Instructions - Literature Review

The following is a complete description of each section and subsection of the literature review assessment. These instructions are also included in the concept paper template, they are meant to help guide your process as you complete each section.

[Restate the Title Here and Remove the Brackets]

The introduction to the literature review should follow immediately after the title. Its placement signals that it is an introduction and does not require a separate heading. Follow current APA guidance for creating a title. The title should be a statement and not a question. It should summarize the main idea of the paper. It should be concise and include the variables in the research and their relationship. See section 2.4 on page 31 of the APA manual. Use this space to discuss what the reader is expected to learn from the literature review. Introduce your research topic and describe the significance of your topic. Discuss how you conducted your literature search, the databases and keywords used.

Theoretical Orientation for the Research Concept

Many times, the term ‘theory’ can be conflated with other uses. In research there are about three ways that theory is applied in research. - a) empirical theories, b) theories of method, and c) theories of content.

Empirical theories are likely to drive quantitative projects. These theories are intellectual guesses, supported by the research literature, that become the impetus for initiating a quantitative research study. They guide research questions, justify what is being measured (variables) as well as how those variables are related, and guide the data collection instruments. Such theories are best described in the research question section of the paper and should make a clear connection to the research question.

Theories of method refers to the epistemological underpinnings of theories that drive decisions associated with the planning and development of research strategies. Theories of method is also understood as concept mapping. It’s a description of the research concept development with a discussion that includes a justification for making such choices. It’s helpful to include this description in the background section of the paper.

For this section of the assignment, the focus should be on theories of content. Examples of theory related to content include psychoanalytic theory, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, attribution theories, and cognitive and developmental theories. Theories of content should be identified, defined, and described with support from the theoretical and empirical literature. These theories should be grounded in psychology and provide a lens by which to understand the research topic.

With this mind, be sure to:

* Identify and define the theory(ies) that provide the foundation for the research.
* Describe the theory(ies) and explain how the research topic relates to the theory(ies).
* Include macro/umbrella theory(ies) from seminal source(s) that provide a reasonable theoretical foundation for contextualizing the research concept.

Review of the Literature

The review of literature is more than a summary of the information found through the literature search. Its purpose is to provide the context within which the project will be framed and developed. It should include a conceptually organized synthesis of the results of the process that clearly delineates what is known, what is unknown, and what is controversial regarding your topic. It is expected that you will organize topics and subtopics in the literature review thematically. Reviews that are organized article by article are not appropriate for this project.

It is important to understand that the process of finding, reviewing, synthesizing, and writing the literature review defines the theoretical framework and gives you a strong foundation from which to work when developing your research question. The literature review is part of the concept paper template, which you will use and build on throughout the course.

For this section of the assessment, the review of literature should reflect an effective understanding of the current state of empirical research on the topic. Include (1) studies describing and/or relating to the research topic, (2) studies on related research such as factors associated with the themes, (3) studies on the instruments used to collect data, (4) studies on the broad population for the study, and/or (5) studies similar to the proposed study. The themes presented and research studies discussed and synthesized in the Review of Literature need to demonstrate a working understanding of all aspects of the research topic. Analyze the relationships among the related studies instead of presenting a series of seemingly unrelated abstracts or annotations. The literature review should motivate the study. The reader should understand why the problem should be researched and why the study represents a contribution to existing knowledge.

Themes to be considered and addressed in your literature review include the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

* Themes in the literature that illuminate the history of the discipline or area of practice of your project.
* Themes in the literature that provide a theoretical background for the topic or area of practice regarding your project.
* Best practices in your area of practice or specialization.
* Themes regarding the proposed research that add something significant to the knowledge base of psychology.
* Themes that identify the standards of your profession (values, attitudes, beliefs, professional attributes) and the sources from which these are derived.

Synthesis of the Research Findings

The introductory paragraphs in this section are usually followed by a review of the literature. Show how your research builds on prior knowledge by presenting and evaluating what is known about your research topic and problem. Assume that readers possess a broad knowledge of the field but not the cited articles, books, and papers. Discuss the findings of works that are pertinent to your specific topic.

This section requires that you take the research findings, discussed in the review of literature above, and integrate the findings so that they overlap and create a new understanding of the issues that relate to your research topic. This new understanding is developed by Identifying the connection between each of the themes from the literature and deciding what argument you are making. Use those same sources to support the final point that you want readers to know.

Critique of Previous Research Methods

Critiquing research is part of the research process. This calls for an evaluation of the methods that were employed in the research that informs the research topic. To do this well, a synthesis of the methods should be conducted. This synthesis should connect with the synthesis from the previous section. That is, the research that has been reviewed and synthesized for its findings will be reviewed and synthesized for its methods. Evaluate the various methodologies and designs that have been used in prior empirical research related to your research topic. Discuss how the methods helped advance the knowledge base, discuss the strengths of the methods, and what you might change to boost the research. Must include supporting examples with proper citation.

Summary

Restate the main arguments/points that were made throughout the paper provide supporting citations. The summary section reflects that the learner has done their "due diligence" to become well-read on the topic and can demonstrate that this research concept can potentially add to the existing body of research and knowledge on the topic. It synthesizes the information to define the "gaps" in or "identified research needs" arising from the literature and the theory(ies) to provide the foundation for the study.

Additional Requirements

* Formatting: Use the Concept Paper Template to complete your assessment. It has been created to reflect the proper structure. To avoid missing content and losing points, please do not modify the template.
* Font: New Times Roman, 12 points, double-spaced, or any other font that complies with current APA guidelines.
* APA: Use APA format and style throughout, including citations.
* Length: The literature review draft assessment should be 5-6 pages, not including references.