

Table 3.4 Common errors in writing a literature review

Primary errors

These are errors made by an author when writing a review:

1. Not including seminal work or failing to define the scope of the review appropriately
2. Lack of discrimination; not all the research cited is of equal validity or quality

Secondary errors

These are errors made when the author uses literature in an uncritical way:

3. Presenting inaccurate information about sampling, methods, design procedures and contexts of study
4. Double-counting of references by original author
5. Non-recognition of faulty conclusions by original author
6. Unwarranted attributions, the original author making claims not justified by the data
7. Suppression of contrary findings

Tertiary errors

These areas are when primary and secondary errors are included in generalizations made in the final review written by the author:

8. Consequential errors/flawed generalizations as a consequence of earlier lack of criticality
 9. Failure to marshal all evidence relevant to a generalization
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