

The Importance Of Previous Studies In Scientific Research

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Abstract:

Previous studies constitute foundational pillars throughout the investigative process, serving as vital guides and mentors in scientific research. From the initial spark of defining a research problem to the meticulous analysis and interpretation of results, prior scholarship illuminates each step. This article delves deeper into this paramount importance, exploring the multifaceted benefits of previous studies for both their formal structure and thematic content.

It will empower researchers with the knowledge to present these vital resources rigorously and practically, thereby optimizing their potential utility in individual research endeavors.

Keywords: Previous studies, Definition, Importance, Benefits, Components.

Introduction :

Scientific investigation occupies a prominent position within the concerns of many researchers, particularly those embarking upon their initial forays into this rigorous enterprise. The pursuit of meaningful research necessitates the adherence to a defined and systematic sequence of steps, each contributing to the attainment of the desired objective. Within the field of social sciences, scholars frequently engage in a thorough examination of previously conducted research endeavors. This critical analysis serves the dual purpose of extracting the distilled essence of prior advancements in the

relevant field and informing the conceptualization and formulation of the researcher's upcoming investigative undertaking.

An exhaustive immersion in the existing body of research equips the investigator with invaluable tools for navigating the complexities of their chosen inquiry. Not only does it facilitate the resolution of pre-existing questions, but it also fosters the emergence of novel interrogations that may have previously eluded consideration. This iterative process of questioning and clarifying progressively refines the researcher's perspective, paving the way for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, by leveraging the insights gleaned from prior scholarship, the researcher liberates valuable time and resources that can be subsequently directed towards the subsequent, and no less crucial, stages of the research journey.

Previous Studies:

Previous research is an essential source of inspiration for researchers. Every research is an extension of previous research. Therefore, it is necessary to review the literature, that is, to know the work that has been done before on the subject that concerns us. (Maurice Angers, p. 125)

To justify the importance of his study, the researcher must explain how his research or proposed study differs or distinguishes itself from previous studies. (Abaidat et al., p. 26) This is subject to the condition that he must show the points of similarity and difference, as well as a scientific criticism of those studies by highlighting the level that they have reached in that subject and comparing them to what he intends to do in his research. From this, we saw that it is necessary to define a definition of previous studies so as not to fall into the circle of confusion with other terms.

Definition of Previous Studies:

The researcher refers to previous research and studies and reads them analytically to extract the lessons in addition to determining the extent of the contribution of the results that were reached in those studies related to the subject of the research to be implemented" (Abaidat et al., 1999, p. 26)

Therefore, we can propose the following definitions that we find appropriate for our topic. As a first definition, it can be said

that "Previous studies are a collection of research and studies that have addressed the topic that the researcher has studied. These studies provide the researcher with a lot of information about the subject of the study, which helps him to understand the subject of his scientific research fully." (bts-academy.com)

We also find in another place that previous studies are "scientific research and studies that have previously been conducted by researchers in the subject of the study or similar topics. The most important source of obtaining research problems is the researcher's review of previous studies on the same subject of his research. Previous studies are also known as research that has been completed in many fields of scientific research, whether in universities or multiple research centers or through conferences or scientific symposia." (.drasah.com)

It is also known as "the previous human efforts that have researched the subject that the researcher is studying himself or a similar subject, from one angle and in one of the many environmental conditions, which has been published in any form, provided that it is a contribution of scientific value. The publication may be in print or lectures or broadcasted talks, voice only or voice and image, or presented to a scientific institution to obtain a scientific degree or a financial reward or to want to contribute scientifically ... And these studies do not include what is considered textbooks or introductions without rooting in them, that is, just a collection of available information." (Sini, 1994, p. 155)

To avoid going into too many definitions and as a summary of the above, we can say that previous studies include all studies that are directly or indirectly related to the research topic and that were conducted by researchers, whether those studies were published or unpublished. The review of these studies is for purely scientific purposes, as the research seeks through them to position itself in the circle of knowledge and information that it is about to reveal to benefit from previous experiences and try to use them in favor of its research. Therefore, the researcher's review of previous studies is critical so that he can benefit from it.

The Importance of Previous Studies:

The importance of previous studies is evident in the idea that "the essence of research is to advance the discipline by testing theories and practices. To do this, the researcher needs to be

aware of the established and recognized science, then go through a review of the scientific writings on this topic and place his original contribution with the established knowledge. In this sense, literature review is the basis of his research work" (Gauthier et Bourgeois, 2016, p.77), because scientific knowledge is cumulative and everything new is built based on previous knowledge.

The researcher must also make sure that each previous study will lead him to another study, because each book, article, or research report includes a list of references that the researcher relied on in his work, and these references will lead him to other sources (Matthews and Ross, p.236). What we emphasize is that the topic that has been chosen for the study is the one that will guide us at the beginning of the research to the titles of previous studies in particular and the references in general that are related to the topic. It is worth noting that through previous studies "researchers often recommend addressing a problem or a set of topics and problems that emerged during their research and conducting further research in a specific field, where a new problem emerges from the side problems that they cannot leave their original topic and their original problem and delve into it" (Qandilji, 2012, p.50). This will enable the researcher to then pose the appropriate questions to avoid repetition and focus on what is new giving his research a kind of uniqueness.

Therefore, we can say that "every research work falls within a set of homogeneous and interconnected elements and can be identified in intellectual currents that preceded it, or influenced it... Therefore, it is natural for the researcher to take note of the previous works that dealt with similar topics and to express the similarities and differences between his work and these intellectual currents" (Quivi, 1997, p.60).

The Benefits of Previous Studies:

Each stage of research has its benefits that are essential for the smooth progress of the research. Previous studies, for their part, are of great benefit that we can see in the early stages of research. The benefits of previous studies can be summarized in the following points:

- ✓ Previous studies provide the researcher with a wealth of knowledge and information about the topic to be studied. In other words, they enable the researcher to

"expand the base of his knowledge and information about the topic he is writing about. No matter how much knowledge and knowledge the researcher has on the topic, he still needs everything that has been written about the different aspects of the topic, or everything he can get. Thus, he can have a clearer picture of his topic." (Qandilji, 2012, p.55)

- ✓ They enable the researcher to identify one of the faces through which the topic has been studied and open up horizons for other studies from other perspectives. A good researcher "the more he increases his exploratory readings, his knowledge and his review of previous research, the more he will be successful in his research." (Qandilji, 2012, p.55)
- ✓ They enable the researcher to save effort and time by lifting the veil on some of the difficulties and errors that he may encounter by identifying what the researchers have faced before him.
- ✓ Previous studies enable the researcher to avoid repetition in work and focus only on what is new in the subject of the study.
- ✓ The researcher learns from previous studies about the methodology applied in those studies so that he can choose what suits him in his study.
- ✓ Previous studies also help to "benefit the researcher in avoiding the negatives and pitfalls that the researchers who preceded him in their research, and to introduce him to the difficulties that the researchers faced, and the means they followed in addressing and avoiding those difficulties and pitfalls, and also to benefit from the results of previous research in building hypotheses for new research." (Qandilji, 2012, p.55).
- ✓ Previous studies allow the researcher to pose the appropriate questions for his research and the appropriate methodology, as they enable him to compare his work with other works, increase his confidence, and start serious work.

All of this also allows for the crystallization of the topic, its definition, and the precise knowledge of the aspects to be studied, and the avoidance of dispersion in the ideas and

objectives set out in the research, so that the research is scientific and comprehensive.

The Basic Steps in Reviewing Previous Studies:

To benefit from previous studies, the researcher must carefully review them. Therefore, they must take enough time for this purpose so that they do not miss aspects of those studies that may be important to them. Here, we propose some important steps that the researcher should take immediately after identifying the problem. These steps are as follows:

1. Search for primary sources, such as books, journals, theses, and research related to the subject of the study.
2. Use secondary sources, which are books that help the researcher to enrich their information and edit their research.
3. Read the primary sources carefully and accurately to be able to identify the topic later.
4. Compile everything that the researcher has read and reviewed, so that they can present those studies. (Al-Dhamin, 2007, p.87)

How to Present Previous Studies:

There is no one-size-fits-all method for presenting previous studies. Each researcher chooses the method that they believe is most appropriate for them, provided that it is scientific and faithful to the content of the studies and their relationship to the research topic. The researcher should also be skilled and clear, especially in the scientific style of analysis and commentary on previous studies. However, for the presentation to be good, the preceding stage, which is reading, must also be good. Careful and in-depth reading of all the books, references, and dissertations found on the topic will make a difference in the quality of the presentation that the researcher will make later.

In general, the researcher reviews the previous studies and highlights the similarities and differences between their research and the previous studies that have addressed the same topic. They should also highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the studies and what they can offer the

researcher in terms of information and ideas that will help them in their research.

After reviewing the previous studies, the researcher seeks to write and record the information about those studies. It is important to note that there is more than one way to write previous studies in scientific research. Some of the most common methods are as follows:

- ❖ **Historical order:** According to this method, the researcher arranges the books and references according to their publication dates, from the oldest to the most recent.
- ❖ **Thematic order:** Using this method, the researcher identifies the topics of the previous studies according to their importance in the research. They then proceed to summarize the studies.
- ❖ **Comparison of similarities and differences:** In this case, the researcher seeks to clarify the similarities between the previous studies and their research, as well as to identify the differences.
- ❖ **Title order:** The researcher writes the title of the study, then summarizes it and records the findings. This is one of the most commonly used methods.
- ❖ **Order according to research methodology:** The scientific methodologies used vary from one study to another. The most prominent of these are deductive, descriptive, inductive, quantitative, and so on. The researcher can write the previous studies by classifying them according to the methodology. (mobta3ath.com).

It becomes clear that the method of presenting previous studies is linked to the researcher's subjectivity and what they want to review in the first place. In other words, each researcher has the right to choose the method and manner, and to put their stamp on it. Naturally, all of these stages are followed by a commentary on the previous studies. This commentary is carried out by the researcher to highlight the information that the studies can provide to them for their research and to point out any shortcomings that they may find that must be addressed. However, the most common method for presenting previous studies is in chronological order, from

the most recent to the oldest. All of these studies are referred to in the research text as "previous studies."

It is important to remember that regardless of the method that the researcher chooses to present the previous studies that they believe is appropriate for them, they must be careful to search for those studies that are directly related to the topic under study so that their thoughts do not get lost in the vast amount of ideas. With the passage of time and careful and in-depth readings, the type of studies that the researcher will need will become increasingly clear, which will help them to build their research and refine their ideas. The researcher will mention these studies in their research because they will not mention all of the studies that they have reviewed, but only a limited number of them

The Components to Highlight in the Presentation of Previous Studies:

The presentation of previous studies should be governed by a set of ethical and scientific rules at the same time. The researcher is presenting the work of another researcher, so they must be respectful of that person's information and be honest in their work. At the same time, the presentation should not be haphazard but should focus on the most important points and ideas.

The following are the most important components that the researcher should highlight in the presentation of previous studies:

- The title, author, location, and date of the study
- The purpose of the study and the questions it addresses
- The sample size, characteristics, and how it was selected
- The methodology used, including data collection and analysis
- The findings of the study
- A commentary on the study

The commentary is where the researcher seeks to highlight the importance of their study. As Abaidat et al. (1999, p. 26) state,

"To justify the importance of their study, the researcher must show how their study differs from or is superior to previous studies. This can be done by identifying weaknesses or shortcomings in those studies, either in terms of the theoretical framework or the methodology used. This will give the research topic more logical justification or importance by highlighting what the researcher hopes to achieve in their study that other researchers have not."

The commentary can also help the researcher to identify new developments related to the topic of the study. This can lead to the researcher changing their hypotheses or some aspects of their theoretical framework.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we can summarize from all that we have mentioned previously that the previous studies do not represent an element, title, or chapter of the research that we refer to because we are forced to do so out of respect for the research steps. Rather, it is a scientific and practical process at the same time, as it depends on methodology and ethics at the same time. As it has benefits, it also has importance. It enables the researcher to prepare for real research through the provision of scientific material and the theoretical approach that will serve the research in all its remaining stages. It essentially serves the research from the beginning by helping to control the topic and define the questions seriously, avoid repetition, encourage the researcher to discover new things, and try to be unique in their research in terms of the aspects to be studied from the topic, as well as choosing the appropriate methodology and the appropriate theoretical approach. This makes the previous studies a stage of great importance, like the other stages.

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