THE LITERATURE REVIEW

KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH PROCESS
Research Proposal Flow Chart

1. Introduction
   - Research Question
     - What?
     - Why?
     - How?
   - Summary of Proposal

2. Literature Review
   - Literature on Topic
   - Literature on Method
   - Theoretical Approach
     - Why?
     - How?
   - Find a Hole
   - Look for Debates

3. Methodology
   - Research Design
   - Research Procedures
     - Kind of Data
   - Collection Procedures
   - Selection and Access
   - Human Subjects Review
   - Ethics Statement
   - Costs and Funding
     - How?

4. Preliminary Data
   - Evidence of Importance
     - Informs Methodology
     - What?
   - Preliminary Findings
   - Important categories & Relationships

5. Statement of Limitations
   - Alternatives
   - Weaknesses
     - What your research will do

6. Conclusion
   - Contributions
     - Importance
   - What?
   - How?
   - Why?
Literature Review
Purpose of a Review of the Related Literature

- You have begun with a general research question
- The literature is a gold mine
- Have other researchers already addressed and answered your research problem or major subproblems?
- The related literature can give you a multitude of insights into the problem you seek to study
- You may find scholars with whom to communicate and learn from
- You may discover controversies about your topic you did not know about
More Reasons to Review the Related Literature

- You may discover a variety of methods and research design issues that could help you determine your own approach.
- You may find out about data sources you did not know before.
- You may find measurement tools that are relatively new and learn how useful they were.
- The literature will help you interpret and make sense of your findings as you tie your work to prior scholars.
- It may reassure you to know that others have spent time and energy on this topic, so it is probably worth pursuing yourself.
Stages of review

- Dialectical relationship between the research problem and the literature
- You may have a general area of interest, perhaps “gentrification” or “mass incarceration”
- You may formulate a preliminary research question
- You then undertake an exploration of the literature to help you determine a more precise question
- This is the browsing phase of the literature review, and will not be what appears in that famous Chapter 2 of your dissertation
The Search Begins!
Browsing the Related Literature to Make the Research Problem More Precise

- Most of us turn to online databases, but not necessarily the first place to go in the early stages of considering the related literature.
- Sometimes in-depth investigative journalism can provide some pointers to get started (e.g., Washington Post expose on police brutality).
- Advanced textbooks often are a good starting point to give you context and references to key studies.
- Reference librarians are eager to assist you.
- Library catalogs also have list a diverse set of sources, including seminal books that might not appear in online databases.
- Browsing library shelves near key books can lead to serendipitous discoveries.
Give a structure to what you will need to learn.
Key Words to Drive the Search

- You have now read a bit about your topic
- You have also specified a preliminary research problem to investigate and made it more precise through “browsing” the literature
- You are therefore in a good position to create a list of key words and a list of leading writers in the area
Searching Online Databases for Related Literature

- Many databases to work with—23 are listed in Leedy & Ormond, 2016
- Many universities have subscriptions
- PsycINFO, Medline, JSTOR, National Criminal Justice Reference Service Abstracts, PAIS International, Web of Science, ERIC, ICPSR
- Research Librarians can help
- Public databases can also be helpful—Google Scholar, PubMed, Googlebooks
- Googlebooks especially useful for older seminal writings
Searching Online Databases for Related Literature

- Government websites
  - Specific agencies (e.g., Bureau of the Census, National Institute of Justice)
  - Federal Digital System (FDsys) catalogs government reports of all kinds (gpo.gov/fdsys)
- WorldCat combines library catalogues of thousands of institutions
- Web of Science
  - Unique
  - Lists works that have cited a given work
  - Helps identify key authors and seminal works that are frequently cited
Other Authors’ Literature Reviews and Reference Lists

- Most scholarly books and refereed journal articles have literature reviews and reference lists.
- As you read, identify additional writings that appear three times or more in the literature reviews and/or reference lists, and add these to your list to investigate.
- This process is especially useful for recent journals.
- Remember that even the most recent article and book is at least one to two years old due to the gap between completion and publication.
- Be aware of ongoing research in your field that has not yet been completed by corresponding with recent authors.
How to Proceed?

- Create your own database of references
- Paper and pen
- Excel Spreadsheet
- RefWorks
- Prepare to Begin the Review
| III.A  Misselden crit. | 4: 38-41 |

England's loss of specie is due to unwise policies on trade, especially those pursued by the East India Company which ignores our rules about export of bullion and thereby impoverishes the country.
Reference Card: Paper and Pen

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Simple Excel Spreadsheet for tracking references

### BOOKS

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### ARTICLES

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<td>Ludin, H. &amp; Elbern, J.</td>
<td>Current versus delivery: Challenges in neuropsychopharmacology</td>
<td>European Neuropsychopharmacology</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>18(5-6)</td>
<td>9-11</td>
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<td>Trivedi, A. &amp; de la Torre, R.</td>
<td>Neuropsychiatric and clinical predictors in schizophrenia</td>
<td>International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>129(1)</td>
<td>286-292</td>
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<td>Schwaeb, S. G., &amp; Widen</td>
<td>Research on causes for schizophrenia</td>
<td>Schizophrenia Research</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>12(1-2)</td>
<td>29-30</td>
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### WEBSITES

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REFWORKS

- Electronically collect, organize and manage your references in a personal database
- Easily format bibliographies, footnotes and in-text citations into almost any output style
- Conveniently link references to full-text articles, eliminating unwieldy storage of paper copy
- Auto completion of references and suggestions from Summon
- Easy one click saving of individual web pages or references from research literature databases
- Automated recognition of uploaded documents
- Built-in document reading for PDF, RTF and MS Office files
- Enhanced sharing of documents with the ability to highlight and add notes.
- Automatic identification of missing style elements, e.g. doi or journal title
- Off-line access to all of your full-text attachments (documents)
Welcome to RefWorks
Linking JSTOR to RefWorks: An Example
The Impact of Gentrification on Voter Turnout

H. Gibbs Knobbs, Moshe Haspel

Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 87, No. 1 (MARCH 2006), pp. 110-121

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Topics: Gentrification, Voter turnout, Neighborhoods, African Americans, Housing, Voter registration, Poverty

The Broadening Conception of Gentrification: Recent Developments and Aveneries for Future Inquiry in the Sociological Study of Urban Change

Chase M. Billingham

Michigan Sociological Review, Vol. 29 (Fall 2015), pp. 75-102

JOURNAL ARTICLE

Topics: Gentrification, Neighborhoods, Urban sociology, Housing, Political debate, City halls, Political sociology, Inner cities
Commentary: Mixed-Income Housing: Where Have We Been and Where Do We Go From Here?

Derek Hyra


JOURNAL ARTICLE

Topics: Poverty, Neighborhoods, Urban studies, Public housing, Retirement communities, Suburbs, United States environmental policy, Cityscapes, Gentrification
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Reference from JSTOR Saved to RefWorks

Import complete

- We've saved 1 document in your library.

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ProQuest RefWorks

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- 3 minutes ago
  - Commentary: Mixed-Income Housing: Where Have We Been and Where Do We Go From Here?

- 34 minutes ago
  - THE BROADENING CONCEPTION OF GENTRIFICATION: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE INQUIRY IN THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF URBAN CHANGE
  - The Impact of Gentrification on Voter Turnout
Ready to Create a Bibliography
References


Exercise: JSTOR and RefWorks
Moving Forward on the Review

- With your data-gathering tools in hand, head for the library (physical or virtual)
- Keep track of your searches (which key words did you use, which online databases did you use, which references did you consult) with a notebook
- Record the content information you glean from your articles and books as you proceed, in full sentences that will be clear to you in six months
- Use all resources to find key sources: interlibrary loan, recalling books held by a professor for 6 months, use googlebooks, buy items that you simply must have from Amazon (get prime, so you can get them fast).
FIND ALL THE SOURCES
Evaluating the Research You Find

- Focus primarily on peer-reviewed studies and scholarly publishers (university presses (e.g., Oxford University Press) and well-known academic publishing houses (e.g., Sage))
- Peer review is not the final word, however.
- Methods vary in quality, reliability, and validity, and often studies can be only modestly sound—but enough to be worthwhile at some level
- You must evaluate all of the material you use
- A checklist is helpful
Checklist to Assess the Value of a Research Item: 1-4

CHECKLIST

Evaluating a Research Article

1. In what journal or other source did you find the article? Was it reviewed by experts in the field before it was published? That is, was the article in a period (refereed) publication?

2. Does the article have a stated research question or problem? That is, can you determine the focus of the author's work?

3. Does the article describe the collection of new data, or does it describe and synthesize previous studies in which data were collected?

4. Is the article logically organized and easy to follow? What could have been done to improve its organization and readability?
Checklist to Assess the Value of a Research Item: 5-9

5. Does the article contain a section that describes and integrates previous studies on this topic? In what ways is this previous work relevant to the research problem?

6. If the author explained procedures that were followed in the study, are these procedures clear enough that you could repeat the work and get similar results? What additional information might be helpful or essential for you to replicate the study?

7. If data were collected, can you describe how they were collected and how they were analyzed? Do you agree with what was done? If you had been the researcher, what additional things might you have done?

8. Do you agree with the author’s interpretations and conclusions? Why or why not?

9. Finally, think about the entire article. What is, for you, most important? What do you find most surprising? What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of this article? Will you remember this article in the future? Why or why not?
Ready to Write the First Draft

- When you find repetitive patterns in the research that seems sound, it’s time to organize and synthesize the material.
- You may have written a summary of the articles and books already, but do not string these together and call it a literature review.
- Here is where your general organization of your problems and subproblems will give you a foundation.
Many Directions to Go in a Review

- What are the key sources?
- What are the key theories, concepts, and ideas?
- What are the epistemological and ontological grounds for the discipline?
- What are the major issues and debates about the topic?
- What are the political stand points?
- What are the origins and definitions of the topic?
- What are the main questions and problems that have been addressed?
- How is knowledge on the topic structured and organized?
- How have approaches to these questions increased our understanding and knowledge?
Remember the “Mind Mapping” Example
Organize and Synthesize

- Use your outline (or mind mapping diagram) to organize your sources
- Now, synthesize
  - Common themes
  - Evolution of approaches over time
  - Alternative theoretical perspectives
  - General trends in the findings of previous research
  - Discrepancies, contending findings, and blank spots
The Inverted Pyramid

- Begin with “old and broad” studies, including seminal papers from the very early days of a discipline
- Move through the history of related studies, gradually narrowing the topics
- The tip of the inverted pyramid should point directly to your topic
- Your study is the next logical step in research in this topic area
- Central to the literature review is the changes in and development of methodology to study the problem
- The history of the findings in a topic are of secondary importance (but not unimportant)
Multiple Pyramids?

- Research flows can come from different pyramids
- Sometimes different threads must be woven together, with somewhat different histories
- Use headings to indicate such cases
- Always use transitional language when moving through the literature review—avoid jarring non-sequiturs
- Periodically remind the reader how the particular part of the literature that you’re recounting is related to your research problem
The Danger of Plagiarism

- Your understanding of the history of scholarship in an area may be very similar to that of another writer
- You should cite that writer, even if you came up with the understanding on your own
- You should use your own words, in any event
- You should minimize the use of exact quotations (in quotation marks or doubly-indent paragraphs) unless they are crucial or especially seminal in a field
WOW REVIEW
Exercise : Evaluating a Sample Literature Review