

Theological Research Methods II:

Reviewing the Literature

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Learning Outcomes

1. Organizing and collating materials for the Review of Scholarship
2. Distinguishing different levels of Scholarship Review
3. Process of writing the Review for the Research Proposal

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Basic Assumption of Scholarship

“As a researcher and a true scholar, you cannot simply accept the word of others at face value; you must evaluate it on the basis of evidence and sound argument and be prepared to disagree and criticize. This is a fundamental part of what it means to exercise your independence and autonomy”

Murray, Neil, and David Beglar. “Inside track: writing dissertations and theses”. London: Longman, 2009:6

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Ultimately, the success of any postgraduate research is determined by three factors:

1. Accessibility to sufficiently reliable and robust primary and secondary scholarly resources,
2. The rigour with which the researcher engages with these resources, and
3. Their demonstration of the contribution of the research to this body of scholarship

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Literature Review

Thematic
Review

Framed by Problem Statement

Organized to unveil the
Gap or Problem Statement

A is a critical analysis and summary of existing published research on a particular topic usually arranged according to logical themes, but rarely according to chronology, with critical evaluations and dialogue intended to highlight the gaps in knowledge of the subject and so generate the motivations for further research

Key skill which underlines the researcher's insights

Chronological/
Narrative Review

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Relevance of Literature Review

- Identify gaps in the existing research
- To avoid duplication of recent
- Clarify the contribution of current study
- Add to body of knowledge by building on previous foundations
- Lay foundation for further research

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Review of Literature orientates the research problem,
contextualizes the findings,
demonstrates the researcher's academic credentials
and develops the complexity of the researcher's
critical and cognitive thinking abilities

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Four Levels of Review of Literature

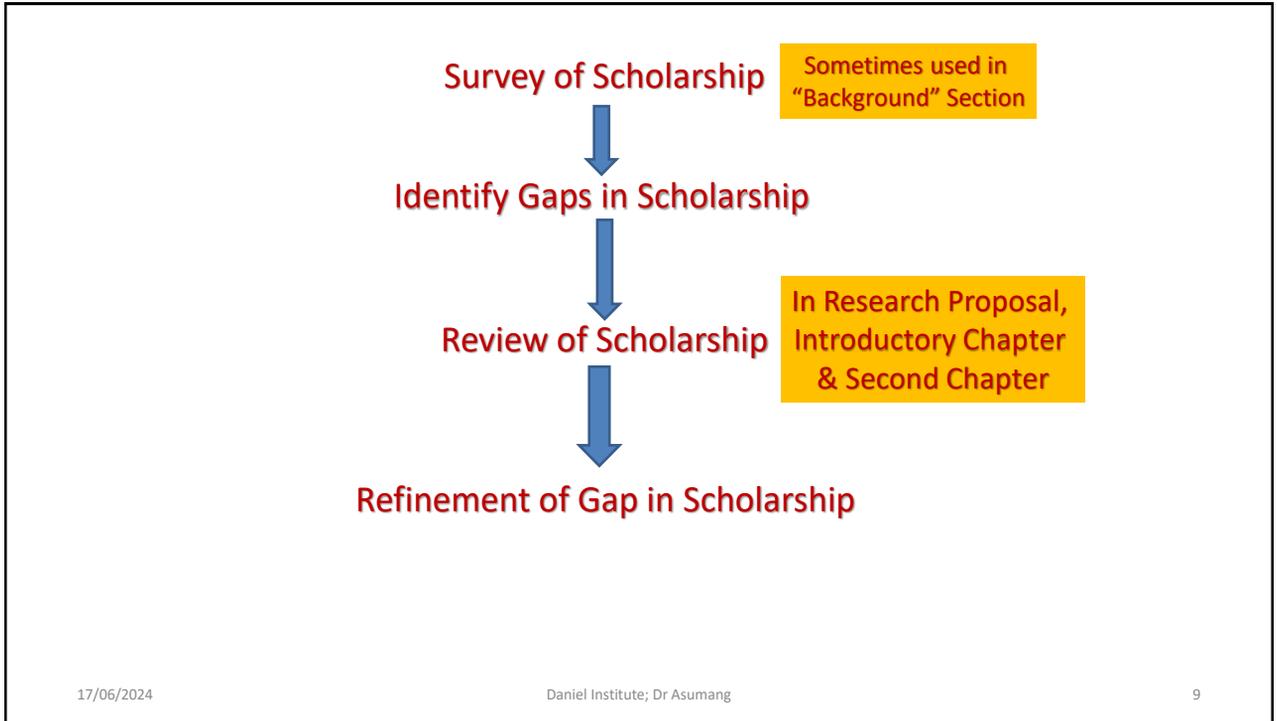
1. **For Identifying Research Problem**
 - Brief, non-comprehensive, less evaluative summary
 - Helps identify Gaps in scholarship
 - Used for “Survey of Scholarship”
 - Helpful for Background of Research Proposal
2. **For the Research Proposal**
 - Comprehensive and coherent account of the scholarly arguments on subject
 - Evaluations of distinctive contributions and
3. **For the Thesis**
 - More in-depth and additional literature to RP
 - More evaluation and reflection on individual contributions
 - Demonstrating their relations with conclusion
4. **Thesis which is a Review**
 - Rarely the whole research could be “a review”
 - Usually aimed at identifying a “Status Questionis”
 - More employed in Systematic or Biblical Theology, but sometimes also in Biblical Studies
 - E.g., “Review of current state of scholarship on the Apocalyptic Paul”

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Similar but slightly different terms

- **Survey of Scholarship:**
 - An overview of the current state of knowledge identifying the main scholars and their contributions. No in-depth engagement of these contributions
 - Usually as part of the background of the Introduction of the Research Proposal and the Thesis
- **History of Scholarship:**
 - A review that is focused on the development of research questions, methods, and theories, as well as the contributions and debates of individual scholars or schools of thought on the subject
- ***Status Questionis***
 - Latin - "the state of the question"
 - The current state or condition of a debate

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Survey of Scholarship summarizes the different contributions of scholars to a topic with occasional evaluations of the degree of the contribution

Review of Literature is more in-depth and includes critical engagement of the scholar's contribution. Reviews will have an account of the scholar's method, main conclusions, relevance of finding and the student's evaluation of the merits and demerits of the study

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Whether one chooses a Survey of Scholarship or Review of Scholarship depends on

1. How many relevant publications
2. How pin-point the research problem is
3. The degree, PhDs mostly expect review at some point
3. The institutional requirements for the thesis

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A **Systematic Review** is a type of literature review that uses a structured, rigorous, and transparent process to identify, select, appraise, and synthesize all the relevant studies on a precisely defined research problem. The comprehensive nature and the depth of analysis required of a systematic review means that it usually takes up the whole thesis rather than serving as only a part of the thesis.

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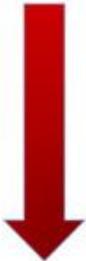
	Systematic Review	Literature Review
Definition	High-level overview of primary research on a focused question that identifies, selects, synthesizes, and appraises all high quality research evidence relevant to the question.	Qualitatively summarizes evidence on a topic using informal or subjective methods to collect and interpret studies.
Goals	Answers a focused clinical question Eliminate Bias	Provide summary or overview of topic
Question	Clearly defined & answerable clinical question Recommending using PICO as guide	can be a general topic or specific question
Components	Pre-specified eligibility criteria Systematic search strategy Assessment of the validity of findings Interpretation and presentation of results Reference lists	Introduction Methods Discussion Conclusion Reference list
Number of Authors	Three or more	One or more
Timeline	Months to years Average eighteen months	Weeks to months
Requirements	Thorough knowledge of topic Perform searches of all relevant databases Statistical analysis resources (for meta-analysis)	Understanding of topic Perform searches of one or more databases
Value	Connects practicing clinicians to high quality evidence Supports evidence-based practice	Provides summary of literature on a topic

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Comparison of different types of Reviews

	Speed	Methodological detail	Risk of bias	Comprehensiveness				
Narrative review	Dependent on research area	No methods	High risk of bias	Dependent on author				
Critically Appraised Topic (CAT)	Rapid	Fewer methods	Increased risk	Possibly incomplete				
Scoping review								
Rapid review								
Systematic review +/- meta-analysis					Slow	More explicit methods	Decreased risk	Comprehensive

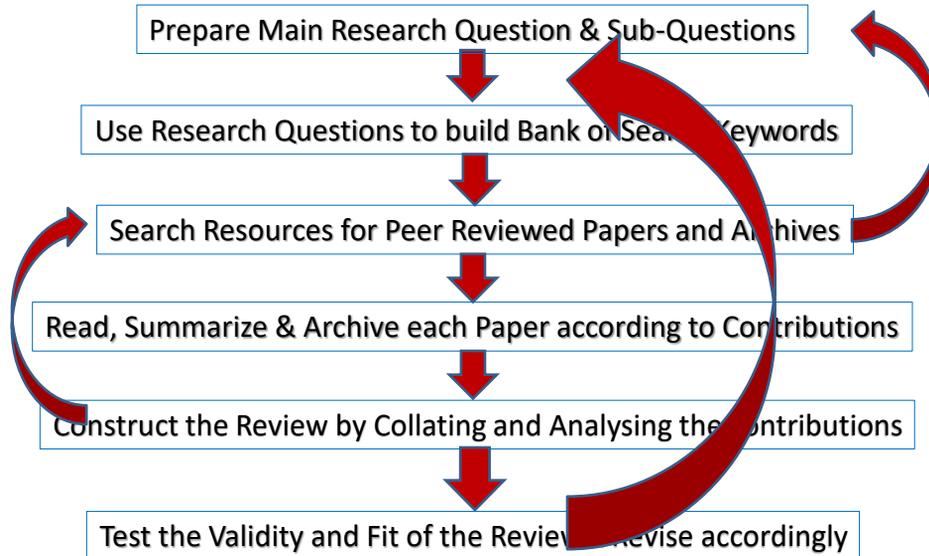
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Features of the Ideal Review of Scholarship

- Scope and Focus:**
 - Clearly defines the topic or research area being reviewed.
 - Establishes the boundaries and scope of the review.
 - Focuses on relevant and up-to-date literature within the chosen topic.
- Comprehensive and Systematic Coverage of Subject:**
 - Involves a thorough and systematic search of relevant literature, including books, journal articles, and other sources.
 - Ensures that the review covers a representative sample of the available literature on the topic.
- Critical Evaluation:**
 - Critically appraises and evaluates the quality, validity, and reliability of the literature reviewed.
 - Identifies gaps, inconsistencies, or contradictions in the existing research.
 - Analyzes and synthesizes the key findings, concepts, and methodologies presented in the literature.
 - Presents a balanced and objective assessment of the existing literature, without bias or personal opinions
 - Acknowledges and discusses alternative or opposing viewpoints, if relevant
- Organization:**
 - Organizes the review into logical themes, concepts, or categories that are relevant to the research topic.
 - Identifies and discusses the relationships, patterns, and connections among the reviewed studies.
 - May organize according to chronological development of thought on the topic
 - Follows a well-structured and organized format, typically including an introduction, body, and conclusion
- Synthesis and Integration:**
 - Synthesizes the key insights, arguments, and perspectives from the reviewed literature.
 - Integrates the findings to provide a comprehensive and coherent understanding of the current state of knowledge on the topic.
- Identification of Research Gaps:**
 - Highlights the gaps, limitations, or areas that require further research and investigation.
 - Suggests potential directions for future research based on the identified gaps.

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Procedure for Preparing the Literature Review



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Constructing the Literature Review

1. Problem Statement must Guide
2. Group Literature into Sub-themes
3. Identify within each sub-theme
 - Points of agreement
 - Points of Disagreement
 - Points not covered
4. Construct a coherent logically arranged summary of findings
5. Dialogue and evaluate the contributions
 - If they are few, dialogue with each contribution
 - If they are many, group them into similar categories and dialogue with them

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Organizing the ideas for Review from the Reading Material

- Breakdown the topic into three or four sub-topics
 - E.g. “The Praxis Of Speaking In Tongues And Prophecy Based On An Exegesis Of 1 Corinthians 14:2-28”
 - Create a folder for each sub-topic containing scholarly materials on the topic
 - Glossolalia Folder
 - Prophecy Folder
 - 1 Corinthians 14 Folder
 - Search and populate each folder with recent important publications
- Read each article, summarizing the insights from each one as you go along
 - Ensure that you place quotation marks for directly quoted material in your notes and indicate the precise page to avoid accidental plagiarism
 - Reflect on the points you identify and indicate ideas and how they might help you.

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First Corinthians 14 Folder

Name	Status	Date modified	Type	Size
KIM'S TONGUES AND PROPHECY THESIS...	✓	23/05/2024 07:14	Microsoft Edge P...	1,605 KB
NAGEL'S ANALYSIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 1...	✓	23/05/2024 06:57	Microsoft Edge P...	212 KB
NEL'S ANALYSIS OF PENTECOSTAL MOV...	✓	23/05/2024 06:59	Microsoft Edge P...	2,161 KB
SUMMARY OF ARTICLES ON 1 CORINTHI...	↻	23/05/2024 07:16	Microsoft Word D...	14 KB

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References Mailings Review View Help

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Paragraph Styles

Summary of Insights and Ideas from Reading materials

SUMMARY OF ARTICLES ON 1 CORINTHIANS 14

Kim's Article	

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Components of Engagement of Each Publication in a Review

1. Description of Methodology the publication
2. Summary of the publication's main points
3. Evaluation of the publication's contribution to the topic
4. Critique of outstanding issues or gap

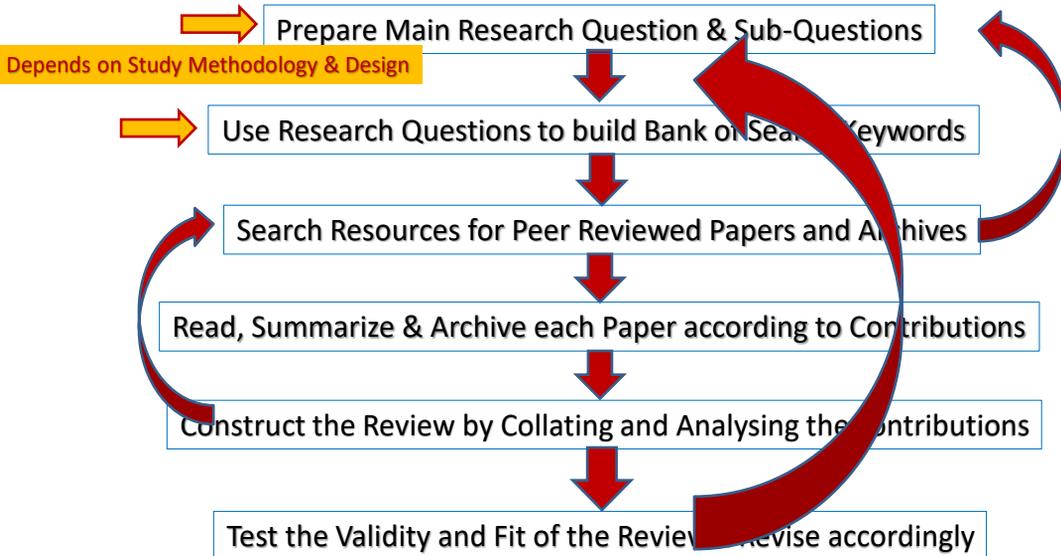
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How will you proceed to collect, collate, organize and review the literature for the following research topic:

“Effects of Social Media on Spiritual Growth of the Youth of ABC Church”?

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Example Bank of Search Keywords

1. Index Words:

1. Effects of **Social Media** on **Spiritual Growth** of the **Youth** of ABC Church

2. Substitute Words:

- Social Media: **Digital, Online, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter**
- Spiritual Growth: **Spiritual formation, spirituality, Maturity**
- Youth: **Adolescents, young adults, children**

3. Related Words:

4. Reference Words and works:

5. Eliminate keywords which do not work:

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Depending on how many relevant publications, and how pin-point the research question, choose between Survey or Review

Survey of Scholarship summarizes the different contributions of scholars to a topic with occasional evaluations of the degree of the contribution

Review of Literature is more in-depth and includes critical engagement of the scholar's contribution. Reviews will have an account of the scholar's method, main conclusions, relevance of finding and the student's evaluation of the merits and demerits of the study

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Testing for Validity of the Review

- The Review must be revisited, re-adjusted, revised and expanded as the research proceeds
- At the end of the thesis compare and contrast the Literature Review with study findings and revise the literature review accordingly to ensure that it indeed represented the state of scholarship
- Excellent Literature Reviews can be further developed and put forward for publications in peer reviewed journals

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Assessment of Review of Literature

1. How comprehensively does it cover the main elements of the study?
2. How fair is it to Scholars' contributions?
3. How Critical is it in assessing the contributions?
4. How coherent are the themes covered
 - Chronology is rarely helpful for coherence
 - Order of the logic
 - Sometimes the sub-questions of the research may retrospectively help in organizing the order
5. Does it naturally lead the reader to generate the Main Research Question?

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2.0 Background & Review of Scholarship

[Describe the background to your study problem here.]

The background section should indicate what research has already been done and what remains to be done, thus creating a natural orientation to your research problem.

My Self-Assessment

	Yes /No/NA
1. I have done sufficient preliminary investigation to identify a genuine research question, problem, or objective	
2. I have demonstrated familiarity with existing research in the field	
3. I have presented a plausible rationale for the study	

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Questions?