**Literature Review Template**

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| This document provides a generic template for a typical literature review chapter/section within a dissertation or thesis. Given that it is publicly accessible, the file is read-only. **To customise it, select “File”, followed by ‘’Make a copy’’ or “Download”**.  |

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| **WHERE TO START** |

If you’re new to the process of writing a literature review, our experienced, friendly academic researchers are ready to help you. You can [access that here](https://www.hamnicwritingservices.com/contact-us).

**PLEASE REMEMBER** - always follow any guidelines or templates that your university or institution provides. The template we provide here follows a generic, commonly used structure, but some institutions have unique requirements or specific priorities. So, make sure that you thoroughly digest and adhere to any instructions they’ve provided.

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| **WHERE TO GET MORE HELP** |

If you’d like on-demand assistance with your literature review, consider our private coaching service, where we hold your hand through the process, step by step. You can [book a free initial consultation here](https://www.hamnicwritingservices.com/contact-us).

Introduction

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| This section needs to introduce the chapter to your reader and help orient them in terms of what to expect. This is usually quite short, consisting of a few paragraphs. Depending on the nature of your project, you’ll typically cover some (or all) of the following in this section:* A quick reminder of your topic and research aims
* A brief explanation of the purpose of the literature review chapter
* An outline of the scope of your literature review (what you will and won’t cover)
* A brief overview outlining the layout of the chapter

Keep your introduction section concise. There’s no need to go into detail here – save your word count for the body section, as this is where you’ll earn marks. |

Next, you’ll move into the body section of your literature review. For the sake of simplicity, we break this down into three sections, namely:

1. The **foundation of theory** (theoretical framework)
2. The **empirical research**
3. The **research gap**

However, this is not set in stone. You may, for example, blend these three components together into one body section. Similarly, your university may require that you present the theoretical framework in a separate section. So, pay close attention to your institution’s guidance documents and requirements, and if possible, try to review past dissertations/theses from your specific program to get a feel for the norms.

The foundation of theory (theoretical framework)

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| The theoretical framework typically presents a set of concepts, definitions, and propositions that together form a structured, comprehensive view of a specific phenomenon. For example, If your research aims involve understanding what factors contribute toward people trusting investment brokers, you’d need to first lay down some theory so that it’s crystal clear what exactly you mean by this. You’d also need to identify what existing theories have to say in relation to your research aim. In this case, you could discuss some of the key literature in relation to organisational trust.Typically, you’ll present your theoretical framework in written form, although sometimes it will make sense to utilise some visuals to show how different theories relate to each other. Your theoretical framework may revolve around just one major theory, or it could comprise a collection of different interrelated theories and models. In some cases, there will be a lot to cover and in some cases, not. |

### Empirical research

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| Once you’ve laid a strong foundation of theory, introduced key concepts and defined important terminology, you’ll typically move on to discuss what the existing empirical research has found in relation to your research aims and questions. By empirical research, we mean studies that have collected and analysed data (qualitative or quantitative) and drawn conclusions therefrom. For example, if you were investigating the factors that impacted the likelihood to purchase on an e-commerce store, you would review existing studies that have undertaken both qualitative and quantitative investigations to identify the potential factors.This section will often form the largest portion of your body content, as you’ll effectively review, synthesise and critique the existing body of studies in relation to your topic. How you structure this section will vary tremendously from study to study. Sometimes, it makes sense to structure this by key variable. Sometimes, it makes more sense to structure it by research aim or question. You could also consider structuring it chronologically or methodologically, depending on the nature of your project.You’ll need to use your discretion here and select a structure that makes sense within your context. Again, look at past dissertations and theses for inspiration and guidance.  |

Research gap

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| Having laid down the theory and synthesised the empirical research, it’s important to clearly articulate the research gap. At this stage, the gap may seem obvious, but you still need to build a clear, strong argument as to what type of gap exists and why that’s meaningful. |

Other potential inclusions

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| Depending on your university’s requirements, as well as the nature of your study, there may be other components that need to make an appearance within the body section of your literature review. These could potentially include:* Hypotheses or propositions
* A conceptual framework (this is different from a theoretical framework)
* Discussion of methodologies from previous studies
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Conclusion

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| Last but not least, you’ll need to wrap up your literature review and transition to the next chapter (typically the methodology chapter). The conclusion section should provide a brief recap of the key points and provide a transition. Keep it concise - there’s no need to provide a lengthy summary of everything that was discussed.  |

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