

LITERATURE REVIEW

DR. SACHIN S. SAWANT

DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES (DESH)

WHAT IS A LITERATURE REVIEW?

Literature = scholarly publications which have been written on a particular topic, such as journal articles, research reports, government reports and text books

The review = the careful selection of literature relevant to your topic and the presentation, interpretation, classification and evaluation of this literature

INTRODUCTION

- Review of literature is one of the most important steps in the research process.
- It is an account of what is already known about a particular phenomenon.
- The main purpose of literature review is to convey to the readers about the work already done & the knowledge & ideas that have been already established on a particular topic of research.
- Literature review is a laborious task, but it is essential if the research process is to be successful.

IMPORTANCE

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- Identification of a research problem & development or refinement of research questions.
- Generation of useful research questions or projects/activities for the discipline.
- Orientation to what is known & not known about an area of inquiry to ascertain what research can best contribute to knowledge.
- Determination of any gaps or inconsistencies in a body of knowledge.
- Discovery of unanswered questions about subjects, concepts or problems.
- Determination of a need to replicate a prior study in different study settings or different samples or size or different study populations.

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- Identification of relevant theoretical or conceptual framework for research problems.
- Identification or development of new or refined clinical interventions to test through empirical research.
- Description of the strengths & weaknesses of design/methods of inquiry & instruments used in earlier research work.
- Development of hypothesis to be tested in a research study.
- Helps in planning the methodology of the present research study.
- It also helps in development of research instruments.
- Identification of suitable design & data collection methods for a research study

PERPOSE OF LITERATURE REVIEW

- The purpose of a literature review is to convey to the reader previous knowledge & facts established on a topic, & their strength & weakness.
- The literature review allows the reader to be updated with the state of research in a field & any contradictions that may exist with challenges findings of other research studies.
- It helps to develop research investigative tools & to improve research methodologies.
- It also provide the knowledge about the problems faced by the previous researchers' while studying same topic.
- Besides enhancing researchers' knowledge about the topic, writing a literature review helps to:

CONTINUED....

- ➡ Place each in the context of its contribution to the understanding of subject under review.
- ➡ Describe the relationship of each study to other research studies under consideration.
- ➡ Identify new ways to interpret & shed light on any gaps in previous research.
- ➡ Resolve conflicts amongst seemingly contradictory previous studies.
- ➡ Identify areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication of effort.
- ➡ Point a way forward for further research.
- ➡ See what has & has not been investigated.

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- ➡ Develop general explanation for observed variations in a behavior or phenomenon.
- ➡ Identify potential relationship between concepts & to identify researchable hypothesis.
- ➡ Learn how others have defined & measured key concepts.
- ➡ Identify data sources that other researchers have used.
- ➡ Develop alternative research projects.
- ➡ Discover how a research project is related to the work of others.
- ➡ Place one's original work (in case of thesis or dissertation) context of the existing literature.

SOURCES OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature can be reviewed from two sources:

1. Primary sources
2. Secondary sources

PRIMARY SOURCES....

- Literature review mostly relies on primary sources, i.e. research reports, which are description of studies written by researchers who conducted them.
- A primary sources is written by a person who developed the theory or conducted the research, or is the description of an investigation written by the person who conducted it.
- Most primary sources are found in published literature.
- For example, a nursing research article.

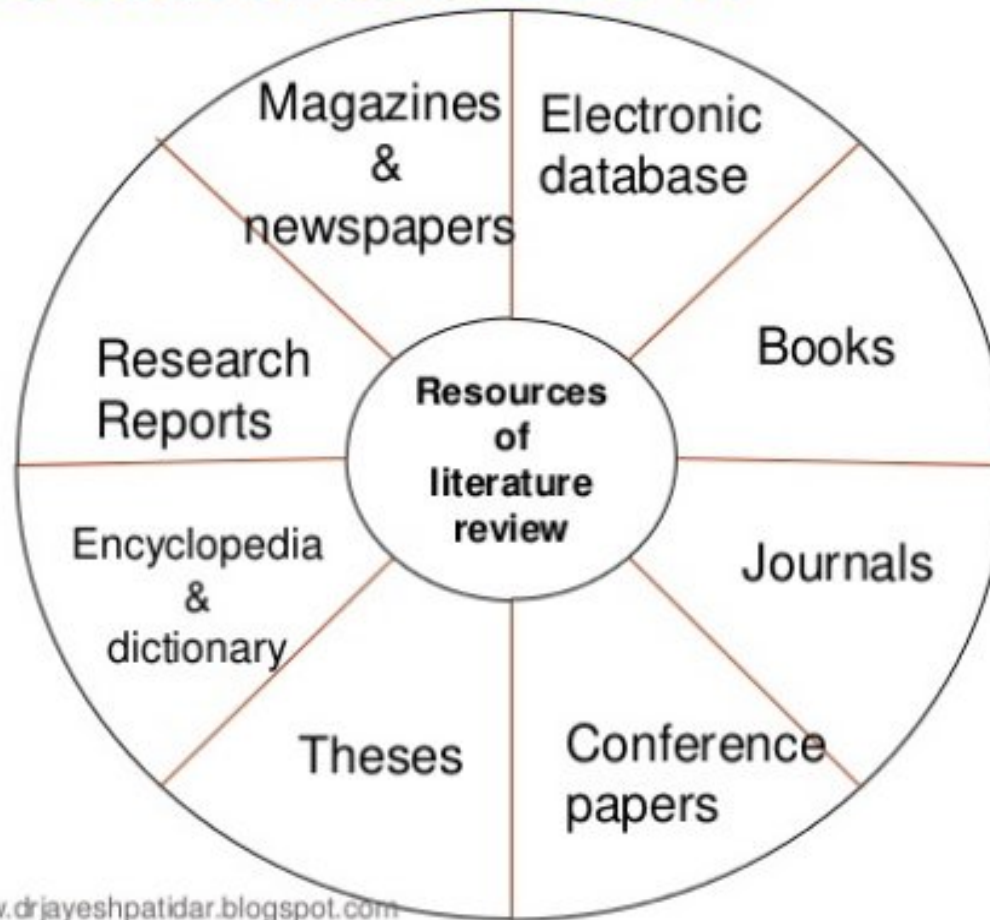
Example of a primary source: An original qualitative on patient experiences in the ICU: Hupcey, J. E. (2000). Feeling safe the psychosocial needs of ICU patients. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 32:361-367.

SECONDARY SOURCES....

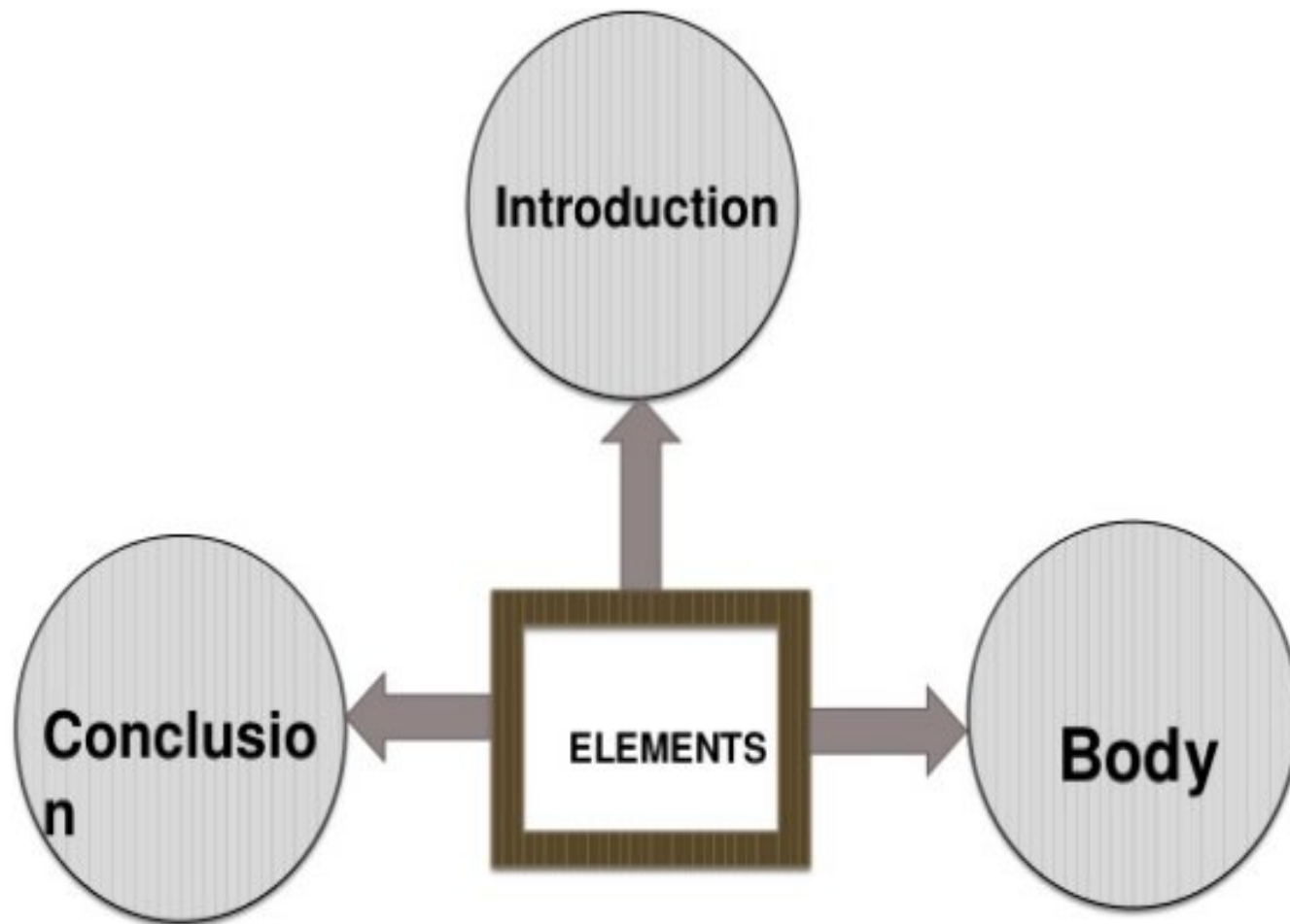
- Secondary source research documents are description of studies prepared by someone other than the original researcher.
- They are written by people other than the individuals who developed the theory or conducted the research.
- The secondary sources may be used when primary sources are not available or if researchers want external opinions on an issue or problem or

Example of a Secondary Source: A literature review on patient experiences in the ICU: Stein-Parbury, J. & Mckinley, S. (2000) patient experiences of being in an intensive care unit: a select literature review. *American Journal of critical care*, 9:20-27.

The main sources from where literature can be searched are as ...



STEPS TO WRITE A LITERATURE REVIEW



INTRODUCTION

While writing the introduction, following steps should be taken care of:

- Define or identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern, thus, providing appropriate context for reviewing the literature.
- Point out overall trends in what has been published about the topic or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, & conclusion or gaps in research & scholarship, or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.
- Establish the writer's point of view for reviewing the literature, explain the criteria to be used in analyzing & comparing literature & organization or review

THE BODY

Following measures need to be undertaken while writing the body of the literature.

- Group research studies & other types of literature (reviews, theoretical articles, case studies) according to common denominators such as qualitative versus quantitative approaches, conclusions of authors, specific purposes or objectives, chronology, & so on.
- Summarize individual studies or articles with as much as or as little detail as each merits according to its comparative importance in the literature, remembering that space denotes significance.
- Assist the reader with strong 'umbrella' sentences at the beginning of paragraphs, signpost throughout, & brief 'so what' summary sentences at intermediate points in

THE CONCLUSION

The points to be taken care of in the conclusion are as follows:

- Summarize major contributions of significant studies & articles to the body of knowledge under review, maintaining the focus established in the introduction.
- Evaluate the current 'state of the art' for the body of knowledge reviewed, pointing out major methodological flaws or gaps in research, inconsistencies in theory, & finding & areas or issues pertinent to future study.
- Conclude by providing some insight into the relationship between central topic of the literature

POINTS TO BE
CONSIDERED WHILE
WRITING LITERATURE
REVIEW

IMPORTANT POINTS

✦ *Be specific & be succinct:*

Briefly state specific findings listed in an article, specific methodologies used in a study, or other important points. Literature reviews are not the place for long quotes or in-depth analysis of each point.

✦ *Be selective:*

Researcher should narrow down a lot of information into a small space for literature review. Just the most important points (i.e. those most relevant to the review's focus) must be mentioned in each work of review.

✦ *Focus of current topics:*

Researcher needs to analyse points such as if it is a current article, & if not, how old it is: has its claims, evidence, or arguments been superseded by more recent work; if it is not current, then if it is important for historical background ; etc.

CONTINUED....

✦ *Ensure evidence for claims:*

Researcher should focus on what support is given for claims made in literature. What evidence & what type (experimental, statistical, anecdotal, etc.) of evidences are offered? Is the evidence relevant & sufficient? What arguments are given? What assumptions are made, & are they warranted?

✦ *Focus on sources of evidences:*

Researchers should ensure the reliability of the sources of the evidence or other information – if they are from author's own experiments, surveys, historical records, government documents, etc. He should check how reliable those sources are.

CONTINUED....

- ✦ ***Account of contrary evidences:***

Does the author take into account contrary or conflicting evidence & arguments? How does the author address disagreements with other researchers?

- ✦ ***Reference citation:***

Any references cited in the literature review must be included in the bibliography. The common practice is that the reviewer does not list references in the bibliography that are not directly cited in the literature review or elsewhere in the paper /thesis.

- ✦ ***Avoid abbreviations:***

Avoid technical terms, jargons & abbreviations.

- ✦ ***Simple & accurate sentence structure:***

A researcher should use simple sentences & must avoid errors of grammar & punctuation

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✦ *Organization of literature review:*

A literature review is organized by subtopic, not by individual references. In a typical literature review, the writers may cite several references in the same paragraph & may cite the same reference in more than one paragraph, if that source address more than one of the subtopics in the literature review. Typically, discussion of each sources is quite brief. The contribution the present reviewers make is organizing the ideas from the sources into a cogent argument or narrative that includes their perspectives.

✦ *Referring original source:*

The reviewer should focus on citing the material that originates with each reference. This may require a careful reading of the reference. If the reference author refers to another source whose ideas are relevant or interesting, it is better to track & use that original reference.

THANKS