



---

## ROLE & CONCEPT OF LITERATURE REVIEW

---

**Dr Rajesh Kumar Mangla**

Associate Professor, NGF College of Engineering & Technology, Palwal

*Corresponding Author- Dr Rajesh Kumar Mangla*

*E mail: [rajeshmangla2014@gmail.com](mailto:rajeshmangla2014@gmail.com)*

---

### **Abstract**

*Literature Review is a very significant component of any research paper. A literature review stands not just for a synopsis of previous research materials; rather it is an imperative document for organizing and making accessible the most important findings in an area of analysis and research. It surveys scholarly articles, books, dissertations etc., significant to a particular issue or an area of study, providing a depiction and important assessment of the subject. The key center of a scholastic research document is to extend a novel argument, and a research paper contains a literature review as one of its ingredients. Literature review is not only an important, but also an indispensable ingredient of any research or dissertation papers.*

**Key Words:** *Synopsis, imperative document, analysis, assessment, dissertation papers.*

---

### **Introduction**

A literature review is a specific type of research paper that focuses on published literature on a given topic. It is often the first step in doing original research. Most often associated with academic-oriented literature, such as a thesis, a literature review usually precedes a research proposal and results section. It is designed to fill in a gap in knowledge. It helps to organize and interpret a body of professional literature. Literature reviews as secondary sources, do not report any new or original experimental work. Its main goal is to situate the current study within the body of literature and to provide context for the particular reader. A literature review usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. A summary is a recap of the important information while synthesis is a re-organization or a reshuffling of that information. It gives a new interpretation of old material or combine new with old interpretations.

### **Basic Concept**

Literature review is a crucial part of any research paper. A literature review stands not just for a summary of previous research materials; rather it is a vital document for organizing and making accessible the major findings in an area of inquiry and research. It surveys scholarly articles, books, dissertations etc., relevant to a particular topic or an area of research, providing a description and critical evaluation of the topic. “A literature review is the study of what has been published on a certain topic by accredited scholars and researchers. It is often a part of the

introduction to an essay, research report, or thesis. **Taylor [4]** mentioned that people writing the literature review, try to **convey** to their readers what **knowledge** and **ideas** have been established on a topic, and what their **strengths** and **weaknesses** are” (1)

A literature review is basically a scholarly document that reviews published research information in order to determine what is known. In the context of a research paper, the literature review is a critical synthesis of previous research and its evaluation leads logically to the research questions. So, when we have a specific question on a topic, we go to the research literature and find out what other researchers already know about the topic. It is not a paper explaining “how to do” something or an introduction to a topic. It is not a paper on a topic either. It is a paper on the research about a topic which is introduced to determine what the research says—and doesn’t say—about the topic. “A literature review is a text written by someone to consider the critical points of current knowledge including substantive findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic.” (2) The main focus of an academic research paper is to develop a new argument, and a research paper contains a literature review as one of its parts. In a research paper, we use the literature as a foundation and as support for a new insight that we contribute. The focus of a literature review, however, is to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of others without adding new contributions. “Just like most academic papers, literature reviews have at

least three basic elements: an introduction or background information section; the body of the review containing the discussion of sources; and, finally, a conclusion and/or recommendations section to end the paper. Our main objective is to present the material, not the argument.” (3)

**Like primary research, a literature review generally has following four stages:**

1. Problem formulation—which topic or field is being examined and what are its component issues?
2. Literature search—finding materials relevant to the subject being explored
3. Data evaluation—determining which literature makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the topic
4. Analysis and interpretation—discussing the findings and conclusions of pertinent literature

**It has following four main elements:**

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 categories (e.g. those in support of a particular position, those against, and those offering alternative theses entirely)
3. 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

According to Cooper (1988) "a literature review uses as its database reports of primary or original scholarship, and does not report new primary scholarship itself. The primary reports used in the literature may be verbal, but in the vast majority of cases reports are written documents. The types of scholarship may be empirical, theoretical, critical/analytic, or methodological in nature. Second a literature review seeks to describe, summarize, evaluate, clarify and/or integrate the content of primary reports". (4)

#### **Purposes**

Purpose of literature review is to convey to our reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. It identifies areas of gap/controversy and establishes a theoretical framework in the subject area in order to formulate further research oriented questions that bring forth the future course of research direction in the concerned field. Its basic objective is to find the basic developments and trends in the research field like what are the schools of

thought? What are the primary issues in the field? What are the most commonly researched topics? How can the topic be organized and categorized? “Besides, a literature review also helps the researcher to identify the research trend in this area, and adjust the future scope of the research. A literature review goes beyond the information search. It helps us identify and articulate the relationships between the literature and our field of research. Boote, D.N. & Beile have summarized following basic purposes for a literature

review: (5)

1. It provides a context for the research and justifies the research,
2. It ensures the research has not been done before or there are gaps in previous researches,
3. It shows where the research fits into the existing body of knowledge,
4. It enables the researcher to learn from previous theory on the subject,
5. It assists on refining, refocusing or even changing the topic.”(5)

#### **Role and Importance**

Literature review is a tool to make clear for a reader what the research collectively indicates with regard to a particular issue or question. In the context of a research paper on a thesis, the literature review provides a background to the study being proposed. **Literature review also provides new information and serves as a critical appraisal. Thus,** Research is made in order to inform people with new knowledge or discovery and to make our research more credible.

In a literature review, we remain dispassionate and objective. This is difficult when we write about an issue. A literature review brings up both sides of the issue and we have to write objectively about both sides, even the positions with which we disagree. We simply report what the research says. We don't just summarize it; rather we assess and evaluate the literature. If we just summarize what we've found, then it's a book report, not a literature review. A literature review doesn't only report on what the research says, but also, it critically analyzes that literature. Literature review is not only a significant, but also a necessary part of any research or dissertation papers. Our opinions about the facts are supported by citing what other reliable authors have said about our topic. The inclusion of a certain work in our review should be justified so as to make it authentic and reliable. It not only convinces the readers but also builds the stronger foundation for our paper.

“So a literature review is said to be a piece of **discursive prose**, not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another. It is basically the document of our own analysis. That’s why we write purely about related works of other people and do not include subjective approach.” (6)

"Research **literature reviews** can be contrasted with more subjective examinations of recorded information. When doing a research review, you systematically examine all sources and describe and justify what you have done. This enables someone else to reproduce your methods and to determine objectively whether to accept the results of the review. (7) "In contrast, subjective reviews tend to be idiosyncratic. Subjective reviewers choose articles without justifying why they are selected, and they may give equal credence to good and poor studies. The results of subjective reviews are often based on a partial examination of the available literature, and their findings may be inaccurate or even false."(7)

One of the important roles of a literature review is the analysis and synthesis of the literature. Literature reviews are not just summaries of a bunch of studies. They tie the studies together into a whole, and makes meaning out of the findings of the many separate studies. It sets the research direction and serves a stimulus to the advance of the researcher’s own thoughts and ideas that becomes the basis for new knowledge acquisition. “Literature review presents only highly relevant information to analyze the main ideas and logics of a source in order to further increase the reliability of our research results. A thorough review of literature provides the backdrop to, and reasons for, conducting the research.”

### Conclusion

Literature reviews provide us with a handy guide to a particular topic. For professionals, they are useful reports that keep them up to date with what is current in the field. For scholars, the depth and breadth of the literature review emphasizes the credibility of the writer in the respective field. Literature reviews also provide a solid background for a research paper’s investigation. Comprehensive knowledge of the literature of the field is required to most of our research papers. **It provides** an overview of significant published research information on a topic that critically analyzes a segment of a literature of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies and theoretical articles. A literature review is usually organized around

ideas, not the sources themselves. It is a critical synthesis and evaluation of the available research material. Thus, a literature review is a vital piece of discursive prose, organized into sections that present themes and identify trends, including relevant theory. A theoretical context can enable meaningful synthesis and interpretation of my research findings.

### References:

- 1.taylor, d. (2010). The literature review: a few tips on conducting it. Retrieved from <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review> at may 17th, 2010
- 2.dellinger, a. (2005). "validity and the review of literature". *Research in the schools*; 12(2), pp. 41-54. Anson, chris m. And robert a. Schwegler, the longman handbook for writers and readers. Second edition. New york: longman, 2000.
- 3.h. Cooper. (1998). "synthesizing research: a guide for literature reviews."
- 4.boote, d.n. & beile, p. (2005). Scholars before researchers: on the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational researcher* 34/6, 3-15.
- 5.<http://primedissertations.com/blog/importance-of-literature-review/>
- 6.“arlene fink, conducting research literature reviews: from the internet to paper. Sage, 2009”