Design, Format, & Structure
Thesis and Dissertation

UMES Writing Workshop
Dr. Celeste Raver Luning
March 6, 2020
Agenda

• Resources
• Getting Started
• Designing YOUR Study
• Format and Structure
• Final Thoughts
Resources

• Department
  • Chair
  • Advisor
  • Professors with specific expertise

• Department formatting guidelines

• UMES Guide to Preparation of Theses and Dissertations

• Peer mentors
• Books & articles
Resources – Books & Articles

Writing & Literature

• Academic Story Telling

• Literature Review
Resources – Books & Articles

Methodology
(primarily social science)

• Research Design


Resources – Books & Articles

Methodology
(primarily social science)

• Research Design
Resources – Books & Articles

Methodology
(primarily social science)

• Understanding Research
Resources – Books & Articles

Translating Research to Words

Getting Started
Getting Started

Identify Broad Research Focus

Examine the literature
Identify areas of exploration
Getting Started

Identify Your Focal Topic Area

YOU MUST be of deeply interested in the topic!!!!

Get to know the literature – YOU NEED TO BE AN EXPERT IN THE LITERATURE

Diagram:
- Broad Research Area
- Focal Topic
- Gap(s)
- RQ
Getting Started

Identify the Gap(s) in the Literature

Use the literature

Is this a gap worthy of exploring?

Will studying this help contribute to furthering knowledge in your field?
Getting Started

Create Your Research Question(s)

What questions will help to address the identified gap in the literature?

What methodological approach is appropriate?
## Getting Started - Goal of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal of Research</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Abstract Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory Research</td>
<td>Seeking to determine if a phenomenon exists</td>
<td>Does it exist?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Research</td>
<td>Differentiating phenomenon from other phenomenon or attempting to characterize it in a more complete manner</td>
<td>What are its characteristics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictive Research</td>
<td>Identifying relationships to provide knowledge about some thing by knowing about another thing</td>
<td>To what is it related?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory Research</td>
<td>Seeking an explanation by examining a cause-effect relationship between two or more phenomena</td>
<td>What causes it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Research</td>
<td>Research to solve a social problem</td>
<td>Can this be used to solve a problem?</td>
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</table>

(Dane, 2011)
Cyclical Nature of the Practice of Science

(Dane, 2011)
Designing Your Study
Designing *Your* Study - The Research Process

(Brewerton & Millward, 2004, p. 3)
Designing Your Study – Proposal

(Brewerton & Millward, 2004, p. 19)
Designing Your Study

Having a Research Mindset

• Literature guides your study
• YOU ARE NOT PROVING ANYTHING!
  • The hypothesis is supported or not supported
• Be cautious and conscientious with words
Designing Your Study

Start with Alignment

- Title
- Purpose
- Research Question(s)
- Hypothesis(es) (Quantitative)
- Synthesizing Question(s) (Qualitative)
What does alignment mean?

- Title, purpose, and research question(s) utilize similar wording
  - *Should be able to identify purpose of study by reading the title*
Designing Your Study

What does alignment mean?

- Hypotheses (quantitative) *must* support research questions
- Synthesizing questions (qualitative) *must* support research questions
Why is alignment important?

- Generates cohesion
- Clearly identifies what the study is regarding
- Keeps the researcher(s) on track
- Provides the foundation
Designing Your Study

How to Check

Alignment Assessment

• Title
• Purpose
• Research Question(s)
  • Hypotheses (Quantitative)
  • Synthesizing Question(s) (Qualitative)
# Designing Your Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tips</th>
<th>1. Find the gap (READ LITERATURE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Brainstorm ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Generate initial purpose and RQ(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Design theoretical framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. <strong>ASSESS and ADJUST</strong> purpose and RQ(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Create hypotheses or synthesizing questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Identify context of study and general research design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7. Write title and purpose  
8. Align title, purpose, and RQ(s)  
9. Write the background to the problem  
10. **ASSESS and ADJUST** title, purpose, and RQ(s)  
11. Write literature review  
12. **ASSESS and ADJUST** title, purpose, and RQ(s) |
Designing Your Study

Create an Alignment Assessment

- Title
- Purpose
- Research Question(s)
  - Hypotheses (Quantitative)
  - Synthesizing Question(s) (Qualitative)
Designing Your Study - Methodological Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deductive Logic</th>
<th>Inductive Logic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using what is already known to determine what data to collect and what it will mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypotheses must come from existing literature – deductive logic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If not much is known about topic, study primarily utilizes inductive logic</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Many studies utilize a combination of both types of logic</strong></td>
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(Loseke, 2017)
Format and Structure
Format and Structure

Primary Instruction
Follow the guidance provided by your specific department and advisor
Format and Structure - General

- Chapter 1
  - Introduction to the Study or Statement of the Problem
- Chapter 2
  - Review of the Literature
- Chapter 3
  - Methodology of the Study
- Chapter 4
  - Results of the Study (quantitative)
  - Findings of the Study (qualitative)
- Chapter 5
  - Discussion and Conclusions

(UMES theses and dissertation guide, 2015-2016)
Format and Structure - ORLD

- Chapter 1
  - Introduction
- Chapter 2
  - Literature Review
- Chapter 3
  - Theoretical Framework (quantitative)
  - Conceptual Framework (qualitative)
- Chapter 4
  - Research Design and Methodology
- Chapter 5
  - Results of the Study (quantitative)
  - Findings of the Study (qualitative)
- Chapter 6
  - Discussion and Conclusions
Format and Structure – Chapter 1

• Broad Introduction to the Study
• Background of the Problem
• Trends in the Literature
• Significance of the Study
  • Scientific
  • Methodological
  • Theoretical
  • Practical Significance
    • Relevance to Organizational Leadership (ORLD)
• Scope of the Study
• Definitions and Key Terms
• Summary and Organization of the Study
Format and Structure – Chapter 2

• Overview of the Chapter

• Review of the Literature
  • Should organize in a manner that “tells a story”
  • Highlight what is known
  • Point to what is missing
    • Explain why that missing knowledge is a problem
Format and Structure – Chapter 2

- Theoretical or Conceptual Framework (*ORLD students see next slide*)
  - How does theory inform this study?
  - What is missing from theory that this study may help to explain?

- Gap in the Literature
  - Final points as to why this study is necessary

- Summary of the Chapter
Format and Structure – Chapter 3 (ORLD students)

• ORLD utilizes a distinct chapter for the theoretical/conceptual framework

• Overview of chapter

• Theory(ies) or concepts from which study is derived
  • How does theory inform this study?
  • What is missing from theory that this study may help to explain?

• Conceptual or theoretical model of the study

• Research questions

• Hypotheses or synthesizing questions

• Summary of the chapter
Format and Structure – Chapter 3 (ORLD – Chapter 4)

- Overview of the Chapter
- Methodology and Research Design
- Context (if relevant)
- Sample
- Ethical Practices – IRB Protocols
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Reliability and Validity
- Role of the Researcher (Qualitative)
- Limitations and Delimitations of Methodology and Research Design
- Summary of the Chapter
Format and Structure – Chapter 4 (ORLD – Chapter 5)

• Overview of Study

• Results of the Study (quantitative)
  • Demographic and/or descriptive analysis
  • Reliability and validity analyses
    • Instrument analysis, reliability analysis, assumption testing, construct validity
  • Hypothesis testing
    • Results should be relative to each hypothesis
Format and Structure – Chapter 4 (ORLD – Chapter 5)

• Findings of the Study (qualitative)
  • Demographic and/or descriptive analysis (if applicable)
  • Findings relative to synthesizing questions
  • Findings relative to research question(s)

• Summary of Chapter

NOTE:
This chapter *IS NOT* for interpretation!!
It is *merely* reporting the results or findings of the study.
Format and Structure – Chapter 5 (ORLD – Chapter 6)

• Summary of the Study
• Discussion
  • Discuss the results/findings relative to the literature
  • Each hypothesis or synthesizing questions discussed relative to the literature
    • INTERPRET WHAT YOUR STUDY REVEALED!!!
  • RQ(s) discussed relative to the literature
  • ADDRESSING what YOUR study indicated in comparison to what was known in your scientific field prior to your research
Format and Structure – Chapter 5 (ORLD – Chapter 6)

• Limitations and Delimitations of the Study
• Significance of the Study
  • Scientific
    • Methodological and Theoretical
    • Practical Significance
• Relevance to Organizational Leadership (ORLD)
• Implications for Future Research
• Summary
• Conclusion
Format and Structure – Final Pieces

• References
• Appendices
Format and Structure

- Utilize UMES guidelines

- Citation and reference format dictated by your program
  - APA common in social sciences

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Final Thoughts
Final Thoughts

• Prior research informs your study
• Be flexible
• Remain open to other options
• *Listen to feedback*
• You must be *passionate* about the topic
• IT WILL NOT BE PERFECT
Final Thoughts

Your thesis or dissertation is an academic story
(based on research)

“Every story, even the driest, has a human face. Draw it well and put it on display, for to readers it is a mirror and a magnet”
(Flaherty, 2009, p. xv)


