

Background of a study

It provides background information relating to the social/political/historical/ educational (etc) context of the study.

- It may include historical, cultural, political, social or organizational information about the context of the research
- May include a theoretical starting point
- May include personal motivation

Literature Review

What needs to be included in a review of the literature?

- The key issues which underlie the research project
- The major findings on the research topic, by whom and when
- The main points of view and controversies that surround the issue being investigated
- A critical evaluation of these views, indicating strengths and weaknesses of previous studies on the topic
- General conclusions about the state of the art at the time of writing, including what research still needs to be done; that is, the gap that remains in the research that the study will aim to fill

Steps and strategies for writing a literature review

Steps	How to do?
Locate relevant literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sources may be in hard form as well as in soft form• Identify key authors and journals• Use Google Scholar for computerized searches• Use Tables of Contents from key journals to find relevant articles• Use reference lists from articles, books and chapters
Critically read the literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify themes in the literature• Identify strengths and weaknesses of individual articles• Identify strengths and weaknesses of the field as a whole
Prepare to write	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the expected length and format of the literature review• Make a preliminary outline• Organize the literature you will cover• Limit the scope of the review to the topic you have chosen
Write the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write the introduction• Write subsections• Combine and critically evaluate the literature• Avoid plagiarism
Indicate the gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the review to lead to your study and research question/s

Reading and summarizing previous studies

Technique	Questions to be answered
Summarizing a previous study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the major research questions or hypotheses in the study?• What were the main findings of the study?• Why was it important to carry out the research?• What is the relationship between this study and your own project?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What other research studies were conducted in the same area? • What is the relationship between these studies and your own project?
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Typical tenses used in the literature review

Tense	Example	When to use
simple present	Richard (1989) shows that..... "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A generalization is being made • A reference is being made to the state of current knowledge • Previous findings are being presented/are accepted as facts
simple past	Richard (1989) showed that"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reference is being made to a single study • A specific piece of research and its findings are being referred to
present perfect	Research has shown that"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general area of investigation or inquiry is being referred to • A general statement is made about previous research

Sample

Banking sector in Pakistan has undergone remarkable changes in recent years following the wave of deregulation and liberalization of financial sector in other parts of world. The reforms aimed at deregulation have altered the composition of banking sector in Pakistan considerably. There have been significant changes in size, structure and ownership patterns of commercial as well as consumer banks in the country after the implementation of prudential regulations which were introduced in different phases in the 1990s to make banking sector competitive.....(Background continued)

To see the impact of financial sector reforms on banking, Grabowski, Rangan and Rezvanian (1994), Berger and Mester (1997) and Humphrey and Pullley (1997), investigate the impact of deregulation on U.S. banks performance. Chaudhri (2002) and Mohan (2002) analyze the impact of liberalization on profitability of Indian banks in public sector. There are also many studies, which investigate the effect of ownership on banking performance (Bhattacharyya and Kumbhakar, 1997; Kumbhakar and Sarkar, 2002; Bhattacharyya, Lovell and Sealey, 1997).. (Continued)

Grabowski, Richard, Nanda Rangan, and Rasoul Rezvanian, 1994, "The Effect of Deregulation on the Efficiency of US Banking Firms," *Journal of Economics and Business* 46 (No. 1, February), 39-54.
 Berger, Allen N., and Robert DeYoung, 1997, "Problem Loans and Cost Efficiency in Commercial Banks," *Journal of Banking and Finance* (forthcoming).