

ROLE OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Some sections commonly found in both a research proposal and report

Section	Aim
Introduction	To show the aims, objectives, scope, rationale and design features of the research. The rationale is usually supported by references to other works which have already identified the broad nature of the problem.
Literature review	To demonstrate skills in library searching : to show command of the subject area and understanding of the problem; to justify the research topic, design and methodology.
Methodology	To show the appropriateness of the techniques used to gather data and the methodological approaches employed. Relevant references from the literature are often used to show an understanding of data-collection techniques and methodological implications, and to justify their use over alternative techniques.

What are the key sources?

**What are the key theories
concepts and ideas?**

**What are the major
issues and debate about
the topic?**

**What are the epistemological
and ontological grounds for
the discipline?**

**Literature search and
review on your topic**

**What are the political
standpoints?**

**What are the main questions
and problems that have been
addressed to date?**

**What are the origins and
definitions of the topic?**

**How is knowledge on the topic
structured and organized?**

**How have approaches to these
questions increased our
understanding and knowledge?**

Some of the questions the review of the literature can answer

Here are some of the questions your literature review should answer

(Asian Institute of Technology Language Centre)

- What do we already know in the immediate area concerned?
- What are the characteristics of the key concepts or the main factors or variables?
- What are the relationships between these key concepts, factors or variables?
- What are the existing theories?
- Where are the inconsistencies or other shortcomings in our knowledge and understanding?
- What views need to be (further) tested?
- What evidence is lacking, inconclusive, contradictory or too limited?
- Why study (further) the research problem?
- What contribution can the present study be expected to make?
- What research designs or methods seem unsatisfactory?

LITERATURE REVIEW



EXPLORE ISSUES, THEORIES IN SCHOLARLY WRITINGS AND PROVIDE EXPLANATION, SUMMARY AND CRITICAL EVALUATION ON PREVIOUS RESEARCH



CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON A SEGMENT OF A PARTICULAR KNOWLEDGE THROUGH CLASSIFICATION, SUMMARY, COMPARISON OF PAST RESEARCH , THEORITICAL ARTICLES AND LITERATURE



How can we critically evaluate past research?

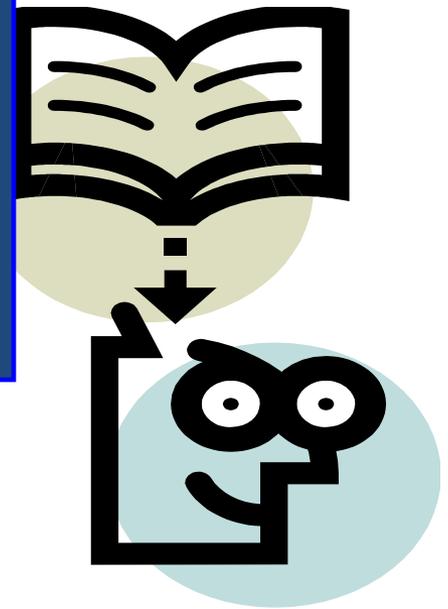


By questioning_*



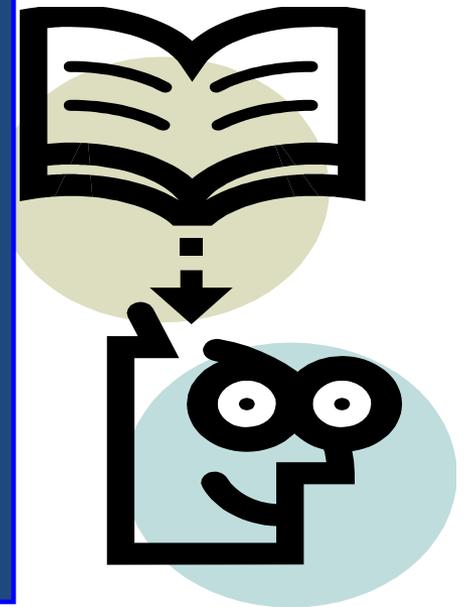
Ask these questions while you are developing your literature review:

- **What do you already know about the subject? Major works?**
- **Is there any gap in the knowledge of a particular subject**
- **Has the author formulated any problem statements/issues?**
- **What is the orientation of the research?**
- **What is the theoretical framework of the author?**



Ask these questions while you are developing your literature review:

- **Is there further research by other researchers?**
- **Who are the personalities in the topic to be researched? E.g: Bloom, Dewey, Martin.....**
- **Is the analysis accurate and relevant?**
- **What is the strength and weakness of the research?**
- **How is the article or book related to your research question?**
- **What is the methodology/ methods/ issues/problems that earlier researchers identified and how they can give impact to your project?**



HOW CAN I WRITE A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW?

- **Remember the purpose:** you are not writing a literature review just to tell your reader what other researchers have done. Your aim should be to show
 - *why your research needs to be carried out,*
 - *how you came to choose certain methodologies or theories to work with,*
 - *how your work adds to the research already carried out,* etc.

HOW CAN I WRITE A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW?

- **Read with a purpose:** you need to *summarize* the work you read but you must also decide which ideas or information are important to your research (so you can emphasize them), and which are less important and can be covered briefly or left out of your review. You should also look for the major concepts, conclusions, theories, arguments etc. that *underlie* the work, and look for *similarities* and *differences* with closely related work. This is difficult when you first start reading, but should become easier the more you read in your area.

HOW CAN I WRITE A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW?

- **Write with a purpose:** your aim should be to evaluate and show relationships between the work already done (Is Researcher Y's theory more convincing than Researcher X's? Did Researcher X build on the work of Researcher Y?) and between this work and *your own*. In order to do this effectively you should carefully plan how you are going to organize your work.

HOW CAN I WRITE A GOOD LITERATURE REVIEW?

Read:

(Language Centre. Asian Institute of Technology)

- [The Basics of Good Writing.](#)
- Traps
- Example of good literature review

Mapping and analysing ideas

Mapping a topic

- To acquire sufficient knowledge of the subject to develop the necessary understanding of the methodology and research techniques,
- To comprehend the history and diffusion of interest in the topic,
- To undertake an analytical evaluation of the main arguments, concepts and theories relevant to the topic in order to synthesize from the analysis an approach or thesis that is unique, that is your work.

Mapping and analysing ideas

Analysis element of the review

What do you need to elicit from the literature?

The ways in which:

- core ideas,
- concepts
- methodologies have been employed
- how they have been operationalized for empirical work

Critical review

What is meant by critical?

To be critical does not mean to criticise in a negative manner. Rather it requires you to question the information and opinions in a text and present your evaluation or judgement of the text. To do this well, you should attempt to understand the topic from different perspectives (i.e. read related texts) and in relation to the theories, approaches and frameworks in your course.

What is meant by evaluation or judgement?

Here you decide the strengths and weaknesses of a text. This is usually based on specific criteria.

Evaluating requires an understanding of not just the content of the text, but also an understanding of a text's purpose, the intended audience and why it is structured the way it is.

What is meant by analysis?

Analysing requires separating the content and concepts of a text into their

- main components and then understanding how these interrelate, connect
- and possibly influence each other.

To analyze methods used

Breakdown of methods used in the empirical studies

Method used	Number of papers
Interviews	9
Focus groups	4
Open-ended web surveys	2
Quantitative surveys	9
Experiment/simulation	1
Design research	5

Another interesting finding is the breakdown of methods used in the 30 empirical studies. There have been 15 qualitative studies (interviews, focus groups, and open-ended surveys), 10 quantitative studies (surveys and experiment/simulation), and 5 design research studies where a working system or a prototype was built to evaluate the results(see [Table 2](#)).

CRITICAL REVIEW

Criteria	Possible focus questions
Significance and contribution to the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the author's aim?• To what extent has this aim been achieved?• What does this text add to the body of knowledge? (This could be in terms of theory, data and/or practical application)• What relationship does it bear to other works in the field?• What is missing/not stated?• Is this a problem?

CRITICAL REVIEW

Criteria	Possible focus questions
Methodology or approach (This usually applies to more formal, research- based texts)	<p>What approach was used for the research? (eg; quantitative or qualitative, analysis/review of theory or current practice, comparative, case study, personal reflection etc...)</p> <p>How objective/biased is the approach? Are the results valid and reliable? What analytical framework is used to discuss the results?</p>

CRITICAL REVIEW

Criteria	Possible focus questions
Argument and use of evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a clear problem, statement or hypothesis?• What claims are made?• Is the argument consistent?• What kinds of evidence does the text rely on?• How valid and reliable is the evidence?• How effective is the evidence in supporting the argument?• What conclusions are drawn?• Are these conclusions justified?