

WRITING A LITERATURE REVIEW

Guiding questions to support planning, revising, and refining of a *literature review* *

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Submission of Formative Literature Review Outline

What is the focus and aim of your review? Who is your audience?

The subject chosen for the literature review, is ***“The impact of Communications Technology on Employees’ Productivity during Government Mandated Lockdown”***.

The review will focus on the lockdown period during the recent Covid-19 epidemic, as this was the biggest sustained lockdown in recent history, and there should be a wealth of information available.

The potential audience could include business decision makers, as they would have a vested interest in their employee’s productivity whilst not in the office.

1. The overall aim is to try and summarise, deductions, statistics (where available) and opinions from different sources, regarding the effectiveness of Communication Technology, in aiding employees to work productively when not in the normal office environment.
Scope will be global rather than national, as the issues (or not) observed are likely to be common globally. By default, under lockdown conditions, most people would remain at home, so “working from home” will often be quoted in the review.

Why is there a need for your review? Why is it significant?

During and since the end of the Covid-19 lockdown, many businesses have changed their business model, and now allow their employees, for a large percentage of the time to work remotely from home. The effectiveness of this approach must be studied, in order to allow for mainstream acceptance of the hybrid model of Office/Remote working patterns for employees using necessary Communication Technology tools.

Any productivity observed during a lockdown, would very likely translate to normal working from home conditions, so the results of any analysis are especially relevant.

2. If it can be shown through study, that when remote workers are provided with efficient Communication Technology Tools and allowed to work remotely, they are just as, if not more effective, than when they are working from the Office, it may help to make the practice more acceptable. The reverse is also true, if it can be shown that people are less productive when working remotely, and away from management scrutiny, it provides support to reverse the practice, and make employees return to the Office more regularly.
This is important to establish, as modern-day businesses cannot function without the use of IT Systems. The next lockdown could come anytime, so it is important to understand if normal business can continue under lockdown conditions.

What is the context of the topic or issue? What perspective do you take? What framework do you use to synthesise the literature?

Aim of review is to show if it really is feasible, using Communication Technology, to be productive or not, as an employee, working from home under lockdown conditions.

Without Communication Technology, most employees that can work remotely (not factory workers, mechanics etc) would likely be unable to work at all.

3. Review will aim to critically interpret and compare, information gathered from different sources, to see if it is possible to say with confidence what the impact of Communication Technologies on productivity during lockdown conditions is.

Framework will consist of identifying what the issue is, followed by an existing literature search. It will then be followed by review and evaluation of that literature, to try and formulate an understanding of what the reality is. The literature will be examined critically, and will be reviewed to see any common themes or connections between the various papers/reports. It will be examined critically to identify if there are any

gaps or areas that are lacking in information. Once the information is collated, and reviewed, the report will be written, being sure to quote any sources of information, so that the reader can independently examine the “evidence” gathered, and make their own judgement based on what is presented to them. There will be a conclusion at the end of the review, where after analysis, the existing literature will be shown to support or not, productivity of communication technology under lockdown conditions. Where possible, possible recommendations for the future may be stated.

How did you locate and select sources for inclusion in the review?

Information is collected through research on sites like Google Scholar and similar searches. Only documents that are presented as studies and are further peer reviewed will generally be acceptable as sources, however, other sources may also be considered to provide background from an Industry perspective (these are unlikely to be academic sources). This is necessary to be able to evaluate the topic from different directions.

4. Industry documentation is more likely to be able to compile statistics than academics, however, care should again be taken as to the bias or not of the documentation. Different search terms will be used. Starting with generic terms, as the information is collected and reviewed, search terms will be modified to try and obtain more specific information. As the study progresses, terms and focus of the search may alter.
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How is your review structured?

- Any statements or comments made, should, where possible, have a relevant reference associated with it.
 - Review will begin with an outline/classification of what a lockdown is, with a brief focus on the Covid-19 epidemic, and the resulting almost global lockdown.
 - It will then go on to describe what the legacy working model is – almost 100% working from Office.
 - Cover briefly, preparedness of companies to use Communication Technology at outset of Covid lockdown vs later.
 - Communication Technology will be described.
5. Differences between home-working in the past, and more recently – investigate if there is a defined and clear improvement in technology and/or deployments during the Covid Epidemic.
- Large and main focus of the review will be directly concerned with the productivity or lack thereof, of the Communication Technology under lockdown conditions, however, it is felt necessary to give some detailed background (the other points), so that the reader is aware of the perspective from which the literature review is collated, examined and written.
 - Degree of “Productivity” where possible, to be analysed from both a company perspective, and personal employee perspective.
 - Any other points or topics that become relevant as the literature is reviewed may be added – the list is not “set in stone” and could change as appropriate.
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What are the main findings in the literature on this topic?

6. Findings are ongoing.
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What are the main strengths and limitations of this literature?

7. Some opinions appear to be, by default, quite negative on the feasibility of remote working/productivity, without knowing any of the facts relating to effectiveness or productivity, using tools that are available to the employee. There are naturally, counter-opinions, which view the productivity in a more positive light. These conflicting opinions, may present as a form of unconscious bias in the research conducted, which could taint or colour any results obtained from the research. Care should be taken to view any data from a neutral perspective, in order to try and ascertain a more truthful conclusion.
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Are there any discrepancies in this literature?

To be determined.

8. When it is possible to perform an analysis of personal view of productivity vs company view (where there is enough data to support the arguments) comparisons will be made, whilst being careful to point out subjective views/probable bias in answers.

What conclusions do you draw from the review? What do you argue needs to be done as an outcome of the review?

9. The review is not finished, so I am unable to conclude anything definitively from research collected. I know it was asked that references are included in this document, but the review has not progressed at this point, where it makes sense to do it.

* As with other sets of guiding questions in this book, select those questions that are relevant to your context, add others as appropriate, and decide the order in which you will address them to communicate effectively with your audience.

Source: Healey, M., Matthews, K., & Cook-Sather, A. (2020) *Writing about learning and teaching in higher education: Creating and contributing to scholarly conversations across a range of genres*. Center for Engaged Learning Open-Access Books, Elon University. 142-152.