



USC Libraries

Elements of a Literature Review

1. Introduction

- Describes the population of interest
- Describes the scope of the literature
- Describes how the literature relates to your topic
- Describes research questions or problem statement
- Describes the general structure of your paper

2. Discussion

- Uses organizational scheme (thematic, chronological, methodological, by results, trends, by research questions).
- Relevance– Literature reviewed should have a relationship to the research or paper topic. Omit if a direct relationship between your research questions/problem is not evident.

3. Conclusion

- Summarize major contributions to the body of knowledge under review.
- Evaluate the body of knowledge for methodological flaws or gaps in the research.
- Conclude by providing insight into the relationship between the reviewed material, your questions/problem and the discipline or profession

1. A literature review is an accurate account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers.

2. A literature review is not just a report or summary of publications and studies. It is a critical appraisal of strengths and weaknesses in the existing literature.

3. In addition to being an evaluation and critical appraisal, it should show the relationships between different works, and show how the

literature relates to your work.

4. The literature review should have a clear organizational scheme. This aids in the writing process. Once the scheme is established be sure to stay true to it.

Chronological

Thematic

Advancements or trends

Methodological

Geographical

Publication

Research Questions of the Literature

Research Questions from your paper

Theoretical Framework

Issues within the Topic

Interventions