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LITERATURE REVIEW

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is a literature review?

A literature review is a summary, examination and evaluation of written information (books, journals) on a particular topic such as Marketing Management.

There are three basic kinds of reviews:

- **Difference of opinion** – tells the reader about the differences in opinion between authors on the same topic.
- **Chronologically** – tells the reader about the literature from oldest to latest.
- **Methods of research** – tells the reader about the different research methods done on the same topic

You will usually be required to write a literature review at University and for business.

Why do we write literature reviews?

- Determine what has already been written on a topic
- Provide an overview of key concepts
- Identify major relationships or patterns
- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Identify any gaps in the research
- Identify any conflicting evidence
- Provide a solid background to a research paper's investigation

How do you complete one?

There are four (4) steps to completing one:

1. Check the task and identify the specific topic
2. Search for and collect written opinions/information on a specific topic (books, journals, website articles)
3. Identify differences and similarities in the information
4. Examine and evaluate the various opinions on the topic such as differences in research results.

Literature Review Presentation and Layout

Format

Literature reviews are like an essay in that they have an introduction, body and conclusion. However a review focuses on the literature instead of using literature to support its ideas such as an essay.

- Introduction
 - define the topic, providing an appropriate context for reviewing the literature
 - Point out overall trends in what has been published about the topic; or differences in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.
 - establish writer's reasons (point of view) for reviewing the literature
 - explain the organization of the review (sequence)
 - state what literature is and is not included (scope)

- Body Paragraphs
 - Include a main statement / idea that you are putting forward, ie topic sentence
 - Provide evidence from research to support / argue your idea, showing where the writers agree and / or disagree
 - student analysis of the research literature where appropriate
 - summing up and linking to the next idea (paragraph).
 - Each body paragraph should deal with a different theme that is relevant to your topic.
 - Each paragraph should start general and become specific
 - Themes can include:
 - historical background
 - methodologies
 - previous studies on the topic
 - mainstream versus alternative viewpoints
 - principle questions being asked
 - general conclusions that are being drawn.

- Conclusion
 - Summarise the main ideas from the body
 - Evaluate the current research pointing out any gaps, inconsistencies or areas that should be studied further.
 - Your overall view of the topic

Contents

- Introduction example – Theme - Previous studies of the topic

Function	Example	Language
<p><u>Topic sentence</u> →</p> <p>Scope →</p> <p>Thesis Statement →</p>	<p>Many theories have been proposed to explain what motivates human behaviour. Although the literature covers a wide variety of such theories, this review will focus on five major themes which emerge repeatedly throughout the literature reviewed.</p> <p>These themes are: incorporation of the self-concept into traditional theories of motivation, the influence of rewards on motivation, the increasing importance of internal forces of motivation, autonomy and self-control as sources of motivation, and narcissism as an essential component of motivation.</p> <p>Although the literature presents these themes in a variety of contexts, this paper will primarily focus on their application to self-motivation.</p>	<p>←</p> <p>Present perfect e.g. <u>have been proposed</u></p> <p>←</p> <p>Present & future e.g. <i>covers, will focus.</i></p> <p>←</p> <p>Present & future e.g. <i>presents, will focus</i></p>

- Body paragraph examples – Theme – Previous studies of the topic

Function	Example	Language
<p><u>Topic sentence</u> →</p> <p>Supporting Evidence →</p> <p>Sum up and link to next idea →</p>	<p>Researchers A and B both state X is true but differ on its effects. Firstly, researcher A(2009) suggests that X is true due to reasons 1 and 2. Researcher B(2010) also argues that X is true, but points out that the effects of X may be different from those suggested by Researcher A. B(2010) explains that these effects are caused because of the difference in X's circumstances. Therefore while A and B agree that X is true they disagree on the effects of X.</p>	<p>←</p> <p>Present tense Is used. Past tense is only used if the research has been disproved. E.g. <i>suggests, argues, are caused.</i></p>

Function	Example	Language
<p><u>Topic sentence</u> →</p> <p><i>Supporting Evidence</i> →</p> <p><u>Student Analysis</u> →</p> <p>Sum up and link to next idea →</p>	<p>Researchers generally state Motivation theory is true but differ on its effects. There seems to be general agreement on this theory, (for example, White(1987), Brown (1980), Black (1978), Green 1975) but Green (1975) sees motivation as a consequence of a positive working environment while Black(1978) puts money as a cause of motivation. While Green's work has some limitations in that it fails to consider other circumstances, its main value lies in the fact it inspired further studies in this field. This early research and agreement about money and motivation then led to more specialised research on its effects in the 1990s.</p>	<p>←</p> <p>Present tense Is used. E.g <u>state</u>, <u>differ</u>, <u>seems</u>.</p> <p>Past tense is only used if the research has been disproved.</p>

- Body paragraph examples – Theme – Writing about 2 or more sources

To develop an argument from 2 or more sources, you need to link your arguments together. The model below is a guide.

Function	Example	Language
<p>Topic sentence →</p> <p>Supporting Evidence →</p> <p>Contrasting theories →</p> <p>Sum up and link to next idea →</p>	<p>Most early theories of motivation were concerned with need satisfaction. Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe and Waters – Marsh (1998) argued that motivation relies on what a person needs and wants. Similarly the early theories of Maslow and Macgregor (Robbins et al. 1998) focused on personal needs satisfaction as the basis for motivational behaviour. However recent studies outlined by Leonard, Beauvais, and Scholl (1999) suggest that personality and disposition play an equally important role in motivation. Current thinking does not discount these theories, but simply builds on them to include a self – concept.</p>	<p>←</p> <p>Past tense – past theories. E.g. <i>were concerned</i></p> <p>←</p> <p>Use of adverb <i>Similarly</i> to show link between theories.</p> <p>←</p> <p>Use of <i>However</i> to show contrast</p> <p>←</p> <p>Use of verb <i>suggest</i> and adjective <i>current</i> as new/recent theories explained.</p>

- Body paragraph examples – Theme – Integration of student analysis

It is important to integrate your analysis and interpretation of the literature in your literature review. Read the following paragraph and see how the arguments have been integrated into the paragraph along with student analysis. Analysis is not just student opinion, it needs to be supported by the literature.

Function	Example	Language
Topic sentence →	By its very nature, motivation requires a degree of individual satisfaction or narcissism. Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe and Waters – Marsh (1998) suggest that motivation has as its very basis the need to focus on, and please the self. This is supported by Shaw, Shapard and Waugman (2000) who contend that this narcissistic drive is based on the human effort to find personal significance in life. It can be argued that the desire to improve one’s status is a highly motivational force, and is central to the idea of narcissistic motivation. The narcissistic motivational strategies put forward by Shaw et al. (2000) are concerned with motivation for life in general, but may also have applications in the context of work. These strategies, with their focus on personal needs, demonstrate that narcissism is an essential component of motivation.	Discussion of current literature means present tense is used. E.g. <i>requires, suggest, contend.</i>
First statement of supporting evidence →		
2 nd statement of supporting evidence →		←
Student analysis →		←
Sum up and link to next idea →		←
		Student analysis uses the passive phrase <u>It can be argued</u> . This avoids using “I” or “in my opinion.”

- Conclusion example

Function	Example	Language
Summarise main ideas →	In conclusion, Cacioppe and Waters – Marsh (1998) and Shaw, Shapard and Waugman (2000) all agree that internal motivation is important but disagree on how much is. Shaw et al. (2000) studied this area and gave the opinion that it varies according to circumstances. However all the research done has failed to fully evaluate motivation in terms of personality. Therefore, while the literature provides many answers to what causes motivation and its varying effects, more is needed to give a clear idea of what can cause it.	← Present tense to summarise e.g. <i>agree, gave</i>
Evaluate →		← Present Perfect to link past to present e.g. <i>has failed</i>
Writer’s view →		

Reference List

Like an essay, a literature review must contain a reference list or recommendations for reading in a full bibliography. The reference list should give information about all sources cited in the report. Use the APA referencing format.

These guidelines are not prescriptive and some academic staff may have their own preferences, so it is important that you consult the subject outline and/or the tutor before proceeding.

Literature Review Checklist

Have you

- written an introduction, body and conclusion?
- outlined the purpose and scope?
- explained the organisation of the review?
- identified appropriate and credible (academic/scholarly) literature?
- summarised the research in your own words?
- discussed the varying viewpoints?
- analysed and critiqued your readings?
- identified gaps in the literature and research?
- identified areas for further research?
- recorded the reference details of the sources?
- checked punctuation and spelling?

References

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https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/2_assessmenttasks/assess_tuts/lit_review_LL/integration.html