

2.2.3: Sources Other Than Scholarly Journals

There are five other outlets that are sources of research reports: books, dissertations, government reports, policy reports, and presented papers. We will briefly consider each.

BOOKS In general, books communicate information, provoke thought, and entertain. Some books report on original research or are collections of research articles. You can find information on these types of books (e.g., title, author, and publisher) in the library's catalog system. Only college or university libraries have books that report on research. Some publishers, such as university presses, specialize in publishing them. Qualitative types of research are more likely to appear in a book format, as are the results of long, complex studies that may also be published in scholarly journal articles. Because they are not in the article search tool system, it is difficult to locate studies in books. Three types of books can contain research reports:

- **Monographs.** Contain the details of a long complex study or a set of interconnected studies.
- **Readers.** Contain articles on a topic, original or gathered from journals. Often the editor of the book has modified the research (i.e., shortened and simplified it) to make it easier for nonexperts to read.
- **Edited collections.** A collection of new research reports, articles reprinted from scholarly journals, or a mixture of both on a common topic.

DISSERTATIONS All graduate students who receive the Ph.D. degree are required to do original research and write the study as a dissertation thesis. Dissertations are in the library of the university that granted the Ph.D. About one-third of dissertation results are published later as books or

articles. Because dissertations report on original research, they can be valuable sources of information. Specialized indexes like the Dissertation Abstracts International (online and print version) list dissertations with their authors, titles, and universities. To get a copy of the dissertation, you must either borrow it via interlibrary loan from the degree-granting university, if that university permits this, or purchase a photocopy of it (see Figure 2.2).

GOVERNMENT REPORTS The U.S. federal government, the governments of other nations, state- or provincial-level governments, the United Nations, and international agencies such as the World Bank all sponsor research studies and publish research reports. Many college and university libraries have some of these documents in their holdings, often in a special government documents section. Most libraries hold only the most frequently requested documents and reports. You can use specialized lists of publications and indexes to search for them, but usually you will need the help of a librarian. Some are also available online.

PRESENTED PAPERS Each year, the professional associations in various fields (e.g., criminal justice, education, marketing, nursing, political science, psychology, recreation, sociology) hold annual meetings. At them hundreds of researchers gather to deliver, listen to, or discuss oral reports of recent research, with many also in written form. People who attend can pick up a copy. If you do not attend, you can obtain a meeting program with a list of each paper with its title, author, and author's place of employment. You can also write directly to the author to request a copy.

POLICY REPORTS Research institutes and policy centers (e.g., Brookings Institute, Rand Corporation, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) publish papers and reports. An organization might list its reports

Figure 2.2 Example of Dissertation Abstract

Although you may find it difficult to obtain full dissertations, you can learn a great deal about the research study conducted in a dissertation from its abstract alone.

Title: An ethnographic case study of two tattoo shops in Milwaukee
Author(s): Mertens, Diane K.
Degree: Ph.D.
Year: 2014
Pages: 244
Institution: University of Wisconsin
Advisor: Neuman, W. Lawrence
Abstract: This ethnographic case study explored the emic knowledge of tattoo artists and tattooed individuals in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Five tattoo artists and 12 tattooed individuals who had two or more tattoos were recruited. They were observed in two tattoo shops over the course of six months and completed a 20-item structured interview and unstructured interviews. The goal was to determine the nature of the experience and its meaning to the participants. The participants were also interviewed about their knowledge of the social consequences involved with getting tattooed, and whether or not tattooing has become socially acceptable. Two of the five tattoo artists did not complete the structured interviews, but all participated in an unstructured interview. Lastly, all 17 participants completed a task in which they created a free-list of their recreational activities and rated each on several attributes of leisure. They also sorted a list of leisure activities. The data affirmed that the idea of leisure is strongly peer-centered for the participants. Characteristics of the tattoo experience as described by the participants suggested that for them, tattooing is both a leisure activity and a form of self-expression. The participants discussed the growing acceptance of tattooing in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as well as variables that make some tattoos socially acceptable or tolerated. They demonstrated that this morally controversial leisure activity has challenged certain social norms but remains associated with other leisure activities often perceived as deviant or morally questionable.

Figure 2.4 Example of Two Abstracts from Scholarly Articles

Article abstracts provide important summary information and help you determine the relevance of an article before reading it.

Example of Highly Structured Abstract

Title: Demographic Correlates of a Representative Sample of Men and Women Who Have Ever Been Tattooed

Abstract

Objective: Despite an increase in the popularity of persons getting tattooed, we know little about the characteristics of adult men and women who have ever been tattooed. We investigated demographic and behavioral correlates of adults who have been tattooed in a representative sample. **Methods:** Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATIs) were completed by a representative random sample of 9,337 men and women aged 16–65 years in Canada. **Results:** A total of 15.8% of respondents had ever been tattooed, and 3.1% of respondents within in the year immediately prior to the interview. More men than women reported getting a tattoo; nonetheless, the highest tattooing rates were among women in their 20s (31.1%). The 20–39 age group was most likely to have been tattooed. Men without a college degree and women who were cohabitating also showed higher tattoo rates. Tattooing was correlated with several risk-taking behaviors: binge drinking, smoking tobacco and marijuana, and having a large number of sexual partners. It was also correlated with having being diagnosed for anxiety or depression. **Conclusions:** As tattooing has grown in popularity, especially among young adults, it remains a marker for people who engage in other high-risk behaviors.

Example of an Unstructured Article Abstract

Title: *College Student Attitudes About Tattoos*

Abstract

We test models of negative attitudes toward tattooed persons and attitudes toward getting a tattoo in the future among 205 tattooed and 307 nontattooed college students. People who have friends and family members with a tattoo reduce negative attitudes toward tattooing. In addition to having known a person with a tattoo as well as having gotten one tattoo in the past predicts a person's attitude toward future tattooing. Looking at data for 194 tattooed respondents, we find that those who have multiple tattoos are most committed to their tattoos and least interested in their removal. Having multiple tattoos is also associated with a perception that tattooed persons suffer from negative prejudice from the nontattooed population. Persons with visible and large tattoos do not differ from persons with covered and small tattoos regarding degree of tattoo commitment, but persons with large and visible tattoos most likely to say that tattooed persons suffer from prejudice.

Example Study Sexual Harassment Literature Search

Here is a search I conducted using article search tools. My general topic was “sexual harassment.” I narrowed the topic to “sexual harassment of female college students.” I looked for peer-reviewed articles in English published from 2005 to 2012. I started with the article search tool called “EBSCO-Host Academic Search Complete.” This tool examines 1,500 peer-reviewed journals for all academic fields back to the late 1990s for most journals. Other article search tools contain information from different journals or cover different time spans. My first keywords were *sexual harassment* and *university*. The search located 614 articles. I found that many were not about college students. The search tool had picked up the word *university* from where the author worked. A search with *sexual harassment* and *student* yielded 191 articles. Some were about high school students, and some were about males being harassed by females, but many were relevant. I narrowed my search further to *sexual harassment* and *college female* and got 64 articles. Not all were on my topic of interest. I noticed that “gender-related harassment” and “unwanted sexual encounters” appeared in some articles. This gave me the idea to use them as alternative keywords for sexual harassment. I next used three other article search tools with the same restrictions and used the same keywords as before. I found that the four article search tools located many of the same articles, but often one search tool found articles not located by other search tools. This shows that it is always best to use more than one search tool (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 Number of Articles Found with Article Search Tools (peer-reviewed articles, 2005–2012)

Keywords Used	EBSCO-Host	JSTOR	Sociological Abstracts	Citation Index
<i>Sexual harassment & University</i>	614	192	240	114
<i>Sexual harassment & student</i>	191	67	82	273
<i>Sexual harassment & college & female</i>	64	80	15	27

USE BOOKS AND OTHER OUTLETS TO FIND STUDIES It is very difficult to find studies in books. The subject lists in library catalog systems are broad and not very useful. Moreover, they list only books in a particular library system. Professional librarians can help you locate books from other libraries. There is no sure-fire way to locate relevant books. Use multiple search methods, including a look at journals that contain book reviews and the bibliographies of articles.

Locating studies in other outlets like government documents, Ph.D. dissertations, policy reports, and presented papers is far more difficult and time-consuming. A specific study might be highly relevant to your question, but few beginning researchers have the time or skills to search other outlets systematically.

Figure 2.5 Web Page from EBSCO Host Academic Elite Advanced Search

Although each search tool is a little different, the types of information you will need when searching a database of scholarly articles are similar. In addition, your speed and efficiency at finding relevant articles can improve with practice.

EBSCO Research Databases

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Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals ☐

Published Date Month Yr. to Month Yr.

Publication

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Periodical
Newspaper
Book

Document Type All
Abstract
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TIPS FOR RECORDING NOTES Reading research reports with a critical eye is a skill that takes time and practice to develop. Despite a peer review procedure, errors and sloppy logic can slip into research reports. Sometimes titles, abstracts, and the introduction are misleading; they may not fully explain the study's method and results. A

good article follows a logical progression, and all its parts fit together. Weak articles make huge leaps in logic or omit transitional steps.

As you read for details and take notes, try to develop a mental image of how the researchers conducted the study. Reading many studies can expand your research design

Figure 2.6 Example of Notes on an Article

Your notes should answer the following questions

ENTRY IN SOURCE FILE

Guéguen, Nicolas. 2012. "Tattoos, piercings, and sexual activity." *Social Behavior and Personality*, Vol. 40, Issue 9, pp. 1543–1548.

CONTENT FILE

Guéguen, Nicolas. 2012

Background: Many studies have examined the characteristics of people with tattoos or body piercings in the United States. U.S. studies found college students with piercings engage in risky behaviors, use illegal drugs recreationally, and engage in binge drinking, more than students who do not have piercings. Women with piercings were more likely to have premarital sex, but no difference was found between men with or without piercings found regarding sexual behavior. Similar patterns hold for tattoos. U.S. adolescents with tattoos report higher levels of substance use, violent behavior, sexual intercourse, and school problems than were adolescents without tattoos.

Questions/expectations: A large majority of studies on tattooing and piercing have been conducted in the United States, with only a few studies in other countries (Canada, Switzerland). Tattooing or piercing among young adults has not been studied in France, and are new behaviors in France, beginning later than in the United States. This study focuses on sexual behavior, and the effect of a combination of tattooing and piercing on the age of the first sexual experience. The author hypothesized that respondents with tattoos and/or piercings would report earlier sexual activity than would respondents without piercings or tattoos.

Definitions and measures: In a face-to-face survey, respondents were asked three questions. They were asked about age of first sexual activity, "How old were you when you had sexual intercourse for the first time?" Tattoos and body piercings were measured by asking how many piercings they had (ranging from 0 to 5+) and how many tattoos they had (ranging from 0 to 5+).

Research design: The data were gathered by 104 (46 males and 58 females) research assistants who were undergraduate students studying business management. Each assistant was neatly dressed in a traditional manner for young people (jeans/sneakers/T-shirt) and on sunny days on a college campus approached 20 passerby students of the same gender as himself/herself.

Data or research participants: The participants were 2,080 students (1,160 females and 920 males) enrolled in four public universities in the west of France (Brittany). All were French and Caucasian, and their mean age was 20.84 years.

Findings: Among all respondents, 24 percent had either a tattoo or a piercing. Both males and females without piercings or tattoos began sexual activity later than males and females who had only tattoos, only piercings, or both tattoos and piercings. Persons with both tattoos and piercings began sexual activity younger than who had only piercings or only tattoos. No significant gender differences were found. Among male and female students without tattoos or piercings, the onset of sexual activity began one to two years later (average age 17.5) than students who had tattoos (age 16.6), piercings (age 15.8), or both (age 15.4).

skills. If you read a study in which the authors were disorganized or did not clearly provide all the details, you will recognize the importance of good organization and specifying all details.

You may encounter unfamiliar terms, new theoretical ideas, advanced technical vocabulary or sophisticated statistical charts, graphs, and results beyond your background. This is because professional researchers are the primary audience for research reports. The technical terms and results communicate important information to this audience. Do not be overly concerned if you cannot follow everything. As a novice researcher and consumer of studies, you should not expect to have the sophisticated knowledge of an expert researcher. Be prepared to read an article more than once. A lack of knowledge might prevent you from fully evaluating all aspects of a study, but you can still learn from and build on sophisticated studies and improve and expand your understanding over time.

2.3.5: Organize Notes, Synthesize, and Write the Review

Synthesizing and discussing findings with clear writing is the most difficult step in preparing a literature review. After gathering information, organize specific findings to create a map of how they fit together. Your organizing method depends on the purpose of the review. Usually, it is

best to organize findings around your research question or around a few core, shared findings. Most professionals try several organizing schemes before they settle on a final one. Organizing your notes is a skill that improves with practice. Some people place notes into several piles, each representing a common theme. Others draw charts or diagrams to show the connections among different findings. Others create lists of how the many study findings agree and disagree. Organizing notes is a process. Often you will find that some references and notes are no longer relevant, and you will discard them. You may discover gaps or new areas that you did not consider previously. This may require return visits to the library to refine your search.

Next you will want to *synthesize* or blend the findings, methods, or statements from separate studies and end up with a coherent whole. Instead of just listing summaries of articles, one after the other, your literature review will show how the studies fit together as one integrated picture.

Your goal is to produce a well-written, compact document that clearly summarizes what many studies say about a research question. A good literature review is a neutral summary description (do not include your personal opinion or conjecture) that communicates its purpose to the reader through its organization. You want to organize common findings or arguments together, address the most important ideas first, logically link findings,