Literature Reviews

Purposes and Phases

Roles of a LR

- delimiting the research problem,
- seeking new lines of inquiry,
- avoiding fruitless approaches,
- gaining methodological insights,
- identifying recommendations for further research, and
- seeking support for grounded theory.

Reasons for a LR

- distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done,
- discovering important variables relevant to the topic,
- synthesizing and gaining a new perspective,
- identifying relationships between ideas and practices,
- establishing the context of the topic or problem,
- rationalizing the significance of the problem,
- enhancing and acquiring the subject vocabulary,
- understanding the structure of the subject,
- relating ideas and theory to applications,
- identifying the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used, and
- placing the research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments.

Cooper's Taxonomy

Characteristic	Categories
Focus	Research outcomes
	Research methods
	Theories
	Practices or applications
Goal	Integration
	(a) Generalization
	(b) Conflict resolution
	(c) Linguistic bridge-building
	Criticism
	Identification of central issues
Perspective	Neutral representation
	Espousal of position
Coverage	Exhaustive
	Exhaustive with selective citation
	Representative
	Central or pivotal
Organization	Historical
	Conceptual
	Methodological
Audience	Specialized scholars
	General scholars
	Practitioners or policymakers
	General public

From "Organizing Knowledge Synthesis: A Taxonomy of Literature Reviews," by H. M. Cooper, 1988, *Knowledge in Society, 1, p. 109.*

Phases

1. Problem formulation
2. Data collection
3. Data evaluation
4. Analysis and interpretation
5. Public presentation

Problem Formulation

- Research Question
  - Is determined by the Focus and Goal of the review
- Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
  - Defines which studies will be included and which will be excluded
  - Influenced by Focus, Goal, and Coverage
  - *Reliability* = two people will define the same final set of studies based solely on the I/E criteria

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takes time, a lot of time…

Data Collection

- Automatic
- Manual
  - References
  - Experts
  - Citations
- Filtering
  - Using the inclusion and exclusion criteria

Data Evaluation

- Data Extraction
  - Coding "book" or extraction sheets
  - Guided by the research questions
- Quality Analysis
  - More or less relevant depending on the Focus and Goal

Analysis and Interpretation

- Qualitative Reviews
  - Coding (Grounded Theory)
  - Constant Comparisons
  - Thematic Analysis
  - Mappings and other forms of information display
- Quantitative Reviews
  - Meta-analysis
- Mixed-methods Reviews

Public Presentation

- Guidelines for presentation
- Display of large amounts of information
- Short and long presentations

Analysing LR

- Each group will evaluate the quality of two literature reviews (the site has a list of 10)

- Using:
  - Bootes and Beile five-category rubric
  - and the following process: