

## Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to present a critical summary of previous research in your selected topic area. By conveying what is already known about your research topic, you are providing a larger context for your study. As you conduct your literature review, you are demonstrating an awareness of the present state of knowledge in your particular field, especially the important and relevant empirical research, theoretical and controversial issues, and breakthroughs. By comparing and contrasting different views and theoretical debates, you will be taking advantage of what others have already learned or discovered that would be applicable to your study.

Writing a good literature review demands a lot of work. You will need to determine the databases and other resources that are appropriate for your topic. An OCLS librarian (<http://www2.indwes.edu/forms/request.aspx>) can help guide you to important sources of which you may be unaware and can suggest key words and terms that are pertinent to your study. As you work your way through the relevant databases and resources, you will compile, read, and analyze the literature in your selected area. Not everything that you read will go into your literature review, however. Avoid stringing together summaries of everything that you have read. Sort through the information that you have discovered and organize and synthesize it in a way that is relevant to your study. Summarize the most important ideas and information and relate them to your study.

As you conduct your literature search, look for information that will support the existence of a problem or gap in your selected area of study. Discover methods that others have used to answer questions or meet objectives similar to those in your study, and search for surveys and tests that may help you in your study. As you write your literature review, you will be placing

each work in the context of its contribution to an understanding of your selected topic; as well, you will be describing the relationship of each source to the other works that you are considering. Finally, place your study in the context of the existing literature. Your literature review will provide a foundation for your research.

Here is an example of a literature review (Roark, 2013, p. 46):

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The construct of emotional intelligence has generated considerable interest in leadership research studies (Harms & Credé, 2010; Rajah et al., 2011; Tang, Yin, & Nelson, 2010). Tang et al. (2010) stressed the pivotal focus has been on whether emotional intelligence is an important factor that determines leadership behavior, practices, and values. At its most basic level, the construct of emotional intelligence represents abilities that join intelligence and emotion to enhance thought (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008) and refers to an individual's basic underlying capability to recognize and use emotion (Gowing, 2001). Cherniss (2010) listed three premises for the concept of emotional intelligence. First, emotions play an important role in life. Second, people vary in their ability to perceive, understand, use, and manage emotions. Finally,

Excerpted from:

Roark, C. S. (2013). *A mixed methods study exploring the relationship between servant leadership and emotional intelligence* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3601509)