



Literature Reviews: An Introduction

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Literature Review: An Examination of the Key Research on a Topic

Seeks to answer the following questions:

- What have others said about this topic?
- What theories address the topic?
- Which policies address the topic? (If relevant)
- What research has been done previously on the topic?
- Do the results of the existing research agree with one another, or is there disagreement?
- What are the gaps in the existing literature?

(Adapted from Davidson & Tollich, 1990)

Different uses of literature review in assignments

- ☐ Review leading to research questions/hypotheses
- ☐ Review leading to conclusions on the topic (and recommendations)
- ☐ Review leading to new or adapted theoretical model or framework for new model

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Ki Pōwhiri



☐ Review leading to research question(s)



The story structure of research

- There's this important problem or issue...
- and researchers understand some areas of the problem *but* others need more research
- a specific area requiring more research is this...and it's important because...
- *so* what I did was...
- and found that...
- which means we now know this.

(Adapted from Paltridge & Starfield, 2007)

Structure for Introduction → Literature Review

Provide the reader with a context/setting for your research
General problem requiring attention and evidence of significance of problem



Narrow down to specific aspect of the problem under investigation
Your specific topic area – what does the research say about its connection with the problem?

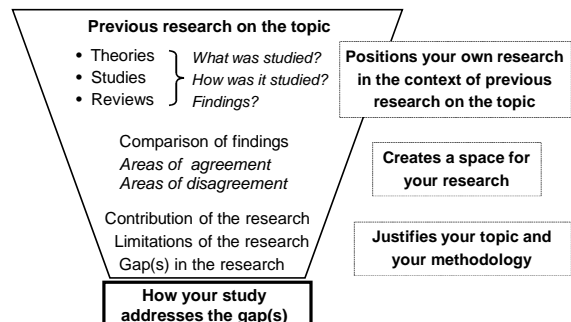


Critical overview of existing research
in your specific topic area
What do we already know from existing research?
Which aspects require further research?
- what are the gap(s) in the research?
Therefore

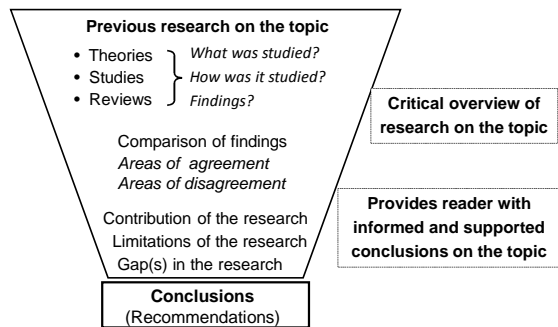


How your study fills the research gap(s)
Objectives of your research

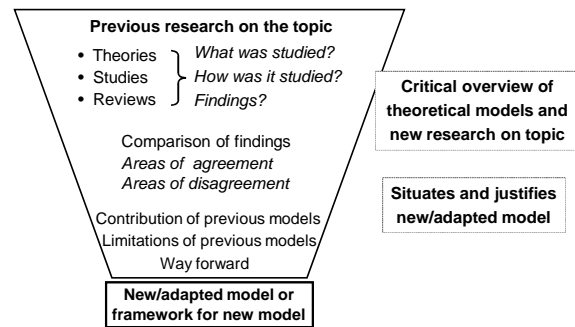
☐ Review leading to research question(s)



□ Review leading to conclusions on topic



□ Review leading to new/adapted theoretical model



How is a literature review organised?

- by key themes or findings
- arranged in headings and sub-headings
- as an **argument** that *flows*
 - information from various sources is *synthesised* to form a coherent argument

Organised by key themes or findings

Topic: What are the most effective measures to prevent smoking onset amongst adolescents?

Restrictions on tobacco advertising

Tobacco advertising and smoking initiation
Effectiveness of banning advertising
Alternative forms of tobacco promotion

Restrictions on sales to adolescents

Age limits
Restricting sales to tobacconists only

Product regulation

Labelling
Ban on small packaging

Health education

Mass-media campaigns targeted at youth
Smoking prevention programmes in schools

Themes/issues that emerge in the literature

Set out under headings and sub-headings

(Source: Roberts & Pettigrew, 2007)

Synthesise information on existing research

A literature review is not just a collection of summaries:

Research by Brown (2002)

Research by Smith (2005)

Research by Atken (2007)

Synthesise information on existing research on the topic

→ **Where is your voice here?** What is the point you're making about the topic in this paragraph? Which issue does the research highlight?

Research by Brown (2002)

→ **Where is your voice here?** What is the relationship between Brown's research and Smith's research?

Research by Smith (2005)

→ **Where is your voice here?** What is the relationship between Atken's research and that of Brown and of Smith?

Research by Atken (2007)

How are all these linked to your research question?

Synthesise existing research on topic

Correlates of Burnout

Introduce information before going into detail

Correlates of burnout can be grouped into three major categories: individual (or personal), job, and organisational...

Individual Level Correlates

Your voice must guide the discussion

Demographic variables (such as gender and age) represent examples of variables studied at the individual level. Gender has been frequently investigated as a correlate of burnout, although findings for this variable are varied. Although there are some studies showing that burnout occurs more often among women than among men (Bussing & Perrar, 1991; Maslach & Jackson, 1998b; Poulin & Walter, 1993a), the opposite is also found (Price & Spence, 1994; Van Horn et al., 1997)...

Age is the most consistent factor related to burnout (Birch et al., 1986; Mor & Laliberte, 1984; Poulin & Walter, 1993a)...

(Adapted from Whitehead, 2001, pp. 38-39)

Critiquing existing research on the topic

What are the strengths and limitations of the existing research in relation to your topic?

- Contributions to the topic area
- Limitations in terms of the topic area
- What are the gaps in the research?

You're constructing an argument about previous research on the topic

Existing knowledge on your topic: What do you include?

Critical evaluation of
existing knowledge

Origins and definitions
of the topic

Theories about
the topic

Your Topic

Major issues
and debates

Main questions and
problems that have
been addressed

Trends in the research

(Adapted from Hart, 1998)

Teacher Burnout: A Study of Occupational Stress and Burnout in New Zealand Schools

- 2.1. The Nature of Stress
- 2.2. History of the Stress Concept
- 2.3. Main Approaches to Definitions of Stress
- 2.4. The Stimulus Based Definition
- 2.5. The Response Based Definition
- 2.6. Summary of Response and Stimulus Approaches
- 2.7. The Transactional or Interactional Definition of Stress
- 2.8. The Burnout Concept
- 2.9. Defining Burnout
- 2.10. Cherniss's Model of Burnout
- 2.11. Golebiewski's Model of Burnout
- 2.12. Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory
- 2.13. Conceptual Framework
- 2.14. Measurement of Burnout
- 2.15. Correlates of Burnout
- 2.16. Studies on Teacher Stress and Burnout
- 2.17. Conclusion

Stress

Burnout

Stress and Burnout

Origins and definitions of the topic

Example:

In order to study stress in teachers, a clear understanding of what is meant by the term 'stress' is needed...The word stress has become a word commonly used in a variety of settings, with different meanings attached to the situation in which it is used. Selye (1956), one of the pioneers in the field...

Introduce
seminal texts

Provide
overview
of
definitions

There are, however, three general perspectives which have been identified. One is that stress is the result of something outside of the individual, i.e., external factors are the cause of stress. The second is that stress is internal, it is what goes on inside the individual as they interpret or react to what is going on around them (Gold & Roth, 1993). and the third major perspective is the transactional view of Lazarus and colleagues which focuses on the cognitive processes and emotional reactions of individuals to stress in their environment (Lazarus, 1978)

(Adapted from Whitehead, 2001, pp. 12-16)

Origins and definitions of the topic

Phrases for
introducing
definitions

Compare
definitions

Critique
definitions

Critique from
academic
source

One of the most publicised definitions (Maslach, 1986), is that burnout is generally conceived to be a chronic response to extreme pressures and involves emotional exhaustion, feelings of low accomplishment and a depersonalisation of others in the work context – a tendency to treat them as objects rather than people...

A recent definition... Another distinct definition, by Freudenberger and Richelson (1980), describes burnout in terms of chronic fatigue, depression and frustration typically engendered by commitment to undertaking that did not realise the person's ambitions and expected rewards. Although this conceptualisation incorporates some of the elements of burnout, it is problematical because as O'Driscoll (2000) states, it confounds burnout with variables which are normally considered as distinct from, although related to, burnout, especially depression and chronic fatigue....

(Adapted from Whitehead, 2001, pp. 26-27)

Introducing theoretical models

Use original sources

Summarise the information on models using your own words

Use appropriate signal words

Use sources for overview & critique

...Maslach and Jackson (1981) conceptualised burnout as having three core components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and lack of, or reduced, personal accomplishment. Maslach's model of burnout characterises emotional exhaustion as feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one's emotional resources. Maslach (1998) cites major sources of this exhaustion as work overload and personal conflict at work.... Depersonalisation refers to a negative, cynical or excessively detached response to other people, which often includes a loss of idealism... Reduced personal accomplishment refers to a decline in feelings of competence and productivity at work... The above three-component conceptualisation is the most widely accepted model of burnout (O'Driscoll & Cooper, 1996)...

(Adapted from Whitehead, 2001, pp. 27-28)

Critical evaluation of theoretical models

Topic sentence linking paragraph to last section & introducing new point

Connecting words and phrases to guide readers

Despite the popularity of the stimulus approach, the stimulus model is not without its limitations. One is that stimulus events alone may be insufficient when predicting an individual's response. For example, two teachers subjected to loud, noisy classrooms may show quite different levels of strain, or may show strain at different times. Thus it fails to take account of individual differences, and it ignores the perceptual cognitive processes which underpin such differences (Cox & Fergusson, 1991).

Another criticism of this approach is that...

(Adapted from Whitehead, 2001, p. 16)

Trends in the research

Indication of time period

Vocabulary used to indicate trends

In the last few decades, research on stress has broadened and become influenced largely by behavioural scientists, moving away from the strict focus on physical stimuli and their physiological consequences (Travers & Cooper, 1996). There has also been a shift of orientation from physical stressors, such as mechanical trauma, toward psychological stressors such as role ambiguity and the impact of psychological and social influences upon the individual...

(Whitehead, 2001, p. 15)

Critical evaluation of existing knowledge on topic

Despite the abundance of definitions and theories of burnout, there is still lacking a comprehensive theoretical framework for burnout, due to the complexity of the phenomenon (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998)...

The amount of qualitative research on teacher's work stress is limited. Two studies by Blase (1986) and Ianni and Reuss- Ainni (1978) will be discussed below...

- Identify strengths & limitations in relation to your research
- You are constructing an **argument** about gaps in current knowledge - **your voice** must come through clearly in the review

Identify gaps in the research

Using negative openings:

However, little information	However, few studies
little data	few researchers
little research	few attempts

Using contrastive statements:

The research has tended to focus on..., rather than on...
However, much of the attention has been focused on X rather than Y.

Raising questions, hypotheses or needs

If these results could be confirmed, they would provide strong evidence for...
It would seem, therefore, that further investigations are needed in order to...

See Manchester University's *Academic Phrasebank* (2006) for more examples:
Google: manchester university + academic phrasebank

Summarise findings on existing research

From this overview of teacher stress and burnout, some important considerations emerge. Firstly, findings from biographical/demographic characteristics in relation to stress and burnout are not conclusive. Also, the review provides predominantly quantitative, empirically based studies, with very few findings coming from interpretive or narrative study. Apart from Friedman's (1991), Blase's (1996) and Ianni and Reuss-Ianni's (1978) study, there has been limited research using qualitative methods encouraging free expression of teacher's personal meanings associated with work stress and burnout.

Leading to concluding statements indicating need for present study

While studies list factors that contribute to stress and burnout, it is clear that understanding the complexity of burnout in schools is required to give deeper insight into the problem.

Deciding which literature is most pertinent to your review

Library searching - Electronic and hard copies:

- university databases
- use **abstracts** to help you in your search
- which authors and articles/books are cited most?
- make an appointment with a librarian for a research consultation

Make sure you follow guidelines in Course Guides for requirements

Prioritise material type

Peer reviewed

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Articles in refereed, international journals | 5. PhD thesis |
| 2. Books / Chapters in Ed. Books | 6. MA thesis |
| 3. Articles in national, refereed journals | 7. Honours thesis |
| 4. Conference papers / Research reports (govt, com, org) | 8. Websites / Articles in non-refereed journals |

- Check course requirements
- Consult with your supervisor

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Presenting information and analysis

A range of formats can be used:

- Text
- Tables
- Diagrams

- Consult with your supervisor on appropriate formats
- See Emerson & Hampton, Chapter 9
- Examine other literature reviews
- Create **templates** according to the requirements of your course
 - presentation and referencing of texts, tables and diagrams
 - in-text references to texts, tables and diagrams

Help with literature review

- **One-to-one & small group consultations at CTL:**
 Contact details:
 Email: slc-alb@massey.ac.nz
 Phone: 414 0800 Ext. 9143
- **Massey's OWLL site**
- **DVD presentation: Thesis Toolkit**
 - available from the Centre for Teaching and Learning
- **Excellent text on literature review:**
 Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a literature review*. London: Sage Publications

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