

Composing a literature map can be challenging. Individuals seeing this map may not be familiar with this approach to organizing the literature and making a case for your study. They need to be told the intent of such a map. It takes time to develop such a map and locate literature to put into the map. For a preliminary map, we consider collecting maybe 25 studies. For a full literature map for a dissertation or thesis, we would consider developing a map with at least 100 studies. Figuring out how your study adds to the literature takes some time. It may add to several threads in your literature map. We would refrain from tying it to all of your subdivisions; select one or two subdivisions. It is also challenging to figure out what the broad topic might be for the top of the map. This is the topic to which your literature map adds. Ask others who know about your literature, see how the research studies group according to some synthesis of the literature, and continually ask yourself what body of literature your study will contribute to. You may also have to develop several versions of your map before it comes together. Develop your map, write the discussion, and check it out with others.

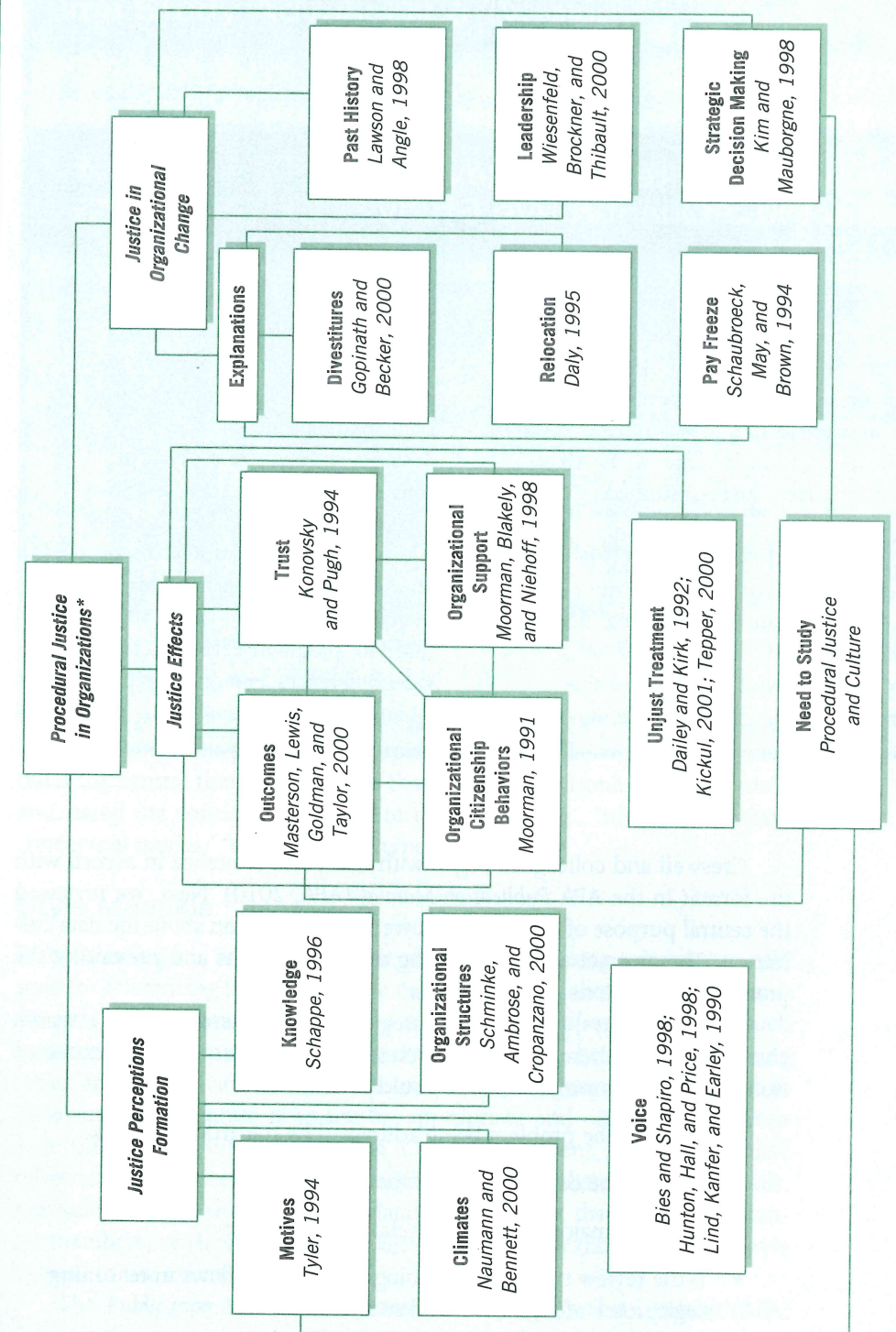
Abstracting Studies

When researchers write reviews of the literature for proposed studies, they locate articles and develop brief abstracts of the articles that comprise the review. An **abstract** is a brief review of the literature (typically a short paragraph) that summarizes major elements to enable a reader to understand the basic features of the article (see Example 2.1). In developing an abstract, researchers need to consider what material to extract and summarize. This is important information when reviewing perhaps dozens, if not hundreds, of studies. A good summary of a research study reported in a journal might include the following points:

- Mention the problem being addressed.
- State the central purpose or focus of the study.
- Briefly state information about the sample, population, or subjects.
- Review key results that relate to the proposed study.
- If it is a critique or methods review (Cooper, 2010), point out technical and methodological flaws in the study.

When examining a study to develop a summary, there are places to look for these parts. In well-crafted journal articles, the problem and purpose statements are clearly stated in the introduction. Information about the sample, population, or subjects is found midway through in a method (or procedure) section, and the results are often reported toward the end. In the

Figure 2.1 An Example of a Literature Map



*Employees' concerns about the fairness of and the making of managerial decisions
Source: Janovec (2001). Reprinted by permission.

results sections, look for passages in which the researchers report information to answer or address each research question or hypothesis. For book-length research studies, look for the same points.

Example 2.1 Literature Review Abstract in a Quantitative Study

The paragraph that follows summarizes the major components of a quantitative study (Creswell, Seagren, & Henry, 1979), much like the paragraph might appear in a review of the literature section of a dissertation or a journal article. In this passage, we have chosen key components to be abstracted.

Creswell and colleagues (1979) tested the Biglan model, a three-dimensional model clustering 36 academic areas into hard or soft, pure or applied, life or nonlife areas, as a predictor of chairpersons'

professional development needs. Eighty department chairpersons located in four state colleges and one university of a midwestern state participated in the study. Results showed that chairpersons in different academic areas differed in terms of their professional development needs. Based on the findings, the authors recommended that those who develop inservice programs needed to consider differences among disciplines when they plan for programs.

Creswell and colleagues began with an in-text reference in accord with the format in the *APA Publication Manual* (APA, 2010). Next, we reviewed the central purpose of the study, followed by information about the data collection. The abstract ended by stating the major results and presenting the practical implications of these results.

How are essays, opinions, typologies, and syntheses of past research abstracted, since these are not research studies? The material to be extracted from these non-empirical studies would be as follows:

- Mention the problem being addressed by the article or book.
- Identify the central theme of the study.
- State the major conclusions related to this theme.
- If the review type is methodological, mention flaws in reasoning, logic, force of argument, and so forth.

Example 2.2 illustrates the inclusion of these aspects.

Example 2.2 Literature Review Abstract in a Study Advancing a Typology

Sudduth (1992) completed a quantitative dissertation in political science on the topic of the use of strategic adaptation in rural hospitals. He reviewed the literature in several chapters at the beginning of the study. In an example of summarizing a single study advancing a typology, Sudduth summarized the problem, the theme, and the typology:

Ginter, Duncan, Richardson, and Swayne (1991) recognize the impact of the external environment on a hospital's ability to adapt to change. They advocate a process that they call environmental analysis, which allows the organization to strategically determine the best responses

to change occurring in the environment. However, after examining the multiple techniques used for environmental analysis, it appears that no comprehensive conceptual scheme or computer model has been developed to provide a complete analysis of environmental issues (Ginter et al., 1991). The result is an essential part of strategic change that relies heavily on a non-quantifiable and judgmental process of evaluation. To assist the hospital manager to carefully assess the external environment, Ginter et al. (1991) have developed the typology given in Figure 2.1. (p. 44)

In this example, the authors referenced the study with an in-text reference, mentioned the problem ("a hospital's ability to adapt to change"), identified the central theme ("a process that they call environmental analysis"), and stated the conclusions related to this theme (e.g., "no comprehensive conceptual model," "developed the typology").

Style Manuals

In both examples, we have introduced the idea of using appropriate APA style for referencing the article at the beginning of the abstract. **Style manuals** provide guidelines for creating a scholarly style of a manuscript, such as a consistent format for citing references, creating headings, presenting tables and figures, and using nondiscriminatory language. A basic tenet in reviewing the literature is to use an appropriate and consistent reference style throughout. When identifying a useful document, make a complete reference to the source using an appropriate style. For dissertation proposals, graduate students should seek guidance from faculty, dissertation committee members, or department or college officials about the appropriate style manual to use for citing references.

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA, 2010) is the most popular style manual used in the fields of education and psychology. The *Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press, 2010)