Thesis and Dissertation Writing Workshop

UMES Graduate School Workshop
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March 24, 2021
## Agenda

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Current Stage of Research
Current Stage of Research

Where are you in your program?
What is your broad research area?
Do you have a specific focal area?
Current Stage of Research

Have you identified a legitimate gap?

Is what you are interested in unique and contributing NEW knowledge?
Current Stage of Research

What are specific questions/issues that you are facing in the process?

What are some roadblocks that you are facing?
Foundation to Research
Goals of Research

Know your goals of research.

Keeps in mind research is often a micro step building from those that “came before you.”
Cyclical Nature of Research

(Dane, 2011)
Foundations to Research

What is the broad problem that you are examining?
Foundations to Research

Micro Problem

What is the micro problem/question that you are examining?
Your goals should as a researcher:

1. Identify the broad problem
2. Discover how others have explored the problem before you
3. Uncover the gaps that still exist
4. Develop a study that can investigate one of those gaps (micro problem)
### Research Approaches

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal of Research</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Abstract Question</th>
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<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>
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<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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(Dane, 2011)
Methodological Thinking

**Deductive Logic**
Using what is already known to determine what data to collect and what it will mean

**Inductive Logic**
Using data to develop concepts and theories

- Hypotheses must come from existing literature – deductive logic
- If limited knowledge on a topic, study primarily utilizes inductive logic
- Many studies utilize a combination of both types of logic

(Loseke, 2017)
Discovering the Micro Problem (RQ)

Identify Broach Research Area

Examine the literature
Identify areas of exploration
Start “Circling” the topic
Discovering the Micro Problem (RQ)

Identify Your Broad Problem (Focal Topic Area)

How long can you love that focal area?
Why is it meaningful to you?
What is it meaningful to your field?
Why is it meaningful to society?
Foundations to Research

Get to know the literature

YOU NEED TO BE AN EXPERT IN THE LITERATURE OF THAT PROBLEM (FOCAL AREA)
Foundations to Research

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?
Foundations to Research

Identify the Micro Problem

Create Your Research Question(s) based on addressing this micro problem

What methodological approach is appropriate?
Designing Your Study
Having a Research Mindset

- Use the literature as a guide, NOT anecdotal information

- YOU ARE NOT PROVING ANYTHING!
  - The hypothesis is supported or not supported
Having a Research Mindset

- Discuss with EXPERTS
- Put on your INVESTIGATOR hat
- Be careful and cautious with words
Designing Your Study

Start with Alignment

<p>| | |</p>
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</table>

- 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
Designing Your Study

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
- Write it down
- Adjust as your study shifts

#### Alignment Assessment
- Title
- Purpose
- Research Question(s)
  - Hypotheses (Quantitative)
  - Synthesizing Question(s) (Qualitative)
Designing Your Study

Tips

1. Find the gap (READ LITERATURE)
2. Brainstorm ideas
   • Generate initial purpose and RQ(s)
3. Design theoretical framework
4. ASSESS and ADJUST purpose and RQ(s)
5. Create hypotheses or synthesizing questions
6. Identify context of study and general research design
# Designing Your Study

| Tips | 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) |
Format and Structure
Format and Structure

Follow the guidance provided by UMES.
Format and Structure

Follow the guidance provided by your specific department and advisor
# General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Introduction to the Study or Statement of the Problem</th>
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<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Methodology of the Study</td>
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</table>
| Chapter 4 | Results of the Study (quantitative)  
Findings of the Study (qualitative) |
| Chapter 5 | Discussion and Conclusions                           |

(UMES theses and dissertation guide, 2015-2016)
Chapter 1 (Introduction of the Study)

• Broad Introduction to the Study
• Background of the Problem
• Trends in the Literature
• Significance of the Study
  • Scientific
  • Methodological
  • Theoretical
  • Practical Significance
• Scope of the Study
• Definitions and Key Terms
• Summary and Organization of the Study
Chapter 2 (Review of the Literature)

• Overview of the Chapter

• Review of the Literature
  • Organize to “tells a story”
  • Highlight what is known
  • Point to what is missing
    • Explain why that missing knowledge is a problem
Chapter 2 (Review of the Literature)

- 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
Chapter 3 - (ORLD students ONLY)
(Theoretical or Conceptual Framework)

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
Chapter 3 - *(ORLD – Chapter 4)*

(Methodology of the Study)

- 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
Chapter 4 - (ORLD – Chapter 5) (Results/Findings of the Study)

- Overview of Study

- Results of the Study (quantitative)
  - Demographic and/or descriptive analysis
  - Reliability and validity analyses
    - Instrument analysis, reliability analysis, assumption testing, validity testing
  - Hypothesis testing
    - Results should be relative to each hypothesis

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Chapter 4 - *(ORLD – Chapter 5)*
(Results/Findings of the Study)

• 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
Chapter 4 - *(ORLD – Chapter 5)*
(Results/Findings of the Study)

**NOTE:**
This chapter *IS NOT* for interpretation!!

It is *merely* reporting the results or findings of the study.
Chapter 5 - (ORLD – Chapter 6) (Discussion and Conclusions)

• 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!!!
Chapter 5 - *(ORLD – Chapter 6)*
(Discussion and Conclusions)

• Discussion
  • 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
Chapter 5 - *(ORLD – Chapter 6)*
(Discussion and Conclusions)

- 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
Final Pieces

• References
• Appendices

My thesis is written in

Blood

Sweat

Tears

and COFFEE.
Format and Structure

• Utilize UMES guidelines

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

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY
Citing Sources
Citing Sources

“Cite the work of individuals whose ideas, theories, or research have directly influenced your work.”

- American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 253
Citing Sources

- Only cite work that:
  - You read and ideas that are incorporated!!

- Use work that both supports and diverges from your argument
  - This builds a better foundation for your research

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources

• Cite *PRIMARY* sources
  o Try to avoid citing sources that are cited in another article
  o Go to the source
  o Ensures accuracy of information

• Credit ideas to sources in building *YOUR* theories and arguments

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources

• Use a combination of paraphrasing and direct quotations

• Paraphrase
  o Either use a parenthetical or narrative citation
    • *Parenthetical* – End of paraphrased sentence
      o Cats in space turn blue (Smith, 2020).
    • *Narrative* – In-text in beginning of sentence
      o Smith (2020) indicated that cats in space turn blue.

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources – Direct Quotations

• Short Quotations (less than 40 words)
  o Appears within the paragraph
  o Enclosed in quotation marks

• Two formatting options:
  o Author name, data, and page number of reference follows the quotation
    • “Quotation” (Smith, 2020, p. 106).
  o Author and date precedes the quotation, followed by quotation, then page number of the reference
    • Smith (2020) stated, “quotation” (p. 106).

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources – Direct Quotations

• Long Quotations (40 words or more)
  o Display as a freestanding block of text
  o Omit quotation marks
  o Start on a new line
  o Indent block half an inch from left margin
  • Same position as new paragraph

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources – Direct Quotations

• Long Quotations (40 words or more)
  ○ Quotation block is double spaced
  ○ Cite the author(s), year, and page number at end of quotation after the final punctuation mark

• Unless author and year cited before the quotation, then just page number

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources – Direct Quotations

Long Quotations Example (40 words or more)

According to Edmondson and McManus (2007),

To advance management theory, a growing number of scholars are engaging in field research, studying real people, real problems, and real organizations. Although the potential relevance of field research is motivating, the research journey can be messy and inefficient, fraught with logistical hurdles and unexpected events. (p. 1155)

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources

• Avoid undercitation
  o This can lead to plagiarism or self-plagiarism

• Avoid overcitation
  o Distracting and unnecessary
  o You DO NOT need to repeat the same citation every sentence
    • As long as, source/topic has not changed

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources – Avoiding Overcitation

*Within the same paragraph*, when the name of the author is part of the narrative, you *do not* need to include the year in subsequent NONPARENTHEtical references.

- As long as the study cannot be confused with other studies

- **NOTE:**
  - Any initial citation in subsequent paragraphs needs the author and year
  - Parenthetical citations need to have both name and year within the same paragraph.

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Citing Sources – The Bottom Line

• This is how you support your assertions
• Avoids plagiarism
• Lends credibility to your work
• Review APA (7th edition) – Chapter 8

(American Psychological Association, 2020)
Resources
Resources

- Department
  - Chair
  - Advisor
  - Professors with specific expertise
- Department formatting guidelines
- UMES Guide to Preparation of Theses and Dissertations
- Peer mentors
- Books & articles

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Resources – Books & Articles

Writing & Literature

• Academic Story Telling

• Literature Review
Resources – Books & Articles

Translating Research to Words

Methodology
(primarily social science)

• Research Design


Resources – Books & Articles

Methodology
(primarily social science)

• Research Design


Resources – Books & Articles

Methodology
(primarily social science)

• Understanding Research
Tips for Success
Tips for Success

• Prior research informs your study
• Be flexible
• Remain open to other options
Tips for Success

• Synthesize literature to support your study
• *Listen to feedback*
• *Cite your sources*
Tips for Success

• You must be *passionate* about the topic

• IT WILL NOT BE PERFECT
Tips for Success

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)
References


