

Literature Review Types: Understanding the Key Types and Its usage in different Areas of Research

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Abstract—*Research of any kind is done with an objective of bringing forth new arguments in the light of the previous work done. For this researchers often use various styles for representing their research in an effective manner. Literature review is basis for any new research work to be undertaken in any area. This requires a thorough understanding of the topic that has been narrowed down to research. It includes description, evaluation and presentation of the concept while critically evaluating it for your own area of research. After careful examination and cross checking all the latest updated work in the chosen area a researcher comes to conclusion of doing the research by identifying the research gap. Literature review forms the most credential part of any research paper. This paper therefore focuses on the different styles of literature review. The paper adopts an exploratory approach with the main objective of understanding the different style and the purpose behind using these styles in different fields of research. For writing this paper it was necessary to proceed only with the secondary sources of information.*

Keywords: Literature Review, Strategies, Types

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature review (hence forth LR) is a report of studies relevant to your area of research which is discussed. LR is about the study of the concept and the previous research work done in the same field. The basic purpose of LR is to draw a relationship between the literature you have studied and the area of research under study. The style of presentation should be in pattern that reflects the findings of previous work done in an organized manner and reflect the research gap that the paper intends to find. There are multi sources from where information is collected and systematically studied, critically analyzed and reviewed and then presented. The concept is presented in the most organized, summarized and synthesized manner to reflect all previous studies prevalent to the present research. Sources like newspaper articles, journals, magazines, websites, books, periodicals, newsletters and the like can be used to portray the information [9]. The main concept to be kept in mind is the details should be arranged in the organized manner so that the information flow makes sense. Depending upon the area of research the presentation will differ. For example in medical field technological breakthroughs and medical treatments have been revolutionising on a large extent. Therefore in areas like these involving more current

information only makes sense while presenting the information.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several methods that have been identified to portray the LR for presenting the ideas. The manner in which the researcher chooses to represent the ideas should be in an organizational method. Later based on this it could be decided if it is thematic/narrative, chronological, systematic, meta-analysis or meta-synthesis. While making a point it should be well supported by the evidence. The basic focus of each LR is the following:

1. Make a concise presentation of the work done prior to researchers research
2. Presenting evidence to support present research and states the position of the work in its discipline and area
3. Critically evaluate the prior work and presents the chronological order of changes in the knowledge in the area of research
4. Focus on the themes and sub themes and compare and contrast the different researchers in the area of research
5. Identify limitations and gaps
6. Present ideas that reflect the existing body of knowledge
7. Justify the research

Chronological:

This method of LR reflects presentation of materials according to the time when they were published. here progression of time is important to reflect.

Thematic:

This method of LR focuses around a topic and subtopic.

Methodological:

This paper focuses on the method of the researcher or writer. It discusses the method in which these topics are discussed.

This could be focussing the study either on the history, current situation, methods or the questions for future research.

Systematic Reviews:

Considered to be the most effective way of study also called as the “Gold Standard”. Here the methodological quality is checked before including it in the LR as evidence. Studies include previous work done which have adopted a primary objective. It attempts to identify, appraise and synthesize all the empirical evidences that meets prespecified eligibility criteria to answer a given research question. Here explicit methods are used aimed at minimizing bias so that it can be used for decision making.[5]

Meta-analysis:

This is more advanced than systematic for of study. It uses statistical procedures to come to a conclusion. It integrates results from different primary studies to conclude. Therefore this kind of study integrates findings from a large body of quantitative findings to enhance understanding.[7]

Meta-synthesis:

This is a non-statistical technique which integrates, evaluates and interprets findings of various qualitative researches. It uses finding from phenomenological, grounded theory. It involves analysing and synthesizing key elements so that the individual findings can become new concepts and can be interpreted accordingly.[7]

Traditional:

This type of LR summarizes a body of literature and draws conclusions about topic. It identifies the gap and inconsistencies in a body of knowledge and requires a sufficiently focused research question.[7]

3. OBJECTIVE

To study various types of literature review methods and the differences between them. To find the literature review method adopted by different areas of research and its suitability.

4. CONCLUSIONS:

The major reason for conducting LR is primarily to synthesize the existing literature and then form the basis for formulating a hypothesis for future studies. It helps in understanding the topic and narrows it down to get a clear picture. This also helps in understanding what has been done and what is currently being researched. This helps in our own work by providing us an opportunity to cement up our own research questions. Different types of research design will help us in identifying the different research questions based on our literature review. Each of the LR types are useful in varied types of research work and different areas. The range includes the areas as diverse as medical, humanities and social

sciences, bio medical, psychology, management etc. however not all LRs are used in all kinds of research work. But the content of each of them would differ based on the type of research questions that needs to be addressed. Some may be useful for some areas while others may be useful for other areas. These needs however be fulfilled by LR types specific to type of research being conducted. Each subject area has its own set of needs that has to be addressed and therefore different types of LR helps in collecting and presenting the information that needs to be synchronized to form the basis for future research. In some research facts needs to presented in chronological order in order to carry out future research whereas in some others it is to find out the research gap so that more exploration can be conducted. The representation of facts require thorough explanation of the existing body of research to gain the knowledge in our own areas of work.

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FINDINGS

| Dependent FACTORS | Types of literature review | | | | | Traditional |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | chronological | Systematic Reviews | Thematic/Narrative Review | Meta-analysis | Meta-synthesis | |
| Progression of time | Yes | | | | | |
| Topic | | | Yes | | | |
| Sub Topic | | | Yes | | | |
| Area of research where usually the method is preferred | | Medical | | Medical | Bio Medical areas | |