ORLD Dissertation Proposal
First Name Last Name
University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Organizational Leadership Program

Wednesday, February 6, 2012

DISSENTATION COMMITTEE:

Dr. Chair, RAC Chair
Dr. Member, Affiliation
Dr. Member, Affiliation
Dr. Member, Affiliation

1 Proposed Dissertation Title (No more than 10-12 words) The title should reflect the purpose of your study and not focus on the theoretical framework.
QUALITATIVE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Note: To be completed within the 2nd year of the program in discussion with your dissertation Chair. This Proposal becomes the foundation for the first three chapters of your dissertation. This document will be used for your Proposal defense (1st meeting).

Chapter 1: Introduction (10-15 pages)

Background of the Problem
Indicate why you are interested in your study and why others should be. Focus especially on what is lacking in the literature. What is the problem you will be addressing? What needs to be improved, or altered in terms of research design or topic? Use citations and related studies to support your arguments. How will your study contribute to the literature?

Trend in the Literature
• Succinctly discuss the trends and foci of previous research.
• Identify the gap in the literature (What is missing? How does your study fill the gap?)

Purpose of the Study
• Indicate how your study will address the gap in the literature.
• Provide a brief description of the methodology and theory that will be used.
• Propose the research questions that the study will seek to answer.

Significance of the Study: (describe how will this research contribute to the existing body of knowledge in Organizational Leadership and who will benefit from the results – be specific)

• Scientific Significance
  o Theoretical Significance – the contribution the study will make to existing theory
  o Methodological Significance – Will this study employ innovative analysis that will enrich the methodological topography?

• Practical Significance/ Relevance to Organizational Leadership
  o What are the leadership implications of your study?
  o How should leaders in your particular discipline utilize your study to address problems/issues?

Scope of the Study
• The general outline of what the study will cover.
• Define the parameters and boundaries of the study. (Provide appropriate citations to support this section)

Organization of the study
• Discuss what will be included in each of the remaining chapters.
CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework and Questions (20-30 pages)

***PLEASE NOTE: These are not separate elements. They all must be included, but integrated together throughout the chapter. For example, you may discuss theory A and how it connects to your study (theoretical framework), and then provide a sensitizing question or research proposition. REPEAT A,B as needed. See strong empirical articles for examples.

**Background of the Problem**
- Summarize the relevant literature that has been done on the topic. This may entail two or more topics.
  - For example, if you are looking at how women succeed in politics you may need to review the literature on 1. Women in leadership; 2. Barriers and Opportunities to advancement in politics.
- Describe how your study connects the dots or fills the gaps.

**A Theoretical or Conceptual Framework:**
- A discussion regarding the justification of the choice of theory and/or concepts you are using to provide the framework for your study. The framework sets the foundation for what you might see in your data analysis.
- Provide a conceptual model of the expected relationships you will find. Also, remind the reader that you will explore or expand theories through your data analysis.

**B Research Propositions or Sensitizing Questions**
Specify the major research question(s) to be explored by this study in each section of your theoretical framework. Build on each research question with theoretical explanations for what you might find.

Develop more detailed research propositions or sensitizing questions following your theoretical discussions to direct the reader toward what you might expect to find in your study.

Note: if your study is purely inductive you will not use research propositions, but you may use sensitizing questions.
CHAPTER 3: Research Design and Methodology (15-20 pages)

Research Design:
Describe the basic design elements including type of study. Be sure to provide appropriate citations to support your design. You will need to state whether the study research design will be:
- Inductive or Deductive: often the answer is both
- Type of Qualitative Methodology: Ethnography, Interview, Historical Analysis, Case Study etc.
- Mixed-Methods: If you plan to include quantitative analysis.

Sample:
Describe sample and underlying population. Outline how participants will be recruited. Specify your target sample size and the justification used to determine sample size. Discuss your target response rate and how you will manage recruitment challenges.

Data Collection Procedures:
Provide a step by step explanation on how you plan to collect your data. Discuss implementation by identifying the specific techniques that will be used to collect the data (interviews, focus groups, narrative analysis). Create study documents to operationalize the constructs of interest, and to answer your research question(s), (provide interview guide as Appendix, for example). Discuss consent and other ethical issues in research as applicable. Describe how the data will be collected, how you will recruit and gather the data.

Data Analysis:
Describe how the data will be analyzed, analytical techniques to be applied, and what skills you will use to conduct the analysis (some examples but not an exhaustive list includes: coding schemes, narrative analysis, qualitative software).

Concepts and Measurement:
Describe the outcomes of interest and the explanatory factors for your study.

APPENDICES

Timeline of the Study:
You should include a brief proposed timeline for completion of the remaining sections of the study, including proposal defense, IRB approval, data collection, revisions of first part of the study AND writing up remaining chapters (Analysis and Conclusion), dissertation defense.

Include other appendices as necessary:
(copy of interview guide, target sample, coding scheme, etc.)

REFERENCES AND CITATIONS

Provide reference list in APA format.