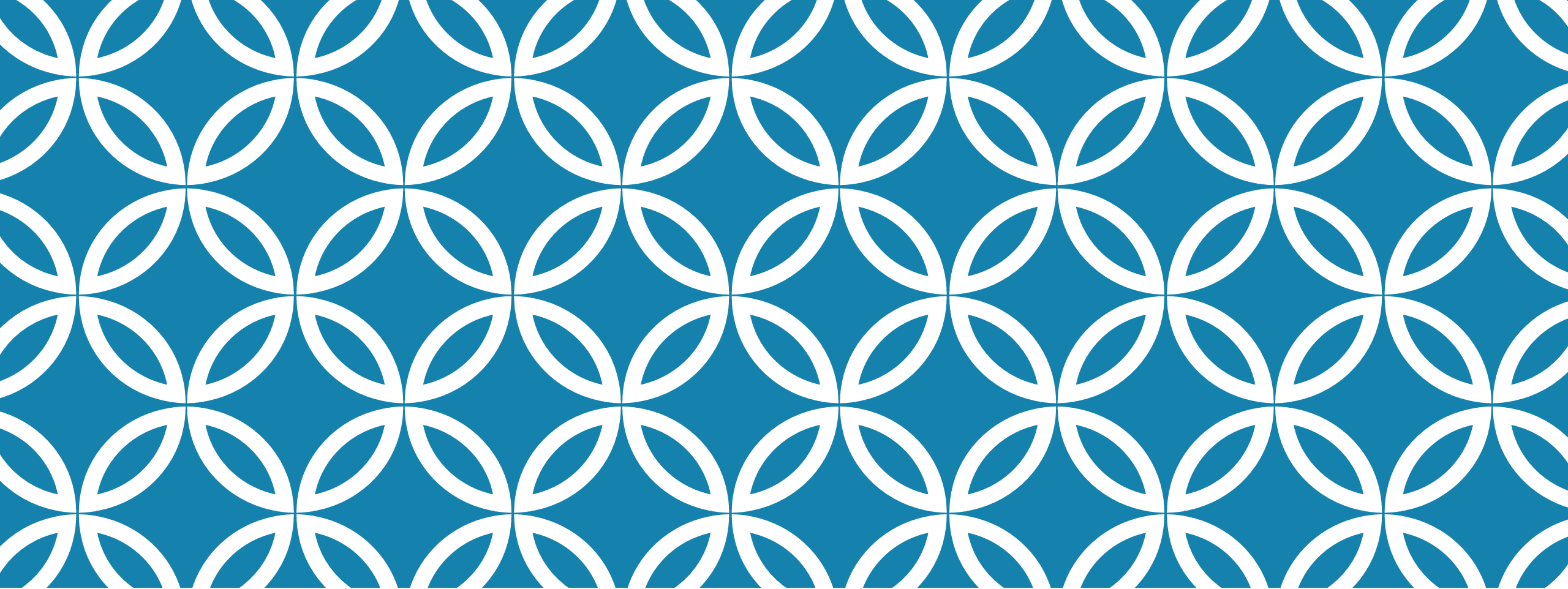




SECONDARY RESEARCH - DISSERTATION CH - LITERATURE REVIEW

Guidance for writing.

SECONDARY RESEARCH : CONTEXTUAL REVIEW / LITERATURE REVIEW

A contextual review / literature review is an evaluation report of studies / articles. I.E: Literature related to your selected area. For any research undertaken (professional / Academic), a 'review' should describe, summarise, evaluate and clarify literature.

The basic purposes of a 'Review' are to:



Provide a context for your research.

Justify the research.

Ensure the exact research has not been completed before.

Enable you to learn from previous theory on the subject.

Show where your research fits into the existing body of knowledge.

Help refine, refocus or even change the topic.

CONTEXTUAL REVIEW / LITERATURE REVIEW :



➤ Getting Started???????????

➤ The first step has to be the library!... nothing can better this!!!

- Snowballing – use references from articles to develop your search.
- Academic articles.
- Academic books.
- Government reports.
- National statistics.
- Documentaries.
- Media reports.

SPECIFICALLY FOR THE DISSERTATION - - - THE LITERATURE REVIEW CHAPTER IS



1) Approx 3500 words.

2) A chapter that will identify your focus - i.e:

“this chapter will review critically the published literature pertaining to the research objectives”

3) A chapter that focusses around key objectives or themes.

4) A Chapter that contains diverse sources to underpin the topic area - eg; Journals, Texts, Industry Sources, etc.

The *main* headings of the chapter should ideally match the objectives/themes of the study (but you can have many more *sub*-headings).

- By structuring each chapter according to the objectives of the study you ensure that you keep focused on the achievement of the objectives and that you are discussing issues of relevance.
- Provides a common thread that weaves through all the chapters: this will be reflected clearly in your table of contents.
- Dissertations require an extensive overview of literature, and must be scholarly. Reviews must be analytical and critical; cite reports that go against your research objectives/questions as well as those supporting them.

USE OF THEORY/ MODELS

A Contextual Review should contain reference to a wide-ranging number of theoretical models/concepts.



However, do not throw lots of theoretical models at the reader without saying *why* each model is relevant to your research. What it will contribute? Will you address each of the areas? Do the models contribute to the achievement of your objectives?

Be critical of the models/concepts, do not accept anything at face value.

Evaluate the usefulness and real-world application of the models for *your research*. You might append some of the models if they are peripheral to the discussion.

Theoretical issues and concepts can be 'dry' topics, but real-life *examples* bring them to life, and show that you can interpret the literature.

Good Literature Reviews / Contextual Reviews for ANY research should achieve depth of analysis by addressing;

- academic/theoretical models and *debate*,
- industry standards and practices,
- governmental/statistical evidence and
- real-life examples (rhetoric vs. reality).

Consider the approaches taken by other organisations/researchers within similar fields - - - eg; Have similar models been used? What are the previous research types? Any pitfalls? - are there any lessons to be learned?

Ensure that you include relevant issues only; try to relate much of the theoretical material in a contextual review / Literature Review to your specific research / study. Focus on those issues that inform your investigation. This facilitates research validity.

You will not be able to identify and discuss everything, so be selective. For example, identify the key differences/issues relating to your topic.

Try to link similar ideas together into paragraphs to avoid a disjointed discussion (i.e. try not to jump from topic to topic - try to smooth the flow). Link words help, such as however, therefore, thus, conversely, nevertheless.

MACRO & MICRO SECTIONS

Oftentimes a MACRO and a MICRO section are preferred for structuring A Contextual Review / Literature Review.

A Macro section would examine the wider issues related to your topic area (broad concepts / issues).

A Micro section would be very specific to your area (eg; case study related?)

Taking this approach would appropriately 'LEAD' the reader into your topic / subject area. Giving them a generic and detailed insight.

The role of this chapter is to 'set the scene' of your topic - - covering all aspects into its background.

According to Caulley (1992) of La Trobe University, the Literature Review should:

- Compare and contrast different authors' views on an issue
- Group authors who draw similar conclusions
- Criticise aspects of methodology
- Note areas in which authors are in disagreement
- Highlight exemplary studies
- Highlight gaps in research
- Show how your study relates to previous studies
- Show how your study relates to the literature in general
- Conclude by summarising what the literature says