

Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

Eighth Edition



Chapter 5

How to Review the
Literature and Conduct
Ethical Studies

Learning Objectives

5.1 Explain how to conduct a systematic literature review.

5.2 Explain the importance of following ethical standards.

5.1 The Literature Review (1 of 9)

Objective: Explain how to conduct a systematic literature review.

- Literature reviews are required for all research studies.
- It is wise to find out what people have already learned about the subject in question.
- Scientific research is a collective effort.

5.1 The Literature Review (2 of 9)

- Four purposes for conducting a literature review:
 - Demonstrate familiarity with a body of knowledge.
 - Show the pathway of past research and how it relates to the current study.
 - Integrate and summarize what is known about an issue.
 - Stimulate new inquiry by identifying past “blind alleys” and “dead ends”.

5.1 The Literature Review (3 of 9)

- Where to Find Research Literature
 - Periodicals
 - Scholarly journals
 - Citation from scholarly journals
 - Books
 - Dissertations
 - Government documents
 - Policy reports and presented papers

5.1 The Literature Review (4 of 9)

- How to Conduct a Systematic Literature Review
 - Refine and define your review.
 - Locate research reports.
 - Find articles in scholarly journals.
 - Find scholarly books.
 - Review dissertations.
 - Examine government documents.

5.1 The Literature Review (5 of 9)

- Evaluate Research Articles
 - Examine the title.
 - Read the abstract.
 - Read the article.
- Taking Notes
 - Create a source file and a content file for each source.
 - Err on the side of recording too much.
 - Photocopy relevant articles and reports.

5.1 The Literature Review (6 of 9)

- Organizing Notes
 - Several methods
 - Try several different organizational plans
 - Discard references that are irrelevant.
 - Types of reviews
 - Context review
 - Historical review
 - Integrative review
 - Methodological review
 - Theoretical review

5.1 The Literature Review (7 of 9)

- Writing the Review
 - Writing a literature review requires planning and clear writing.
 - Use rules of good writing.
 - Communicate the purpose of the review to readers.
 - Synthesize and organize common findings together.
 - Address the most important ideas first.
 - Logically link common statements and findings.
 - Note discrepancies and weaknesses.

5.1 The Literature Review (8 of 9)

- The Internet and Literature Review

Advantages of Internet Research	Disadvantages of Internet Research
Easy, fast and cheap	No quality control
Links provide additional ways to find other sources	Many excellent sources are not available
Speeds the flow of information around the world	Finding sources can be time-consuming
Provides access too a wide range of information	Can be unstable and difficult to document

5.1 The Literature Review (9 of 9)

- Literature Meta-Analysis
 - A literature meta-analysis is a special technique in which most past studies are located and then examined to find a set of replicated core findings.
 - The process has 5 steps:
 - Locate previous studies on the topic or question.
 - Develop consistent criteria and screen studies for relevance and/or quality.
 - Identify and record the relevant findings on each study.
 - Synthesize and analyze the findings.
 - Draw summary conclusions based on the synthesis.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (1 of 13)

Objective: Explain the importance of following ethical standards.

- Ethics begins with the researcher.
- Personal moral code is the best defense against unethical behavior.
- Consult your conscience before, during, and after conducting research.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (2 of 13)

- Why Act Ethically?
 - Most cases of unethical behavior result from a lack of awareness and pressures to take ethical shortcuts.
 - Ethical research takes longer, costs more money, is more complicated, and is more likely to end before completion.
 - Written ethical standards are usually vague principles.
 - In many situations, it is easy to act unethically, and the chances of getting caught is small.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (3 of 13)

- Unethical Behavior
 - Scientific misconduct
 - Research fraud
 - Plagiarism
- A behavior can be unethical even if it is legal.

Legal	Ethical Yes	Ethical No
Yes	Ethical and legal	Legal but unethical
No	Illegal but ethical	Unethical and illegal

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (4 of 13)

- Power and Ethics
 - The relationship between a researcher and research participants involves power and trust.
 - A researcher's authority to conduct research comes with responsibility to guide and protect the interests of the participants.
 - Sources for seeking ethical guidance include: professional colleagues, ethical advisory committees, institutional review boards (IRBs), codes of ethics from professional associations, and writings on ethics.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (5 of 13)

- Ethical Issues Involving Research Participants
 - Physical harm, psychological abuse, and legal jeopardy
 - Physical harm
 - Psychological abuse, stress, or loss of self-esteem
 - Legal harm
 - Deception
 - Informed consent
 - Covert observation

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (6 of 13)

Chart 5.3 Informed Consent

Informed consent statements contain the following:

1. A brief description of the purpose and procedure of the research, including the expected duration of the study.
2. A statement of any risks or discomfort associated with participation.
3. A guarantee of anonymity and the confidentiality of records.
4. The identification of the researcher and of the location of information about participants' rights or questions about the study.
5. A statement that participation is completely voluntary and can be terminated at any time without penalty.
6. A statement of alternative procedures that may be used.
7. A statement of any benefits or compensation provided to participants and the number of subjects involved.
8. An offer to provide a summary of findings.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (7 of 13)

- Special Populations
 - Some populations may lack the competency to give voluntary consent.
 - Some participants may only participate to get a desired good (early release from prison).
- Creating New Inequalities
 - One group of participants is denied benefits from the study (Example: a group receiving a placebo).
 - Crossover designs can reduce this problem.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (8 of 13)

- Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality
 - Privacy
 - Privacy should only be violated to the minimum degree necessary and only for legitimate research purposes.
 - Anonymity
 - People remain nameless. Participants can be identified by a code number.
 - Confidentiality
 - We may attach names to the information, but identities are protected from public view.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (9 of 13)

- Ethics and the Scientific Community
 - Many professionals have a code of ethics and peer review boards or licensing regulations.
 - Ethical codes outline proper and improper behavior.
 - They represent a consensus among professionals.
 - Codes of ethics help universities and other institutions defend ethical research.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (10 of 13)

- Ethics and the Sponsors of Research
 - Special ethical problems arise when someone is paying for a study, especially if it is applied research.
 - Researchers may have to set ethical boundaries beyond which they may refuse sponsor demands.
- Whistle-blower—a person who exposes activity that is illegal or unethical
- Arriving at Particular Findings
 - An ethical researcher refuses to participate if he or she is required to reach specific results.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (11 of 13)

- Ethics and the Sponsors of Research
 - Limits on How to Conduct Studies
 - Sponsors can legitimately set some conditions on which research techniques are used or how much money is spent on the study.
 - Contract research—a firm or government agency asks for research on a specific subject
 - Researchers should refuse to continue work on a study if unable to uphold accepted standards of research.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (12 of 13)

- Ethics and the Sponsors of Research
 - Suppressing Findings
 - Government agencies may suppress or omit scientific information that contradicts policy or embarrasses officials.
 - In sponsored research, researchers can negotiate conditions for releasing prior to the beginning of the study.
 - Concealing the True Sponsor
 - We must balance the ethical value of revealing the sponsor's identity and the possibility of reduced cooperation.

5.2 Ethics in Social Research (13 of 13)

- Feminist Communitarian Research Ethics
 - Three Principles
 - Ethical research is multivocal—it recognizes a diversity of human experience.
 - Ethical research requires engaging in dialogue over moral concerns that is phased in terms of the researcher's experiences.
 - Research processes need to involve researchers and participants on equal terms.

Conclusion

- The literature review and ethical considerations involve placing the research in the context of the larger community of researchers and attaching a specific study to larger concerns.
- With the power of being a researcher comes the responsibility to oneself, the sponsors, the community of researchers, and the larger society.
- You personally must decide to conduct your research in an ethical manner!

Copyright



This work is protected by United States copyright laws and is provided solely for the use of instructors in teaching their courses and assessing student learning. Dissemination or sale of any part of this work (including on the World Wide Web) will destroy the integrity of the work and is not permitted. The work and materials from it should never be made available to students except by instructors using the accompanying text in their classes. All recipients of this work are expected to abide by these restrictions and to honor the intended pedagogical purposes and the needs of other instructors who rely on these materials.