Research methodology
University of Pretoria

Literature overview

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Structure
Chapter 1

1. Introduction

2. Problem statement => (solution)
   Research question => (answer)

3. **Literature overview**

4. Research gap

5. Methodology: paradigm/epistemology
   theory, model, method

6. Research plan: chapters
Aim of literature review
1) To explore the existing research:

- what are the discussions in the field – trends
- who are the primary and secondary authors
- what is their contribution – theories, models, methods, insights, shift in the field

**NOT:** an annotated bibliography!
2) To identify a research gap

- What is not covered in existing literature?

OR:

- Applying a theory differently

OR:

- Apply to a different context
Formulate the research gap:

**not:** “nothing has been done”

**rather:** “the contribution of this study is ....”
Exam criteria
1. Independent study
2. Specialisation
3. Innovation (your contribution)
Selecting material

4. Recency

- 10 years
- from 2000
- exception: classics
- secondary literature
5. 
Relevance

rel-e-vance  n.

1. Pertinence to the matter at hand. 

Relevance is a term used to describe how pertinent, connected, or applicable some information is to a given manner.
Epistemology
Epistemology

paradigm (frame of thinking)

theory

model

method
What to look for:

- theories
  (high abstraction)
- models
  (in between)
- methods
  (most concrete)
Writing skills
How to write

Use *epistemological* language:

Which of these are correct?

“look at”
“Taylor says”
“Taylor writes …”

“investigate”
“Taylor describes”
“For Taylor …”

“According to Taylor”
“Taylor explains …”
How to write

Author in text:
According to Taylor (2004:73) ...

vs.

Author in brackets:
... is the case (Taylor 2004:73).
How to write

*not only paraphrase:*

- comprehension
- *apply* to your topic
Referencing
Referencing

- direct “ ” (Smith 2008:16)
- similar (cf Smith 2008:4)
- detail (see Smith 2008:75)

References communicate!!
Referencing

What do these communicate?

- (cf Smith 2007: 75; Dane 2005:23; see Gibbs 2010)
- (Ian 2003; cf Grey 2007; Car 2010; see Reagan 2013:57; Gray 2014)
- (Smith 2003:p 1 of 6)
- (Dane 2005; contra Mason 2008:26-30)
Referencing

**Primary source:**
- big names who changed the field
- person whose intellectual property it

**Legitimate secondary source:**
- those who built on the big ones
- e.g. the Freudian school
Referencing

Illegitimate secondary source

DO NOT use:

Recent research by Timothy Ireland et al (in Siegel 2005:179) indicates that …”

Question: Whose intellectual property?

That person referenced as primary source