

# Relevance of Literature Review for the Researches in History

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### Abstract

Doing a careful and thorough literature review is essential when a person writes about research at any level. It is basic homework that is assumed to have been done vigilantly, and a given fact in all research papers. By providing one, usually offered in one's introduction before one reaches one's thesis statement, one is telling one's reader that one has not neglected the basics of research.

It not only surveys what research has been done in the past on the topic, but it also appraises, encapsulates, compares and contrasts, and correlates various scholarly books, research articles, and other relevant sources that are directly related to the current research. Given the fundamental nature of providing one, the research paper will be not considered seriously if it is lacking one at the beginning of the paper. A literature review surveys books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, and by so doing, provides a description, summary, and critical evaluation of these works in relation to the research problem being investigated. Literature reviews are designed to provide an overview of sources you have explored while researching a particular topic and to demonstrate to your readers how your research fits within a larger field of study. Literature review allows the researches of History to establish their theoretical framework and methodological focus. Even if they are proposing a new theory or a new method, they are doing so in relation to what has been done. For the research scholars of History, the review of literature has its specific importance as most of them depend on the stuff they get from the researches already done.

The paper deals with the various aspects of literature review, such as, meaning, types, stages, relevance and importance of literature review for the researches in History.

**Keywords:** Literature Review, Theoretical Framework and Methodological Focus.

### Introduction

A literature review may consist of simply a summary of key sources, but in the social sciences, a literature review usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis, often within specific conceptual categories. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organization, or a reshuffling, of that information in a way that informs how you are planning to investigate a research problem. The analytical features of a literature review might:

1. Give a new interpretation of old material or combine new with old interpretations,
2. Trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates,
3. Depending on the situation, evaluate the sources and advise the reader on the most pertinent or relevant research, or
4. Usually in the conclusion of a literature review, identify where gaps exist in how a problem has been researched to date.

### The Purpose of a Literature Review is to

1. Place each work in the context of its contribution to understanding the research problem being studied.
2. Describe the relationship of each work to the others under consideration.
3. Identify new ways to interpret prior research.
4. Reveal any gaps that exist in the literature.
5. Resolve conflicts amongst seemingly contradictory previous studies.
6. Identify areas of prior scholarship to prevent duplication of effort.
7. Point the way in fulfilling a need for additional research.

8. Locate your own research within the context of existing literature.

#### **The Structure of a Literature Review Should Include the Following**

1. An overview of the subject, issue, or theory under consideration, along with the objectives of the literature review,
2. Division of works under review into themes or categories [e.g. works that support a particular position, those against, and those offering alternative approaches entirely],
3. An explanation of how each work is similar to and how it varies from the others,
4. Conclusions as to which pieces are best considered in their argument, are most convincing of their opinions, and make the greatest contribution to the understanding and development of their area of research.

#### **The Critical Evaluation of Each Work Should Consider**

##### **Provenance**

What are the author's credentials? Are the author's arguments supported by evidence [e.g. primary historical material, case studies, narratives, statistics, and recent scientific findings]?

##### **Methodology**

Methodologies were the techniques used to identify, gather, and analyze the data appropriate to addressing the research problem? Was the sample size appropriate? Were the results effectively interpreted and reported?

##### **Objectivity**

Objectives is the author's perspective even-handed or prejudicial? Is contrary data considered or is certain pertinent information ignored to prove the author's point?

##### **Persuasiveness**

Which of the author's theses are most convincing or least convincing?

##### **Value**

Values are the author's arguments and conclusions convincing? Does the work ultimately contribute in any significant way to an understanding of the subject?

#### **Types of Literature Reviews**

##### **Argumentative**

This form examines literature selectively in order to support or refute an argument, deeply imbedded assumption, or philosophical problem already established in the literature. The purpose is to develop a body of literature that establishes a contrarian viewpoint. Given the value-laden nature of some social science research [e.g., educational reform; immigration control], argumentative approaches to analyzing the literature can be a legitimate and important form of discourse. However, note that they can also introduce problems of bias when they are used to make summary claims of the sort found in systematic reviews [see below].

##### **Integrative**

Considered a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are

generated. The body of literature includes all studies that address related or identical hypotheses or research problems. A well-done integrative review meets the same standards as primary research in regard to clarity, rigor, and replication. This is the most common form of review in the social sciences.

##### **Historical**

Few things rest in isolation from historical precedent. Historical literature reviews focus on examining research throughout a period of time, often starting with the first time an issue, concept, theory, phenomena emerged in the literature, then tracing its evolution within the scholarship of a discipline. The purpose is to place research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments and to identify the likely directions for future research.

##### **Methodological**

A review does not always focus on **what** someone said [findings], but **how** they came about saying what they say [method of analysis]. Reviewing methods of analysis provides a framework of understanding at different levels [i.e. those of theory, substantive fields, research approaches, and data collection and analysis techniques], how researchers draw upon a wide variety of knowledge ranging from the conceptual level to practical documents for use in fieldwork in the areas of ontological and epistemological consideration, quantitative and qualitative integration, sampling, interviewing, data collection, and data analysis. This approach helps highlight ethical issues which you should be aware of and consider as you go through your own study.

##### **Systematic**

This form consists of an overview of existing evidence pertinent to a clearly formulated research question, which uses pre-specified and standardized methods to identify and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect, report, and analyze data from the studies that are included in the review. The goal is to deliberately document, critically evaluate, and summarize scientifically all of the research about a clearly defined research problem. Typically it focuses on a very specific empirical question, often posed in a cause-and-effect form, such as "To what extent does A contribute to B?" This type of literature review is primarily applied to examining prior research studies in clinical medicine and allied health fields, but it is increasingly being used in the social sciences.

##### **Theoretical**

The purpose of this form is to examine the corpus of theory that has accumulated in regard to an issue, concept, theory, phenomena. The theoretical literature review helps to establish what theories already exist, the relationships between them, to what degree the existing theories have been investigated, and to develop new hypotheses to be tested. Often this form is used to help establish a lack of appropriate theories or reveal that current theories are inadequate for explaining new or emerging research problems. The unit of analysis can focus on a theoretical concept or a whole theory or framework.

##### **Development of the Literature Review**

1. Problem formulation

2. Literature Search
3. Data Evaluation
4. Analysis and Interpretation

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To brood over the relevance of research in the understanding of problems
2. To be familiar with the process of social research
3. To analyze and interpret the steps of research
4. To learn about the basics of historical researches
5. To compare and contrast the historical researches and the researches in the other social sciences
6. To concentrate on the relevance of review of literature to the scholars of history
7. To find out the problems faced by the researchers of history
8. To provide fruitful suggestions about how to make review writing relating to the researches in history

**Hypothesis**

1. Research helps in understanding and governing the various problems
2. Research is a scientific study of the problems, and is the only way to the solution of the problems
3. Methodology of researches in History is based on secondary data
4. Review of literature forms the basis of researches in History and helps the researchers be familiar with the roots of the problem to be studied
5. Making of review of literature in the researches in History has certain specific steps that require a careful following of all the steps

**Research Methodology**

The methodology adopted by the researcher was different from the methodology in use in the other social sciences. For the purpose, through the selection of 10 studies, a research gap was explored which helped the researcher finalise the topic of the study. Thereafter 10 more studies were further studied thoroughly, and the analysis of the contents with a focus on the name of the authors, nativity, year of publication of the study, objectives, hypothesis, method, population, samples, sample size, tools and techniques, findings was made. The thought was developed keeping in view how the review of related literature is helpful in particular to the researchers of researches in History. For the purpose of the study, the secondary data collected through the various internet sites, research journals, books of History and theses were used. In addition, the researcher used her own keen insight for the systematic development of thought on the selected theme.

**Delimitations**

1. The study was kept confined to the relevance of review of literature in the researches of History
2. The study was designed only on the secondary data and traditional research design
3. The other steps of research other than the review of literature are not discussed in detail

**Findings**

1. Research plays a vital role in the understanding of problems

2. There are different types of research with some specific methodology to follow
3. Legitimate research is possible only through the prescribed steps
4. Historical researches have certain basics to be learnt by the researchers of History for the sake of making legitimate researches in History
5. The approach of the historians and researches of History is different from the approach of the other scientists
6. Review of related literature is relevant to the historical studies
7. Being the people of different approach, the scholars of History face much problem while designing their research
8. The scholars of history are advised to apply their own observation in addition to the secondary data while making research
9. Research can help the scholars of History go into the past of the events and understand the scenario in the past
10. Historical researches can provide solution to the understanding of the complex problems of the past
11. Most of the researches of History work on the secondary data, while they can make the research more effective using primary data

**Conclusion**

It is important to think of knowledge in a given field as consisting of three layers. First, there are the primary studies that researchers conduct and publish. Second are the reviews of those studies that summarize and offer new interpretations built from and often extending beyond the primary studies. Third, there are the perceptions, conclusions, opinion, and interpretations that are shared informally that become part of the lore of field.

In composing a literature review, it is important to note that it is often this third layer of knowledge that is cited as "true" even though it often has only a loose relationship to the primary studies and secondary literature reviews. Given this, while literature reviews are designed to provide an overview and synthesis of pertinent sources you have explored, there are a number of approaches you could adopt depending upon the type of analysis underpinning your study. A good literature review needs a clear line of argument. Therefore need to use the critical notes and comments researcher made while doing reading, to express an academic opinion. Make sure that: Researcher include a clear, short introduction which gives an outline of the— review, including the main topics covered and the order of the arguments, with a brief rationale for this. There is always a clear link between researcher own arguments and the evidence— uncovered in reading. Include a short summary at the end of each section. Use quotations if appropriate. Researchers always acknowledge opinions which do not agree with thesis. If— researcher ignores opposing viewpoints, argument will in fact be weaker.

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