

Creating a Structured Narrative Literature Review Template: A Case Study

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Abstract

Completing a literature review can be overwhelming for reviewers at any level. Given the crucial role of a literature review in conducting scholarship, research methodology literature in various disciplines addresses directions, approaches, strategies, and benefits to aid in the completion of a review. The authors of this paper answered the following research question: “What are the prominent elements of a literature review template.” After identifying the typical elements needed to collect data for a narrative and systematic literature review, the authors combined elements in a novel way to create a new literature review template, which they titled the structured narrative literature review template. This template makes the literature review process more manageable by providing a flexible, concise, and easy-to-understand tool. It is organized into four sections: Bibliographic Information, Study Information, Study Contribution, and Reviewer Methodology.. Ultimately, incorporating the template equips a reviewer with a structure and strategy that can assist in overcoming one of the most daunting portions of the research process.

Keywords: narrative literature review; literature review template; research methodology

Literature reviews are fundamental to the research process (Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic, 2010; Garfield, 1987). Most, if not all, academic writing includes a survey of relevant literature (Machi & McEvoy, 2016). The importance of a literature review is to understand the topic at hand, what others have written about the subject, and as Carnwell and Daly (2001) state, “to identify gaps in the knowledge that a new study would seek to address” (p. 57).

Methodology research in various disciplines addresses definitions, strategies, and benefits of completing a literature review. It also addresses challenges and provides broad recommendations for starting a review, identifying relevant information, and developing conclusions. These sources assist the person conducting a review (hereafter, reviewer(s)) on the why and the how of performing a literature review.

Two types of literature reviews include those that are part of larger studies¹ and those that are “free-standing.”² Within the types of reviews are different methods in which reviews are conducted. These include “narrative,” “systematic,” “realist,” and “scoping.” The authors of this paper (hereafter, the authors) focus only on narrative and systematic reviews in this section as the other examples are niche to respective disciplines. Additionally, the authors consider the following topics outside the scope of this study: differentiations between the two literature review types (larger studies vs. “free-standing”), as their research promotes data collection for either; literature search strategies, which have been thoroughly addressed in various disciplinary

¹ Literature reviews in larger studies typically frame the understanding of the research topic, inform the research design, and outline the ongoing discussion in the existing body of knowledge (Li & Wang, 2018). Li & Wang (2018) note that this type of literature review also “needs to identify what is unknown about the topic, explain how it is informed by, and deviates from, previous studies, and convince the reader of the significance of the current study” (p. 125).

² The “free-standing” type is an independent publication, such as a synthesized review meta-analysis of the literature on a certain topic and is format agnostic (Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic, 2010; Li & Wang, 2018).

literature; a template for a systematic literature review, although their results accounts for some of the elements included in this review method; and citation software, as the authors were focused on a template-based approach.

Narrative literature reviews focus on selected topics through creative and critical analysis of arguments found in secondary sources rather than purely quantitative content. Unsurprisingly, this method, sometimes also referred to in the literature as “traditional” or “interpretive” review, takes a narrative format and “critiques and summarizes a body of literature and draws conclusions about the topic in question” (Cronin, Ryan & Coughlan, 2008, p. 38). Narrative reviews allow reviewers to understand previous knowledge and arguments while forming the foundation for their unique contributions to the field. Thus, narrative reviews are frequently relevant for humanities scholarship. There are perceived limitations in narrative reviews, including that they are: not transparent in data collection and their decision-making processes (Efron & Ravid, 2018; Li & Wang, 2018; Schultze, 2015); not viewed as reproducible by other scholars (Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic, 2010, p. 130); and frequently lack a defined scope (Efron & Ravid, 2018).

A systematic review documents the data-collecting process, including identifying, selecting, and analyzing source material, and requires reviewers to communicate these steps to ensure transparency (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015; Fisch & Block, 2018; Frimpong, Li, Amoah, & Hossin, 2020; Okoli and Schabram, 2010). To conduct a systematic review, the reviewer must develop a defined scope of inquiry and then seek relevant literature against the inclusion and exclusion criteria established by the reviewer. Researchers often use this type in evidence-based practice disciplines, such as health sciences and economics (Hjørland, 2011). The emphasis on process and transparency leads some scholars, according to Boell & Cecez-

Kecmanovic (2015), to maintain that this type of review is ‘objective’, ‘scientific’, ‘transparent’, ‘replicable’ and ‘rigorous’” (p. 164). Critics of systematic reviews cite several limitations, including that they are: not viewed as having flexible scopes and standards for evaluation (Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic, 2010; Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015; Efron & Ravid, 2018); not encouraging the deep reading of source materials (Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic, 2010); and too reliant on sources and information located in electronic databases (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015).

With numerous sources of guidance and strategies available, the authors of this paper set out to identify an uncomplicated, holistic approach to organizing and collecting literature review data to make “the writing process simpler” (Ingram, Hussey, Tigani, & Hemmelgarn, 2006, p. 1). The authors discovered resources that address portions of the data collection process in varying degrees of completion and complexity. Much of this information relied on a template-style method for data collection. This approach organizes data into sections, such as bibliographic, study-specific, and reviewer commentary, and can typically be compiled in word-processing documents, note cards, or spreadsheets.

Finding this approach appealing, the authors embarked on constructing a template. They asked the following research question: “What are the prominent elements of a literature review template?” This study provides an overview of the process they completed to design the structured narrative literature review template.

Literature Review

Numerous scholars who conduct research on literature reviews (hereafter, the researcher(s)) offer practical advice, best practices, and challenges to conducting a literature review. The authors investigated the various research and organized this section to correspond

with drafting a review, starting with search strategies and ending with data analysis.

Researchers suggest various approaches to developing a search strategy, including establishing subject familiarity (Carnwell & Daly, 2001); developing an iterative keyword search strategy (Efron & Ravid, 2018; Kraus, Breier & Dasí-Rodríguez, 2020); investigating “indexes and publications that identify in--progress and completed research” (Connaway & Radford, 2017, p. 31); soliciting input and advice from other scholars; and assessing the footnotes and citations of articles found in search results (Wildemuth, 2016).

Researchers address strategies and criteria for evaluating sources, including: developing an evaluation strategy (Faryadi, 2018; Rewhorn, 2018; Kraus et al., 2020; Xiao & Watson, 2019;); comparing and contrasting results and conclusions (Cohen, 1990; Cronin et al., 2008; Efron & Ravid, 2018; Wildemuth, 2016); and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria³ (Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016).

Researchers reference a variety of data collection methods to compile and organize data, such as using tally matrices, mapping the author, theory, and subject, coding with qualitative software, returning to previously cited content for clarification, and establishing shared categories for consistency across a research team, including the development of codebooks, spreadsheets, software, index card note-taking, tables, grids, idea maps, author maps, storyboards, and outlines (Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic, 2010; Efron & Ravid, 2018; Faryadi, 2018; Frederiksen & Phelps, n.d.; Frimpong et al., 2020; Galvan & Galvan, 2017; Ingram et al., 2006; Li & Wang, 2018; Machi & McEvoy, 2016; Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2016; Randolph, 2009; Rewhorn, 2018; Xiao & Watson, 2019).

³ Onwuegbuzie & Frels (2016) define this process as “the focused, intentional act of categorizing information, critiquing the usefulness of information, and developing the foundation for establishing new evidence on the selected topic” (p. 175)

The literature also addresses strategies and tools for analyzing collected data. When preparing for the analysis stage of the literature review, researchers suggest that reviewers organize their analysis into a variety of elements. Some examples include concepts, arguments, counter arguments, scholarly debates, chronology, countries or other geographic details, people or groups of people, policy, observation and interpretation, and scholars (Carnwell & Daly 2001; Efron & Ravid 2018; Fisch & Block 2018; Frimpong et al. 2020; Kraus et al. 2020; Machi & McEvoy 2016; Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2016).

The authors argue that their research, which results in the design and implementation of the structured narrative literature review template, affords the reviewer a practical and easy-to-employ approach for writing a structured narrative literature review, incorporating elements from various review types. This hybrid approach to conducting a literature review offers reviewers the flexibility of a traditional review with some of the structured components of systematic reviews.

Methodology

The authors completed two steps to generate results for the study: data collection and data analysis.

Data Collection

To begin data collection, the authors developed a working scope to obtain literature review templates from various academic disciplines. The authors determined that a literature review template contains the following information: structure, thesis, relevant bibliographic information, and important themes or topics from the source derived by the reviewer. With this working scope, the authors mined templates found in scholarly publications. Additionally, they completed new searches for stand-alone templates that fit the working scope. The authors identified 10 templates to analyze. The authors completed two steps to generate results for the

study: data collection and data analysis.

Next, the authors assembled information on each template, including audience, format, and metadata, to develop a structured narrative literature review template. The following paragraphs briefly describe each template.

Cronin et al. (2008) provide a template, "Summary of Information required in review," that nursing and general students and "novice scholars" can use to craft narrative literature reviews. The template prompts the reviewer to record data across three types of sources: primary, secondary, and "non-research." Template categories address bibliographic information, study details, and reviewer impressions among other data points.

The authors selected three templates from the *50 smart literature review templates* (2021) website. Each had distinct audiences, with one template, *IS-1 literature review template* (CS Department, 2017), geared towards computer science students, the *Research questions* (n.d.) template oriented for an undefined audience, and the *Literature review template* (n.d.) intended for those engaging in human study research. Each also had distinct qualities. The *IS-1* (CS Department, 2017) and *Literature review template* (n.d.) contain multiple fields that would allow a reader to document information about the source and their interpretation of the source. The *Literature review template* (n.d.) also asks the reader to comment on health-related themes, such as "factors influencing behavior" and the study's subject's current knowledge. The *Research questions* (n.d.) template only allowed for basic study information to be captured - purpose, method, and results. It did not collect reviewer commentary data.

Efron and Ravid (2018) offer two templates for reviewers: *Evaluation checklist* and *Note template*. The checklist evaluates secondary sources that will comprise a reviewer's narrative literature review. It addresses several types of research: quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods,

and hermeneutic-phenomenological. Efron & Ravid developed this checklist to allow readers to track common elements and categories across differing types of research. Efron & Ravid's (2018) note template assists the reviewer with the note-taking process during the narrative literature review's data collection portion. They encourage the reviewer to record information using notecards. Efron and Ravid (2018) assume that the reviewer has already developed themes and topical categories during the reading process. Both Efron and Ravid (2018) templates, designed for a general audience, encourage close reading by prompting the reader to provide commentary as they review sources.

The *Literature review matrix* (Union Institute & University, 2022) records bibliographic and study information (“theoretical framework” and “methodology”). It also tracks the review status, noting when a reader has saved, read, annotated, and summarized a source. The template is designed for a general reviewer who is writing a narrative review. It does not allow the reviewer to include information within the matrix formulated during close reading.

Machi and McEvoy's (2016) *Literature survey tally matrices* assist the reviewer in examining the secondary source literature and constructing arguments around the data collected. The reviewer builds a body of secondary literature, develops themes, categories, or topics, identifies patterns among this data, and conducts analysis to construct an argument. Machi & McEvoy (2016) divide the matrices into three distinct sections: “Assemble the collected data,” which focuses primarily on bibliographic and study information; “Organize the information,” which asks the reviewer to orient the study's results and validity within larger scholarship; and “Analyze the patterns of data,” which prompts the reviewer to reflect on the implications and conclusions of the source. The matrices are designed for a general research audience.

Williamson, Reilly, and Thompson's (2020) *Literature review template* records

bibliographic information, study information, and reviewer commentary to complete a narrative literature review. The template encourages the reviewer to extract direct quotations that provide evidence for targeted themes or areas of focus. Reviewers can use the template in word processing software or collaboratively in cloud-based platforms. The researchers designed the template for their own personal research uses.

Finally, Ramdhani, Ramdhani, and Amin's (2014) "A synthesis matrix organized by the key studies" includes bibliographic information on the source and the reviewer's commentary. This commentary includes the comparison of a source's findings, "similarities" ("how the findings confirm those of other studies"), and "uniqueness" ("how the findings differ from other studies or offer information not found in other sources") (p. 52). The template is particularly useful for a general audience completing a systematic review.

Data Analysis

As the authors reviewed each template, they identified multiple concepts that they refer to as "template metadata terms." They combined like concepts and then defined each unique term, generating 17 template metadata terms. See Table 1: Template Metadata Terms and Definitions for a full list of terms and definitions. The authors identified 124 template metadata terms instances when evaluating this study's templates. They also determined instances when an original term could be assigned multiple template metadata terms. The authors compiled this data set into a Google Sheets spreadsheet for analysis.

Table 1: Template Metadata Terms and Definitions

Term	Coded Definition
Title	Title of the source
Author	Author of the source
Date of publication	Date of publication of the source

Term	Coded Definition
Citation	Full or partial bibliographic citation of the source
Study purpose	Main point or idea of the source; can include research questions and problem statements
Study type	Methodological approach(es) of the source, including qualitative, quantitative, and/or mixed methods
Study parameter	Research scope established by the source
Study methodology	Methods used by the source to collect and/or analyze data
Study findings	Results of the source
Study recommendations	Recommendations formulated by the source
Study conclusions	Conclusions formulated by the source
Reviewer commentary	Informal note taking on key ideas, thoughts, or themes developed by the reviewer when conducting review
Impact	Contribution of the source to research in the field
Originality	Research uniqueness of the source in comparison to existing research in the field
Study limitation	Gaps, weaknesses, and/or barriers identified by the source
Abstract	Summary of research provided by the source
Reviewer Process	Reviewer’s methods used to collect and analyze secondary literature data
Other	Any additional content collected that is not related to other template metadata terms

Results

The authors tallied instances of each metadata term they assigned. The most prominent term was “reviewer commentary” (described by the authors as “Informal note taking on key ideas, thoughts, or themes developed by the reviewer when conducting review”) with nearly 20% (n = 24) of the total results. Some of the examples of this term included:

- “Key thoughts/comments,” which can include source strengths, weaknesses, and main ideas (Cronin et al., 2008)
- “Orientation,” which encourages the reviewers to “interprets the texts with a focus on their meaning rather than merely reporting on them” with the idea that their review is

grounded in “his or her perspective on the historical, political, and cultural background surrounding the topic” (Efron & Ravid, 2018, p. 116)

- Claim acceptability, which can include the reviewer’s interpretation of the source’s validity and reliability (Machi & McEvoy, 2016)

“Study parameter” (defined by the authors as “research scope established by the source”)

was the second most tagged metadata term with 13.7% (n = 17) of results. Prominent examples included:

- “Sample,” which discusses the source’s study population or data size (Rhamdani et al., 2014)
- “Site and participants,” which describes information on the source’s population composition, geographic location, and other relevant characteristics (Efron & Ravid, 2018)
- “Theoretical Framework,” which is the larger context in which the source’s study is built, often taking into consideration the research question, the purpose, and the outcome (Union Institute & University, 2022)

The third most prominent term was “Study methodology” (or “methods used by the source to collect and/or analyze data”), which garnered 12.1% (n = 15). Examples include:

- “Data collection,” which includes details on how the source’s creator gathered data to complete their study, sometimes framed around inclusion/exclusion criteria (Williamson, et al., 2020)
- “Procedures,” which includes a description of data collection processes (Efron & Ravid, 2018)

- “Implementation Details/Experimental Setup,” which describes the source’s approach to study design and delivery (CS Department, 2017)

“Study purpose” (defined by the authors as “Main point or idea of the source; can include research questions and problem statements”) received nearly 10 percent (n = 12) of the total.

Examples included:

- “Problem Addressed/Identified” (CS Department, 2017)
- “Purpose,” which particularly focuses on the scholar’s intent (*Research questions*, n.d.)
- “Research questions,” which can also include the scholar’s hypothesis (Efron & Ravid, 2018)

Three other metadata terms, “Citation” (defined by the authors as the “full or partial bibliographic citation of the source”), “Study findings” (source’s results), and “Reviewer process” (defined by the authors as “reviewer’s methods used to collect and analyze secondary literature data”) received around five percent each of the overall totals. All other remaining terms received less than five percent of the overall total. See Table 2: Metadata Template Term Tally for full results.

Table 2: Metadata Template Term Tally

Metadata Term	Instances	Percentages
Reviewer commentary	24	~19%
Study parameter	17	~14%
Study methodology	15	~12%
Study purpose	12	~10%
Citation	8	~6%
Study findings	7	~6%
Reviewer process	7	~6%
Originality	5	~4%
Title	4	~3%

Author	4	~3%
Study recommendations	4	~3%
Impact	4	~3%
Study limitation	4	~3%
Date of publication	3	~2%
Study conclusions	3	~2%
Abstract	2	~2%
Study type	1	~1%
Total	124	~100%

Discussion

After completing data collection and analysis across existing literature review templates, the authors identified and recommended characteristics that would strengthen a *structured narrative literature review template*. They also articulated implications for current and future areas of literature review research.

Structured Narrative Literature Review Template

The authors mapped metadata template terms into categories to establish four *structured narrative literature review template* sections: Bibliographic Information, Study Information, Study Contribution, and Reviewer Methodology.

The Bibliographic Information section focuses on the citation information of a source. Metadata template terms in this section account for 16.9% of terms found (n = 21) in all metadata templates reviewed by the authors. Typical metadata elements that align with this section were terms such as “Title,” “Author,” and “Date of Publication.” From this analysis, the authors placed the following elements into the *structured narrative literature review template*: Title, Author, Citation, and Abstract. Although other sections have greater instances of metadata terms, the authors recommend that “Bibliographic Information” appear first in the future template to help the reviewer retrieve source information later in their research process.

The Study Information section incorporates information on the study's methodology, analysis, and results. Metadata template terms in this section were the most prominent across all templates, accounting for half of all elements ($n = 63$). Examples include "Study purpose," "Study parameter," and "Study findings." The authors positioned the following elements into this section of the *structured narrative literature review template*:

- Study purpose: the main point(s) or idea(s) of the article under review
- Study parameter: the research scope (geographic location, study population, etc.) of the article under review
- Study methodology: the research method(s) of the article under review
- Study findings: the results of the article under review
- Study recommendations: the recommendations from the article under review
- Study conclusions: the conclusions from the article under review
- Study limitation: gaps, weaknesses, and/or barriers stated in the article under review

The Study Contribution section highlights the source's impact on scholarly debates and conversations. Metadata template terms in this section were the least assigned, occurring 7.3% ($n = 9$) of the time across all templates reviewed by the authors. The authors placed the following elements into this section of the *structured narrative literature review template*:

- Impact: the article's influence on an area of scholarship
- Originality: the article's novel contributions to an area of scholarship

The authors contend that this section facilitates a reviewer's: understanding of the existing literature's significance; ability to add new findings to the scholarly record; and ability to differentiate their research against existing scholarship.

The Reviewer Methodology section comprises information about the reviewer's role

when conducting a literature review. Specifically, this section documents the reviewer’s interpretation and analysis of the literature. Metadata template terms in this section were the second most assigned across all templates, with 25% (n = 31). The following elements are in this section of the *structured narrative literature review template*:

- Reviewer commentary: the reviewer's observations/key ideas/themes of the article under review
- Reviewer process: the reviewer's approach to analyzing the article under review
- Reviewer research notes: any information relevant to the reviewer's research project

The authors summarized the mapping of terms to sections in the structured narrative literature review template in Table X: Template Metadata Section Elements, Definitions, and Mapping.

Table 3: Template Metadata Section Elements, Definitions, and Mapping

Sections	Definitions	Term Mapping
Bibliographic Information	Source’s citation information	Title: Author: Date of publication: Citation: Abstract:
Study Information	Details about the study and its results	Study purpose Study type Study parameter Study methodology Study findings Study recommendations Study conclusions Study limitation
Study Contribution	Source’s impact on scholarly debates and conversations	Impact Originality
Reviewer Methodology	The role that the reviewer performs when conducting the literature review, specifically their interpretation and analysis	Reviewer commentary Reviewer process Reviewer research notes

Table 4: *structured narrative literature review template* compiles all sections and metadata elements.⁴ The authors suggest that specific elements should be mandatory when completing the template. These elements are represented with a ~ symbol. The authors recommend that specific fields use direct quotations from the source (including source page number). The need for direct quotes is represented with a * symbol. The authors provide a fillable template in Appendix A and include two real-world examples in Appendix B.

Table 4: Structured narrative literature review template

Section	Elements and Instructions
Bibliographic Information ~	Title
	Author
	Citation <i>full citation in the style that is appropriate for your discipline</i>
	Abstract * <i>complete abstract of the article under review</i>
Study Information	Study purpose * <i>main point(s) or idea(s) of the article under review</i>
	Study parameter <i>research scope (geographic location, study population, etc.) of the article under review</i>
	Study methodology * <i>research method(s) of the article under review</i>
	Study findings * <i>results of the article under review</i>
	Study recommendations * <i>recommendations from the article under review</i>
	Study conclusions *

⁴ See “Structured Narrative Literature Review Template” for full template here: <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/handle/10657/15001>.

	<i>conclusions from the article under review</i>
	Study limitation * <i>gaps, weaknesses, and/or barriers stated in the article under review</i>
Study Contribution	Impact * <i>article's influence on an area of scholarship</i>
	Originality * <i>article's novel contributions to an area of scholarship</i>
Reviewer Methodology ~	Reviewer commentary <i>reviewer's observations/key ideas/themes of the article under review</i>
	Reviewer process <i>reviewer's approach to analyzing article under review</i>
	Reviewer research notes * <i>information relevant to the reviewer's research project</i>
Other	<i>important information not captured in other template areas</i>
<p>~ These sections of the template are mandatory * Direct quotations from the source are encouraged; include page number in the template</p>	

Benefits

Incorporating the *structured narrative literature review template* presents several benefits to the reviewer. Completing the template promotes close reading and efficient note-taking of sources. According to Merriam-Webster (2022), close reading is defined as a “detailed and careful analysis of a written work.” Researchers emphasize the need to go beyond “summarizing” by actively reading (and re-reading), identifying relevant evidence, and then synthesizing disparate sources into a narrative (Efron & Ravid, 2018; Ingram et al., 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016). Other researchers note that the intentional and careful review of

sources promotes a greater understanding of the material. Boell & Cezec-Kecmanovic (2010) remark

Arguably the most important part of a survey of existing literature is reading. Through reading, important concepts are identified while at the same time the vocabulary used to describe those concepts is mastered. Furthermore, through reading one can learn how similar results are interpreted differently by different authors. Increased understanding of a topic acquired through reading can be used to identify additional search terms and phrases as well as related theories. (pp. 137-8)

Several researchers identify the types of content that a reviewer could document, including the source's: methodological approach and study design, significance and impact on the field, limitations, significant quotations and concepts, and diverse perspectives and various contexts (including cultural and political) on the same topic (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2016; Efron & Ravid, 2018; Noblit & Hare, 1988; Ramdhani et al. 2014; Randolph, 2009; Walsh & Downe, 2005). Efron & Ravid (2018) also elaborate on the kinds of information a reviewer can collect based on the type of study. They explain that for quantitative studies "you may want to note whether the study was experimental or descriptive, the validity and reliability of the instruments, the sample used to gather data, or the statistical results and their significance;" for qualitative studies "you may want to note the subjectivity of the researchers and the methods of establishing the trustworthiness of the study;" and for hermeneutical-phenomenological studies "[you may want to select] social and theoretical contexts and the cultural constructions" (p. 86).

The *structured narrative literature review template* can help reviewers avoid the "common pitfall" of "piecemeal reading, which may cause incomplete or inaccurate understanding" (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 1995, quoted by Li & Wang, 2018, pp. 127-128).

This reinforces Li & Wang's (2018) position that "there is no shortcut to a successful review, and familiarity with the literature is the only key" (pp. 127-128). Additionally, it encourages reviewers to note their own commentary while reading sources, promoting an "active" and "critical" approach to source review. This reflective practice can help the reviewer reimagine the focus and approach of their research (Li & Wang, 2018, pp. 127-8).

Related to close reading, the *structured narrative literature review template* encourages collaborative note taking. As research becomes increasingly team-based, interdisciplinary, and geographically dispersed, tools like the template can assist with setting research norms and project management. The norming process includes developing rules for incorporating direct quotations and paraphrasing into the template while coordinating the division of review work among the team. The template can be used in web-based platforms such as Google Docs and Microsoft Office 365 to allow research teams to easily collaborate in real-time - promoting the opportunity for the team to present multiple perspectives within the template for any given source.

Conclusion

To answer the research question, "What are the prominent elements of a literature review template," the authors designed a two-part study of existing literature review templates. After codifying the results, they identified elements that the authors organized into four sections: Bibliographic Information, Study Information, Study Contribution, and Reviewer Methodology. These sections, and their corresponding elements, comprise the *structured narrative literature review template*.

The authors have identified several limitations to their study. First, while the *structured narrative literature review template* affords a process and structure for collecting narrative

literature review data, it might not be the most efficient or effective data collection tool for other types of literature reviews, including systematic. To mitigate this, the authors chose to include elements in the *structured narrative literature review template* typically found in systematic reviews, such as study type, study parameter, and reviewer process. Studying how the *structured narrative literature review template* can aid or hinder data collection for systematic or other review types could refine the template and/or determine its applicability beyond the narrative review approach.

Additionally, the authors only have anecdotal data on the usability of the *structured narrative literature review template* and its effectiveness in helping reviewers collect data for a narrative literature review. The authors intend to investigate how reviewers can implement the *structured narrative literature review template* in their own narrative review data collection process to understand the usability and effectiveness of the template.

When compiling the *structured narrative literature review template*, the authors identified possible integrative features that could improve a future version of the template. For example, syncing the template with citation management software could automate portions of the data collection process, particularly bibliographic information.

Completing a literature review can be overwhelming for reviewers at any level. After identifying the typical elements needed to collect data for a narrative literature review, the authors created the *structured narrative literature review template*. It makes the process more manageable by providing a flexible, concise, and easy-to-understand tool. Ultimately, incorporating the template equips a reviewer with a structure and strategy that can assist in overcoming one of the most daunting portions of the research process.

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