

Tikrit University

College of Nursing

Basic Nursing Sciences



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Research Methods

(Literature Review)

by:

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Research methods

Literature Review

The second major section is the review of the literature. In some formats, the literature review is incorporated into the introduction. As the name suggests, the literature review section briefly recapitulates the work done in the field. This review need not be exhaustive; the writer should summarize only those studies most relevant to the current project. All literature reviews should be accurate and relevant.

Accuracy

A concise and accurate distillation of each study in your review is a prerequisite for any literature review. The main points of each study hypotheses that were tested, sample, method, findings, and implications should be briefly summarized. The review should be selective but thorough.

Relevance

A literature review should be more than a rote recitation of research studies. It must also contain analysis and synthesis. The writer is obligated to discuss the relevance of the past work to the current study. What theoretic development can be seen in past work? What major conclusions have recurred? What were some common problems? How do the answers to these questions relate to the current study? The ultimate aim of the review is to show how your study evolved out of past efforts and how the prior research provides a justification for your study.

Methods

The methods section describes the approach used to confront the research problem. Some of the topics that are usually mentioned in this section are as follows.

1. Variables used in the analysis

This includes a description of both independent and dependent variables, explaining how the variables were selected for the study, what marker variables, if any, were included, and how extraneous variables were controlled. Each variable also requires some justification for its use variables cannot be added without reason. The mean and the standard deviation for each variable should be reported when necessary.

2. Sample size

The researcher should state the number of subjects or units of study and also explain how these entities were selected. Additionally, any departure from normal randomization must be described in detail.

3. Sample characteristics

The sample should also be described in terms of its demographic, lifestyle, or other descriptor characteristics. When human subjects are used, at least their age and sex should be indicated.

4. Methodology

Every research report requires a description of the methods used to collect and analyze data. The amount of methodological description to be included depends on the audience; articles written for journals, for instance, must contain more detailed information than reports prepared in private sector research.

5. Data manipulation

Often the collected data are not normally distributed, and researchers must use data transformation to achieve an approximation of normality. If such a procedure is used, a full explanation should be given.

Results

The results section contains the findings of the research. It typically contains the following:

1. Description of the analysis

The statistical techniques used to analyze the data should be mentioned. If the analysis used common or easily recognized statistics, a one-sentence description might be all that is needed, such as "Chi-square analyses were performed on the data" or "Analysis of variance was performed...."If appropriate, the particular statistical program used by the researcher should be identified. Finally, this part should include an overview of what is to follow: "This section is divided into two parts. We will first report the results of the analysis of variance and then the results of the regression analysis."

2. Description of findings

The findings should be tied to the statement of the hypotheses or research questions mentioned in the introduction. The author should clearly state whether the results supported the hypotheses or whether the research questions were answered. Next, any peripheral findings can be reported. Many researchers and journal editors suggest that interpretation and discussion of findings be omitted from this section and that the writer should stick solely to the bare facts. Others think that this section

should contain more than numbers, suggesting the implications of the findings as well. In fact, for some short research articles, this section is sometimes called "Findings and Discussion." The choice of what model to follow depends upon the purpose of the report and the avenue of publication.

3. Tables

Tables, charts, graphs, and other data displays should be presented parsimoniously and, if the article is being submitted to a journal, in the proper format. Remember that many readers turn first to the tables and may not read the accompanying text; consequently, tables should be explicit and easily understood by themselves.