Research Proposal Writing - Part II

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Literature Review

• Literature Review can be defined in two ways:

i. First by knowing what is **NOT** Literature Review?

ii. Then, by identifying what Literature Review **SHOULD BE**.
Literature Review

- What is NOT LR?
- i. Not a bibliography or list of books, articles etc on the topic.
- ii. Not an annotated bibliography either.
- What IS LR?

A Critical review of, or engagement with, the scholarly literature on your research topic, showing the gaps in the existing knowledge on the topic.
LR: Purpose

• i. Obtaining familiarity with the existing literature on the topic.
• ii. Obtaining a critical knowledge on the existing literature on the topic.
• iii. Identifying knowledge gap/gaps in existing scholarly/research literature on the topic.
• iv. To show that you seek to address that knowledge gap through your proposed research.
LR: Advantages

• i. You become thoroughly familiar with the relevant field of scholarly literature.
• ii. You develop a critical awareness of the strength, weaknesses and gaps in the existing scholarly knowledge.
• iii. Your proposed research is not a repetition of existing research.
• iv. Helps you to refine your topic, research problem, research questions, hypothesis, and methods.
• v. You learn from abut theories, approaches, arguments, etc., available in the existing body of knowledge and enrich your own approaches, perspectives, methods, etc.

IT ENABLES AND PREPARES YOU TO BECOME A BETTER RESEARCHER.
LR: How to Begin?

LR can be done in THREE steps:

Step I: Literature Search in libraries, internet sources etc.

Step II. Preparing a Bibliography

Step III. Critical reading of the literature and taking down notes and your reflections/responses to existing literature
Writing up LR

• Writing LR in **FIVE Stages**:
  • Step I: Classify and group literature under review according to appropriate themes
  • Step II: Identify strength and weaknesses/shortcomings of existing literature by going through your notes.
  • Step III: Organize and structure your review thematically. (Don’t present your review according to alphabetical order of the literature under review. Organize the review thematically).
Writing up LR

• Step IV: At the end, highlight the strength and weakness and GAPS in existing knowledge on the topic.
• Step V: Show how your proposed research intends to fill those knowledge gaps.
Approach

• Research, in its simplest form, is an exercise in (a) collecting data and evidence on a given problem, (b) interpreting them to make a new argument and analysis, and (c) building and presenting such arguments and analysis on the basis of data and their interpretation.

• This exercise requires an approach, available within the existing traditions of research.
Approaches

- There are different approaches to research.
- DATA COLLECTION APPROACHES
  - i. Historical:
  - ii. Comparative: Contrast two or more instances
  - iii. Case Study/studies – Single case or two/several cases.
Approaches

- INTERPRETIVE/THEORETICAL APPROACHES: Examples
  - Feminist
  - Critical-legal
  - Institutional
  - Historical
  - Post-modern
  - Political economy/Marxist
  - Structuralist
Research Methods

• Methods involve **two phases**: (a) Collection of data, (B) Interpretation of data

Why Methods?

To justify your knowledge claims: **Justification**

To validate your arguments and conclusions on the basis of scientific rigour of your data and their interpretation: **Validation**
Methods

• Choice of methods depends on your research questions.
• CLASSIFICATION/TYPPOLOGY OF DATA
• Different types of data:
  • Quantitative – Qualitative
  • Primary – Secondary
  • Historical – Contemporary
  • Archival - Field
Sources of Data

• Sources:
• Archival, for secondary, historical data: Libraries, archives for books, newspapers, journals, newspapers.
• Field Research for Primary Data: Surveys, interviews, field observations etc.
• Archival research for primary data: Manuscripts, diaries, photographs, films etc.
Methodology

- Methodology refers to philosophical and theoretical justification of methods.
- In the social sciences and humanities, there are several methodological paradigms:
  - There are three main methodological traditions/paradigms;
  - Positivist (Objectivist paradigm)
  - Post-positivist (Subjectivist paradigm-constructivism, interpretivism, phenomenology, hermeneutics,)
  - Mix-Method – (Synthesis of objectivist and subjectivist paradigms)