

Literature Review

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ALWAYS LEARNING

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Literature Review

- A literature review is “the selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfill certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed” (Hart, 1998, p. 13).

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Why do we need a literature review?

- To develop new knowledge we need to show an understanding of what has gone before
- ... hence the literature review ...
- ... locating our study in its field and borrowing, adapting (or critiquing) existing ideas/concepts

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Roles of literature review

- Focus and clarify your research problem
 - Expose you to theories and methods in your topic area
 - Highlight key terms, concepts and debates in your topic area
 - Assist you in identifying a 'gap'
- Grix (2004) p. 38-9

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Functions Literature Review

- Research builds on existing knowledge
- One does “reinvent the wheel”
- Look at a problem from a specific angle
- Find out what variables are important to consider
- Introduce relevant terminology/provide definitions
- Provide arguments for the relationships variables
- Testability and replicability are enhanced.
- Research findings are related to findings of others.

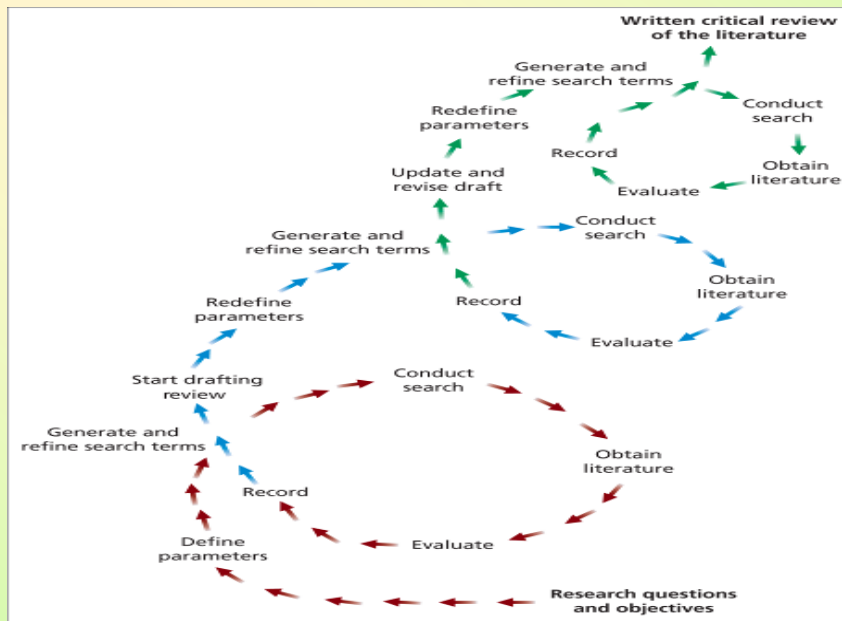
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5 steps (Creswell, 2012)

1. Identify key Search terms
2. Locate literature
3. Select literature for review
4. Organise the literature
5. Write literature review

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The literature review process



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Iterative(repeating) process

- Writing a thesis (or literature review) is not a linear process
- Draft and re-draft
- Eg. Start by summarising key studies, key themes
- Description as first stage
- Later develop into an argument
- Later again revise in line with significance

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Benefits of Conducting a Literature Review

1. It can offer new ideas, perspectives, and approaches that may not have occurred to you.
2. It can inform you about other researchers who conduct work in the same area.
3. It can show you how others have handled methodological and design issues in studies similar to your own.
4. It can reveal sources of data that you may not have known existed.
5. It can introduce you to measurement tools that other researchers have developed and used effectively.

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Benefits of Conducting a Literature Review

6. It can reveal methods of dealing with problem situations that may be similar to difficulties you are facing.
7. It can help you interpret and make sense of your findings and, ultimately, help you tie your results to the work of those who have preceded you.
8. It will bolster your confidence that your topic is one worth studying, because you will find that others have invested considerable time, effort, and resources in studying it.

In short: the more you know about investigations and perspectives related to your topic, the more effectively you can tackle your own research problem.

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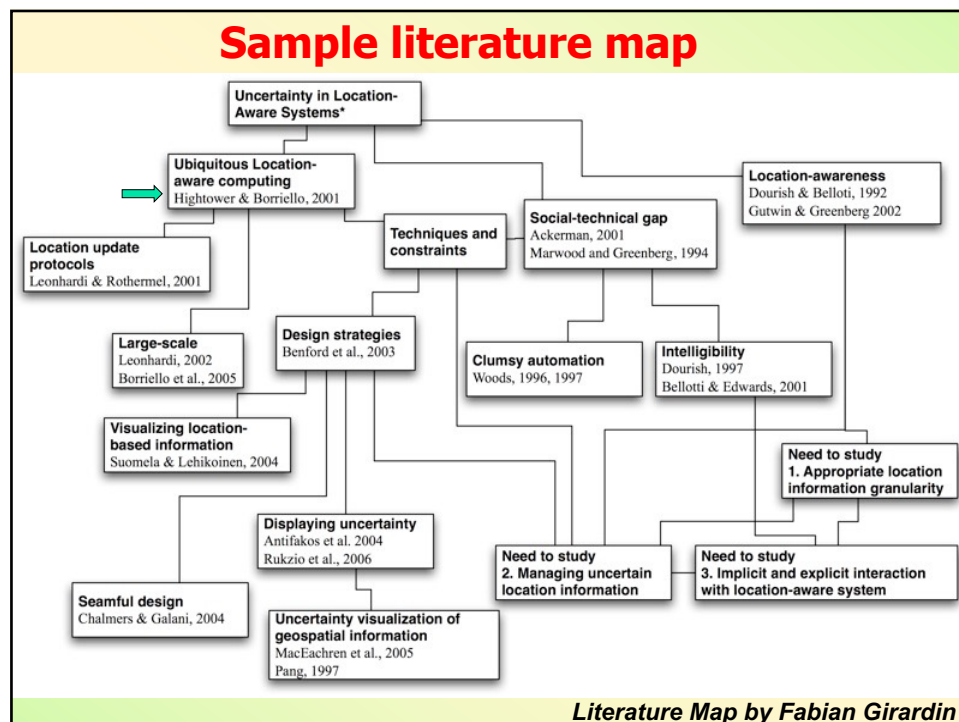
Two (optional) strategies

- Literature maps
- Concept maps

(Creswell, 2012)

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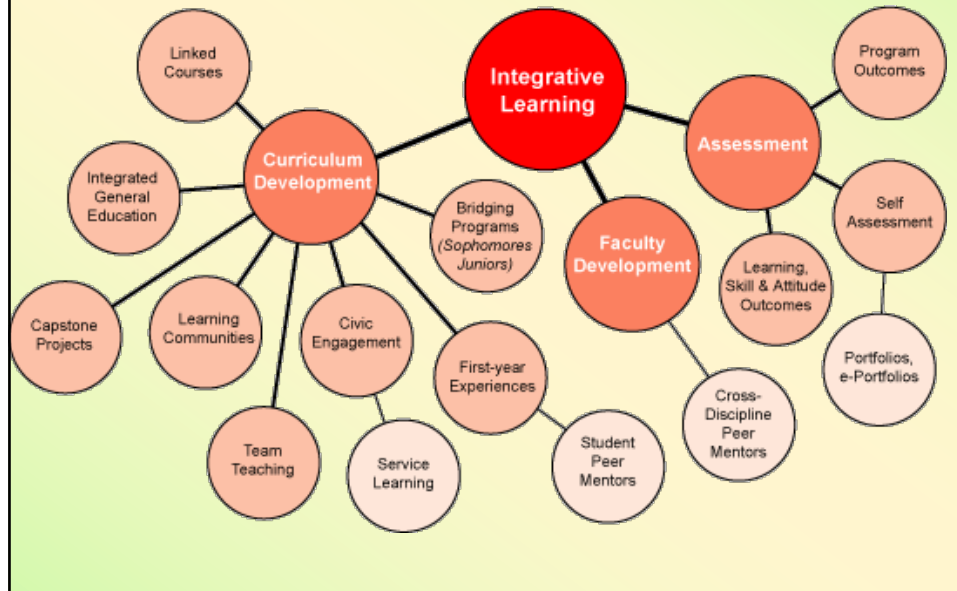
Sample literature map



Literature Map by Fabian Girardin

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Sample concept map



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Principal Systems for Classification of Knowledge

- Dewey Decimal system: Classifies knowledge according to 10 basic areas of human knowledge, each divided decimally. The main classification system in public libraries and probably the most generally accepted system worldwide.
- Library of Congress system: Classifies knowledge by alphabetical categories. The main classification system used in college and university libraries.

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Data sources

- Textbooks
- Academic and professional journals
- Theses
- Conference proceedings
- Unpublished manuscripts
- Reports of government departments and corporations
- Newspapers
- The Internet

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Searching for literature

- Most libraries have the following electronic resources at their disposal:
 - Electronic journals
 - Full-text databases
 - Bibliographic databases
 - Abstract databases

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Evaluating the literature

- Titles
- Abstract
- Table of contents/first chapter book
- Number of citations

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Sources and Strategies for Locating Related Literature

1. Identify one or more *keywords*.
2. Use the library catalog.
3. Use indexes, abstracts, and other general references.
4. Use the library's online database:
 - JSTOR
 - Web of Science
 - WorldCat.
5. Explore government publications:
 - www.gpoaccess.gov.
6. Search the World Wide Web.
7. Examine citations and reference lists of those who have gone before you.

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Practical Application: Conducting a Literature Search

- **Using paper and pencil or brainstorming software:**

1. Write the problem in its entirety at the top of the page.
2. Write each sub-problem in its entirety.
3. Identify the important words and phrases in each sub-problem.
4. Translate these words and phrases into specific topics you must learn more about—these become your “agenda” as you conduct the literature search.
5. Go to the library to seek out resources related to your agenda.
6. Read!

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Guidelines: Using Your Library Time Efficiently

1. Go to the library armed with data-gathering tools.
2. Identify the materials (books, articles, etc.) you want to read, and determine if they are available in your library.
3. Develop an organized plan of attack for finding the sources you’ve identified.
4. Track down your sources.
5. Record all basic information as you read each source.
6. Identify strategies for obtaining sources that are not immediately available.

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Practical Application: Beginning Your Review of the Related Literature

1. Write your research problem.
2. Identify the sub-problems.
3. Construct a set of paper note-taking forms or an electronic database.
4. Go to the library with your information-gathering system.
5. Track down your references.

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Evaluating, Organizing, and Synthesizing the Literature

- Never take other people's conclusions at face value; determine for yourself whether the conclusions are justified based on the data presented.
- Organize the ideas you encounter during your review.
- Synthesize what you've learned from your review:
 - Compare & contrast varying theoretical positions on the topic.
 - Show how approaches to the topic have changed over time.
 - Describe general trends in the research findings.
 - Identify and explain discrepant or contradictory findings.
 - Identify general themes that run throughout the literature.

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Guidelines: Writing a Clear and Cohesive Literature Review

1. Get the proper psychological orientation.
2. Have a plan.
3. Emphasize relatedness (i.e., how the literature is related to the problem).
4. Give credit where credit is due; use appropriate citations.
5. Review the literature, don't reproduce it.
6. Summarize what you've said.
7. Remember that your first draft will not be your last draft.
8. Ask others for advice and feedback.

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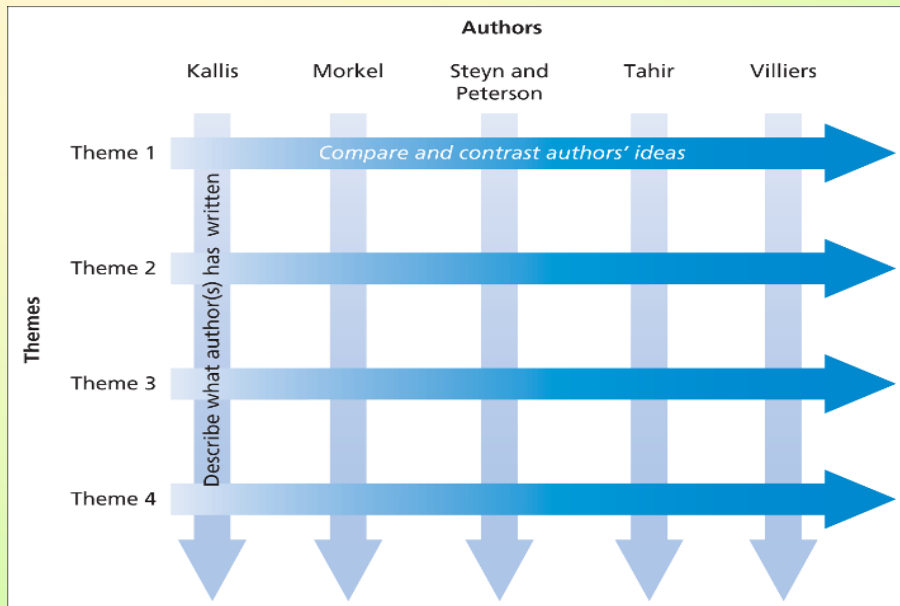
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Documenting the Literature Review

- Literature review introduces
 - Subject study
 - Highlights the problem
 - Summarizes work done so far

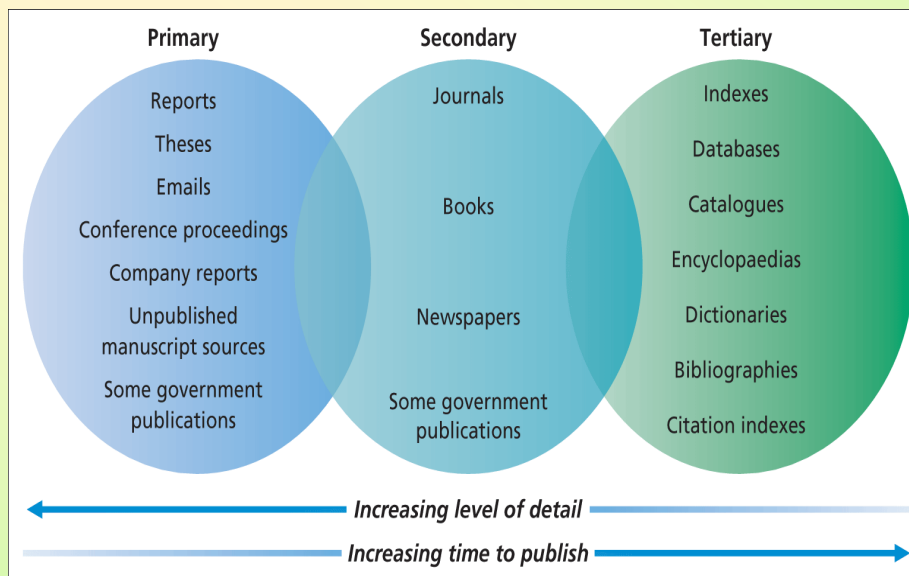
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Literature review structures



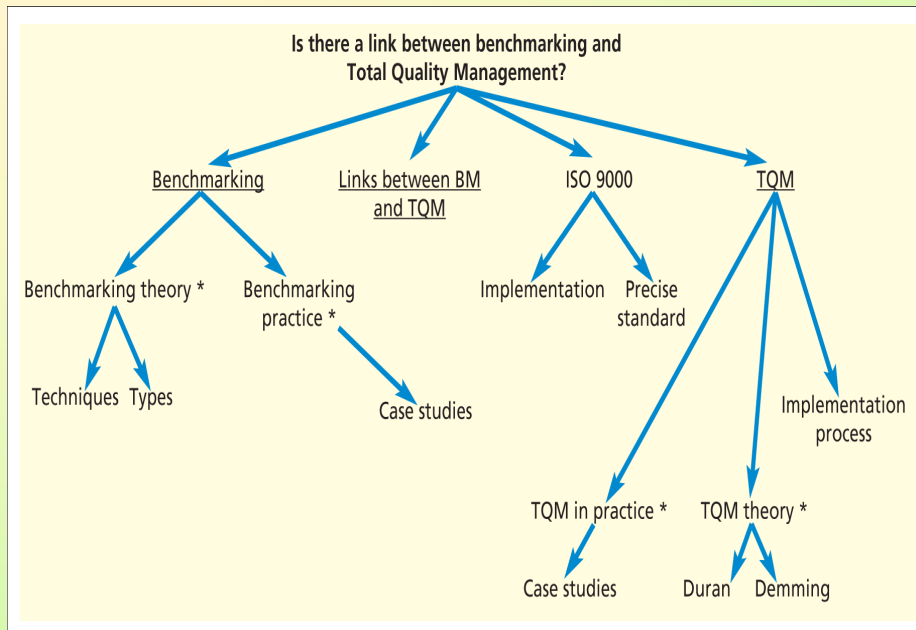
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Literature sources available



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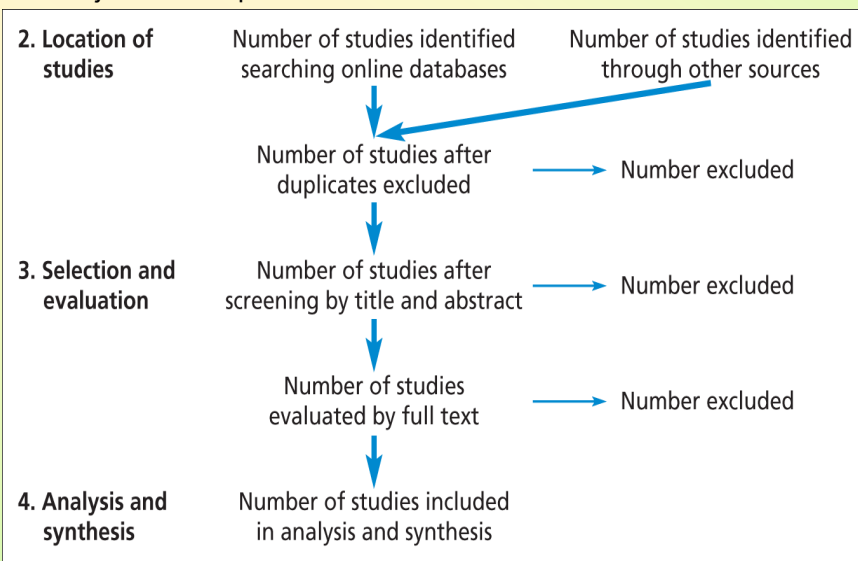
Focus on research: using a relevance tree



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Flow diagram for reporting Systematic Review study location, selection and evaluation

1. Subject and scope



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Search: Using Business Source Complete

EBSCOhost: Advanced Search

New Search | Subjects | Publications | Images | More

Sign In | Folder | Preferences | New Features! | Help

Searching: Business Source Complete, Show all | Choose Databases »

perform* OR efficient* OR productivity* OR ef in SU Subject Terms

AND work* OR job OR individual OR o in SU Subject Terms

AND financ* in Select a Field (optional)

Search Clear

Basic Search | Advanced Search | Visual Search | Search History

Search Options

Search modes

- ☒ Boolean/Phrase
- ☐ Find all my search terms
- ☐ Find any of my search terms
- ☐ SmartText Searching [Hint](#)

Apply related words ☐

Also search within the full text of the articles ☐

Limit your results

Full Text ☐

Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals ☐

References Available ☐

Published Date from

Month Year 1950 to

Month Year

29

EndNote library® screenshot Thomson Reuters

EndNote X3 - [EndNote Library_Performance]

File Edit References Groups Tools Window Help

Quick Search

Author	Year	Title	Journal	Ref Type	URL
Autrey	2010	Performance Measure Aggregation, C...	Journal of ...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Banerjee	2010	Disagreement and Learning: Dynamic ...	Journal of F...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Benson	2006	High-involvement work practices and a ...	Human Res...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Chenhade	2006	Culture Change for the Analytical Mind	Strategic Fi...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Davidson	2010			Generic	http://search.ebs
De Franco	2009	The Performance of Analysts with a CF...	Accounting ...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Edmondson	2008	The Competitive Imperative of Learning	Harvard Bu...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Fang	2009	Media Coverage and the Cross-sectio...	Journal of F...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Field	2009	Institutional versus Individual Investmen...	Journal of F...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Fitz	2009	Do VCs matter? the importance of own...	Strategic M...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Fredrickson	2010	Sharing the wealth: social companion...	Strategic M...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Gil-Bazo	2009	The Relation between Price and Perform...	Journal of F...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Hall	2008	The effect of comprehensive performa...	Accounting...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Juliano	2007	Work Design Can Decrease Costs, H...	Natural Gas...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Malghami	2010	Non-Financial Performance for Firm's ...	European J...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Mason	1979	Measurement for Management Decisi...	California ...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs
Melby	2006	Monetary Incentives and Mood	Journal of ...	Journal Arti...	http://search.ebs

Preview Search

Autrey, R. L., S. S. Dikolli, et al. (2010). "Performance Measure Aggregation, Career Incentives, and Explicit Incentives." *Journal of Management Accounting Research* 22: 115-131.

We examine a setting in which managers have differential career concerns and firm performance is publicly observed using disaggregated measures that are incrementally informative but costly to contract upon. In such a setting, when do firms contract on aggregated rather than disaggregated performance measures? We show that at intermediate levels of managerial career concerns contracting on an aggregate measure can be welfare-enhancing. In this case, the net cost of both contracting directly on an aggregate measure and exploiting career incentives based on disaggregated measures is smaller than the cost of contracting directly on disaggregated measures. Our findings also imply that detailed performance disclosures will be accompanied by lower incentive weights based on aggregate performance when career incentives mitigate distortions caused by aggregation.

Showing 30 of 30 references.

Ready

Hide Tab Pane

NLM

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QUALITY LITERATURE REVIEWS

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Quality literature reviews

- Authoritative
- Comprehensive
- Readability
- Clarity
- Focused (yet wide-ranging)
- Criticality
- Synthesis
- Coherence (within overall thesis)

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Authoritative sources

- What is an authoritative source?
- What is generally not an authoritative or reliable source?
- What might be the grey areas between the two?

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Authoritative

- Refereed journal articles (so try to develop a sense of the main journals in your field)
- books
- book chapters (from major publishers)
- Up-to-dateness vs. awareness of history of field (eg classic references)

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Synthesis

- What are the major findings from the studies that you have reviewed?
Likely to result in a series of main themes
- Describe or restate what is missing in the literature (i.e. your research gap)
(Creswell, 2012)

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Coherence

- The literature review needs to cohere with the findings and significance of the study
- So it will usually be revised significantly during the research writing process

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Enhancing depth and readability

- Some literature reviews are fragmented and difficult to read
- Possible strategy:
Devote part of the literature review to the detailed discussion of key studies and their context; purpose; methods; results; and relevance to your study

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Developing an argument

- Avoid too much “He Says, She Says”
- Avoid too many references in brackets for a single point (A, 2003; B, 2005; C, 1999; D, 2004; E 2011; F, 2010)
- Good LR contains synthesis, summing-up and shows linkages to your research

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Reading on literature review

- Boote, D. & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: on the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 3-15.