

UNIT 8: Research Project

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WEEK THREE
LECTURER: N. QUARRIE

Learning Outcome One (1)

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- LO1 Understand how to formulate a research specification

Objective of Lesson

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- By the end of this lesson you should be able to:
- 1.3 undertake a critical review of key references



Overview

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- Any research project that is completed needs to include a literature review. It is noticed that many students from time to time assume that writing a literature review is the same thing as listing what persons say about the topic they are doing. This is not the correct way to do a literature review. This lesson will take a look at how to critically review references:
- literature review; critique of references from primary sources e.g. questionnaires, interviews; secondary sources e.g. books, journals, internet; scope and limitations; implications e.g. resources

What is a literature review?

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- “A literature review is a search and evaluation of the available literature in your given subject or chosen topic area (rlf.org.uk, n.d.)”
- It is therefore the critical analysis of the information available about the topic being researched.

Main Purpose of Literature Review

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- When writing a literature review it is important to recall what are the main purpose of a literature review:
 - 1. It surveys what persons have written about your research topic.
 - 2. It synthesizes the information in that literature into a summary

But what do we really mean by this? To synthesize “To combine or put together separate things so that they make a connected whole (rlf.org.uk, n.d.)”

Main Purpose of Literature Review

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- For you to synthesize the information it means that you try analyze the similarities, difference etc between what different authors are saying about the topic you are studying.
- 3. “It **critically analyses** the information gathered by identifying gaps in current knowledge; by showing limitations of theories and points of view; and by formulating areas for further research and reviewing areas of controversy (rlf.org.uk, n.d.)”

Main Purpose of Literature Review

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- When reviewing literature it is very important for you to identify areas that previous work did not deal with, i.e, gaps in the literature. You can also identify some limitation of the results highlighted in a previous study. For example, you may find that the sample size may have been too small and thus the results may not be as valid.
- “It **presents** the literature in an organised way (rlf.org.uk, n.d.).” As expected when you write a literature review the analysis of the literature should be presented in a very logical and organized manner. You can organize your paragraphs based on themes, e.g pollution, management in the hotel industry.

How to write a Literature Review?

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- When writing a literature review the following sections must be included:
- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion
- Now what should be included in these sections?

How to write a Literature Review?

- Introduction:
- In the introduction for your literature review you should;
- 1. “Define or identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.)” In essence you will be summing up what what your topic is about.
- 2. “Point out overall trends in what has been published about the topic; or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research and scholarship; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.) ”

How to write a Literature Review?

- Introduction:
- “Establish the writer's reason (point of view) for reviewing the literature; explain the criteria to be used in analyzing and comparing literature and the organization of the review (sequence); and, when necessary, state why certain literature is or is not included (scope) (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.) ”

How to write a Literature Review?

- **Body:** In the body of your literature review you must do the following:
- “Group research studies and other types of literature (reviews, theoretical articles, case studies, etc.) according to common denominators such as qualitative versus quantitative approaches, conclusions of authors, specific purpose or objective, chronology, etc (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.)”
- “Summarize individual studies or articles with as much or as little detail as each merits according to its comparative importance in the literature, remembering that space (length) denotes significance (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.)”
- “Provide the reader with strong "umbrella" sentences at beginnings of paragraphs, "signposts" throughout, and brief "so what" summary sentences at intermediate points in the review to aid in understanding comparisons and analyses (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.)”

How to write a Literature Review?

- **Conclusion:** You must write a conclusion for your literature review. You must use the conclusion to do the following:
- “Summarize major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review, maintaining the focus established in the introduction. (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.)”
- “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 and findings, and areas or issues pertinent to future study (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.)”
- “Conclude by providing some insight into the relationship between the central topic of the literature review and a larger area of study such as a discipline, a scientific endeavor, or a profession (Writing.wisc.edu, n.d.)”

Examples of Literature Review

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Lets look at some examples of a literature review:

Please click on the following link to view the examples:

Libguides.uwf.edu. (n.d.). *Sample Literature Reviews - Literature Review: Conducting & Writing - LibGuides at University of West Florida Libraries.*

[online] Available at:

<http://libguides.uwf.edu/c.php?g=215199&p=1420828> [Accessed 20 May 2016].

Lets discuss the examples!

Validity and reliability of sources

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- It is very important to review the validity and reliability of sources used in your literature review and your overall project. Please view the following video to learn about these two concepts (Nb. You may need to sign up for a free trial):
- Jennifer Lombardo, (n.d.). *Assessing the Reliability and Validity of Sources*. [video] Available at: <http://study.com/academy/lesson/assessing-the-reliability-and-validity-of-sources.html> [Accessed 20 May 2016].

Review Questions

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1. What is literature review?
2. Explain the main purpose of a literature review
3. What are the main sections of a literature review?
4. Explain what should be included in each section identified in question number 3.

References/Additional Reading List

1. Writing.wisc.edu. (n.d.). *"Review of Literature" UW-Madison Writing Center Writer's Handbook*. [online] Available at: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/ReviewofLiterature.html> [Accessed 20 May 2016].
2. www.rlf.org.uk. (n.d.). *Glossary*. [online] Available at: <https://www.rlf.org.uk/resources/glossary/#synthesise> [Accessed 19 May 2016].
3. Jennifer Lombardo, (n.d.). *Assessing the Reliability and Validity of Sources*. [video] Available at: <http://study.com/academy/lesson/assessing-the-reliability-and-validity-of-sources.html> [Accessed 20 May 2016].
4. www.rlf.org.uk. (n.d.). *Literature reviews*. [online] Available at: <https://www.rlf.org.uk/resources/what-is-a-literature-review/> [Accessed 19 May 2016].
5. Libguides.uwf.edu. (n.d.). *Sample Literature Reviews - Literature Review: Conducting & Writing - LibGuides at University of West Florida Libraries*. [online] Available at: <http://libguides.uwf.edu/c.php?g=215199&p=1420828> [Accessed 20 May 2016].