



PRE-PH.D. COURSE WORK
PAPER-1: RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES
UNIT-1
TOPIC: LITERATURE SURVEY TOOLS

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OUTLINE

- ❖ What is literature survey?
- ❖ Why we need literature survey?
- ❖ What are the steps involved in literature survey?

WHAT IS LITERATURE SURVEY?

- ❖ A literature survey is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing you to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research.
- ❖ Literature survey involves finding relevant publications (such as books and journal articles), critically analyzing them, and explaining what you found. There are five key steps:
 1. **Search** for relevant literature
 2. **Evaluate** sources
 3. **Identify** themes, debates and gaps
 4. **Outline** the structure
 5. **Write** your literature review

WHY WE NEED LITERATURE SURVEY?

The literature review gives you a chance to:

- ❖ Demonstrate your familiarity with the topic and scholarly context
- ❖ Develop a [theoretical framework](#) and [methodology](#) for your research
- ❖ Position yourself in relation to other researchers and theorists
- ❖ Show how your research addresses a gap or contributes to a debate

What are the steps involved in literature survey?

STEP 1: SEARCH FOR RELEVANT LITERATURE

Before you begin searching for literature, you need a clearly defined topic.

❖ MAKE A LIST OF KEYWORDS:

Start by creating a list of keywords related to your research question. Include each of the key concepts or variables and list any synonyms and related terms.

❖ SEARCH FOR RELEVANT SOURCES

Use your keywords to begin searching for sources. Some useful databases to search for journals and articles include:

- University's library catalogue
- Google scholar
- JSTOR
- EBSCO
- Medline (life sciences and biomedicine)
- Inspec (physics, engineering and computer science)
- Etc.,

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STEP 2: EVALUATE AND SELECT SOURCES

It is not possible to read absolutely everything that has been written on the topic – so we have to evaluate which sources are most relevant to your questions.

For each publication, we need to ask:

- ❖ What question or problem is the author addressing?
- ❖ What are the key concepts and how are they defined?
- ❖ What are the key theories, models and methods? Does the research use established frameworks or take an innovative approach?
- ❖ What are the results and conclusions of the study?
- ❖ How does the publication relate to other literature in the field? Does it confirm, add to, or challenge established knowledge?
- ❖ How does the publication contribute to your understanding of the topic? What are its key insights and arguments?
- ❖ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the research?

NOTE: TAKE NOTES AND CITE YOUR SOURCES

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STEP 3: IDENTIFY THEMES, DEBATES, AND GAPS

To begin organizing our literature survey's argument and structure, we need to understand the connections and relationships between the sources we have read. Based on our reading and notes, we can look for:

- ❖ **Trends and patterns** :Do certain approaches become more or less popular over time?
- ❖ **Themes**: What questions or concepts are repeated across the literature?
- ❖ **Contradictions**: Where do sources disagree?
- ❖ **Pivotal publications**: Are there any influential theories or studies that changed the direction of the field?
- ❖ **Gaps**: What is missing from the literature? Are there weaknesses that need to be addressed?

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STEP 4: OUTLINE YOUR LITERATURE REVIEW'S STRUCTURE

There are various approaches to organizing the body of a literature review. We should have a rough idea of our strategy before you start writing.

❖ **CHRONOLOGICAL**

The simplest approach is to trace the development of the topic over time. Try to analyze patterns, turning points and key debates that have shaped the direction of the field.

❖ **THEMATIC**

If we find some recurring central themes, we can organize your literature review into subsections that address different aspects of the topic.

❖ **METHODOLOGICAL**

If we draw our sources from different disciplines or fields that use a variety of [research methods](#), we might want to compare the results and conclusions that emerge from different approaches. For example:

- Look at what results have emerged in [qualitative versus quantitative research](#)
- Discuss how the topic has been approached by empirical versus theoretical concept

❖ **THEORETICAL**

A literature survey is often the foundation for a [theoretical framework](#). We can use it to discuss various theories, models, and definitions of key concepts.

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STEP 5: WRITE

Like any other [academic text](#), our literature survey should have an [introduction](#), a main body, and a [conclusion](#). What we include in each depends on the objective of our literature survey.

THANK YOU