

Module 1- Unit 1 Part 7

Review of Literature

➤ The functions of the literature review in research

1.7.1 How to carry out a literature search

1.7.2 How to review the selected literature

1.7.3 How to develop theoretical and conceptual frameworks

1.7.4 How to write a literature review

One of the essential preliminary tasks when you undertake a research study is to go through the existing literature in order to acquaint yourself with the available body of knowledge in your area of interest.

Literature review is an integral part of the research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step. It has value even before the first step; that is, when you are merely thinking about a research question that you may want to find answers to through your research journey.

In the initial stages of research it helps you to establish the theoretical roots of your study clarify your ideas and develop your research methodology. Later in the process, the literature review serves to enhance and consolidate your own knowledge base and helps you to integrate your findings with the existing body of knowledge. Since an important responsibility in research is to compare your

findings with those of others, it is here that the literature review plays an extremely important role.

A **literature review** is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic. The **literature review** surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research. The **review** should enumerate, describe, summarize, objectively evaluate and clarify this previous research.

1.7.1 A literature review has the following functions:

1. It provides a theoretical background to your study.
2. It helps you establish the links between what you are proposing to examine and what been studied.
3. It enables you to show how your findings have contributed to the existing body of knowledge your profession.
4. It helps you to integrate your research findings into the existing body knowledge. In relation to your own study, the literature review can help in four ways.
5. It can bring clarity and focus to your research problem; improve your research methodology.

The literature review can help in our ways.

1. It can Bring clarity and focus to your research problem;
2. Improve your research methodology;
3. Broaden your knowledge base in your research area
4. Contextualize your findings.

1.7.2 How can Bring clarity and focus to your research problem

The literature review can play an extremely important role in shaping your research problem because the process of reviewing the literature helps you to understand the subject area better and thus helps you to conceptualize your research problem clearly and precisely and makes it more relevant and pertinent to your field of enquiry.

When reviewing the literature you learn what aspects of your subject area have been examined by others, what they have found out about these aspects, what gaps they have identified and what suggestions they have made for further research. All these will help you gain a greater insight into your own research questions and provide you with clarity and focus which are central to a relevant and valid study. In addition, it will help you to focus your study on areas where there are gaps in the existing body of knowledge, thereby enhancing its relevance.

Improving your research methodology

Literature review tells you if others have used procedures and methods similar to the ones that you are proposing, which procedures and methods have worked well for them and what problems they have faced with them. By becoming aware of any problems and pitfalls, you will be better positioned to select a methodology that is capable of providing valid answers to your research question. This will increase your confidence in the methodology you plan to use and will equip you to defend its use.

Broadening your knowledge base in your research area

The most important function of the literature review is to ensure you read widely around the subject area in which you intend to conduct your research study. It is



important that you know what other researchers have found in regard to the same or similar questions, what theories have been put forward and what gaps exist in the relevant body of knowledge.

Enabling you to contextualize your findings

Obtaining answers to your research questions is comparatively easy: the difficult part is examining how your findings fit into the existing body of knowledge.

How do answers to your research questions compare with what others have found?

What contribution have you been able to make to the existing body of knowledge?

How are your findings different from those of others?

Therefore literature review will enable you to compare your findings with those of others and answer these questions. It is important to place your findings in the context of what is already known in your field of enquiry.

1.7.3 How to review the literature

If you do not have a specific research problem, you should review the literature in your broad area of interest with the aim of gradually narrowing it down to what you want to find out about.

There are four steps involved in conducting a literature review:

1. Searching for the existing literature in your area of study.



- 2. Reviewing the selected literature.**
- 3. Developing a theoretical framework.**
- 4. Developing a conceptual framework.**

Searching for the existing literature

To search effectively for the literature in your field of enquiry, it is imperative that you have at least some idea of the broad subject area and of the problem you wish to investigate, in order to set parameters for your search. Next, compile a bibliography for this broad area. There are three sources that you can use to prepare a bibliography:

1. Books
2. Journals
3. Internet.

Books

Books are the central part of bibliography. The main advantage is that the material published in books is usually important and of good quality, and the findings are integrated with other research to form a coherent body of knowledge. The main disadvantage is that the material is not completely up to date. The best way to search for a book is to look at your library catalogues.

Use the subject catalogue or keywords option to search for books in your area of interest. Narrow the subject area searched by selecting the appropriate keywords. Look through these titles carefully and identify the books you think are likely to be of interest to you. If you think the titles seem appropriate to



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your topic. Then what we do? Print them out (if this facility is available), as this will save you time, or note them down on a piece of paper.



Journals

You need to go through the journals relating to your research in a similar manner. Journals provide you with the most up-to-date information.

There are several sources designed to make your search for journals easier and these can save you enormous time. Now online journals are also available in our discipline. Some of them are listed in the table below.

Magazines

These are the publications of various bodies released at short intervals covering diversified areas in management. Examples are Business week, Business India, Business Today, Outlook, Frontline, The week etc.

| Where we can search for the existing literature | |
|---|---|
| Books | Text books |
| | Reference Books |
| Journals | <p>Business and Economics Journal</p> <p>Contemporary Marketing Review</p> <p>Current Research Journal of Economic Theory</p> <p>Journal Of Economics And International Finance</p> <p>Journal of Accounting & Marketing</p> <p>Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review</p> <p>Journal of Tourism & Hospitality etc.</p> |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| | |
| Magazines | Business week, Business India, Business Today, Outlook, Frontline, The week etc. |
| Other sources | Internet Annual reports Proceedings of conferences and seminars |

How review is carried out

After identify the sources of information,

Note your topic or area of interest under study

Read the relevant literature related with your topic using different sources as specified above.

Referring the original work rather than their off shoots

Reading with comprehension

The researcher should try to understand the contribution in right perspective otherwise he cannot formulate his own point of view.

Reading in time



Time factor is always important in the research activity so the researcher must make the reading as his continuous activity

Indexing the literature

If any relevant information is come across in a journal note down the name of author/s title of the articles, name of the journal, volume number, issue number page numbers of the articles and year of publication.

In the case of books, name of the author/s, title of the book, name of the publisher, place of publication, total number of pages noted and year of publication etc.

Write the reference

Reference styles are standardized rules for presenting information about the sources used in a text. Typically, a style will describe how to organise information about author(s), publication year, title and page numbers.

Particular referencing styles are preferred by particular academic disciplines because they work better with the kind of texts that are most commonly used in that discipline.

A reference style is a set of guidelines for writers. The overall aim of reference styles is to increase readability and clarity of the text, thereby avoiding misunderstandings.

Although different reference styles give more or less the same information to the reader, this information is provided in different ways. For instance, in some styles source information is given in the running text, whereas other reference styles rely on

a note system. Most reference styles have some kind of reference list containing all sources referred to.

Depending on the way in which they record sources, reference styles can be divided into three main categories: documentary notes styles, parenthetical or author-date styles, and numbered styles.

The APA reference style (named after the American Psychological Association) goes back to the late 1920s, when a group of scholars from the fields of Psychology, Anthropology and Business Management met in order to set up a system for giving references. Today, APA is used within the Social Sciences, as well as within other academic fields.

Examples Journal article

The APA format for scholarly article entries in the list of References looks like this:

Last name, Initial of first name(s). (Year of publication within parenthesis). Title of article. Title of Journal, volume number, inclusive page numbers. doi:

Note that

Except for proper nouns, only the first word of the article title (and of any subtitle) is capitalized Journal titles and volume numbers are italicized Journal titles are capitalized Inclusive page numbers cover the whole article, not only the part of the article to which you refer.

A doi (digital object identifier) is used if accessible

Chapter in edited book



Edited books contain a number of chapters written by different authors. If you have referred to a specific chapter in an edited volume, the entry in your reference list should therefore be listed under the name of the author(s) of that chapter, not to the whole book.

The APA format for reference list entries of chapters from edited books looks like this:

Last name, Initial of first name(s). (Year of publication within parenthesis). Title of chapter. In [Name of editor] (Ed./Eds.), Title of book (page numbers of chapter within parenthesis). Place of publication: Publisher.

Webpage

The basic reference list format for webpages looks like this:

Authors's last name, Initial(s). (Year of publication). Title of webpage. Retrieved from [url here]

Note that

if there is no author, begin with the title, followed by date of publication

if there is no date of publication, write "n.d." (no date).

a date of access is only provided if the webpage content is likely to change (as in a wiki, for instance).

Book by one author

The APA format for book entries in the Reference list looks like this:



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Author's last name, Initial(s). (Year of Publication). *Title of book*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Note that

- Only initials of author's first name(s) are provided
- "Year of publication" refers to the edition that you have used
- The book title is italicised. Except for names etc., only the first word of the title (and of any subtitle) is capitalised
- "Place of publication": Being an American reference style, the *APA Publication Manual* recommends city + abbreviated name of state for US publications and city + country for non-US publications.
- "Publisher" is the name of the publishing company



Book by two or more authors

If there are two or more authors, the names are listed in the following way. Note that the names should be given in the same order in which they appear on the book's title page.

Two authors:

First author's last name, Initial(s) & Second author's last name, Initial(s). (Year of Publication). Title of book. Place of publication: Publisher.

More than two authors:

If there are more than two authors, place a comma between the names of the authors and an ampersand (&) before the last name, for instance like this:

First author's last name, Initial(s), Second author's last name, Initial(s), Third author's last name, Initial(s) & Fourth author's last name, Initial(s). (Year of Publication). Title of book. Place of publication: Publisher.

| The APA format in the Reference list | |
|---|--|
| Journal article | Last name, Initial of first name(s). (Year of publication within parenthesis). Title of article. Title of Journal, volume number, inclusive page numbers. doi: |
| The APA format for book entries in the Reference list | Author's last name, Initial(s). (Year of Publication). Title of book. Place of publication: Publisher. |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Book by two or more authors | <p>Two authors: First author's last name, Initial(s) & Second author's last name, Initial(s). (Year of Publication). Title of book. Place of publication: Publisher.</p> <p>More than two authors: First author's last name, Initial(s), Second author's last name, Initial(s), Third author's last name, Initial(s) & Fourth author's last name, Initial(s). (Year of Publication). Title of book. Place of publication: Publisher.</p> |
| Chapter in edited book | <p>Last name, Initial of first name(s). (Year of publication within parenthesis). Title of chapter. In [Name of editor] (Ed./Eds.), Title of book (page numbers of chapter within parenthesis). Place of publication: Publisher.</p> |
| Web page | <p>Authors's last name, Initial(s). (Year of publication). Title of webpage. Retrieved from [url here]</p> |

Developing a theoretical framework

The information obtained from different books and journals now needs to be sorted under the main themes and theories, highlighting agreements and disagreements among the authors and identifying the unanswered questions or gaps.

You will also realize that the literature deals with a number of aspects that have a direct or indirect bearing on your research topic. Use these aspects as a basis for developing your theoretical framework. The theoretical framework includes all the



theories that have been put forward to explain the relationship between variables under study.

Developing a conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is the basis of your research problem. It stems from the theoretical framework which becomes the basis of your study. Whereas the theoretical framework consists of the theories or issues in which your study is embedded. The conceptual framework, on the other hand, is something you can develop yourself based on this theory. In addition, in your conceptual framework you can add your own **concept / constructs / variables** that you think are relevant and then proceed to explore or test the relationship between them.

1.7.4 How a review of literature is presented

Example

A study on organizational climate of 'XYZ' company

1. Search for sufficient information through books, Journals and internet
2. Grouped under relevant sub topics
 - **Management attitude towards employees**
 - **Interpersonal relationship among the employees**
 - **Training and development programmes**
 - **Performance appraisal system**



➤ **Compensation package**

3. The review presented in chronological order (starting from the earliest work) in each sub topic chronological order of works is maintained separately.

4 Name of authors are mentioned along with the year of publication, when there are two authors, both names are mentioned. When the number of authors is more than two, only the name of the first author followed by '*et al.*' is mentioned.

Examples:

In 2003, Bass *et al.*, identified three important factors that could necessitate training activity, viz., technological advances, organizational complexity and human relations.

Davies in 2005 rightly remarked “it is advisable to use as many strategies as one can conveniently employ when evaluating training.”

Summary

Reviewing the literature is a continuous process.

It begins before a research problem is finalized and continues until the report is finished. There is a paradox in the literature review: you cannot undertake an effective literature review unless you have formulated a research problem, yet your literature search plays an extremely important role in helping you to formulate your research problem. The literature review brings clarity and focus to your research problem, improves your research methodology and broadens your knowledge base.

Reviewing the literature involves a number of steps:



Searching for existing literature in your area of study; reviewing the selected literature; using it to develop a theoretical framework from which your study emerges and also using it to develop a conceptual framework which will become the basis of your investigation. The main sources for identifying literature are books, journals and the Internet. There are several sources which can provide information about locating relevant journals.

The literature review serves two important functions:

(1) It provides theoretical background to your study, and (2) it helps you to contextualize your findings by comparing them with what others have found out in relation to the area of enquiry. At this stage of the research process, only the first function can be fulfilled. You can only take steps to achieve the second function when you have analyzed your data and are in the process of writing about your findings.

Your writing about the literature reviewed should be thematic in nature, that is based on main themes; the sequence of these theme in the write-up should follow a logical progression; various arguments should be substantiated with specific quotations and citations from the literature and should adhere to an acceptable academic referencing style.

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