

FULL DBA CW REPORT STRUCTURE

A suggestion

PART 1 (1,500 words)

CRITICAL FOUNDATIONS OF LITERATURE REVIEW (DBA LEVEL)

1.1 Introduction

- Define **Critical Literature Review (CLR)**
- Position CLR within **doctoral research lifecycle**
- Clarify:
 - purpose (knowledge synthesis + gap identification)
 - audience (academic + practitioner)

1.2 What Makes a DBA Literature Review “Critical”?

Move beyond description:

Weak (MBA level)	Strong (DBA level)
Summarises studies	Evaluates + compares
Lists findings	Synthesises patterns
Reports gaps	Constructs gaps

Explicitly include:

- **Critique of theories**
- **Contradictions in literature**
- **Epistemological positioning**

1.3 CLR Process (Systematic + Transparent)

Integrate:

- PRISMA logic (search, screening, inclusion)
- Database strategy
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria

This aligns with:

“clarity – auditability – replicability – transparency (CART)”

1.4 CLR Content (What You Analyse)

Move beyond “topics” → analyse:

- Theories
- Constructs
- Methods
- Contexts
- Findings consistency

1.5 CLR Output (DBA Expectation)

Findings are NOT raw data → they are **interpreted and synthesised insights**

You must produce:

- Patterns
- Relationships
- Explanations
- Conceptual models

1.6 Writing Style (Critical & Analytical)

- Avoid:
 - “Many studies show...”
- Use:
 - “The literature converges/diverges...”
 - “A key contradiction emerges...”

1.7 Conclusion (Part 1)

- Summarise **how CLR enables contribution**
 - Transition to Part 2 (evidence-based)
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PART 2 (2,500 words)

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (100+ SOURCES)

2.1 Purpose (DBA framing)

Not a list → a **knowledge mapping tool**

2.2 Recommended Structure (UPGRADED)

Each entry should include:

1. Citation
2. Key argument
3. Theoretical lens
4. Methodology
5. Key findings
6. Critical evaluation
7. Relevance to your study

2.3 Organise by THEMES (NOT alphabetically)

Example:

- Theme 1: Core theory
- Theme 2: Empirical findings
- Theme 3: Contradictions
- Theme 4: Emerging trends

2.4 Add a SYNTHESIS LAYER (CRITICAL UPGRADE)

At the end of each theme:

- What do studies agree on?
- Where do they conflict?
- What is missing?

2.5 Add a GAP MATRIX (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Study Theory Gap Method Gap Context Gap Key Insight

PART 3 (3,500 words)

PRELIMINARY CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW (CORE SECTION) STRUCTURE (DBA-LEVEL LOGIC)

3.1 Introduction

- Research problem
- Justification (why important now)
- Clear research aim

3.2 Conceptual Framing

Define:

- Key constructs
- Relationships
- Scope

3.3 Thematic Literature Review (CORE ANALYSIS)

Structure into **analytical themes**, not chronology:

Theme Example Structure:

(a) Conceptual Foundations

- Key theories
- Competing perspectives

(b) Empirical Evidence

- What works / doesn't
- Strength of evidence

(c) Contradictions

- Where studies disagree

(d) Contextual Variation

- Geography / industry differences

CRITICAL RULE:

Every theme must include:

- Comparison
- Evaluation
- Synthesis

3.4 Synthesis of Findings (MOST IMPORTANT SECTION)

Use this structure:

1. Patterns

- What consistently appears?

2. Relationships

- What variables connect?

3. Mechanisms

- Why do these relationships occur?

3.5 Conceptual Framework (MANDATORY FOR DBA)

You must produce:

- Variables
- Relationships
- Mediators/moderators (if applicable)

Example:

Digital Marketing → Trust → Loyalty

Mediator: Customer Value

Moderator: Consumer Scepticism

3.6 Research Gaps (ADVANCED LEVEL)

Move beyond “lack of studies”:

Gap Type	Example
Theoretical	No integration between X and Y
Empirical	Limited longitudinal data
Contextual	No studies in emerging markets
Methodological	Over-reliance on surveys

3.7 Draft Research Questions

- Directly derived from gaps
- Must be:
 - specific
 - researchable
 - theory-linked

3.8 Theoretical Contribution (KEY DBA REQUIREMENT)

- Extend theory
- Challenge assumptions
- Introduce relationships
- Refine constructs

3.9 Managerial Implications (DBA DISTINCTION MARKER)

Must answer:

- What should organisations DO differently?
- What decisions change?
- What risks emerge?

3.10 Conclusion

- Reconnect:
 - research problem
 - synthesis
 - contribution
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PRESENTATION & WRITING EXPECTATIONS

Structure Quality

- Logical flow
- Clear signposting
- No repetition

Critical Tone

Use:

- “However...”
- “This suggests...”
- “A limitation in the literature is...”

Evidence Use

- Majority:
 - **recent journal articles (last 5 years)**
- Include:
 - seminal works

Visual Elements (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

- PRISMA diagram
- Gap matrix
- Conceptual framework