



LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature is important because “without it you will not acquire an understanding of your topic, of what has already been done on it, how it has been researched, and what the key issues are. In your written project you will be expected to show that you understand previous research on your topic. This amounts to showing that you have understood the main theories in the subject area and how they have been applied and developed, as well as the main criticisms that have been made of work on the topic.” (Hart 1998, in Bell, 2005)

LITERATURE REVIEW

- helps the researcher to see if the topic has already been researched,
- helps the researcher to see how s/he might need to revise the research idea,
- shows methodological techniques and problems specific to the research problem, and
- helps the researcher design a study.

In QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

(exploratory), literature review:

- is important during the later stages (e.g., interpreting results, discussion),
- is conducted to see what has been done and to provide sensitizing concepts, and
- minimizes the researcher's biases.

In QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH, literature review:

- must be done before conducting the study,
- helps the researcher to see if the research problem has already been done,
- shows him/her data collection instruments that have been used,
- shows designs that have been used, and
- shows theoretical and methodological issues that have arisen.

Sources of Information

Books

give researchers an overview and a summary of relevant research and theory.

Journals

provide more recent information than books and provide full length empirical research articles for researchers to carefully examine.

Internet sources

The **quality** of Internet resources:

- varies widely, and
- must be evaluated before use.