

How to do a literature review?

Supervised project in research

M.Sc. in Global Supply Chain

What is a literature review?

The literature review is a critical synthesis of scientific research that has been conducted on a subject. The purpose of the literature review is first to summarize the knowledge that has been acquired so far on a research subject. It also aims to shed light on the methodologies that have been used to study a subject and to criticize the results of previous studies. It can also possibly compare contradictory results of certain studies. Finally, it should highlight the gaps in previous research.

What are the main steps to follow when starting a literature review?

Step 1: Define the research subject

To do this, a discussion with your supervisor will help you to find keywords that can be used to search for scientific articles.

At the start of the research, it is better to be more specific to avoid finding too many references that are not sufficiently related to the research subject and thus waste precious time analyzing them.

Conversely, if the determined keywords do not give enough results, it is then advisable to widen the search by using more encompassing keywords.

It should be noted that the use of operators like "AND" or "OR" and quotation marks for expressions containing several words are very useful for improving the quality of the results obtained.

Step 2: Determine the search engine

Next, you need to determine which search engine you will use. Among other things, it is possible to use:

- The research tool from HEC's library (<https://www.hec.ca/en/library/index.html>);
- Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>);
- Specific databases (<https://www.hec.ca/en/library/databases/index.html>; see the list below);
- Specific scientific journals (<https://www.hec.ca/en/library/journals.html>; see the list below).

Major databases in supply chain management:

- ABI/Inform Collection,
- Business Source Complete (EBSCO),
- Emerald (MCB University Press),
- JSTOR: Journal Storage,
- ScienceDirect (Elsevier).

Highly ranked journals in Supply Chain Management:

- Production and Operations Management
- Journal of Operations Management
- Journal of Supply Chain Management
- Manufacturing and Service Operations Management
- International Journal of Production Economics
- International Journal of Production Research
- Decision Sciences
- International Journal of Operations and Production Management
- Supply Chain Management- An International Journal
- International Journal of Physical Distribution & Logistics Management
- Journal of Purchasing & Supply Management
- Journal of Business Logistics
- Management Science
- OMEGA
- Operations Research
- Computers and Operations Research
- Transportation Research: Part A / B / C / D / E

How to do it day by day?

1. Find 5 papers.
2. Read the abstract of each paper.
3. Choose the papers that are the most relevant: read them in more details (introduction, discussion and conclusion) and fill in the following recapitulative table:

Authors	Title	Journal	Year	Research Question	Methodology	Main findings

4. For the most relevant paper, read the full paper and write a small summary (one paragraph).

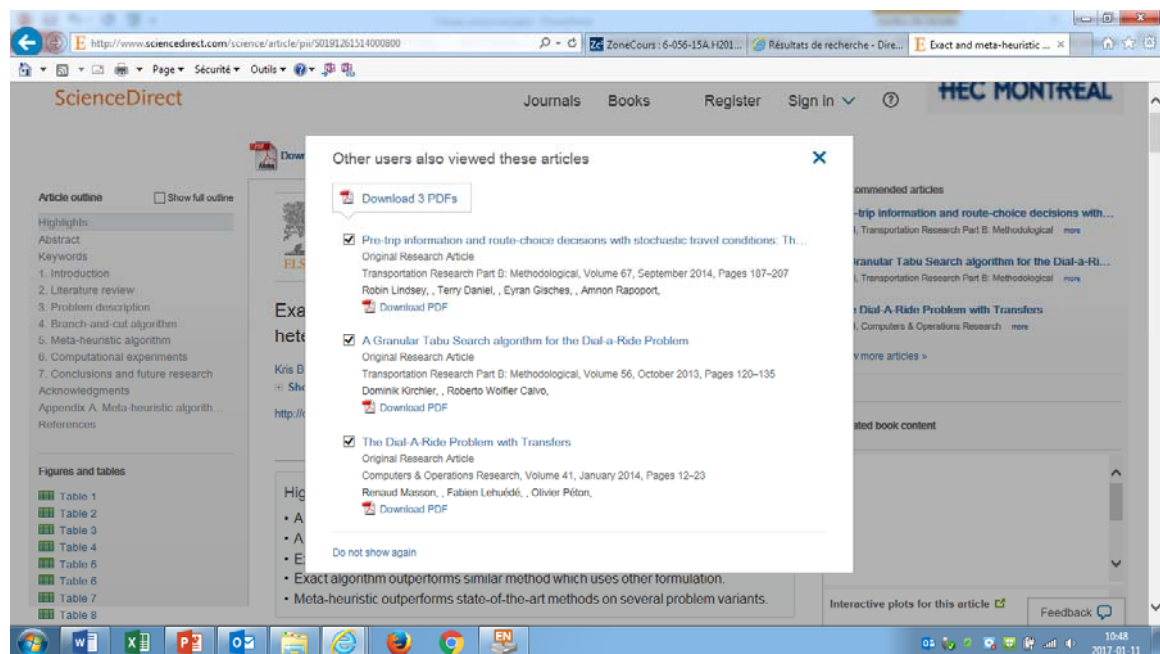
5. For those papers, make related searches:
 - Find papers that are referenced by this paper and which have a similar subject;
 - Find papers that cite this paper;
 - Look whether the same authors have written other papers on the same subject.
6. Go back to step 1 until you reach 15 to 20 relevant papers.
7. Categorize the papers in terms of the subject studied, the methodology used, or any other way that seems relevant.
8. Group together the paragraph you wrote on each paper and ensure you have a narrative frame.
9. Find other papers to complete your research.

How to find more recent papers?

There are three ways to find more recent papers on a specific subject.

Option 1:

The database « ScienceDirect » has a functionality that suggest papers in link with the one you just found (see pop-up window).



Option 2:

Using Google Scholar by clicking on the “Cited by” under the paper you just found. By clicking this link, you will obtain a list of papers that cites the latter.

The marketing and **logistics** efficacy of **online** sales channels

[S Rao, TJ Goldsby, D Iyengar](#) - ... of Physical Distribution & **Logistics** ..., 2009 - emerald.com

Purpose—The purpose of this study is to investigate key differences between web-only and multi-channel retailers in terms of five different measures of web activity and three different forms of outsourcing behavior. Specifically, the research examines the marketing and ...



Cited by 72

[Related articles](#)

[All 3 versions](#)

Option 3:

Using the functionality “Cited Reference Search” in the database Web of Science. You must then enter the information on the paper for which you are trying to find papers that have been citing it.

What other tools can be useful?

1. General guidelines for a research work at a graduate level:
https://www.hec.ca/cfla/anglais/document/guidelines_academic_work.pdf
2. Guidelines on how to cite your sources:
<http://libguides.hec.ca/citing>
3. HEC's reference style:
<https://libguides.hec.ca/style-hec>
4. Guidelines about EndNote tool:
<https://libguides.hec.ca/endnote>