



IV Odense Workshop on International Entrepreneurship Workshop 8 - May 20, 2021, 3:15-5:15pm

Literature Reviews in IE: Types, Approaches and Best Practices

“A subject advances when studies are designed in a way that builds logically based on the findings of prior studies” (J. Paul)

Workshop host: Dr Alex Rialp Criado
Full Professor in Business Organization
Dep. of Business (B Building)
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
08193 Bellaterra (Barcelona), España (Spain)
Tfn: +34 93 581 22 68
E-mail: Alex.Rialp@uab.cat

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES:

- To outline different types and approaches for conducting a thorough literature review in a given topic/field (theories, constructs, and methods).
- To emphasize the application of this research strategy in the IE discipline by providing insightful viewpoints from experienced experts in this research field.
- To discuss about and stimulate more contribution-focused and potentially publishable literature reviews in IE.



GUEST PRESENTERS

- Nicole Coviello, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada
- Rubina Romanello, University of Udine, Italy
- Tuija Mainela, University of Oulu, Finland

INTRODUCTION – What is a LR?

“A **literature review** is a written document that presents a logically argued case founded on a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge about a topic of study. This case establishes a convincing thesis to answer the study’s question.” (Machi & McEvoy, 2016)

A more or less ‘systematic’ way of collecting and synthesizing previous research (findings) in an accurate, precise and trustworthy manner within a given field, domain and/or discipline (Snyder, 2019)

Review Papers In General Aim to:

- Resolve definitional ambiguities and outline the scope of the topic.
- Provide an integrated, synthesized overview of the current state of knowledge.
- Identify inconsistencies in prior results and potential explanations.
- Evaluate existing theoretical and methodological approaches and unique insights.
- Develop conceptual frameworks to reconcile and extend past research.
- Describe research insights, existing gaps, new research questions and future research directions.

The Process of Conducting (and assessing the quality) of a Literature Review

(Liberati et al., 2009; Tranfield et al., 2003; Torraco, 2005; Wong et al., 2013, in Snyder, 2019)

Phase 1: design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is this review needed and what is the contribution of conducting this review?• What is the potential audience of this review?• What is the specific purpose (objective/s) and research question(s) this review will be addressing?• What is an appropriate method or review approach to use of this review's specific purpose?• What is the search strategy of relevant literature for this specific review? (including search terms, databases, inclusion and exclusion criteria etc.)
Phase 2: conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the search plan developed in phase 1 work to produce an appropriate and trustful final sample or does it need adjustment?• What is the practical plan for selecting sources and articles?• How will the search process and selection be documented?• How will the quality of the search process and selection be assessed?
Phase 3: analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What type of information needs to be abstracted from the data to fulfill the purpose of the specific review?• What type of information and data analysis technique/s is needed to conduct the specific analysis?• How will authors ensure the quality of this review process?• How will analysis be documented and reported?
Phase 4: structuring and writing the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are the motivation and the need for this review clearly communicated?• What standards of reporting are appropriate for this specific review?• What information needs to be included and synthesized in the review?• Is the level of information provided enough and appropriate to allow for transparency and replicability so readers can judge the quality of the review?• Are the review results clearly shown together with directions for further research?• Is the contribution of the review useable and clearly communicated?

General Types of Review Papers

(Palmatier et al., 2018; Paul and Rialp, 2020)

Domain-based reviews: Review, synthesize, and extend a body of literature in a given substantive domain/topic.

- Structured / Framework-based review (e.g. TCCM, 5Ws, A-P/D-O)
- Bibliometric review
- Hybrid review (SLR/narrative; structured/bibliometric)
- Review aiming for theory development

○ **Theory-based reviews:** Review, synthesize, and extend a body of literature that uses a given underlying theory/ies.

○ **Method-based reviews:** Review, synthesize, and extend a body of literature that uses a given underlying method/s.

○ **Meta-analytic (or effect focused) reviews:** Pooling the results from various (quantitative) empirical studies in order to estimate the overall effect size of a particular variable by correcting the various methodological errors of individual studies.

Main Approaches of Review Papers (Palmatier, 2018; Snyder, 2019)

Systematic reviews and meta-analysis

Aimed to comprehensively identify and synthesize research that bears on a particular question, using organized, transparent, and replicable procedures at each step in the process. Positivist, quantity-based, theory-driven

Traditional, narrative reviews

Discuss current knowledge about a research domain in a narrative manner usually without an explicit and exhaustive methodology for selecting and evaluating included literature. Interpretivist, quality-based, discourse-oriented

Integrative/critical reviews

The aim is to assess, critique, synthesize and/or integrate the literature on a research topic in a way that enables new theoretical frameworks and perspectives to emerge.

International Journal of Management Reviews (IJMR)

Reviewing the literature?

Systematic literature reviews

Conceptual papers

Bibliometric analysis

Traditional
narrative

Meta-
ethnography

Realist
synthesis

Meta-
narrative

Design
synthesis

Meta
analysis

Constructivism

Critical realism

Positivism

- IJMR papers dominated by traditional narrative and SLRs
- More innovatory approaches to literature reviews in business & management

Systematic Literature Review (SLR) (Palmatier, 2018)

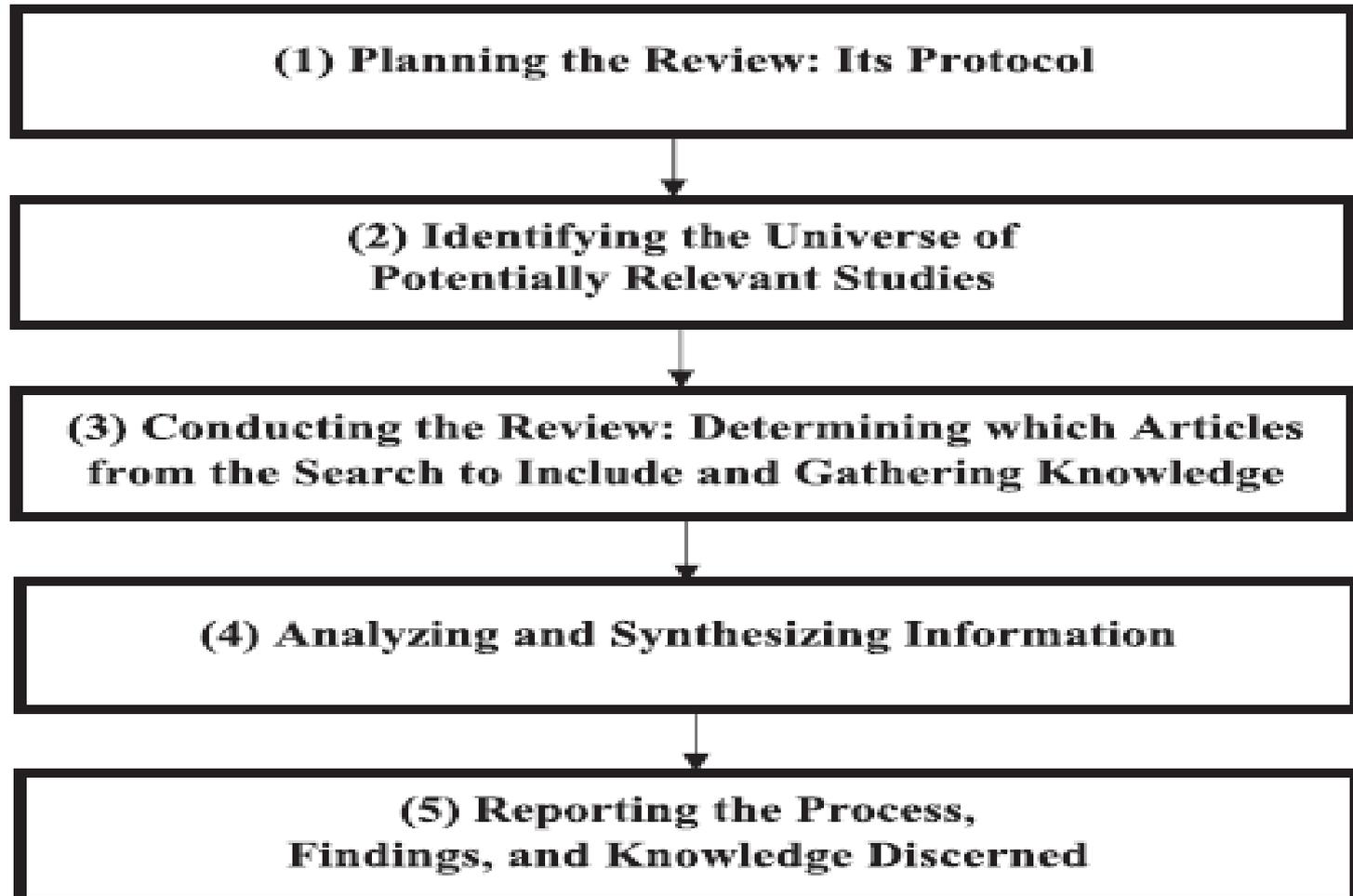
Process

1. Topic formulation
2. Study design
3. Sampling
4. Data collection
5. Data analysis
6. Reporting

Structural components

- Depth and rigor (reliability)
- Replicability
- Usability
- Helpful format

SLR execution (Williams et al., 2020)



What makes a review article potentially contributive (checklist)?

- Is field/sub-field mature to warrant an extensive review?
- Is the review coherently bounded?
 - What has been included/excluded?
- A synthesis & evaluation of existing state of knowledge?
- An adequate categorisation of themes and sub-themes?
- A complete analysis of the literature?
 - Contrasting theories, methods/methodologies
 - Strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and risks
 - Agreement and disagreements on findings
- Authoritative conclusions about the current state of literature?
- Does the review identify gaps & future research directions?
- Clear about contributions to theory, practice & policy?

Up-to-date developments in LRs

- Conducting SLRs and bibliometric analyses in Business and Management
 - (Linnenluecke et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2020)
- Conducting SLRs in Entrepreneurship
 - (Kraus et al., 2020)
- Theory-building review articles
 - (Post et al., 2020)
- Methodological reviews and meta-analysis
 - (Arguiris et al., 2020; Steel et al., 2021)

Food for thought – Open discussion

- Is there room for more novel, thorough, contributive and distinctive LRs in IE (versus parent disciplines IB/IM/E)?
 - Acknowledging previous LRs in IE (strengths/weaknesses)
 - Broader/narrower review purpose/RQ?
 - Focus on cross-disciplinarity: international AND entrepreneurial behavior (theories, constructs, contexts, methods) and multi-level frameworks (i.e. A-P-O)
 - Single author or multiple, complementary reviewer team?
- Which type/approach to use (some blurred boundaries)?
 - Single: structured or SLR vs. NR; bibliometric review; meta-analysis
 - Hybrid/combinative: SLR+bibliometric/meta-analytic review, integrative-critical SLR, Qualitative (narrative)+SLR...
- Reliable and replicable procedures: key challenges?
- How to build a more creative, well-grounded and substantial future research agenda in IE?

Further Readings

Aguinis, H., Ramani, R. S., & Alabduljader, N. (2020). Best-Practice Recommendations for Producers, Evaluators, and Users of Methodological Literature Reviews. *Organizational Research Methods* (forthcoming)

Aria, M., & Cuccurullo, C. (2017). Bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. *Journal of Informetrics*, 11(4), 959-975.

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- Kraus, S., Breier, M., & Dasí-Rodríguez, S. (2020). The art of crafting a systematic literature review in entrepreneurship research. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* , 16(3), 1023-1042.
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- Webster, J & Watson, R.T. (2002). Analysing the Past to Prepare for the Future: Writing a Literature Review. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(2), 13-23.
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(Some) Guiding Books

- Bryman, A, (2008). *Social Research Methods* 3rd ed., Oxford University Press (Chapter 4).
- Greener, S. (2008). *Business Research Methods*. Ventus Publishing ApS. (Chapter 2)
- Littell, J. H., Corcoran, J., & Pillai, V. (2008). *Systematic reviews and meta-analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Machi, L. A., & McEvoy, B. T. (2016). *The literature review: Six steps to success*. 3rd Edition. London: Corwin Press.
- Pettigrew, M. & Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences*. Oxford: Blackwell.