

HELLENIC OPEN UNIVERSITY School of Social Sciences MBA Programme

Literature Survey & Evaluation of Results

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Purpose of literature survey

- To write up a literature review
 - A literature review is an account of the state of the art of the theory on a certain topic.
- The purpose of a literature review is to
 - Provide an overview of the dominant lines of thinking/ concepts/ themes and ideas around a topic
 - Identify their strengths and weaknesses
 - Identify a less-debated area or an unresolved problem in the area
 - Connect your own thoughts/ideas/questions/ or overall scope of the thesis to the literature
 - Ideally, conclude with a conceptual map that will guide the empirical part of your study

What is *not* a literature review

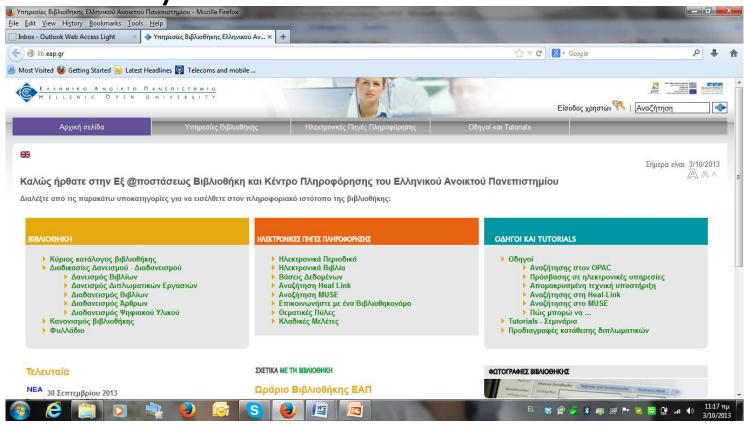
- A literature review is not a collection of short summaries of all the material you have read.
- A literature review is not a summary of key concepts/ definitions or themes found in any textbook of a particular subject area.

Types of publications

- Academic books
- Journal articles
- Government reports/ policy statements, Legislation
- Company/Industry information
- Articles from specific daily press and trade journals (<u>Attention</u>!)
- Conference proceedings
- Web sources (Attention!)

How to do a literature survey

 Start with an on-line visit to HOU library



At the library portal you can access

- The *Heal-link* service
- The JSTOR Journals Archive collection
- ISI Web of Science
- Sectoral studies (ICAP &STOCHASIS)
- E-books
- E-journals (HOU subscriptions)
- National and international
 Dissertation/Thesis databases

Tools and techniques

- Ask your supervisor for the most reputable journals in the field and access them through the HOU library portal
- Use keywords in Google Scholar to refine your search (www.google.com/scholar)
 - You can then access the results through the HOU lib portal
- Read footnotes in articles to see what sources they cite.
- Identify academic material (incl. scholars and Institutes) that is most often cited by several of your sources.

Use the web to...

- find government policy documents and legislative information
- find company information
- o find images and multimedia
- find relevant national and international statistics (e.g. ELSTAT, Eurostat, national and international observatories, OECD databases, etc).

Evaluation of survey results

Criteria to evaluate the results

- Authority: Who is the author? What university is he/she affliliated? Is it his/her area of expertise?
- Timeliness: How "fresh" is the data?
- Usefulness: How does it relate to your topic?
- Reliability: Is the material scholarly? E.g. is it published in an academic journal? If so, the last two criteria are fulfilled. If not, pay paricular attention to them.
- Accuracy: Can the data be confirmed in any way? Are there enough references to support the arguments made?
- Validity: Is the method being used sound and consistent with accepted professional and industry standards?
- Rule of thumb: Always consult your supervisor about your survey results 10

Evaluating web sources

- Is the author a well-known and well-regarded authority? Does he provide her/his credentials (e.g., education, occupation, affiliation, etc.)? Does his/her e-mail address appear clearly on the site?
- What type of organization is the publisher
- Does the site include properly referenced sources of information?
- Is the content up-to-date? Are the dates of publication and/or last update clearly stated?
- Are links to relevant information provided? Do they work?
- What is the purpose of the site (inform, persuade, advertise, influence, induce objectives, etc)?

Acknowledging literature sources in academic writing

- You need to acknowledge ALL the sources you use in your study in order to:
 - show that you have identified the most important research material published in your area of study
 - prove your good knowledge and understanding of the arguments made
 - avoid being charged for *Plagiarism*.

What is Plagiarism

- Plagiarism occurs when one obtains ideas, arguments, or pieces of someone else's work and presents them as his/her own. Plagiarism may occur when:
 - using paragraphs, sentences, phrases or even expressions by an author without acknowledgement
 - copying whole pieces from Web sites, books, articles, newspapers, magazines, speeches, etc.
 - copying art work, photos, graphs, diagrams and music
 - copying from another student
 - Not using quotation marks
 - Not paraphrasing properly

How can you acknowledge your sources

- By using a proper Referencing System, such as
 - Harvard Referencing System
 - APA
- Study the rules of the System carefully and comply with them in a precise and consistent manner.
- For more information you are advised to study The MBA Dissertation Guide
- Note that your Bibliography or List of References should <u>only</u> include items that you have actually <u>read and used</u> in your study.

Bibliography

- Bell, Judith (2010) Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science (Open Up Study Skills), 5th edition, Open University Press.
- Thomas, Gary (2013) How to Do Your Research Project: A Guide for Students in Education and Applied Social Sciences, 2nd edition, Sage Publications.

On-line tutorials on the web

- http://libguides.asu.edu/content.php?pid=2
 64100&sid=4194969
- http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/read ing-and-researching/research-usinginternet
- http://www.canberra.edu.au/pilot/module1 /index.html
- http://www.twu.edu/library/tutorials.asp