Understanding Types of Scholarly Literature

# Overview

Before you can effectively critique scholarly research, it is essential to first understand what scholarly literature is and why it matters. In graduate-level leadership studies, being able to engage with research critically is not just an academic exercise, but a vital leadership skill. Leaders must be able to evaluate research-based evidence, apply it thoughtfully in practice, and contribute to informed decision-making in their organizations and communities.

In this unit, you will be introduced to several common research methodologies that are frequently used in leadership and social sciences research:

* Quantitative Research
* Qualitative Research
* Mixed Methods Research
* Literature Reviews
* Systematic Literature Reviews
* Scoping Reviews

Understanding these research approaches will equip you to read academic studies with greater confidence, recognize the strengths and limitations of different methodologies, and assess the credibility of research findings. This knowledge is also essential for your upcoming assignments, particularly your systematic literature review, which is a major project in LDRS 697 and 698. Through this unit, you will begin building the foundational skills necessary to complete that review, as well as to become a more informed consumer of research throughout your leadership practice.

## Topics

Unit 2 is divided into six topics. See the [**Unit 2 Topics**](https://learn.twu.ca/mod/book/view.php?id=1172206) link at the bottom of this page for the course notes on the following topics:

1. Introduction to Quantitative Research
2. Introduction to Qualitative Research Design
3. Introduction to Mixed Methods
4. Introduction to Literature Review vs. Systematic Literature Review
5. Introduction to Scoping Review
6. Unit Summary

## Unit Outcomes

When you have completed this unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe the differences between a quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research report.
2. Identify the key differences between traditional literature reviews and systematic literature reviews, including their purposes and methodologies.
3. Explain the purpose of conducting a scoping review and how it can inform the development of research questions.

## Learning Activities

Here is a checklist of learning activities you will benefit from in completing this unit. You may find it useful for planning your work:

* Watch the video: “Qualitative & Quantitative Research–An Introduction.”
* Read Chapters 5-10 and 12 in *Introduction to Research in Leadership* (Rosch et al., 2023).
* Choose a peer reviewed article about transformational servant leadership. Review the article and identify the research methodology used.

## Resources

Here are the resources you will need to complete this unit:

* Rosch, D. M., Kniffin, L. E., & Guthrie, K. L. (2023). *Introduction to research in leadership*. Information Age Publishing.
* The articles in this unit can be found through the [TWU library](https://www.twu.ca/academics/library).

# Quantitative Research

The purpose of reviewing these materials is to become informed consumers of research, rather than to develop expertise as researchers. This unit gives a brief introduction to the quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

Plano-Clark and Creswell (2015) assert that quantitative and qualitative research approaches are suited to various kinds of research questions: a quantitative research approach is indicated when the research problem requires **explanation,** while a qualitative research approach is indicated when the research problem requires **exploration.**

From a Christian perspective, becoming an informed consumer of research is deeply connected to the biblical call to seek truth, act justly, and serve others. Research is not merely a technical exercise or a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake; it is a means to align our actions and understanding with God’s purposes. Colossians 3:23 states, “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,” and reminds people that diligence and integrity in all tasks, including engaging with research, are forms of worship and service to God.

To be an informed consumer of research from a Christian perspective means approaching inquiry with humility, recognizing that all truth ultimately comes from God—John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” This perspective calls people to critically evaluate the methodologies, assumptions, and conclusions of research, ensuring they align with ethical principles and the pursuit of justice (“To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God,” Micah 6:8.) For instance, quantitative methods may help you uncover patterns that inform fair policies, while qualitative methods allow you to listen deeply to the voices of traditionally marginalized individuals.

Additionally, research can be viewed as an act of stewardship, in which people responsibly use the knowledge, resources, and abilities God has entrusted to them to benefit others and bring glory to Him (“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4:10.) Engaging with research critically and ethically ensures that your efforts do not exploit or harm but instead contribute to human flourishing and the common good.

Finally, becoming an informed consumer of research also requires discernment. Christians are called to weigh information carefully and assess its validity (“But test everything; hold fast what is good,” 1 Thessalonians 5:21) This discernment helps people navigate biases, incomplete evidence, or conclusions that may conflict with Christian values. By doing so, you uphold the integrity of our faith while embracing research as a tool to seek knowledge, promote justice, and serve God’s purposes in the world. This commitment to discernment extends beyond personal reflection and academic study. It also plays a crucial role in leadership, where decisions often have significant impacts on others. Leaders are called to apply the same thoughtful evaluation to the research they use in their professional roles.

Leaders often face complex situations that require thoughtful decisions grounded in credible evidence. For example, in an educational leadership context, a school principal may review research on different instructional models to determine which approach improves student engagement and achievement. By carefully evaluating the research methods and findings, the principal can select strategies that are both evidence-based and appropriate for the school’s unique community and goals. This ability to assess and apply research ensures that leadership decisions are thoughtful, ethical, and effective.

Learning to evaluate research equips you to make well-informed choices, apply findings responsibly in your organization, and lead with integrity and confidence. This skill will support you throughout this course and in your leadership practice, particularly as you work toward completing your systematic literature review project.

# Quantitative Methodology

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) assert that quantitative research has three purposes: to explain and predict, to confirm and validate, and to test theory. Rosch et al (2023) stated quantitative research is a process of describing relationships with numbers: “The central presumption of quantitative research is that concepts can be represented by numbers” (Rosch et al., 2023, p. 81).

According to Rosch et al. (2023), quantitative research is a structured method of inquiry that emphasizes measurement and analysis of numerical data to understand relationships, behaviors, and outcomes. Further, quantitative research is an approach that seeks to establish patterns and test hypotheses through rigorous statistical techniques. Quantitative research often begins with a clear hypothesis derived from theory or prior research. Further, quantitative research uses statistical tools to interpret data and validate hypotheses. Hypotheses are evaluated through methods such as surveys or experiments. For example, structured surveys can yield quantifiable data that researchers analyze to draw conclusions about leadership effectiveness or organizational dynamics (Rosch et al., 2023).

Quantitative research aligns with the Christian commitment to stewardship and truth-seeking. The Bible emphasizes the importance of seeking understanding and using it wisely—Proverbs 2:6: “For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”. Researchers are encouraged to approach data analysis with integrity, ensuring that their work serves the greater good and aligns with ethical principles that prioritize the well-being of others.

In summary, quantitative research is a vital approach in the study of leadership, offering a systematic way to collect and analyze data, test theories, and derive insights that can inform leadership practices and strategies. Through structured methodologies and statistical rigor, it provides a foundation for understanding complex relationships and informing decision-making.

# Qualitative Research

## Qualitative Methodology

In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research has three distinct purposes: to describe and explain, to explore and interpret, and to build theory (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). These differing research purposes find expression in differing research processes, the kinds of data gathered, the approaches to data analysis, and finally in the ways findings are communicated.

Counter to quantitative research, qualitative research is a method of inquiry that focuses on understanding complex phenomena through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as words, images, and experiences. In Chapter 8 of *Introduction to Research in Leadership*, Rosch et al. (2023) describe qualitative research as an approach that seeks to explore the depth and richness of human experience, particularly in social and organizational contexts.

Because qualitative research focuses on human experiences, it resonates strongly with Indigenous approaches to knowledge, which prioritize relationships, context, and interconnectedness. Menzies (2001) emphasized that Indigenous methodologies often involve storytelling, oral traditions, and respect for the lived experiences of participants. Researchers are encouraged to adopt a relational approach, viewing participants as co-creators of knowledge rather than subjects of study. This perspective ensures that research benefits the community and the academic field, embodying principles of reciprocity and respect.

To explore human experiences, qualitative research often involves conducting interviews, focus groups, or content analysis, which allow researchers to gather insights into participants’ perspectives, experiences, motivations, and emotions. Qualitative research is particularly valuable in leadership studies, as it captures the nuances of individual and group dynamics that quantitative methods might overlook.

Additionally, a key feature of qualitative research is its flexibility; researchers can adapt their methods as new insights emerge during the study. Rosch et al. (2023) note that this adaptability enables a deeper understanding of the context in which leadership occurs. The authors also highlight the importance of reflexivity, encouraging researchers to reflect on their own biases and influences throughout the research process.

In summary, qualitative research provides a rich and detailed understanding of human behavior and organizational phenomena, making it an essential tool for exploring the complexities of leadership and decision-making.

The differing designs of quantitative and qualitative research lead to marked differences in how data are analyzed. Quantitative data is approached primarily through deductive reasoning, employing statistical analyses applied to numerical data, with stress on objectivity. In contrast, qualitative data is approached primarily through inductive reasoning with the goal being to uncover themes and categories, with acknowledgement of potential researcher bias and subjectivity. Typically, quantitative research findings are reported in a formal, scientific style with full display of numbers and statistics, while qualitative research findings are typically reported in a narrative form (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Table 2.1 shows the similarities and difference between quantitative and qualitative research.

**Table 2.1. Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Approaches**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** |
| **General framework** | Seek to confirm hypotheses about phenomena  Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions  Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation | Seek to explore phenomena  Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions  Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation |
| **Analytical objectives** | To quantify variation  To predict causal relationships  To describe characteristics of a population | To describe variation  To describe and explain relationships  To describe individual experiences  To describe group norms |
| **Question format** | Closed-ended | Open-ended |
| **Data format** | Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses) | Textual (obtained from visual artifacts, audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes) |
| **Flexibility in study design** | Study design is stable from beginning to end  Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next  Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions | Some aspects of the study are flexible  Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next  Study design is iterative; data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned |

Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide (Woodsong et al., 2009).   
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/215666086_Qualitative_Research_Methods_A_Data_Collector’s_Field_Guide>

# Mixed Methods Research

## Mixed Methods Methodology

Mixed methods research combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena. Rosch et al. (2023) describe mixed methods as a strategy that leverages the strengths of both methodologies, allowing researchers to explore questions from multiple perspectives.

Mixed methods research involves collecting and analyzing both numerical data and non-numerical data, which can enrich the findings and offer deeper insights. For example, researchers might use quantitative surveys to identify trends and patterns, followed by qualitative interviews to explore the meanings and experiences behind those trends. This approach enhances the validity and reliability of the research, as it provides a more holistic view of the subject matter (Rosch et al., 2023).

Mixed methods research reflects the biblical principle of seeking wisdom through multiple sources (“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed,” Proverbs 15:22). Combining quantitative and qualitative insights mirrors the Christian commitment to balance and thorough understanding in addressing complex issues.

Rosch et al. (2023) also highlight the importance of integrating the findings from both methods to create a cohesive narrative that informs leadership practices and theories. This reflects the biblical principle of seeking wisdom through multiple sources, as Proverbs 15:22 states, “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed.” Combining quantitative and qualitative insights mirrors the Christian commitment to balance and thorough understanding in addressing complex issues. By employing mixed methods, researchers can address complex questions that cannot be fully understood through a single methodological lens.

In summary, mixed methods research is a powerful approach in leadership studies, facilitating a multifaceted exploration of issues and contributing to a richer understanding of organizational dynamics and human behavior.

## 2.3.1 Learning Activity

📺 **Watch** the following videos:

* “Qualitative & Quantitative Research – An Introduction” by [Tine Juhl](https://www.youtube.com/@TineJuhl) (2017).



* “What is Mixed Methods Research?” by [Michigan Medicine](https://www.youtube.com/user/umhealthsystem/umhealthsystem) (2023).



✏️ **Reflect.** After reading the chapters assigned, write about the following in your Reflective Journal.

* Discuss the differences between qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research reports.
* What are the potential challenges for studying servant leadership using a quantitative research approach?
* From a Christian perspective, how can your research serve others and reflect ethical stewardship of knowledge?
* How might Indigenous approaches to relational inquiry (e.g., storytelling, community consultations) inform your understanding of qualitative research?

**Note: Your Journal is not graded but will help you in your assessment for this unit.**

### 2.3.2 Learning Activity: Identifying Research Methodologies in Practice

1. Read the following three articles:
   * **Qualitative Article:** Canavesi & Martini (2021) – [Spirituality and leader–follower relationships](https://mytwu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jodi_mcbride_twu_ca/Documents/Documents/591%20Curriculum%20Revision/Articles/Canavesi%20SL%20Qualitative.pdf)
   * **Quantitative Article:** Murari & Gupta (2012) – [Impact of Servant Leadership on Employee Empowerment](https://mytwu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jodi_mcbride_twu_ca/Documents/Documents/591%20Curriculum%20Revision/Articles/Gupta%20Quant.pdf)
   * **Mixed-Methods Article:** Kendall (2025) [– Exploring gameplay to support leadership skills in nursing](https://mytwu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jodi_mcbride_twu_ca/Documents/Documents/591%20Curriculum%20Revision/Articles/Kendall%20mixed%20methods%20nursing.pdf)
2. Complete the chart below for each article. Be ready to explain how you determined the methodology used. [Click here for a Word template of the chart](https://mytwu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jodi_mcbride_twu_ca/Documents/Documents/591%20Curriculum%20Revision/New%20Support%20Documents/Unit%202%20ID%20types%20of%20research%20learning%20actvity%20chart.docx).

#### **Comparison Chart**

| **Criteria** | **Canavesi & Martini (2021)** | **Murari & Gupta (2012)** | **Kendall (2025)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Research Purpose** |  |  |  |
| **Primary Data Collection Method(s)** |  |  |  |
| **Sample Size and Type** |  |  |  |
| **Data Analysis Approach** |  |  |  |
| **Language Cues (e.g., thematic, statistical)** |  |  |  |
| **Declared Methodology** |  |  |  |
| **Your Conclusion on Type of Study (**Qualitative / Quantitative / Mixed) |  |  |  |

#### **Reflection Questions**

* What features helped you identify the methodology?
* How do the strengths and limitations of each approach show up in the findings?
* Which method would be most appropriate for your own research interests? Why?

# Literature Reviews vs Systematic Literature Reviews

Literature reviews serve as foundational tools for understanding the breadth and depth of existing research on a topic. They help scholars identify gaps in knowledge, establish a framework for future inquiry, and situate their work within broader academic conversations. This section explores traditional literature reviews, systematic literature reviews (SLRs), and scoping reviews, highlighting their differences and uses.

## Literature Review

Whether or not you realize it, you may have read literature reviews in your studies to date.

By definition, a literature review examines and evaluates published work related to a specific subject. In some cases, it focuses on research from a particular time frame. Rather than simply summarizing sources, a literature review follows a structured approach that blends summary with synthesis. While a summary highlights the key points from each source, synthesis involves reorganizing and integrating that information to present new insights or connections among the studies (Mastrodonato, n.d.).

Rosch et al. (2023) highlight that a traditional literature review is often narrative and subjective, summarizing existing research without adhering to a strict methodology. Traditional reviews may lack comprehensive search strategies and systematic analysis, leading to potential biases in how studies are selected and interpreted.

Additionally, Cooper (1988) identified the primary functions of literature reviews as summarising, classifying, and critically evaluating, which help inform researchers about what has been done and what remains to be explored about a particular topic.

Rosch et al. (2023) emphasize that literature reviews play a crucial role in research, particularly in fields like leadership, by offering insights into theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and practical implications. Literature reviews help researchers situate their work within the broader academic discourse and can guide future research directions.

Additionally, peer-reviewed studies consistently highlight the importance of literature reviews in establishing a foundation for new research by summarizing existing work, identifying gaps, and guiding future inquiry (Cooper, 1988). Literature reviews play a crucial role in research, particularly in fields like leadership, by offering insights into theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and practical implications (Rosch et al., 2023. This flexibility can lead to biases in how studies are selected and interpreted, particularly when search strategies and analyses are not comprehensive.

From a Christian perspective, engaging with literature reviews reflects the biblical call to stewardship and the pursuit of truth. By thoughtfully analyzing and synthesizing previous research, scholars fulfill their responsibility to use knowledge wisely, align their work with ethical principles, and serve the greater good—Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.” The narrative nature of traditional literature reviews aligns with this stewardship by encouraging researchers to thoughtfully engage with existing knowledge while remaining diligent and accountable in their efforts—Proverbs 21:5: “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance.”

Moreover, literature reviews can be understood as a form of storytelling, resonating with Indigenous methodologies that value relationality and interconnectedness (Battiste, 2005; Menzies, 2001). For Indigenous scholars, storytelling is an essential practice for weaving together diverse knowledge sources, preserving their integrity, and situating them within a broader relational context. Traditional literature reviews parallel this practice by connecting past knowledge to current and future inquiry, ensuring that the voices and perspectives within the research are acknowledged and respected.

## Systematic Literature Review

While traditional literature reviews provide a flexible narrative overview, more structured approaches, such as systematic literature reviews (SLRs), emphasize rigor and reproducibility.

A SLR is a comprehensive and structured approach to evaluating existing research on a **specific research question or topic**. Unlike traditional reviews, which provide a flexible narrative overview, SLRs emphasize rigor, reproducibility, and the minimization of bias by adhering to predefined protocols for search strategies and data synthesis (Rosch et al., 2023). According to Cherry et al. (2024), an SLR systematically identifies, evaluates, and synthesizes research studies using a defined protocol—which includes clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, a thorough literature search, and systematic data extraction. This structured process ensures that the review is transparent and reproducible, offering reliable conclusions that guide future research.

These methods minimize bias by following predefined protocols for search strategies and data synthesis, ensuring that the process is rigorous and reliable (Rosch et al., 2023). This structured approach embodies Christian values of diligence and integrity, reflecting the importance of producing trustworthy research that serves others responsibly. As Proverbs 25:2 states, “It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out,” highlighting the biblical principle of thoroughness and stewardship in the pursuit of knowledge.

This emphasis on diligence and intentionality finds a parallel in Indigenous perspectives on knowledge. From an Indigenous worldview, the careful and systematic nature of SLRs aligns with the respect and intentionality required in honoring and preserving knowledge. Both approaches value the ethical responsibility to ensure that information is situated within its proper relational and cultural contexts. By synthesizing information thoughtfully and respectfully, SLRs embody both the precision of systematic inquiry and the relational ethics foundational to Indigenous ways of knowing (Menzies, 2001).

While both traditional literature reviews and SLRs aim to synthesize existing research, their methodologies and purposes differ significantly. Traditional reviews offer a narrative and often subjective overview of research, providing flexibility in summarizing and critiquing studies without strict adherence to predefined protocols. This approach allows for creative integration of diverse perspectives but may introduce bias and limit reproducibility. In contrast, SLRs employ a rigorous, structured methodology to minimize bias, ensure transparency, and enhance reproducibility. By following predefined protocols, including clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, systematic data extraction, and comprehensive search strategies, SLRs provide reliable and objective insights that guide future research. These distinctions highlight the flexibility of traditional reviews for exploratory work and the precision of SLRs for generating trustworthy and reproducible findings. Both approaches play essential roles in advancing scholarship when used appropriately within their respective contexts.

Table 2.2 captures the key differences and similarities between literature reviews and systematic literature reviews. Additionally, [click here for a sample SLR](https://mytwu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jodi_mcbride_twu_ca/Documents/Documents/697/A%20Systematic%20Literature%20Review%20of%20Servant%20Leadership%20Theory%20in%20Organizational%20Contexts.pdf).

**Table 2.2 Differences between Literature Reviews and SLRs**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Literature Review** | **Systematic Literature Review** |
| **Purpose** | Summarizes existing research | Provides a comprehensive and objective research synthesis |
| **Methodology** | Narrative and subjective | Structured, reproducible, and systematic |
| **Search Strategy** | May be selective and not exhaustive | Comprehensive and predefined search strategy |
| **Inclusion Criteria** | Often vague or informal | Clearly defined and strictly applied |
| **Data Analysis** | Qualitative and descriptive | Quantitative and qualitative synthesis |
| **Bias** | Higher potential for bias | Minimizes bias through systematic protocols |
| **Outcome** | Provides context and identifies trends | Aims to answer specific research questions with rigor |
| **Reproducibility** | Difficult to replicate | Designed to be replicable |

## Scoping Review

A scoping review is a preliminary assessment of the available literature on a broad topic (Cherry et al., 2024). A scoping review, sometimes called a scoping search, should be the first search you conduct, using simple search terms to identify general literature relevant to your topic.

More specifically, a scoping review is a distinct type of evidence synthesis methodology that systematically identifies, evaluates, and maps the breadth of knowledge on a specific topic or field. Unlike traditional literature reviews or systematic literature reviews, scoping reviews are not comprehensive and **do not** aim to answer a specific research question. Instead, Cherry et al. (2024) state they are “performed to determine whether your topic area is suitable for a review by giving you a snapshot of the volume and type of evidence available” (p. 45). To determine whether a topic is suitable for researcher, scoping reviews systematically identify, evaluate, and map the breadth of knowledge on a specific topic or field. Unlike systematic reviews, which focus on answering narrowly defined research questions, scoping reviews address broader questions to explore and describe the extent and characteristics of existing literature (Sharma & Goyal, 2023).

In summary, the goal of a scoping review is to:

1. Understand the extent and type of research available on a topic.
2. Determine the relevance of a topic by evaluating the volume and diversity of existing evidence.
3. Identify trends, gaps, and areas for further study.

Scoping reviews must be conducted early in your research, **before finalizing your research question**. Doing so is useful in identifying underexplored fields, where mapping the range and type of studies can clarify concepts, identify gaps, and guide future research directions.

To ensure a transparent and reliable process, the following steps are critical when conducting a scoping review:

1. **Identify the Research Question**  
   The research question is the cornerstone of a scoping review. It should be broad enough to capture the diversity of literature on the topic, yet clearly defined to maintain focus and direction. Using sub-questions can help balance the breadth of inquiry while ensuring the depth of analysis (Sharma & Goyal, 2023).
2. **Identify Relevant Studies**  
   Develop a comprehensive search strategy that specifies databases, search terms, and other sources—such as organizational websites and key references. This step ensures that the review includes diverse and interdisciplinary perspectives, drawing from published and unpublished literature (Sharma & Goyal, 2023).
3. **Select Studies**  
   Screen studies based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This process typically involves reviewing titles, abstracts, and full texts to determine relevance, where necessary. Employing multiple reviewers and using a flow diagram, as recommended by the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) guidelines, enhances transparency and reproducibility (Sharma & Goyal, 2023).
4. **Chart the Data**  
   Extract and organize key information from each study in a systematic format, such as a spreadsheet or database. Categories often include the author, publication year, study location, population, methodology, main findings, and limitations. This structured approach facilitates a clear overview of the evidence (Sharma & Goyal, 2023).
5. **Collate, Summarize, and Report Results**  
   Synthesize findings into a narrative or descriptive summary that highlights the relationships between the evidence and the review objectives. Visual representations, such as tables, charts, or diagrams, can further illustrate the distribution and characteristics of the included studies (Sharma & Goyal, 2023).
6. **Consult Stakeholders (Optional)**  
   Engage with stakeholders, such as experts or practitioners, to refine the research question, validate findings, or provide feedback. This step enhances the relevance and practical application of the review, particularly for interdisciplinary or applied topics (Sharma & Goyal, 2023).

Scoping reviews provide a comprehensive and flexible method for understanding the scope and characteristics of available evidence, particularly in areas where research is heterogeneous or evolving. By following these structured steps, researchers ensure their findings are robust, transparent, and useful for informing future studies. [Click here for a sample scoping review.](https://mytwu-my.sharepoint.com/personal/jodi_mcbride_twu_ca/Documents/Documents/591%20Curriculum%20Revision/Articles/TESOL%20Journal%20-%202025%20-%20Reinders%20-%20Conceptualizations%20of%20and%20Research%20on%20Language%20Teacher%20Leadership%20%20A%20Scoping%20Review.pdf)

This aligns with servant leadership principles by fostering informed decision-making that serves the greater good and prioritizes others’ needs. From a Christian perspective, the diligence and intentionality required in scoping reviews reflect the biblical call to seek truth and apply knowledge in ways that glorify God and benefit the community (Proverbs 3:13-14).

## 2.5.1 Learning Activity

📺 **Watch** the following video “[Systematic vs. Scoping Review: What’s the Difference?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&si=jyp8a-827EYUC2HA&v=YVckIl8_ZCg&feature=youtu.be)“ by [Carrie Prices](https://www.youtube.com/@carrieprice78) (2021).

📖 **Read** Chapters 5-10 and 12 in Introduction to Research in Leadership (Rosch et al., 2023).

✏️**Respond** to the following in your Reflective Journal:

* Discuss the differences between literature reviews, scoping reviews, and systematic literature reviews.

**Note: Your Journal is not graded but will help you in your assessment for this unit.**

# Unit Summary

In conclusion, the exploration of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research methodologies demonstrates the diverse approaches researchers can take to address complex questions. Quantitative research, with its emphasis on numerical analysis and structured methods, provides a systematic framework for uncovering patterns, validating theories, and explaining relationships (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Rosch et al., 2023). This approach aligns with the Christian value of stewardship, emphasizing diligence and integrity in managing and interpreting data to serve the greater good.

Conversely, qualitative research offers rich insights into human experiences and complex phenomena through methods like interviews and observations. This approach captures the nuances of leadership and group dynamics, resonating with Indigenous perspectives that value relationality, storytelling, and the interconnectedness of knowledge (Menzies, 2001; Rosch et al., 2023). By prioritizing relationships and context, qualitative research fosters deeper understanding and reciprocity, ensuring that inquiry benefits both researchers and communities.

Mixed methods research integrates the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, offering a holistic view of multifaceted issues. This methodology reflects the Christian principle of seeking wisdom through multiple sources—Proverbs 15:22: “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed.” By combining diverse perspectives, mixed methods research enhances the validity of findings and supports comprehensive decision-making in leadership contexts (Rosch et al., 2023).

The unit also highlighted the essential roles of literature reviews, systematic literature reviews, and scoping reviews. Traditional literature reviews provide narrative overviews, while SLRs emphasize rigor and reproducibility through structured protocols that minimize bias and ensure transparency (Cherry et al., 2024; Sharma & Goyal, 2023). Scoping reviews, meanwhile, offer a broad assessment of available evidence, helping researchers refine their focus and identify knowledge gaps. These methodologies—when approached with respect for relationality and intentionality—align with both Indigenous values of honoring knowledge and Christian principles of stewardship and service.

As you develop as a consumer of research, understanding these methodologies equips you to critically evaluate scholarly work, apply evidence-based practices, and contribute to informed leadership. By incorporating the principles of servant leadership, relational ethics, and the pursuit of truth, researchers can ensure their work serves the needs of their communities while advancing knowledge in meaningful and impactful ways.

## Checking Your Learning

Now that you have completed the learning activities and assignments for this unit, check the list below to ensure you can do the following:

1. Can you describe the differences between a quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research report?
2. How can scoping reviews help researchers refine their research questions?
3. What are the main characteristics that differentiate a traditional literature review from a systematic literature review?
4. How does the methodological rigor of systematic literature reviews contribute to research transparency?
5. How can the principles of servant leadership guide researchers in applying the findings of a scoping or systematic review to serve the needs of their communities?
6. From a Christian or Indigenous perspective, how can respect for relationality and stewardship influence the way researchers approach literature reviews and evidence synthesis?

**Review the unit topics more in depth as needed or continue to the next unit.**

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