

Steps in a Literature Review

1. Preliminary Planning

- Define the scope and objectives of the review
- Identify key concepts and variables
- Formulate the review question (e.g., using PICO, SPIDER, or PECO frameworks)
- Choose an appropriate review framework (e.g., PRISMA, JBI, Cochrane)

2. Develop a Review Protocol

- Describe inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Specify databases and search strategies
- Define study selection, data extraction, and synthesis methods
- Plan for risk of bias and quality assessment

3. Registration and Approval

- Register the review protocol (e.g., PROSPERO, OSF, or institutional repository)
- Seek ethical approval if required
- Establish roles, timelines, and resources for the review team
- Set the timeline for the review stages

4. Systematic Literature Searching

- Develop a detailed search strategy (keywords, Boolean operators, truncation)
- Identify relevant databases (e.g., Scopus, ProQuest, CINAHL, PubMed)
- Conduct pilot searches to refine search terms
- Systematically search databases and grey literature sources
- Download and store citations using a reference manager (Zotero, Mendeley)
- Remove duplicates

5. Importing & Managing Citations

- Download and store citations using a reference manager such as Zotero
- Remove duplicates
- Import cleaned citation files (RIS, BibTeX, or CSV) into a review platform such as:
 - JBI SUMARI (for systematic reviews using JBI methodology)
- Organise references within the platform (tag, categorise, and annotate)
- Assign reviewers and set inclusion/exclusion decision workflows
- Track progress of screening and resolve conflicts

6. Screening and Study Selection

- Conduct title and abstract screening based on inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Perform full-text screening for potentially eligible studies
- Record reasons for exclusion at each stage
- Document the selection process using a PRISMA flow diagram
- Resolve disagreements via consensus or third-party adjudication

7. Appraisal and Data Handling

- Conduct quality or risk of bias assessment using appropriate tools (e.g., CASP, JBI, RoB 2.0)
- Use review platforms (e.g., JBI SUMARI, Covidence) to record quality ratings and notes
- Extract data into standardised data extraction tables/forms
- Manage and code extracted data (e.g., NVivo, Excel, or within review software)
- If a detailed analysis of bibliometric data is done, manage data with tools like VOS viewer and Biblioshiny

8. Synthesis and Interpretation

- Choose synthesis type (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods)
- Perform qualitative synthesis (e.g., thematic synthesis, narrative synthesis).
- Or perform quantitative synthesis (meta-analysis), if appropriate.
- Assess heterogeneity (statistical or conceptual).
- Conduct sensitivity analyses if applicable.
- Interpret findings in the context of evidence strength and limitations.
- Visualisation of bibliometric data using VOS viewer and Biblioshiny

9. Reporting and Dissemination

- Follow reporting guidelines (e.g., PRISMA 2020 checklist)
- Write the review, including introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusions
- Include PRISMA diagram, tables, and summary figures
- Discuss implications for policy, practice, and future research
- Submit the review for peer-reviewed publication
- Deposit supplementary materials (e.g., data extraction forms, protocols) in repositories.