



## Description

An [excellent literature review](#) integrates information in such a way that it provides a new framework to build upon. It is a way of contextualizing your work and showcasing a bigger picture before you pin down to your research problem. It not only highlights principle issues in your field but also provides new perspectives on the research topic. Careful skimming of literature introduces the readers to relevant terminologies frequently used in context of their work. [Literature review](#) assists in recognizing related research findings and relevant theories. Furthermore, it aids in pinpointing the methodologies that one may adopt for research.

## 5 Steps to Begin the Literature Review

There are five steps that one should follow before preparing to [conduct the literature review](#):

1. Identify all the literature relevant to your topic of interest. Explore all the different types of literature including theoretical literature, applied literature, literature that talks about research methods, or a combination thereof.
2. Using multiple [keywords and strategies](#) capture the most accurate and relevant data. Conduct an extensive search in multi-disciplinary databases.
3. Group your findings into a detailed summary of what is known and what needs to be explored.
4. Identify existing gaps or any unresolved issues
5. Formulate broad questions that warrant further research

## How to Best Critique a Research paper

For extracting maximum information from a [research paper](#), researchers must ask the following questions!

1. Has the author formulated an appropriate research question based on the problem/issue?
2. Is the research question clearly defined in terms of its scope and relevance?
3. Was there an alternative or better perspective to approach the research question?
4. What is the author's orientation towards the research problem – is it a critical analysis or interpretation based?
5. Has the author extensively evaluated the literature considering both latest and relevant articles?

6. How has the author defined the basic components (population, interventions, outcomes) of the study? Are the measurements valid, accurate and statistically significant? Are the conclusions based accurate interpretations of the data?
7. Is there an objective based, unbiased reasoning provided for the problem statement or is the author merely attempting to prove his/her preconceived beliefs and opinions?
8. How does this article contribute to your understanding of the research problem?
9. What are the strengths, limitations and shortcomings of the study?

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## 10 Questions for a Comprehensive Literature Review

1. Do I have clearly defined research aims prior to commencing the review?

It is important to choose a focused question that can efficiently direct your search. It can assist you to create a list of keywords related to your research problem. Furthermore, it helps in identifying relevant databases to search for related journals and articles.

2. Have I correctly identified all the sources that will help me define my problem statement or research question?

Literature is not limited to journal articles, thesis, and dissertations. One should also refer to credible internet sources, conference proceedings that provide latest unpublished papers, as well as government and corporate reports. Books, although do not have latest information, can serve as a good starting point to read background information.

3. Have I considered all kinds of literature – including both qualitative and quantitative research articles?

An exhaustive literature survey helps you position your research within the context of existing literature effectively creating a case as to why further study is necessary. Your search has to be robust enough to ensure that you have browsed through all the relevant and latest articles. Rather than reading everything, researchers must refer and follow the most relevant work!

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4. Do I have enough empirical or theoretical evidence to support my hypothesis?

Discovering new patterns and trends becomes easy if you gather credible evidence from earlier works. Furthermore, it helps in rationalizing the significance of your study.

5. Have I identified all the major inconsistencies or other shortcomings related to my research topic?

Researchers should not only refer to articles that present supporting evidence but also focus on those that provide inconclusive or contradictory information. It helps to identify any open questions left by researchers in previous studies.

6. Is my relationship diagram ready?

A relationship diagram is an effective way of recognizing links between different elements of a complex research topic. It is an immensely important tool that helps in clarifying and structuring research specific findings and interpretations at various stages of the project. It is an effective way of representing your current understanding of the research topic. In addition, a good relationship diagram can help you find new insights owing to a clear picture of all the probable relationships between key concepts, variables and key factors.

7. Have I gathered sufficient evidence from the literature about the accuracy and validity of the designs or methods that I plan to use in my experiments?

It is paramount to use methodologies and research techniques that have scientific reliability. Moreover, since methods especially used in qualitative research are often more subjective, it becomes crucial for researchers to reflect on the approach and explain the criteria for selecting a particular method.

8. Have I identified the purpose for which articles have been shortlisted for literature review?

You can expedite your literature writing process if you tag your articles based on its purpose of inclusion in the review report. Following are the tags that can be added to articles:

- Show how latest developments or develop a theoretical base to your study
- Demonstrate limitations, inconsistencies or shortcomings of previous studies
- Critique or support certain methods or findings
- Replicate the study in a different setting (region/population)
- Indicate how the study supports or contradicts your findings
- Use it as a reference to further build your research
- Provide a general understanding of concerns relevant to your research topic

9. Have I recorded all the bibliographic information regarding my information sources?

Recording and cataloguing your bibliographical details and references is absolutely crucial for every researcher. You may use commercial software such as Reference manager, End Note, and Pro Cite to manage your references. Furthermore, you may also keep a record of keyword searches that you have performed.

10. Will my literature review reflect a report that is created after a through critical analysis of the literature?

An excellent literature review must be structured, logical, and coherent. It is a great opportunity to demonstrate that you have critically analyzed and understood the relevant body of literature underpinning your research. It is important to structure your literature into appropriate sections that discuss themes or presents trends. Grouping your literature helps in indicating relationships and making comparisons.

Still have more queries related to literature review and synthesis? Post your queries [here](#) and our experts will be happy to answer them! You can also visit our [Q&A forum](#) for frequently asked questions related to research writing and publishing answered by our team that comprises subject-matter experts, eminent researchers, and publication experts.

### **Category**

1. Manuscript Preparation
2. Reporting Research

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shwetad