

PERFORMING A LITERATURE REVIEW: AN OVERVIEW

Dr. Sauli Mitra

Assistant Professor and Head Department of Psychology,
MRM College, LNMU, Darbhanga, Bihar

ABSTRACT

One of the early activities in the research process is the review of the research literature. After the problem has been identified, information is needed about the problem so that it can be put in the proper context and the research can proceed effectively. In the review of the literature, the researcher attempts to determine what others have learned about similar research problems and to gather information relevant to research problem at hand. Research is never ending process no investigation can be visualized in isolation. If we haven't already defined our research topic, we can't begin our literature search. However, the process of searching for relevant literature may be critical in help in we define our research problem. When we do a literature review, we increase our research approach as well as our overall knowledge base. Books, magazines, and the Internet are the primary sources for recognising literature. There are a number of resources that might assist we in discovering relevant publications. One of the most significant aspects of our study's literature review is that it acts as a theoretical framework for the investigation, as well as providing context for our results. Only the first function may be completed at this point in the research process. An important part of a good literature review is to present the key themes in a logical progression; each argument should be supported by specific quotes or citations from the source material; and the reference style used must comply to an accepted academic standard. This paper discusses literature review as a methodology for conducting research and offers an overview of different types of reviews, as well as some guidelines to how to both conduct and evaluate a literature review paper.

Keywords: Literature review, Search engines, Summary of literature, Thematic writing and Theoretical Framework

INTRODUCTION

When doing a research study, one of the most important preparatory duties is to go through the current literature in order to get familiar with the body of knowledge that exists in your field of interest. Examining the literature may be time-consuming, intimidating, and infuriating, but it can also be very fulfilling. The literature review is a vital aspect of the research process, and it contributes significantly to practically every phase of the process. If you are only considering a research topic that you may wish to get answers to throughout your investigation, it might be beneficial even before you take the first step. This tool aids you in the early phases of research by assisting you in establishing the theoretical foundations of your study, clarifying your thoughts, and developing your research approach. Later in the process, the literature review is used to develop and solidify your own knowledge base, as well as to assist you in integrating your results with the existing body of information, which is beneficial to both parties. As a researcher, one of your most essential responsibilities is to compare your results with those of other researchers. Producing a literature review is often a part of graduate and post-graduate

student work, including in the preparation of a thesis, dissertation, or a journal article. Literature reviews are also common in a research proposal or prospectus (Baglione, L. 2012). It is in this context that the literature review plays an incredibly significant function. It assists you in integrating your results with existing information throughout the writing of your report — that is, to either support or refute prior study findings. The higher the academic level of your study, the more critical it is to ensure that your results are well integrated with the current literature in your field. In summary, a literature review has the following functions: It provides a theoretical background to your study. It helps you establish the links between what you are proposing to examine and what has already been studied. It enables you to show how your findings have contributed to the existing body of knowledge in our profession. It helps you to integrate your research findings into the existing body of knowledge. In relation to your own study, the literature review can help in four ways. It can: 1. bring clarity and focus to our research problem; 2. improve our research methodology; 3. broaden our knowledge base in our research area; and 4. contextualize our findings.

Bringing attention to the Research Problem

A dilemma exists in the context of the literature review. A literature search cannot be conducted successfully if the researcher does not have a clear understanding of the issue he or she is trying to solve. The literature review, on the other hand, may play an incredibly vital function in developing your research topic since the process of reviewing literature is similar to that of writing a research proposal. Reviewing the literature helps you have a better understanding of the topic area and, as a result, allows you to write better. Improve the clarity and precision with which you conceptualise your research topic, as well as its relevance and relevancy to your specific area of interest. When you research the literature, you may learn about the many parts of your topic area that have been studied others have looked into these elements, what they have discovered about them, and what gaps they have discovered are discussed .how they came at their conclusions, and what recommendations they have for further study. All of these will assist you in gaining a better understanding .clarify and narrow the scope of your own research topics, allowing you to craft a more focused and effective proposals well as a valid research. Additionally, it will assist you in focusing your research on areas where there are gaps in the existing knowledge. current corpus of knowledge, hence increasing the relevance of that knowledge

Increasing the quality of our research

In the process of reading the literature, you learn about other researchers' methods for solving comparable research topics. Your proposed processes and techniques may have been utilised by others before, and a literature study may help determine whether they have worked effectively or if they have encountered difficulties. It is much easier to pick an approach that will provide reliable results if you are aware of potential issues and traps. As a result, you'll have more faith in your process and be better prepared to defend it if necessary.

Trying to locate any existing research

If you want to find relevant material in your field of study, you must first have a general notion of what you're looking for. The next step is to develop a list of relevant sources. To create a bibliography, you may draw on three different resources.

Books, Journals, Internet.

Books

Despite the fact that books are an essential element of any bibliography, they also have their drawbacks. For the most part, book content is of high quality, and the results are 'connected with previous studies to produce a cohesive body of knowledge' (Martin 1985: 33). Because it might take a few years between the creation of a work and its publishing in the form of a book, the content is not always up to date. The best place to look for a book is through your local library's online catalogue. The topic headings assigned to a book by librarians are generally based on Library of Congress Subject Headings when cataloguing it. Ask your librarian for assistance if you are unsure about the right topic heading for your area of expertise. This can save you a lot of time. You may use publications like the Book Review Index to find books that interest you. You may search for books in your area of interest by using the topic catalogue or keywords option. Using the right keywords may help narrow the scope of a search. Check out each of these titles to see if there is anything that interests you. In order to save yourself time, print off the titles (if this option is available) or write them down on a piece of paper. In certain cases, you'll need to read the book to find out whether it's worth your time, so keep that in mind while deciding whether or not to buy it. You can use the bibliographies of the 10–15 books you've chosen as a starting point for your research. Photocopying their bibliographies will save you time. To identify the works that appear in many bibliographies, thoroughly review each one. To include a book that has been cited by several writers on your reading list is a good idea. Make a list of all the books you've read so far so you can refer to it later.

Journals

We need to go through all of the relevant journals in the same way. However, even if there may be a two to three-year delay between study completion and journal publishing, journals still present you with the most up-to-date information. Although the number of journals accessible varies on the topic of study, you should choose as many as you can, despite the fact that certain disciplines have more than others. Prepare a list of the journals that you plan on reading in order to find relevant material for your research. If you have been successful in identifying any interesting journals and articles, compile a list of those you want to investigate, organised by journal and subject matter. If you choose one of these publications, start with the most recent issue and go through the contents page to see if there is anything relevant to your study subject. If you believe that a certain article will be of interest to you, read the abstract for that item. If you believe you may need it in the future, and depending on your financial means, either duplicate it or make a summary of it and keep a record of its reference for future reference. There are a number of resources available to help your search for journals simpler, and using one of them may save you a significant amount of time. They are:

- Indices of journals (e.g. Humanities index);
- Abstracts of articles (e.g. Eric);
- Citation indices (e.g. Social Sciences Citation Index).

A variety of print and online options are available for each of these indexes, abstracts and citation services. Most libraries use computers to keep information on books, journals, and abstracts. A topic, author, and title are used to categorise each piece of information. Another option is to use keywords (either as an author or title or topic or expert or just as keywords). The system you employ is determined by the resources you have at your disposal and your level of familiarity with it. In a variety of fields, there exist specialised electronic databases. A bibliography might benefit from them as well.

Importance of a Literature Review

It establishes the authors' in-depth understanding and knowledge of their field subject. It gives the background of the research. Demonstrates how the research fits within a larger field of study. Provides an overview of the sources explored during the research of a particular topic. Literature reviews are often linked with conceptual categories, which allow for the application of both synthesis and summary techniques in the analysis of the literature. A summary is a concise description of important information, while a synthesis is the rearrangement of source material to assist with specific research questions and problems.

As a starting point, researchers should seek for academics and studies that show a significant connection between the problem and the criteria. A literature review provides the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the field's advancements by establishing a landscape for them. This research incorporates all (or at least the vast majority of) previous and significant papers in the field, as the reader will see in the table below. This is a positive development.

The analytical features of a Literature Review

- Incorporate new meanings into previously used content, or combine new and old meanings as needed, as appropriate.
- Reading the works mentioned below will allow you to keep track of the intellectual growth of the subject, as well as significant debates.
- Examine the sources and provide them to the reader on the basis of the most pertinent or relevant research, depending on the situation and the circumstances
- As a rule, it is essential to identify any gaps in the way a subject has been researched up to this point near the conclusion of a literature review.

The Purpose of a Literature Review

- Describe how each contribution makes a difference in addressing the study problem you're researching.
 - Explain how each piece of work is related to the others.
 - Develop new ways for putting existing research to use.
 - Identify the areas where the literature falls short.
 - Identify and resolve discrepancies in previous studies that seem to be in opposition.

- Make a note of prior scholarship to prevent wasting time by having to redo previously completed work.

The Benefit of a Literature Review

- Assessment of the current state of research on a topic. This is probably the most obvious value of the literature review. Once a researcher has determined an area to work with for a research project, a search of relevant information sources will help determine what is already known about the topic and how extensively the topic has already been researched.
- Identification of the experts on a particular topic. One of the additional benefits derived from doing the literature review is that it will quickly reveal which researchers have written the most on a particular topic and are, therefore, probably the experts on the topic. Someone who has written twenty articles on a topic or on related topics is more than likely more knowledgeable than someone who has written a single article. This same writer will likely turn up as a reference in most of the other articles written on the same topic. From the number of articles written by the author and the number of times the writer has been cited by other authors, a researcher will be able to assume that the particular author is an expert in the area and, thus, a key resource for consultation in the current research to be undertaken.
- Identification of key questions about a topic that need further research. In many cases a researcher may discover new angles that need further exploration by reviewing what has already been written on a topic. For example, research may suggest that listening to music while studying might lead to better retention of ideas, but the research might not have assessed whether a particular style of music is more beneficial than another. A researcher who is interested in pursuing this topic would then do well to follow up existing studies with a new study, based on previous research, that tries to identify which styles of music are most beneficial to retention.
- Determination of methodologies used in past studies of the same or similar topics. It is often useful to review the types of studies that previous researchers have launched as a means of determining what approaches might be of most benefit in further developing a topic. By the same token, a review of previously conducted studies might lend itself to researchers determining a new angle for approaching research.

Assessing the Quality of a Literature Review

Literature reviews need to be assessed and evaluated as strictly as empirical articles, but is this always the case Palmatier et al. (2018) suggest that a quality literature review must have both depth and rigor ,that is, it needs to demonstrate an appropriate strategy for selecting articles and capturing data and insights and to offer something beyond a recitation of previous research. In addition, they state that a quality literature review needs to be replicable, that is, the method must be described such that an external reader could replicate the study and reach similar findings. Lastly, they state that a literature review must be useful for scholars and practitioners. However, evaluating different types of literature reviews can be challenging. Therefore, some guide-lines for eventuating literature review articles across approaches are suggested as a starting point to help editors, reviewers, authors, and readers evaluating literature reviews. Depending on if, it is a systematic, semi-systematic or integrative review,

different standards can be valid. However, independent of type of review, pay close attention to what studies have been included and for what reasons as these decisions make all the differences in terms of what type of conclusions the authors reach. Ignoring a relevant field of research, some journals or years can have major consequences for the results and conclusions of the studies. In addition, its contribution should always be valued against the topic or field to which it adds. What constitutes a useful contribution in one area may be insufficient in another.

How to get your Literature Review Published

Although there are numerous reasons to perform a literature study, it might be difficult to publish it. When performing a literature review, there are a number of typical blunders that might prevent it from being accepted for publishing in a reputable journal. To begin with, researchers frequently fail to specify in sufficient detail how they did the literature review, making it hard to assess both the quality of the review and its value. There are a number of reasons why these assessments fail to give enough information about the research approach, selection and exclusion of publications, constraints of a particular search technique, and quality of the search process. Second, it is usual to restrict the search too severely in an effort to reduce the sample size and simplify the review. There are several ways to do this, including limiting the number of journals included in the review or omitting publications from other disciplines that could have been relevant. Limiting the sample size is a red signal since it reduces the review's depth and rigour, which might have major consequences for the study's findings and contributions. Consider re-evaluating and narrowing down the study topic if you have too many samples. Certainly, it is possible to restrict the sample in many ways, but excellent justifications must be given for doing so. As a final point, researchers who perform a review often fail to effectively present and explain their findings. Figures and tables are often included in a report but not explained or commented upon. Because of this, it is difficult to decipher what they are saying or what they truly discovered. Spending too much time detailing the process and analytical methodology is typical, but not enough time discussing and explaining the outcomes. This is true for both advanced quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. A lack of context makes it difficult to evaluate the article's contributions. Finally, one of the most typical mistakes is that literature reviews generally fail to make a significant addition to the area. Even though the review paper is great and meticulous, if it does not make a significant addition, it will not be published. According to the American Psychological Association, the literature review is a "descriptive summation" of research undertaken between particular years that describes such information as the number of papers published and the themes addressed and the citations assessed. It is possible that this might be useful at times, but the chances are slim that it will be published in a journal. According to the reality, review papers that contain a mix of word clouds and citation analytics are very unlikely to be accepted for publication. Researchers who have spent time and effort gathering many publications without studying them in any meaningful manner have failed to make a substantial contribution because of this. There seems to be a wide range of options, regardless of the quality of the review. Using a literature review and a meta-analysis of relevant topics, one may show some proof of the impact

of their research. Higher-ranking publications have employed this method successfully (Edeling, A., & Himme, A. 2018).

CONCLUSION

It is essential to conduct literature reviews as a basis for all kinds of research. They may serve as a springboard for new ideas and directions in a specific subject, as well as guidance for policy and practice, proof of an impact, and, if done correctly, the foundation for new knowledge growth. This makes them a foundation for future studies and theories. For this reason, this article provides some easy criteria for performing better, more rigorous literature reviews as well as better research in the long term, which is why this paper was written. It will be much easier to identify actual research gaps rather than simply conducting the same research repeatedly, to develop better and more precise hypotheses and research questions, and, therefore, to increase the quality of research as a community if there is certainty that the research is built on great accuracy.

REFERENCES

1. Baglione, L. (2012). *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press.
2. Edeling, A., & Himme, A. (2018). When does market share matter? New empirical generalizations from a meta-analysis of the market share–performance relationship. *Journal of Marketing*, 82,1–24.
3. Palmatier, R. W., Houston, M. B., & Hulland, J. (2018). Review articles: Purpose, process, and structure. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 46,1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-017-0563-4>.