

Review of Management Literature

Volume 2

**Advancing
Methodologies
of Conducting
Literature
Review in
Management
Domain**

Series Editor

Sudhir Rana

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ADVANCING METHODOLOGIES OF
CONDUCTING LITERATURE
REVIEW IN MANAGEMENT
DOMAIN

REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

Series Editor: Sudhir Rana

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REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT LITERATURE
VOLUME 2

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CONDUCTING LITERATURE
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DOMAIN**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We dedicate this volume to all the academicians, scholars, and thought leaders who are going to expand the body of knowledge by utilizing literature review methodologies.

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>About the Contributors</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xxi</i>
Parameters and Decision Elements of Writing Effective Literature Review Papers: Empirical Evidence From Multiple Stakeholders on POWER Framework	1
<i>Sudhir Rana, Jagroop Singh and Sakshi Kathuria</i>	
Systematic Literature Reviews: Steps and Practical Tips	27
<i>Hussain G. Rammal</i>	
How to Plan and Write for Systematic Literature Review Papers in Management Domain	37
<i>Rahul Dhiman, Vimal Srivastava, Anubha Srivastava, Rajni and Aakanksha Uppal</i>	
Technology and the Conduct of Bibliometric Literature Reviews in Management: The Software Tools, Benefits, and Challenges	57
<i>Alex Anlesinya and Samuel Ato Dadzie</i>	
What? Why? When? How? Where? of Technology-Based Bibliometric Review	79
<i>Shalini Sahni and Rahul Pratap Singh Kaurav</i>	
A Critical Review of Literature Review Methodologies	103
<i>Amna Farrukh and Aymen Sajjad</i>	

PRISMA for Review of Management Literature – Method, Merits, and Limitations – An Academic Review	125
<i>Vinaytosh Mishra and Monu Pandey Mishra</i>	
Realist Synthesis: An Innovative Approach to Literature Review for Complex Management Phenomena	137
<i>Ellen Pittman</i>	
<i>Index</i>	161

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 1

Figure 1. A Hierarchy Model of POWER LR Framework. 14

Chapter 2

Figure 1. Steps Involved in Conducting Systematic Literature Reviews. 32

Chapter 5

Figure 1. Growth of Bibliometrics in Business Management and Social Sciences (a) Scopus and (b) Web of Science (WOS). 80

Figure 2. Need for Literature Review. 84

Figure 3. Overall Process of Conducting Bibliometric Analysis Paper. 97

Chapter 7

Figure 1. Framework for Review of Academic Literature. 126

Figure 2. Publication Data Graph Model. 127

Figure 3. Continuum for Management LR. 128

Figure 4. Flow Chart of Stages of Literature Search. 131

Chapter 8

Figure 1. Triad of Theoretical Determinants for Public Service Performance. 147

Figure 2. Venn Diagram Describing the Scope of What Is Known From the Literature on the Interactions Between Environment, Attribute and Strategic Factors and Their Influence on Hospital Performance ($n = 98$). 154

Figure 3. Interactions Between Hospital Environment, Attribute and Strategy Factors, as Currently Discussed Within the Literature. 155

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LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1

Table 1.	A Review on Suggestions From the Editorials/Notes.	5
Table 2.	Respondent's Characteristics.	10
Table 3.	Exploratory Factor Analysis: Assessment Values.	11
Table 4.	Items Excluded During Factor Analysis.	13
Table 5.	Saatys Nine-Point Scale.	15
Table 6.	AHP Priority Weights and Ranks for POWER Parameters and Their Constituent Decision Elements.	16
	Review Paper Template.	24

Chapter 3

Table 1.	Name of the Journals Asking for SLR Papers.	39
Table 2.	Systematic versus Traditional Review.	40
Table 3.	Steps for Writing an Effective SLR.	45

Chapter 4

Table 1.	How Software Tools Facilitate Systematic Review Activities.	63
Table 2.	Software Tools That can Support the Conduct of Bibliometric Literature Reviews.	69

Chapter 5

Table 1.	Bibliometric Review Studies From Business Management and Social Sciences Discipline.	83
Table 2.	Databases for Bibliometrics.	86
Table 3.	Comparison of the Software.	90
Table 4.	Bibliometric Indicators Suitable for Performance Analysis.	92
Table 5.	List of Journals With Highest Publications of Papers With Bibliometric Analysis.	94
Table 6.	Understanding the Overall Ecosystem of Bibliometric-Based Papers.	95

Chapter 6

Table 1.	Skillset Required for Literature Review Methodologies.	116
Table 2.	Guidelines for Evaluating the Quality of Literature Review, Adapted From Snyder (2019).	118

Chapter 7

Table 1. Strategy to Achieve the Reproducibility Practice in Management Research. 129

Table 2. PRISMA Extensions Relevant to Review of Management Literature. 133

Chapter 8

Table 1. A Comparison of Realist Synthesis With Systematic and Narrative Review Methods. 140

Table 2. Defining Criteria for “Wicked Problems” and Defining Features of “Complex Problems”. 143

Table 3. Steps Involved in Planning and Conducting a Realist Synthesis. 145

Table 4. Sample Findings From a Vote Counting Synthesis of the Characteristics of Included Studies (Following Popay et al. (2006)). 152

Table 5. Sample Findings From a Vote Counting Synthesis of Evidence (Following Popay et al. (2006)). 153

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FOREWORD

It is our pleasure to introduce the second volume in the series “Review of Management Literature”. This volume focuses on literature review (LR) methodologies. Over our respective careers, we read, write, and review manuscripts, and many of us (editors) write decision letters on business management research contributions. In every case, we expect and like to see the extent to which the contribution at an individual level and the volume as a package offer a distinguished contribution/s. As knowledge and research writing impactful literature review papers continue to grow, the majority of scholars still struggle to understand the standard protocols and structures of LR papers. One of the dominant reasons is a lack of a common template and checklist that they can follow while writing their LR papers. Hence, it is pertinent to explore literature review methodologies further. This volume includes eight contributions explaining different LR methodologies. The distinguished contribution of this volume is looking to simplify the guidelines on conducting various LR studies utilizing Bibliometric, Critical, technology-based, PRISMA, and realist reviews. Additionally, the volume explains the POWER framework with empirical evidence and suggestions to write a review paper. The implications of this volume are important for scholarly communities in general and specific to those who read, write, review, and make decisions on literature review papers. This volume concretely broadens the debate on the science and methods behind LR studies.

This volume is important for both early as well as mature career scholars in exploring the ways of conducting LR studies. At the same time, we alert the authors not to showcase a few approaches just because it is important to have an approach in LR studies; instead, we motivate them to learn LR methodologies and opt for the approaches and frameworks judiciously.

This volume introduces both general guiding principles as well as specific frameworks for business management and social science scholars. We hope that this volume will foster learning and motivate more LR contributions in the business management field.

We are highly thankful to all the authors and reviewers for their valuable contributions in making this volume a useful project. And thanks to editor colleagues who agreed to spare their time and valuable knowledge in making the exclusive POWER framework introduced in this volume.

We thank all the members from the Emerald publishing team for helping us throughout this project. We highly appreciate their consistent efforts to the series Review of Management Literature.

Your suggestions and comments on this volume are warmly welcomed.

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PARAMETERS AND DECISION ELEMENTS OF WRITING EFFECTIVE LITERATURE REVIEW PAPERS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS ON POWER FRAMEWORK

Sudhir Rana, Jagroop Singh and Sakshi Kathuria

ABSTRACT

The study responds to the common concerns of authors, reviewers, and editors on writing and publishing high-quality literature review (LR) studies. First, we evolved the background and decision elements on the five parameters of a quality LR paper: Planning, Operationalizing, Writing, Embedding, and Reflecting (POWER), from the editorials and guiding literature. Statistical procedure and refinement of 256 responses from writers, reviewers, and editors revealed 37 decision elements. Finally, a multicriteria-decision-making approach was applied to the detailed responses from the lead editors of ABDC, Scopus, ABS, and WoS journals, and 31 decision elements were found strong enough to represent these five parameters on the quality of LR studies. All five parameters are found important to be considered. However, a high priority is suggested for embedding (the results coming out of the review) and operationalizing (the process of conducting the review), whereas reflection, writing, and planning of LR papers still remain important. The purpose of the POWER framework is to overcome the challenges and decision dilemmas faced by writers and decision-makers. The POWER framework acts as a guiding tool to conduct LR studies in general and business management scholars in specific ways. In addition, this study provides a checklist (Table 6) and template (Appendix A1) of a quality LR study to its stakeholders.

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Keywords: Literature review; POWER; review design; review style; review method; writing review

1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous researchers have emphasized the crucial role of literature review (LR) papers in scholarly research. These papers hold an important position in research. There are many studies available on how to craft a well-structured and effective LR paper (Bodolica & Spraggon, 2018; Fan et al., 2022; Lim et al., 2022; Patriotta, 2020; Paul & Criado, 2020; Paul et al. 2021, 2023; Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). To summarize these studies, four aspects are critical for scholars to write, review, and read the LR papers: (1) publication outlets that publish LR papers – so that you decide where to read from and where to target to publish (2) LR methods – so that you opt for the most appropriate method while performing the review, (3) type of review performed – to understand which review type is appropriate in which condition, and (4) LR frameworks – to bring quality and refinement to the review results.

Coming to the first aspect related to publication outlets, both readers and authors need to consider the publication outlets that exclusively publish LR papers. For example, the *Academy of Management Review*, *Management Review Quarterly*, *Review of Management Literature*, and *International Journal of Management Reviews*, to name some. With regular reading and engagement with LR papers on these publication outlets, research scholars gain valuable knowledge in their domains and identify possible areas for future research. Also, these outlets are multi-disciplined, so every researcher can expect something published that is closely related to their domain. Scholars who are interested in doing an LR will find unique elements, ways of presentation, and methods incorporated in these papers. Because these publication outlets focus exclusively on LR, their editorial team and reviewers also keep on building more knowledge on LR. Hence, subjectivity reduces, and quality work occurs in these publication outlets.

Moving to the second aspect of LR methods, there are two types of methods for LR: quantitative and qualitative. Also, literature can be handled manually or with the help of any tool. It can be a quantitative method such as meta-analysis or qualitative such as systematic literature review (SLR) or mixed-method combines both of these and uses text analysis or other analytical techniques such as regression analysis or correlation analysis on the previous literature.

Considering the third aspect, understanding the types of the LR is important. Often, scholars struggle to understand what type of LR they are doing and what protocols they should follow. An understanding of LR methods and types can be gained by reading Tranfield et al. (2003), Xiao and Watson (2019), Paul and Barari (2022), and Lim et al. (2022).

The fourth aspect relates to the frameworks, which are highly important in conducting LR papers. Often, LR methods are misunderstood and mixed with the LR frameworks. However, these two are different. Frameworks set the

process of shortlisting, screening, and reviewing the collected samples. A recent study by Paul et al. (2023) summarizes the frameworks for writing SLRs. The available and mostly used frameworks include (1) antecedents, decisions, and outcomes (ADO) by Paul and Benito (2018); (2) theory, context, characteristics, and methodology (TCCM) by Paul and Rosado-Serrano (2019); (3) PRISMA – preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses by Shamseer et al. (2015), and (4) 6W (who, when, where, what, why, and how) framework by Callahan (2014), and recently 6 steps and 14 decisions by Sauer and Seuring (2023). The following question arises:

Why existing frameworks are insufficient or not suitable to conduct literature review studies in business management and social science domains?

PRISMA framework is one of the most preferred frameworks in LR papers. The framework was developed keeping in mind the research published in medical journals. The framework primarily focuses on the reporting of reviews evaluating the effects of interventions with objectives other than evaluating interventions (e.g., evaluating etiology, prevalence, diagnosis, or prognosis). Surprisingly, over a period of time, we see that almost every second paper claims the use of PRISMA and misuses the citation of PRISMA to bring authentication to their LR work, without knowing the full elements and the checklist of this framework. The PRISMA-P checklist contains 17 items (with 26 sub-items) considered to be essential and minimum components of a systematic review or meta-analysis protocol (Moher et al., 2009; Shamseer et al., 2015). The PRISMA framework advises PICO (participants, interventions, comparators, and outcomes) approach, which may not reflect in the majority of research papers published in the business management and social science domains today because we are nowadays theory focused. In our papers, we always like to see the new enhancement or development toward theories and concepts. Considering the needs and nature of research publications in business management and social science areas, ADO and TCCM frameworks were adopted. But, as recently reported by Paul et al. (2023), the available frameworks have some limitations, and hence, authors need to make more careful decisions related to novelty and contribution, structuring, and enhancing future research scope.

In this study, we strengthen the previous LR frameworks by (1) consolidating the important criteria and elements of conducting LR papers from the existing frameworks and literature; (2) empirically testing these elements by collecting responses from experienced scholars, reviewers, and editors; and (3) further diving deep and prioritizing these elements by using a multicriteria decision-making (MCDM) approach from editors of high-quality journals (details are given in the research methodology section).

Elements collected from the literature are categorized under five categories: planning (P), operationalizing (O), writing (W), embedding/evaluating (E), and reflection (R), that is, POWER. In the previous version of the POWER framework (in the first volume of Review of Management Literature), we collected arguments and the need to have a framework that is not perspective-based but has scientific rigor.

2. BACKGROUND AND ARGUMENTS ON POWER FRAMEWORK

The existing frameworks (TCCM, ADO, PRISMA/PICO, 6W, etc.) come with their own strengths and challenges. The existing frameworks are more skimmed toward authors' perspectives. Something largely missing in these frameworks is: on which criteria and elements are LR papers evaluated by the reviewers and editors? What do decision-makers and readers like to see in the LR papers?

To answer these questions, we need to understand the challenges and expectations from both scholars/writers of LR papers and decision-makers on these papers (reviewers and editors). Many of these frameworks suggest some common and some unique points for scholars. Something that looks common across almost all the frameworks is emphasizing what, why, and how? However, literature also suggests emphasizing the other important elements such as structure (Fisch & Block, 2018; Palmatier et al., 2018), solving complex and fragmented bodies of knowledge (Patriotta, 2020), developing evidences (Tranfield et al., 2003), balancing breadth and depth (Fisch & Block, 2018). This brings a lot of subjectivity to both LR writers and evaluators. Hence, a complete, consolidated, and comprehensive picture would make the job of both readers and evaluators easy.

Second, the knowledge about these guiding elements of conducting LR papers is fragmented into several papers. Hence, it requires presenting a consolidated and summarized view. And to overcome the opinion conflicts, a framework based on empirical evidence would be more inclusive and scientific.

The reason authors and reviewers of LR papers often struggle with how they bring merit and meaningful arguments to their LR papers may be because of common templates and structures clearly guiding LR papers. And therefore, LR papers are judged based on the perspectives of the evaluators (reviewers) instead of having a scientific evaluation based on the set criteria. Considering the limitations of the available frameworks and having a more inclusive and scientific approach, first, we collected the arguments and criteria from the previous studies/frameworks and then performed statistical refinement as well as prioritization on these elements by using a MCDM. Taking the base from previous version of POWER framework by Rana et al. (2022), we reviewed the previous studies to re-organize the POWER framework elements.

The POWER framework is based on three criteria:

- (1) Editorials that guide LR writers (Table 1).
- (2) Frameworks and studies that guide how to conduct LR papers impactfully.
- (3) Consolidated the important elements and tested them empirically with responses from the authors, reviewers, and editors.

The major elements of an impactful LR are summarized in five measures, that is, planning, operationalization, writing, embedding, and reflecting POWER. Being inclusive and based on scientific procedure, the POWER framework is expected to be a more fit framework for business management and social science scholars in

Table 1. A Review on Suggestions From the Editorials/Notes.

Year	Editors	Title of the Editorial/ Note	Journal	Critical Points	Suggestions
2002	Webster and Watson	Analyzing the past to prepare for the future: Writing a literature review	<i>MIS Quarterly</i>	Key concepts Identifying the literature Structure of the review Tone and language Theoretical development Discussion and conclusion	Writers should understand what is expected from a review paper.
2014	Callahan	Writing literature reviews: A reprise and update	<i>Human Resource Development Review</i>	Who When Where How What Why Concise Clear Critical Convincing Contributive	Six W's of literature review methods and five C's of literature review characteristics to be checked properly.
2018	Palmatier et al.	Review articles: Purpose, process, and structure	<i>Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science</i>	Topic formulation Study design Sampling Data collection Data analysis Reporting	It is important to understand the rigor, depth, structure, and process of literature review papers.
2018	Fisch and Block	Six tips for your (systematic) literature review in business and management research	<i>Management Review Quarterly</i>	Motivation and questions Systematic way Balance between breadth and depth Meaningful conclusions Coherent article structure	It is better to have some experience in the field because the interpretation of the results is subjective and by no means trivial.
2020	Patriotta	Writing impactful review articles	<i>Journal of Management Studies</i>	Comprehensive presentation Theory building Sense making Sense giving	Developing theory through review articles requires ongoing interactions of reading and writing, sense-making and sense-giving, consumption, and production in search of interpretation.

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Year	Editors	Title of the Editorial/ Note	Journal	Critical Points	Suggestions
2021	Paul et al.	Writing an impactful review article: What do we know and what do we need to know?	<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	Reconcile conflicting findings Suggest new directions Reference to methodology, theory, constructs, and context	It is important to understand the type and methods of review articles.
2023	Kunisch et al.	Using review articles to address societal grand challenges	<i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i>	Clarifying key concepts Advancing theory Revealing assumptions, ideologies, and values Scrutinizing trustworthiness and generalizability Guiding research practices Enabling new research methods Consolidating knowledge for practice and policymaking Reflecting on utilization of knowledge Translating and contextualizing existing knowledge	Review papers should reflect on three related roles in addressing societal grand challenge: (1) advancing theoretical knowledge, (2) advancing methodological knowledge, and (3) advancing practical knowledge.
2023	Ketchen and Craighead	What constitutes an excellent literature review? Summarize, synthesize, conceptualize, and energize	<i>Journal of Business Logistics</i>	Need for the review Feasibility Coherence Future research Quality in every aspect Summary and synthesis Conceptual diagram	Four key interrelated steps are necessary: (1) Take stock of the puzzle pieces are present, (2) put these pieces together that fit synthesize, (3) figure out what the overall picture should look like, and (4) create a wish list of future puzzles to be solved.

conducting impactful LR studies, as well as bring a holistic approach between evaluators and writers to understanding what is important from a common point of view. The measures of the POWER framework are discussed next.

2.1 Planning the Review

Planning is an important phase of any project. A few critical decision aspects that we encountered for the planning phase were, how important the topic and area are that you are going to review. Who are your team members, and do they have adequate knowledge and experience of domain and LR methods? What time frame are you going to study, and why is reviewing this time frame important? Checking the feasibility of having an adequate number of papers (minimum 50) that fit your evaluation and quality criteria. While planning, you can see whether or not there is a scope for establishing future research areas (FRA) on this theme and how long that can survive and remain important. What are the driving objectives and questions supporting you to conduct this review?

2.2 Operationalizing

While operationalizing the concepts to conduct the review study, it is important to think properly about the method of review (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method). The quality of documents gets collected only when authors navigate the search to reputed databases and libraries because review results depend on the quality of the documents reviewed. Hence, it is important to select the database and libraries carefully. It is suggested that business scholars prefer their search from two primary indexes – Web of Science and Scopus. Because these indexing platforms are used as standard quality databases, authors and academic institutions consider the journals, books, and conferences indexed of them as a “quality publication.” Also, while refining the selection, you can choose to select journal quality lists. For business scholars, two lists (a) the Academic Guide by the Chartered Association of Business Schools (CABS) and journal quality list by the Australian Business Dean’s Councils (ABDC) are considered more important than others. However, one should give proper justifications and reasons for choosing the database and quality list to narrow down the documents included for review. At this stage, it is also important to think that how you are going to operationalize the review results and propose a conceptual diagram and prepositions. Are you going to reveal the possible independent, dependent, mediating, and moderating variables from the review? If yes, the method and review results should have mutual coordination.

2.3 Writing

Remember that writing is an art, but publishing is a business. The paper that we write undergoes different stages. Impressing gatekeepers (reviewers and editors) is the first job to get it published and attract readers to read and cite it (Rana et al., 2022).

However, writing is very subjective and depends on the knowledge and experience of the writers. But, something important for LR writers is to have the art of clarifying key concepts, the art of presenting the paper comprehensively and concisely, and finally, the art of integrating the concepts, methods, top journals, influencing papers in the field, and FRA. Do not give a chance to the reviewers and editors to be a proofreader of your paper; hence, make sure that the paper is free of grammatical errors. The writing should be clear, critical, and contributive. Also, researchers should be highly careful about tables and figures. Tables and diagrams should be able to provide more detailed information. Remember that the quality of the information is more important than having a large number of tables and figures in the paper. [Table 1](#) reports the suggestions for planning and conducting LR-based studies.

2.4 Embedding/Evaluating

Research in social science and management is more perspective-driven than content-driven. Hence, it becomes highly important how the writer/s interprets the findings and tie these with past, present, and future actions. Something that is important to evaluate and include in the LR papers is advancements taking place in the concepts and theories you are reviewing. The assumptions and questions that you are answering in the review should be properly evaluated. Simplify and bridge the conflicting arguments. Every editor and reviewer likes to see something new and important; hence, it is important to highlight the new knowledge that your proposed review paper is adding to the literature. Researchers' own perspectives, experience, and knowledge must reflect on making the review paper relevant to the readers (simply, you must try hard to include the information in a way that it becomes important for the readers to think about why it is important to read your review paper rather than reading several other papers that you are reviewing and summarizing).

2.5 Reflecting

Reflecting back and forward both are important. It is important to reflect the unique and important knowledge gained from the review, which gaps this review bridged, and which research questions are still mysteries to be solved. Make sure that the review paper has something for all types of readers. Have offerings for industry practitioners on advancing their practices, and for scholars to have a rich and relevant future research agenda. Make sure your future research agenda is organized in a minimum of four microareas, cite and discuss important studies related to these areas. Do not forget to acknowledge what you have not considered including in the review and why. You have not included something has two interpretations: (1) it is not so important, and that's why you have not included it, so why should others work on it? (2) it requires a different method or different skillset to explore more upon something that you left out. So be clear and authentic. The future research agenda is one central objective of the LR papers. So, it should be included carefully.