



# Review of Literature

# Literature Review is:

- ◆ A systematic study, survey and interpretation of the material published on a particular topic ( Babbie, 2002).
- ◆ This involves the review prior work done in the particular area of interest. This body of previous work is referred to as the literature.

# Literature Review involves a summary of:

**Conceptual** - Theoretical grounding (basic theoretical knowledge) for the study - how others have defined the problem and related concepts.

**Research** - what relationships have been identified between variables in previous studies – findings and conclusions of prior studies.

◆ Only relevant, reputable sources should be cited - no opinionated, unsubstantiated sources



# The Value of a Literature Review

- ◆ The literature review is helpful in two ways:
  - ◆ Helps researchers present the ideas of others interested in a particular research question
  - ◆ Allows them to see the results of similar studies performed or questions answered
- ◆ This is usually required for theses and dissertations.
- ◆ Researchers need to know what has taken place in other work related to their study, **and Literature Review helps to provide this knowledge.**
- ◆ Researchers also need to evaluate this work to determine its relevance to their research question.
- ◆ **Literature Review helps to enhance and add to what others have already done.**



# Types of Sources

- ◆ Researchers need to be familiar with **three** basic types of sources:
  - General references: most are either indexes or abstracts listed by the author, title, or place of publication
  - Primary sources: publications found in journals published monthly or quarterly
  - Secondary sources: textbooks where authors describe the works of others
- ◆ The two methods used to perform a literature review are:
  - ◆ Manually: traditional paper approach
  - ◆ Electronically: use of a computer



# Steps involved in a Literature Search

- ◆ Define the research problem as precisely as possible
- ◆ Look at relevant secondary sources
- ◆ Select one or two appropriate general reference works
- ◆ Formulate search terms pertinent to the problem
- ◆ Search the general references for relevant primary sources
- ◆ Obtain and read relevant primary sources; note and summarize key points in the sources



# Doing a Computer Search

- Many online computer terminals are linked to one or more information retrieval systems (i.e., ERIC).
- Steps involved in a computer search are as follows:
  - ◆ Define the problem as precisely as possible
  - ◆ Decide on the extent of the search (number of references)
  - ◆ Decide on the database (i.e., ERIC)
  - ◆ Select descriptors (words that tell the computer what to search for), a.k.a Boolean operators
  - ◆ Conduct the search by entering them into the computer
  - ◆ Obtain a printout of desired references



# Researching the World Wide Web

- ◆ A vast reservoir of information on all topics.
- ◆ Using the WWW is an essential element when performing a literature review, despite the use of ERIC and other databases of choice
- ◆ Use of the following is essential when searching on the WWW:
  - Use of a Web Browser:
  - Use of search engines (programs that allow extensive searches throughout the WWW by indexing them via the description typed)
  - Use of directories (websites linked by similar categorical terms)





# Advantages of Searching the World Wide Web

- ◆ **Currency** – Information is current and up-to-date
- ◆ **Access to a wide variety of materials**
- ◆ **Varied formats** – To meet various needs
- ◆ **Immediacy**- Information is immediately available



# Disadvantages of Searching the World Wide Web

- ◆ Disorganization
- ◆ Validity of information sometimes not known
- ◆ Outdated web sites
- ◆ Lack of empirical or peer-reviewed studies
- ◆ Possible hidden costs



# USING YOUR LIBRARY TIME EFFICIENTLY

- ◆ Identify the key search concept and terms before going to the library.
- ◆ Check catalogue to determine what is available
- ◆ Compile a tentative bibliography.
- ◆ Commence search systematically – Journals then books then official reports and so on.
- ◆ Make use of Indexes, Abstracts, and Other General References.
- ◆ Use electronic search tools



# USING YOUR LIBRARY TIME EFFICIENTLY cont...

- ◆ Select citations that are relevant to your topic.
- ◆ Record all basic information as you read each source.
- ◆ Organize and edit materials.
- ◆ Identify strategies for obtaining additional sources not available in library.



# Literature Review Report

- ◆ A literature review report consists of:
  - ◆ Introduction
  - ◆ Body of the review
  - ◆ Summary
  - ◆ Researcher's conclusion
  - ◆ Bibliography
- ◆ A **meta-analysis** is a statistical procedure when the researcher averages the results of a group of selected studies to get an overall index of outcome or relationship.
- ◆ A literature review should include a search for relevant meta-analysis reports, as well as individual studies.

