

Framework of Literature review

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July 2024



Literature review

A literature review is a critical analysis of published academic literature, mainly peer-reviewed journal papers and books, on a specific research topic.




Objective of Literature Review

The objective of a literature review is to critically assess and encapsulate the existing body of knowledge on a particular research topic, pinpoint areas of research that have yet to be fully explored, and ascertain unanswered questions. It aids in defining the breadth of a research project, demonstrating its novelty, and providing a rationale for its research necessity.



A literature review is not:

- A summary of other published papers of the related topic.
 - A descriptive list of the material available.
 - A set of annotated bibliographies.
 - A collection of quotes and paraphrasing from other sources.
 - A narrative annotated bibliography nor a book report.
 - An unsurprising overview of the literature.
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General Suggestions of Literature Review

- Literature review is about 34% of the thesis; 55 pages ; typical 20,000 words
- Literature review takes minimum 6 months to write
- Review around 100 to 150 published papers or books related to the research topic
- Ensure accurate citation of all sources using the appropriate citation style (e.g. Harvard, APA, MLA).

Check with your university of the recommended citation style.

Structure of the Literature Review

The structure of a literature review should contain three parts:

- Introduction
- Main body
- Conclusion

Each section should be meticulously organised and structured in a chronological manner, clearing the necessity for your research, the status of existing literature, any discernible knowledge gaps, and the positioning of your study within this context.

Introduction of the Literature Review

Keep the Introduction section brief: most commonly only a paragraph long, but can go up to 1.5 pages.

- Introduce the larger subject.
- Narrow that larger subject into your manageable topic.
- Explain the significance of the topic.
- Formulate research question(s).
- Explain the scope of your coverage (what criteria was used to include or exclude studies and why).
- Lay out the organisation of the review (forecasting statements).

(C Cantero)

Body of the Literature Review

- Provide some background information (e.g. definition of concepts, historical perspective(s) on the issue, etc.).
- Group the research according to themes, trends, approaches, etc.
- Summarise individual items with as much detail as merited (determined by its comparative significance within your overall paper).
- Weave citations/descriptions of the literature with your analysis and show the reader how this connects to your overall research question(s).
- Point out any methodological flaws, gaps in research, or inconsistencies in theory and findings.

(C Cantero)

Conclusion of the Literature Review

- Summarise major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review.
- Point out any gaps in the published literature and discuss areas or issues pertinent to future study.

(C Cantero)




Table of Content of the Literature Review

More detailed recommendation of the Literature Review sections based of Chad Perry 2012:

2.1 Research issues

2.2 Introduction

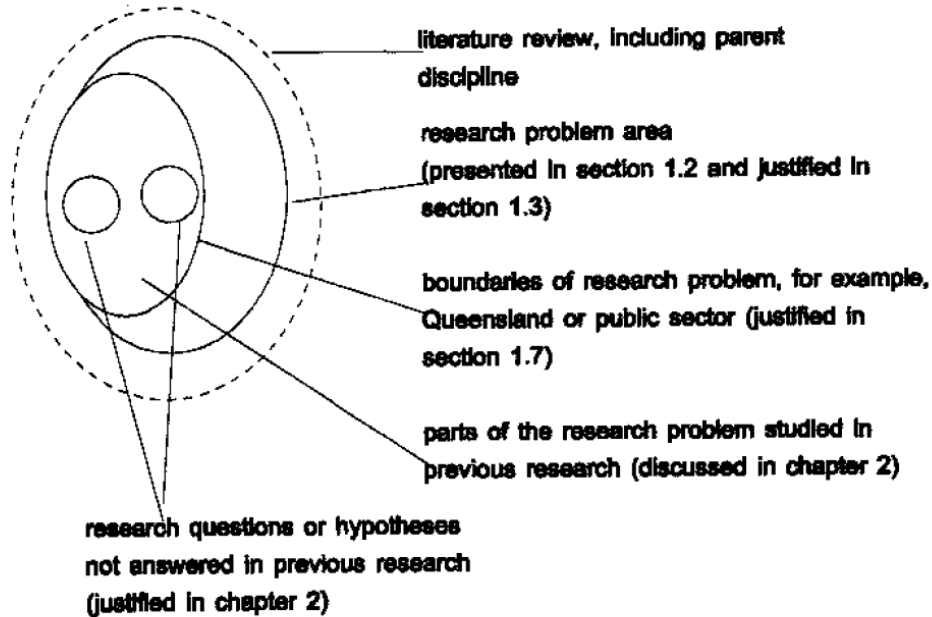
2.3 Parent theories and classification models

2.4 Research problem theory: analytical, theoretical frameworks and related research issues or propositions)

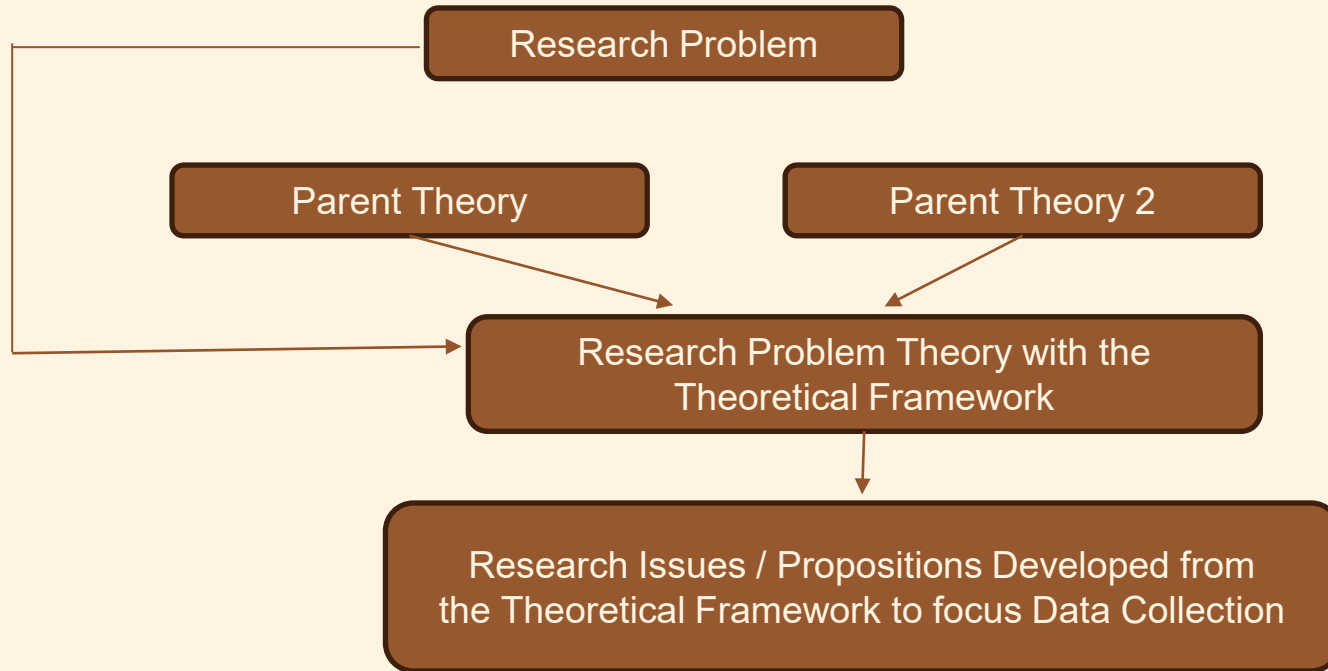
2.5 Conclusion

(Chad Perry)

Content of the Literature Review



Link between Research Problem & Theoretical Framework in Research Problem



(Adapted from Chad Perry 2012)

Research Problem

- Literature Review chapter outlines the core or one big idea of the research, starting with the research problem of the thesis.
- The research problem is one or two sentences that cannot be answered 'yes' or 'no';
- Note that the constructs referred to in the research problem are high level ones and are not the more specific constructs developed for hypotheses at the end of literature review chapter or their operational definitions developed in methodology chapter.

(Chad Perry 2012)

Theoretical Framework (Model)

- Classification models of the literature review and analytical models of the theoretical framework.
- This analytical model will usually explicitly consider relationships between concepts, and so there will be arrows between the groups of concepts

(Chad Perry 2012)

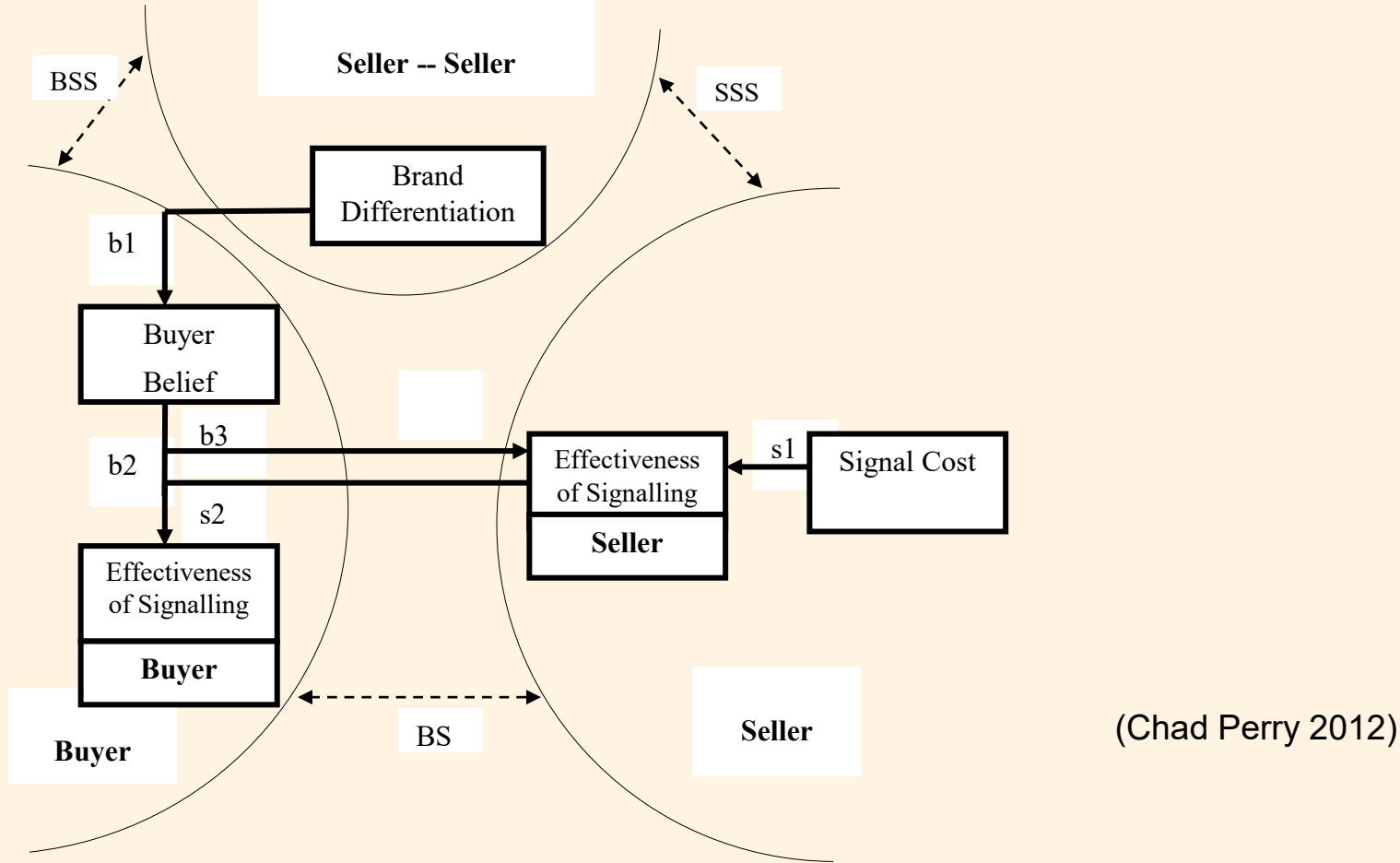


Figure 1. Integrated View of Signalling in the Consumer Market

Research Questions - Hypotheses

- Example: Does the number of successful telemarketing calls correlate with the level of specialisation of telemarketing representatives?
- Each construct in the hypothesis (for example, 'specialisation of telemarketing representatives') must be capable of being measured;
- Generally speaking, the total number of research questions and/or hypotheses should not exceed about four or five; if there are more, sufficient analysis may not be done on each within the space constraints of a doctoral thesis.

(Chad Perry 2012)


Types of literature review:

There exists a wide array of literature review types, encompassing narrative (or traditional) reviews, systematic reviews, quantitative reviews, scoping reviews, meta-analysis reviews, theoretical reviews, conceptual reviews, and critical reviews, among others. Predominantly, theses and dissertations tend to utilise critical reviews in their literature review sections.

Types of literature review:

- Chronological: From older to more recent publications
- Thematic: Organised around several key research themes
- Methodological: Compare the research methods used in different studies
- Theoretical: Discuss opposing theories or models

(Scribber)



PDCA of Literature Review

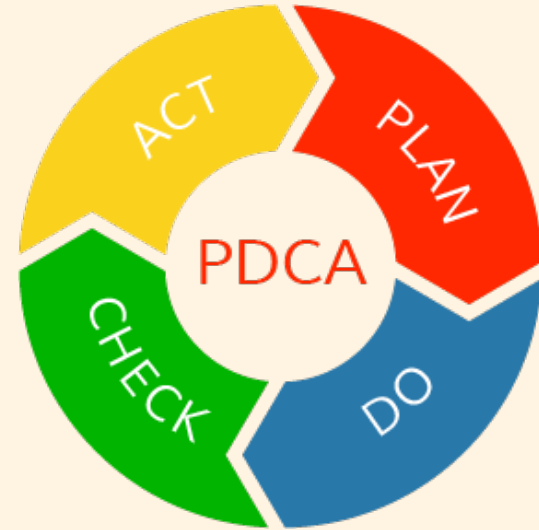
Literature review is a non-linear and iterative process. Researcher need to revisit the different stages of the literature review. We could use the PDCA cycle.

Plan – Identifying the research question, defining the scope of the review, and planning the structure of the review.

Do – Conducting the literature review according to the plan. Searching for relevant literature, reading and analysing the literature, and writing the review.

Check – After writing the literature review, check if it meets the research objectives set in the planning stage. Checking it the review provides a comprehensive overview of the existing literature, identifies research gaps, and sets the context of the research.

Act – If the literature review does not meet the objectives , revise it. If does meet the objectives, finalised the literature review and incorporate into the thesis.



Seven Steps of Writing the Literature

Step 1: Identifying research question

Step 2: Reviewing discipline styles

Step3: Searching the relevant literature


Step 4: Citing references

Step 5: Critically analysing and evaluating the literature

Step 6: Reasoning the findings

Step 7: Write the review

Adapted from K Chongbang



Depth of Literature Review Analysis

- Immerse yourself in the literature by scrutinising each literature source.
- Evaluate the rigorous of the methodology, the underlying theoretical framework, and the pivotal findings of studies pertinent to your research topic.
- Detect recurrent themes, divergent perspectives, and knowledge gaps that your research study intends to fill.
- Integrate insights from a multitude of sources to construct a unified narrative that underscores the evolution of ideas and enhances comprehension of your research area.

Good Practices and Tips for Writing a Literature Review:

- **Clearly define your scope:** Determine the boundaries of your literature review based on your research questions. Keep your research question in mind and stay on topic.
- **Use a systematic approach:** Develop a search strategy and use a consistent method for selecting and evaluating studies.
- **Be critical:** Evaluate the quality and relevance of the studies you include.
- **Analyse & Synthesise information:** Go beyond summarising literatures; identify patterns, contradictions, and gaps in the literature.
- **Write clearly and concisely:** Use clear and concise language to communicate your ideas effectively.
- **Follow a logical structure:** Organise your review in a way that is easy for the reader to follow.
- **Cite your sources correctly:** Use the appropriate citation style according to your university guidelines.
- **Revise and edit carefully:** Ensure that your literature review is well-written and free of errors. Proofreading.

Suggestions of Literature Review Sources

- Public Library and University Library
- Books: Substantial academic books can provide in-depth coverage of your research topic.
- Academic Journals: These are essential for the most recent research and developments.
- Online Databases: These can provide access to a wide range of journals and publications.
- Dissertations and Theses: These can provide detailed research on specific topics.
- Conferences, Peer-reviewed Works, and Technical Works: These sources can offer the latest research findings.
- Professional Standards: These can provide industry benchmarks and best practices.

Reliability of Literature Review Sources

- Evaluate Sources: Critically evaluate each source for its credibility, relevance, and contribution to the field. Consider the methodological rigorous, theoretical framework, and key findings of each literature.
- While non-published or reviewed Internet websites like Wikipedia is a valuable resource for gaining a general understanding of a research topic, it's typically not recommended as a primary source for a literature review.

Suggestions of Literature Review Online Databases

- **Scopus:** One of the largest abstract and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature.
- **Web of Science:** Covers over 12,000 of the highest impact journals worldwide, including Open Access journals and over 150,000 conference proceedings.
- **ERIC:** Stands for Education Resources Information Center, a database that specifically hosts education-related literature.
- **Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ):** An online directory that indexes high quality, open access, peer-reviewed journals.
- **JSTOR:** A digital library for scholars, researchers, and students.
- **ProQuest:** A resource of electronic collections containing millions of articles originally published in magazines, newspapers, and journals.
- **Emerald:** Provides a wide range of peer-reviewed, international journals in the areas of management, science, engineering, technology, social sciences and more.
- **InfoTrac:** A family of databases of content from academic journals and general magazines, a majority of which are full text.
- **Google Scholar:** A freely accessible web search engine that indexes the full text or metadata of scholarly literature across an array of publishing formats and disciplines.

Develop a Search Strategy

- **Brainstorm keywords:** Use synonyms, related terms, and alternative spellings related to your research topic.
- **Combine keywords:** Use Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to refine your search.
- **Utilise database features:** Learn how to use advanced search options, filters, and limiters.
- **Example search:** (remote work OR work from home) AND employee engagement AND (IT industry OR technology) AND peer-reviewed articles

By combining these search terms and databases, you can effectively identify relevant research on the impact of remote work or work from home on employee engagement.

Suggestions of Literature Review Citation Software

- **EndNote:**

- Comprehensive features for large reference libraries
- Strong support for various citation styles
- Integration with Microsoft Word

- **Mendeley:**

- User-friendly interface
- Strong social features for connecting with other researchers
- Integration with Microsoft Word

- **Zotero:**

- Open-source and free
- Strong integration with web browsers
- Allows for easy saving of web pages and PDFs
- Good collaboration features

- **Paperpile:**

- Cloud-based, accessible from anywhere
- Easy to use with a clean interface
- Integrates with Google Docs and Microsoft Word

Common Challenges in writing Literature Review

- **Too limited sources:** Go through the sources in the library, online databases and reliable journals. Consult your Supervisor, other researchers, Lecturers and Professors.
- **Scope and Depth:** Keep to the scope of topics related to your research topic and do not include too many irrelevant literature. Be comprehensive and have a balanced approach in reviewing the literature.
- **Over-reliance on Certain Sources:** It's important to have a balanced view of the literature. Have different sources.
- **Time Management:** Keep a realistic timeline and set achievable milestones for completing literature review sections. Start a section at a time following the set schedule.
- **Critical Analysis:** Remember Literature Review is not about summarising other people's works, you have to analyse and synthesise the information to justify your research.
- **Inconsistent Writing Style:** Create a Style Guide. A style guide provides a set of rules and guidelines for your writing, covering aspects like tone, punctuation, grammar, and formatting. It helps ensure uniformity and coherence in your writing.

Conclusion

- Literature review is the supporting background of any new research activity.
- Literature review is a systematic process.
- Literature review is an interlinking process along with research work.
- Research question, objectives of the research, methodology and other aspects of a research are directed by the review of previous literature.
- Conceptual or analytical framework of research is derived from theoretical and empirical literature review.

Insight

The literature review may initially appear as one of the most challenging sections in your thesis. It signifies the commencement of an in-depth exploration of existing research, the synthesis of substantial volumes of information, and the critical examination of scholarly works. It's common to feel daunted at the beginning, grappling with the extensive literature and the task of comprehending it all. Bear in mind, literature review goes beyond merely summarising others' work—it's about situating your research within the wider academic context. Seek guidance and support from your Supervisor, Lecturers, Professors, Librarians and other Researchers who can provide fresh insights and invaluable feedback.

With diligence, persistence, and the support network around you, you can transform what initially seems overwhelming into a fulfilling intellectual endeavour that makes a significant contribution to your field of study.

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