

TITLE: 10-12 WORDS¹

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

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

DISSERTATION 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**

QUANTITATIVE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Note: While students can work on the proposal throughout the program, many students utilize ORLD 620 to perform a pilot study for the eventual proposal. This allows the student to assess the feasibility of the study and adjust the research design. For the capstone course, ORLD 624, students often utilize that class to build their dissertation proposal.

An official dissertation proposal cannot be submitted until all coursework has been completed with an A or B, the doctoral internship is complete, the comprehensive exams have been successfully passed, and a dissertation committee has been formed and approved.

This Proposal becomes the foundation for the first four chapters of your dissertation. This document will be used for your Proposal defense.

Notes on Title: The title should align with purpose of the study and research question(s). The title should indicate the methodology, as well as location and population of the study.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction should include purpose and rationale for the study should be depicted with supporting research evidence. *The introduction is one of the most important aspects of the proposal, it is how you capture the attention the reader.*

Provides a high-level overview of background information supporting the study, a brief history of the subject matter, as well as a mini literature overview of the key areas of interest within the study. It needs to be engaging and supported with citations.

(THERE IS NOT A LEVEL ONE HEADING 'INTRODUCTION,' JUST THE CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION HEADER)

Background of the Problem

Describes the problem that the study is seeking to address. Describes the history of the problem and how that led to the problem that is necessitating this research. Think about what literature has revealed about the problem, what is missing in the literature, and why this study is important relative to the problem. This section may address what needs to be improved in terms of research design. This section must be supported with empirical research.

Trend in the Literature

Succinctly discusses the trends and foci of previous research. Identifies the gap in the literature (What is missing? How the study fills the gap?) It addresses what has yet to be empirically explored or attempted. This section should address how the study will add to the body of knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

A concise statement of the purpose of the study. The purpose statement should align with the title and research question(s).

Significance of the Study

Describes how the study will contribute to the body of knowledge and who will potentially benefit from the results of the study. Discussed in terms of how the study contributes to the body of knowledge related to organizational leadership. *This section is answering the "So What?"*

There are two main aspects of significance, scientific and practical.

Scientific Significance (This includes theoretical and methodological significance.)

- Theoretical Significance – Addresses how the study contributes to existing theory.
- Methodological Significance – Addresses how the study employs innovative analysis that will enrich the methodological topography.

Practical Significance

- This addresses specifically how the study is relevant to organizational leadership
- What are the leadership implications from the study?
- How can findings from the study be utilized to address real world problems?
- This section may also address policy and political implications and significance.

Scope of the Study

Provides a general outline of what the study covers. Defines the parameters and boundaries of the study. Should have appropriate citations to support the scope.

Definition of Key Terms

Identifies and defines terms that are unique to the study.

Organization of the Study

Provides a high-level overview of what will be included in the remaining chapters, including appendices.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter should begin with an introduction describing the overview of the chapter.

Body of Literature Review

The level headings and design should be based on what makes the most sense relative to your argument.

There is no hard and fast method of writing a literature review.

- The format of the literature review will depend on the purpose or focus of your research.
- If the focus of the research is to challenge the methodological process then your literature review may focus on the methodological process of previous research.
- If the focus is a problem with theoretical applications in previous research then the literature review may focus on the strength and weakness of the use of theory in prior research.
- If the focus of the research is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge, then the literature review could be written in a thematic or chronological style or both.
- The literature review depicts a review of the relevant literature as it relates to topic of interest for the study. Leave extraneous studies out of the review – make it exhaustive but focused!

A dissertation literature review is considered a complex literature review (Machi & McEvoy, 2016)

- Purpose to review literature to reveal a research problem for the study:
 - Presents current state of knowledge about a topic.
 - Argues how the current knowledge leads to a problem or question that leads to performing original research.
 - Initially – Describes what current research has found regarding topic (what is known)
 - Then – Researcher presents the thesis that defines the issue for future study

For quantitative studies, the literature review MUST:

- Discuss the literature surrounding each of the variables within the study.
- How prior research has connected the variables of interest. Essentially, you must make an argument for the path connections that you are proposing in your research.
- What literature has missed relative to possible path connections and why you will be studying such connections. Basically, justification for why those pathways are proposed in the study.
- If utilizing a mediator or moderating variable, must support why a variable should be examined as a mediator or moderator relative to the IV(s) and DV(s) in the study.
- *Part of the literature review is showing empirical support for the connections between the variables, presenting what is missing from this literature, and how the proposed study will fill that gap.*

Gap in the Literature

This section should summarize the gap in the literature. The researcher should summarize the literature review making sure to highlight the gaps or weaknesses in the literature.

Summary

A concise summary of what was covered in the chapter and presentation of the next chapter (1-2 paragraphs).

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

This chapter should begin with an introductory paragraph describing the chapter and what will be discussed.

Theoretical Framework

- This section provides a justification for the choice of theory.
- It should entail a discussion of the pros and cons of other theories as an appropriate theoretical lens.
- Provides a conceptual model of the relationship between the independent variables, dependent variable(s), and any mediator(s) or moderator(s), as dictated by the theory. (Often in diagram form)

Research Question(s) and Hypotheses:

Specify the major research question(s) to be answered by the study. Each research question should be accompanied by a specific set of hypotheses. The hypothesis should be a specific statement pertaining to the direction of the relationship between the variables, referred to in the research question; the statement will indicate the type of statistical analysis that will ensue.

Summary

This should present a summary of what was covered in the chapter and introduce the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The chapter should begin with a brief introductory paragraph regarding what will be covered in the chapter.

Methodology

Introduce overall approach (qualitative or quantitative) and provide justification for the approach. Discuss the type of reasoning that will be utilized in the study (deductive or inductive logic) – many studies utilize both, see Loseke (2017).

Research Design

Describe the basic design elements, all elements should be supported with appropriate citations. This should address if the study is longitudinal or cross-sectional, experimental or quasi-experimental. This should include justification for the design elements.

Data Source

Describes the sample and underlying population. Addresses how participants will be recruited, specifies sample size and procedure to determine sample size, as well as the goal for response rate. This section should be supported with citations and justification for sample selection, as well as potential issues that may be faced in obtaining the necessary sample size.

Pre-Data Collection Protocols

Addresses what will be done before data collection. This should include gaining IRB approval and any other relevant pre-data collection issues that must be addressed.

Data Collection

Provide a step by step explanation on how you plan to collect your data. Provides an overview of the survey (if applicable) that will be distributed (a copy of the survey should be included as an appendix – adjusted based on copyright restrictions).

Discuss consent and other ethical issues in research as applicable. Specifically, describe how the data will be collected, how the instruments/survey will be distributed among research participants, treatment of non-responses, and other relevant issues related to your data collection.

Instrumentation

Discuss instruments that will be utilized to measure the variables of interest. Should include the variable that the instrument was measuring, who developed the instrument, and reliability of the instrument (Cronbach Alpha is acceptable), as well as some basic information regarding the instrument. Essentially, you must justify why this instrument is the best instrument to measure your variable of interest. This should also address any necessary approval to utilize the instrument.

Data Analysis

Describe how the data will be analyzed (i.e. what statistical techniques will be applied). This should be an exhaustive discussion of all statistical techniques that will be utilized in analyzing the data.

Some examples of appropriate statistical techniques include the following (note that this is not an exhaustive list): descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, t-tests, factor analysis, ANOVA, MANOVA, multiple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis, a hierarchical or logistic regression, stepwise regression, mediation, moderation, Structural Equation Modeling.

Provide formulas where appropriate. Discuss underlying assumptions of the tests you are using and how you will account for any violations of these assumptions.

Reliability and Validity

Should address how you plan to focus on developing reliability and validity in the study.

Ethical Practice

How do you plan on maintaining ethical practices in the research?

Limitations

The section should include those characteristics of design or methodology that may impact or influence the interpretation of the findings from your research. They should be the constraints on generalizability and applications to practice.

Delimitations

In this section, you want to include characteristics imposed by you which define the boundaries of the study. You made conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions regarding the sample (including such information as geographic location), the variables, and theoretical perspectives, which are aspects of the delimitations.

Summary

This should summarize what was presented in the chapter and make a final statement regarding why the methodology and research design are the best approach to address the purpose of the study.

References

Loseke, D. R. (2017). *Methodological thinking: Basic principles of social research design*.

Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Machi, L. A., & McEvoy, B. T. (2016). *The literature review: Six steps to success*. Thousand

Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Should be on a separate page(s) and APA formatted. Make sure that all citations are listed in the Reference Section.

APPENDICIES

This section should include any appendices that are referenced in the body of the proposal. APA formatting must be followed.

Common Qualitative Appendices Include:

- IRB Review Board Training Certificate
- IRB Application
- Potential Recruitment Letter for obtaining sample participants
- Timeline for the study (including proposal defense, IRB approval, data collection, data analysis, revisions of first part of study, write up of chapter 5 and 6, and dissertation defense)
- Survey
- Copy of instruments and approval

Please note that the order of the Appendices will be based on how they are introduced in the body of the proposal.