviews
- Steps in Writing the Literature Review
- Tips for Developing the Literature Review
- Mistakes to Avoid
- Literature Review Tools
“A researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field” (Boote and Beile, 2005)
What is a literature review?

A literature review is an objective, thorough summary and critical analysis of the relevant available research and non-research literature on the topic being studied.” (Cronin, Ryan, & Coughlan, 2008)
It is not an annotated bibliography

Summarizes arguments from various sources pointing out strengths and weaknesses of their arguments

Key developments in the literature (research landscape)

Sources may *contradict* each other

How your work *connects* with current literature needs to be explicit.
Why do we write literature reviews?

• The primary purpose of the literature review is to demonstrate why the author’s study is necessary.

• The writer must show what has been overlooked, understudied, or misjudged by previous studies in order to create space for the new research within an area of academic or scientific inquiry.
How to organize a literature review?

Literature reviews must contain at least three basic elements:

- An introduction or background information section;
- The body of the review containing the discussion of sources;
- Conclusion and/or recommendations section to end the paper.

• Three approaches to organize the body: chronological, topical, methodological
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Review</th>
<th>Systematic Review</th>
<th>Meta-Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarizes a topic that is <strong>broad</strong> in scope (e.g. cancer treatment)</td>
<td>Answers a <strong>specific clinical question</strong> (e.g. <strong>PICO</strong>; e.g. Is Vitamin C or Chemotherapy a better cancer treatment in patients over the age of 40?)</td>
<td>Looks at studies from a systemic review</td>
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<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Defines a specific search strategy; lists what will be <strong>included and excluded</strong> in articles selected</td>
<td>Purpose: Combines similar studies and pulls <strong>data</strong> to get a <strong>statistically significant</strong> result</td>
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<td>May use sources that are <strong>biased</strong></td>
<td>Can include a meta-analysis within the review (but no necessary)</td>
<td>Important because <strong>statistical analysis</strong> may overturn results of smaller clinical trials</td>
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Steps in Writing the Literature Review

1. Choose Your Topic
2. Identify Databases & Resources
3. Search & Refine
4. Read & Analyze
5. Write the Review

Source: GSU University Library
### Tips for Developing Literature Review

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Broaden</strong></th>
<th>Broaden your search area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Make</strong></td>
<td>Make sure you use the right keywords</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Explore</strong></td>
<td>If you find relevant articles, explore them in depth</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Follow</strong></td>
<td>Follow the citations of the articles you do find</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ask</strong></td>
<td>Ask for help</td>
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Mistakes to Avoid

- Failing to link the findings of the literature review to your own study
- Not starting the reading process early
- Does not refer to primary sources (lazy research)
- Forgetting to question all aspects of the research design
- Producing an annotated bibliography
Example: Keyword Search

If you are conducting your search on Google Scholar and want to make the search more specific, enclose your keywords or key phrases in double quotation marks.
University Library
https://research.library.gsu.edu/litrev

University of Toledo
https://libguides.utoledo.edu/litreview/steps

The Literature Review: A Few Tips on Conducting It

Literature Review: Relational Words and Phrases
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https://gsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9oiXu6c5rqP46F0
Questions