

Format for Writing the Dissertation Report

Title Page

Acknowledgement

Contents

Abstract

Introduction.

Literature Review

Research Methodology.

Findings / Results

Conclusions & Future Scope

References

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem. This section should focus on why the particular study is needed. It should not be too long, but long enough to tell what the study will contribute to theory or the problem under consideration.

Theoretical or Conceptual Framework. The proposal should include a brief yet substantive summary of the theory that undergirds the study and briefly summarizes previously conducted studies most relevant to the topic under investigation. A conceptual framework provides a narrative and sometimes a visual structure depicting the logical connections among key elements of the theory, constructs, and/or phenomenon of interest.

Research Questions. At this point, research questions are posed. They usually are succinct statements of the broad implications expected from the study. Depending upon the research paradigm guiding the study, hypotheses may be postulated.

Significance of the Study. The study must be justified with respect to established theory, previously conducted research, and the significance of the anticipated results to practitioners and scholars. This is a broad statement as to why the study is important.

Definition of Terms. You should define any technical terms necessary for the reader to understand; however, this usually does not include as much detail as the dissertation itself.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter serves as the foundation on which the study is built and as a basis for discussing results and interpretations. It summarizes what is known and identifies what is unknown about the topic of the dissertation study. The more extensive the previous work, the more involved the preparation of this chapter becomes. Likewise, there may be several areas of

investigation related to the problem. Although a thorough review of the previous research and literature is a necessity, only that which has a direct bearing on the problem should be included. Unnecessary details should be avoided, but major findings and relevant methodological issues should be included. It may be desirable to have a discussion section at the end of the review in which the implications of the previous studies are summarized and then are compared and contrasted with the study under investigation. Relevant examples of research that reports findings that do not support the case being made for the dissertation should also be included.

Chapter 3: Method

The research design is described in sufficient detail in Chapter 3 that readers come away with a clear understanding of how the study will be conducted, and future researchers would know precisely what procedures to follow should they want to replicate this study.

Data Sources. The tools used for measuring the variables in the study should be described. Interview or focus group protocols should be described and the full set of directions and questions should be included in an appendix. Survey tools should provide information as to how the survey was developed and by whom, the number of items, subscales if applicable, the response set, sample items, and validity and reliability information. The full measure should be included in an appendix if feasible.

Data Collection. This section should describe in detail the means used to gather data.

Data Analysis. In this section, readers learn what techniques and tools the research plan to use to analyze and summarize the data. In the case of a quantitative or mixed-method study, assumptions made about the nature of the data should be stated. Commonly accepted statistical devices should be noted, and unusual devices described. Depending upon the study design, the inclusion of a table that lists the research questions, along with the data sources and data analyses that will be used to answer each research question is often helpful.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, a factual reporting of the study results is presented. Findings are generally organized around the research questions. Tables may be used to summarize information. Detailed information may be put in an appendix. Interpretations of the data should wait for the next chapter. A summary of the research findings may be presented at the end of chapter four or the beginning of chapter 5, but not both.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

In this final chapter, the implications of the study findings are discussed. This may include implications for practice as well as implications for future research. Findings are integrated with the theory employed in the first chapter and the body of knowledge presented in the second chapter. The chapter ends with a cogent conclusion summarizing the importance of the study findings.