
MHR976
Theory Development and Testing in Organization-Related Empirical Research
Spring 2007

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Important Note: E-mail is the best contact method. **Please put "bus 976" in subject heading. If you don't, I can't assure you it will get to me in a timely way.*

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

To help student to develop skills necessary to conduct and write scholarly deductive empirical research publishable in top academic journals.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each week: Read articles, summarize selected articles, prepare exercises (including reviewing your colleagues' work).
2. In-class interaction central to learning.
3. Ongoing development of hypotheses and research design for proposal(s) or paper. Final 'mini-'proposal' will contain theoretical motivation, hypotheses, research design, proposed test statistics and implications if hypotheses supported.

SEMINAR KNOWLEDGE GOALS

1. Information: Knowledge of basic conceptual issues in theory development, design options, different research modes, data sources, design options..
2. Competencies: Assess theories, develop testable hypotheses, design studies in organizational contexts, pick appropriate statistical method to test theory, identify test statistics for specific hypotheses, match methods and theory, critically review empirical work, draft parts of scholarly articles.

LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE

1. Core skills: Ability to execute separate parts of 'normal science' project within professional norms including basic rules of inference and quasi-experimental design.
2. Advanced and additional skills: Ability to develop impactful hypotheses; ability to focus and shape scholarly research project; long term career issues.

OPTIONAL BOOKS

1. Cook, Thomas D. and Donald T. Campbell. 1979. Quasi-Experimentation. Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
2. Cummings, L. L. and Peter J. Frost. 1995. Publishing in the Organizational Sciences (2nd Edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
3. Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (Eds.) Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
4. Huff, Anne Sigismund. 1998. Writing for Scholarly Publication. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
5. Lave, Charles A. and James G. March. 1975. An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences. New York: Harper & Row.
6. Schutt, Russell K. 1996. Investigating the Social World: The Processes and Practice of Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Sage.
7. Course reading package (This contains most required course readings that are not in the required textbooks.)

GRADING

Your responsibilities will include (1) summarizing readings, (2) written exercises, (3) reviewing in writing other students' exercises, (4) presenting your own work in class, (5) general class participation, and (6) final proposal/paper. In general, our goal is to encourage risk-taking and effort. Thus, I will assess most assignments only in terms of whether they are (1) exceptionally good, (2) good and reasonable or (3) problematic.

Your final grade will be assessed based on:

Written summaries, exercise, and reviews	40%
In class discussion and presentations	30%
Final proposal/paper & presentation	30%

APPROXIMATE SCHEDULE (2/26/07)

Class	Date	Topic(s)
A. Introduction		
1	1/22	Introduction & logistics.
B. Theory and Propositions		
2&3	1/29 & 2/5	<i>Theory and propositions:</i> What's a good theory? Why do we care?
4	2/12	<i>Theory and propositions:</i> Theory as a social movement.
5	2/19	<i>Theory and propositions:</i> Developing theory and propositions.
6	2/26	<i>Theory and propositions:</i> Application.
7	3/5	<i>Theory and propositions:</i> Theory as storytelling and pictures.
8	3/12*	<i>Theory and propositions:</i> Creativity and theory.
C. Design		
9	3/19	<i>Theory and propositions:</i> Creativity and theory.
10	3/26*	<i>Design:</i> Reviewing the field –
	4/2	<i>Spring Break: No Class</i>
11	4/9	<i>Design:</i> Reviewing the field - <i>Cindy Devers</i>
12	4/16	<i>Design:</i> Modeling and simulations (plus, discuss reviews)
13	4/23	<i>Design:</i> Lab studies & Meta analysis – <i>Alex Stajkovic</i>
14	4/30*	<i>Design:</i> Qualitative research – <i>Sanjay Jain (May 1 or 2)</i>
E. Presentations		
15	5/7	Managing research streams, Co-author issues, Presentations, and Wrap-up

SUMMARY OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 **Introductions, logistics, final time, place.**

Week 2 **Theory and propositions: What's a good theory and why do we care?**

Required readings

1. Schneider, Benjamin. 1995. Chapter 13: "Some propositions about getting research published," in L. L. Cummings and Peter J. Frost (Eds.), Publishing in the Organizational Sciences (2nd Edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. pp. 216-226.
2. Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 1982. "The variety of perspectives," in Organizations and Organization Theory. Marshfield, MA: Pitman Publishing. pp. 1-40 [Pay special attention to pp. 12-18 (levels and units of analysis) and pp. 33-40 (theory vs. application; evaluating theory).].
3. Popper, Karl R. 1959. Excerpts from The Logic of Scientific Discovery. London: Hutchinson. pp. 27-48, 108-111 [pay special attention to pp. 30-33, 39-40, 46-47, 108-111].
4. Sutton, Robert I. and Barry M. Staw. 1995. "What theory is *Not*," Administrative Science Quarterly, 40: 371-384 [Pay special attention to pp. 371-378.].
5. Weick, Karl. 1995. "What theory is *Not*, Theorizing *is*," Administrative Science Quarterly, 40: 385-390.

Week 3 **Theory and propositions: Theory as a social movement.**

Application: Identify a theoretical body that is of interest to you. Talk the class through the social movement characteristics of that theory. What is considered the seminal work in that theory? What are the major milestones in its developments? Who are the thought leaders associated with this theory?

Required readings

1. Kuhn, Thomas S. 1962. Introduction, in The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 1-22.
2. Merton, Robert K. 1996. Chapter 20 in On Social Structure and Science, pp. 267-276.
3. Hambrick, Donald C. & Chen, Ming-Jer. Forthcoming. New academic fields as admittance-seeking social movements: The case of strategic management, Academy of Management Review.
4. Nag, Rajiv, Hambrick, Donald C, and Chen, Ming-Jer. In press. What is strategic management really? Inductive derivation of a consensus definition of the field, Strategic Management Journal.

Supplementary readings

1. Aldrich, Howard E., Sally W. Fowler, Nina Liou and Sarah J. Marsh. 1994. "Other people's concepts: Why and how we sustain historical continuity in our field." Organization, 1: 65-80.

2. Lambert, Karel and Gordon G. Brittan, Jr. 1992. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science. Atascadero, CA: Ridgeview.
3. Hull, David. 1988. Science as a Process: An Evolutionary Account of the Social and Conceptual Development of Science. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press.

Week 4 Theory and propositions: Developing theory and propositions.

Application

Working from a theory of your own choice:

1. Generate ONE (OR at most TWO) specific testable propositions deduced from a theory.
 - a. State the basic theory you are working with.
 - b. Then show separately how the proposition is implied by the theory (although we will not be stressing constructs and measurement per se, make sure you have defined key terms so that the reader can tell whether the logic makes sense – if you have two propositions, show separately for each one).
2. Show with boxes and arrows the causal model for the proposition(s).

Required readings

1. Lundberg, Craig C. 1976. "Hypothesis creating in organizational behavior research." *Academy of Management Review*, April 1976: 5-12. [See especially pp. 9-10.]
2. Platt, John R. 1964. "Strong inference." *Science*, 146: 347-353 [Especially 347-348, and 352].
3. Ellsworth, Phoebe C. 1977. "From abstract ideas to concrete instances: Some guidelines for choosing natural research settings." *American Psychologist* (August): 604-615. [See especially the section on scope of hypothesis.]
4. Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 1982. "The variety of perspectives," in Organizations and Organization Theory. Marshfield, MA: Pitman Publishing. pp. 12-23 (level of analysis). [**Week2**]

Supplementary Readings

1. Sober, E. 1993. Philosophy of Biology. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. [See especially pp. 210-215 on the use of "evolutionary" models]
2. Heide, Jan B. and George John. Chapter 17: "Measurement issues in research on inter-firm relationships," in Moller, Kristian and David Wilson, Business Marketing: An introduction and Network Perspective. Boston: Kluwer. [For our purpose, focus on the question of what is the unit of analysis and its implications for what kind models and test statistics you would use for related theories.]
3. Hull, David. 1988. Chapter 11: "A general analysis of selection processes," in Science as a Process: An Evolutionary Account of the Social and Conceptual Development of Science. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press. pp. 397-431, 441-450

Week 5 Application

1. Draw a map of theoretical schools in your field. Identify what distinguishes the different theoretical groups.
2. Pick one specific theory or framework.
 - a. Identify key assumptions (these could be formal as in analytic models, or verbal)
 - b. Specify a key causal claim of this theory (must have an “if...then” character)
 - c. Interview a leading researcher in this theory and summarize their “top five” readings relevant to that theory.
 - d. Evaluate this theory in terms of the criteria suggested for looking at theories in prior week’s readings.
3. Why do major research universities promote the development of theories themselves, rather than just working on solving current problems?

Week 6 Theory and propositions: Theory as storytelling and pictures.

Required readings

1. Davis, Murray S. 1971. That’s interesting! Philosophy and Social Science, 1: 4: 309-344.
2. Bacharach, Samuel. 1989. Organizational theories. Academy of Management Review, 14: 496-515.
3. Whetten, David. 2002. Modeling-as-Theorizing: A Systematic Methodology for Theory Development in Essential Skills for Management Research, Sage Publications, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi, David Partington.
4. Sastry, M. Anjali. 1997. Problems and paradoxes in a model of punctuated organizational change, Administrative Science Quarterly, 42: 237-275.
5. Weick, Karl. 1993. The collapse of sensemaking in organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly, 38: 628-652.

Supplementary Readings

1. Salmon, Wesley C. Scientific Explanation and the Causal Structure of the World.

Week 7 Theory and propositions: Creativity

Application:

Do a mini-literature review

1. Pick ONE identifiable literature in your area that you are generally interested in and have read from already. Write a short literature review (less than 15 pages, double spaced).
2. In your review, make sure you clarify
 - a. Basic theoretical claims or main model of the literature
 - b. The nature of empirical support for the theory/model
 - c. The seminal citations for the literature
3. Choose breadth over depth here. That is, be precise and as complete as you can be on one specific area rather than writing an impressionistic treatment of a huge area

Required readings

Weick, Karl E. 1996. Drop your tools: An allegory for organizational studies, Administrative Science Quarterly, 41: 301-314.

Whetten, David & Kim Cameron. 2005. Chapter 3.

INTRODUCTION

OK. You've got to write a literature review. You dust off your world literature anthology book, settle down in your Ebert and Roper at the Movies theatre chair with your popcorn and soda in hand, and get ready to issue a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" as you leaf through the pages. "Literature Review" done. Right?

Wrong! The "literature" of a literature review refers to any collection of materials on a topic, not necessarily the Great Literary Texts of the World. "Literature" could be anything from a set of government pamphlets on British colonial methods in Africa to scholarly articles on the treatment of a torn ACL. And a review does not necessarily mean that your reader wants you to give your personal opinion on whether or not you liked these sources.

What is a literature review, then?

A literature review discusses published information in a particular subject area, and sometimes information in a particular subject area within a certain time period.

A literature review can be just a simple summary of the sources, but it usually has an organizational pattern and combines both summary and synthesis. A summary is a recap of the important information of the source, but a synthesis is a re-organization, or a reshuffling, of that information. It might give a new interpretation of old material or combine new with old interpretations. Or it might trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates. And depending on the situation, the literature review may evaluate the sources and advise the reader on the most pertinent or relevant.

But how is a literature review different from an academic research paper?

While the main focus of an academic research paper is to support your own argument, the focus of a literature review is to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of others. The academic research paper also covers a range of sources, but it is usually a select number of sources, because the emphasis is on the argument. Likewise, a literature review can also have an "argument," but it is not as important as covering a number of sources. In short, an academic research paper and a literature review contain some of the same elements. In fact, many academic research papers will contain a literature review section. But it is the aspect of the study (the argument or the sources) that is emphasized that determines what type of document it is.

Why do we write literature reviews?

Literature reviews provide you with a handy guide to a particular topic. If you have limited time to conduct research, literature reviews can give you an overview or act as a stepping stone. For professionals, they are useful reports that keep them up to date with what is current in the field. For scholars, the depth and breadth of the literature review emphasizes the credibility of the writer in his or her field. Literature reviews also provide a solid background for a research paper's investigation. Comprehensive knowledge of the literature of the field is essential to most research papers.

Who writes these things, anyway?

Literature reviews are written occasionally in the humanities, but mostly in the sciences and social sciences; in experiment and lab reports, they constitute a section of the paper. Sometimes a literature review is written as a paper in itself.

WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE WRITING THE LITERATURE REVIEW?

Clarify

If your assignment is not very specific, seek clarification from your instructor:

- Roughly how many sources should you include?
- What types of sources (books, journal articles, websites)?
- Should you summarize, synthesize, or critique your sources by discussing a common theme or issue?
- Should you evaluate your sources?
- Should you provide subheadings and other background information, such as definitions and/or a history?

Find models

Look for other literature reviews in your area of interest or in the discipline and read them to get a sense of the types of themes you might want to look for in your own research or ways to organize your final review. You can simply put the word "review" in your search engine along with your other topic terms to find articles of this type on the Internet or in an electronic database. The bibliography or reference section of sources you've already read are also excellent entry points into your own research.

Narrow your topic

There are hundreds or even thousands of articles and books on most areas of study. The narrower your topic, the easier it will be to limit the number of sources you need to read in order to get a good survey of the material. Your instructor will probably not expect you to read everything that's out there on the topic, but you'll make your job easier if you first limit your scope.

And don't forget to tap into your professor's (or other professors') knowledge in the field. Ask your professor questions such as: "If you had to read only one book from the 70's on topic X, what would it be?" Questions such as this help you to find and determine quickly the most seminal pieces in the field.

Consider whether your sources are current

Some disciplines require that you use information that is as current as possible. In the sciences, for instance, treatments for medical problems are constantly changing according to the latest studies. Information even two years old could be obsolete. However, if you are writing a review in the humanities, history, or social sciences, a survey of the history of the literature may be what is needed, because what is important is how perspectives have changed through the years or within a certain time period. Try sorting through some other current bibliographies or literature reviews in the field to get a sense of what your discipline expects. You can also use this method to consider what is "hot" and what is not.

STRATEGIES FOR WRITING THE LITERATURE REVIEW:

Find a focus

A literature review, like a term paper, is usually organized around ideas, not the sources themselves as an annotated bibliography would be organized. This means that you will not just simply list your sources and go into detail about each one of them, one at a time. No. As you read widely but selectively in your topic area, consider instead what themes or issues connect your sources together. Do they present one or different solutions? Is there an aspect of the field that is missing? How well do they present the material and do they portray it according to an appropriate theory? Do they reveal a trend in the field? A raging debate? Pick one of these themes to focus the organization of your review.

Construct a working thesis statement

Then use the focus you've found to construct a thesis statement. Yes! Literature reviews have thesis statements as well! However, your thesis statement will not necessarily argue for a position or an opinion; rather it will argue for a particular perspective on the material. Some sample thesis statements for literature reviews are as follows:

The current trend in treatment for congestive heart failure combines surgery and medicine.

More and more cultural studies scholars are accepting popular media as a subject worthy of academic consideration.

Consider organization

You've got a focus, and you've narrowed it down to a thesis statement. Now what is the most effective way of presenting the information? What are the most important topics, subtopics, etc., that your review needs to include? And in what order should you present them? Develop an organization for your review at both a global and local level:

First, cover the basic categories

Just like most academic papers, literature reviews also must contain at least three basic elements: an introduction or background information section; the body of the review containing the discussion of sources; and, finally, a conclusion and/or recommendations section to end the paper.

Introduction: Gives a quick idea of the topic of the literature review, such as the central theme or organizational pattern.

Body: Contains your discussion of sources and is organized either chronologically, thematically, or methodologically (see below for more information on each).

Conclusions/Recommendations: Discuss what you have drawn from reviewing literature so far. Where might the discussion proceed?

Organizing the body

Once you have the basic categories in place, then you must consider how you will present the sources themselves within the body of your paper. Create an organizational method to focus this section even further.

To help you come up with an overall organizational framework for your review, consider the following scenario and then three typical ways of organizing the sources into a review:

You've decided to focus your literature review on materials dealing with sperm whales. This is because you've just finished reading *Moby Dick*, and you wonder if that whale's portrayal is really real. You start with some articles about the physiology of sperm whales in biology journals written in the 1980's. But these articles refer to some British biological studies performed on whales in the early 18th century. So you check those out. Then you look up a book written in 1968 with information on how sperm whales have been portrayed in other forms of art, such as in Alaskan poetry, in French painting, or on whale bone, as the whale hunters in the late 19th century used to do. This makes you wonder about American whaling methods during the time portrayed in *Moby Dick*, so you find some academic articles published in the last five years on how accurately Herman Melville portrayed the whaling scene in his novel.

Chronological:

If your review follows the chronological method, you could write about the materials above according to when they were published. For instance, first you would talk about the British biological studies of the 18th century, then about *Moby Dick*, published in 1851, then the book on sperm whales in other art (1968), and finally the biology articles (1980s) and the recent articles on American whaling of the 19th century. But there is relatively no continuity among subjects here. And notice that even though the sources on sperm whales in other art and on American whaling are written recently, they are about other subjects/objects that were created much earlier. Thus, the review loses its chronological focus.

By Publication

Order your sources by publication chronology, then, only if the order demonstrates a more important trend. For instance, you could order a review of literature on biological studies of sperm whales if the progression revealed a change in dissection practices of the researchers who wrote and/or conducted the studies.

By Trend

A better way to organize the above sources chronologically is to examine the sources under another trend, such as the history of whaling. Then your review would have subsections according to eras within this period. For instance, the review might examine whaling from pre-1600-1699, 1700-1799, and 1800-1899. Under this method, you would combine the recent studies on American whaling in the 19th century with *Moby Dick* itself in the 1800-1899 category, even though the authors wrote a century apart.

Thematic:

Thematic reviews of literature are organized around a topic or issue, rather than the progression of time. However, progression of time may still be an important factor in a thematic review. For instance, the sperm whale review could focus on the development of the harpoon for whale hunting. While the study focuses on one topic, harpoon technology, it will still be organized chronologically. The only difference here between a "chronological" and a "thematic" approach is what is emphasized the most: the development of the harpoon or the harpoon technology.

But more authentic thematic reviews tend to break away from chronological order. For instance, a thematic review of material on sperm whales might examine how they are portrayed as "evil" in cultural documents. The subsections might include how they are personified, how their proportions are exaggerated, and their behaviors misunderstood. A review organized in this manner would shift between time periods within each section according to the point made.

Methodological:

A methodological approach differs from the two above in that the focusing factor usually does not have to do with the content of the material. Instead, it focuses on the "methods" of the researcher or writer. For the sperm whale project, one methodological approach would be to look at cultural differences between the portrayal of whales in American, British, and French art work. Or the review might focus on the economic impact of whaling on a community. A methodological scope will influence either the types of documents in the review or the way in which these documents are discussed.

Once you've decided on the organizational method for the body of the review, the sections you need to include in the paper should be easy to figure out. They should arise out of your organizational strategy. In other words, a chronological review would have subsections for each vital time period. A thematic review would have subtopics based upon factors that relate to the theme or issue.

Sometimes, though, you might need to add additional sections that are necessary for your study, but do not fit in the organizational strategy of the body. What other sections you include in the body is up to you. Put in only what is necessary. Here are a few other sections you might want to consider:

Current Situation: Information necessary to understand the topic or focus of the literature review.

History: The chronological progression of the field, the literature, or an idea that is necessary to understand the literature review, if the body of the literature review is not already a chronology.

Methods and/or Standards: The criteria you used to select the sources in your literature review or the way in which you present your information. For instance, you might explain that your review includes only peer-reviewed articles and journals.

Questions for Further Research: What questions about the field has the review sparked? How will you further your research as a result of the review?

BEGIN COMPOSITION

Once you've settled on a general pattern of organization, you're ready to write each section. There are a few guidelines you should follow during the writing stage as well. Here is a sample paragraph from a literature review about sexism and language to illuminate the following discussion:

However, other studies have shown that even gender-neutral antecedents are more likely to produce masculine images than feminine ones (Gastil, 1990). Hamilton (1988) asked students to

complete sentences that required them to fill in pronouns that agreed with gender-neutral antecedents such as "writer," "pedestrian," and "persons." The students were asked to describe any image they had when writing the sentence. Hamilton found that people imagined 3.3 men to each woman in the masculine "generic" condition and 1.5 men per woman in the unbiased condition. Thus, while ambient sexism accounted for some of the masculine bias, sexist language amplified the effect. (Source: Erika Falk and Jordan Mills, "Why Sexist Language Affects Persuasion: The Role of Homophily, Intended Audience, and Offense," *Women and Language* 19:2.

Use evidence

In the example above, the writers refer to several other sources when making their point. A literature review in this sense is just like any other academic research paper. Your interpretation of the available sources must be backed up with evidence to show that what you are saying is valid.

Be selective

Select only the most important points in each source to highlight in the review. The type of information you choose to mention should relate directly to the review's focus, whether it is thematic, methodological, or chronological.

Use quotes sparingly

Falk and Mills do not use any direct quotes. That is because the survey nature of the literature review does not allow for in-depth discussion or detailed quotes from the text. Some short quotes here and there are okay, though, if you want to emphasize a point, or if what the author said just cannot be rewritten in your own words. Notice that Falk and Mills do quote certain terms that were coined by the author, not common knowledge, or taken directly from the study. But if you find yourself wanting to put in more quotes, check with your instructor.

Summarize and synthesize

Remember to summarize and synthesize your sources within each paragraph as well as throughout the review. The authors here recapitulate important features of Hamilton's study, but then synthesize it by rephrasing the study's significance and relating it to their own work.

Keep your own voice

While the literature review presents others' ideas, your voice (the writer's) should remain front and center. Notice that Falk and Mills weave references to other sources into their own text, but they still maintain their own voice by starting and ending the paragraph with their own ideas and their own words. The sources support what Falk and Mills are saying.

Use caution when paraphrasing

When paraphrasing a source that is not your own, be sure to represent the author's information or opinions accurately and in your own words. In the preceding example, Falk and Mills either directly refer in the text to the author of their source, such as Hamilton, or they provide ample notation in the text when the ideas they are mentioning are not their own, for example, Gastil's.

REVISE, REVISE, REVISE

Draft in hand? Now you're ready to revise. Spending a lot of time revising is a wise idea, because your main objective is to present the material, not the argument. So check over your review again to make sure it follows the assignment and/or your outline. Then, just as you would for most other academic forms of writing, rewrite or rework the language of your review so that you've presented your information in the most concise manner possible. Be sure to use terminology familiar to your audience; get rid of unnecessary jargon or slang. Finally, double check that you've documented your sources and formatted the review appropriately for your discipline.

Sources:

Anson, Chris M. and Robert A. Schwegler. *The Longman Handbook for Writers and Readers*. Second edition. New York: Longman, 2000.

Jones, Robert, Patrick Bizzaro, and Cynthia Selfe. *The Harcourt Brace Guide to Writing in the Disciplines*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997.

Lamb, Sandra E. *How to Write It: A Complete Guide to Everything You'll Ever Write*. Berkeley, Calif.: Ten Speed Press, 1998.

Rosen, Leonard J. and Laurence Behrens. *The Allyn and Bacon Handbook*. Fourth edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

Troyka, Lynn Quitman. *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2002.