

D. Min. Dissertation Template

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Ministry Problem and Purpose of Research

- Describe and document the “big problem” in ministry—the need, problem or challenge
- Specify how your “small” study touches upon the “big” problem. You clearly are not solving the “big problem.” But you are contributing a tiny piece to solving the big problem—tell the reader the tiny piece and how it fits in. Your purpose is to “discover” some unknown that is an important piece of information for the ultimately solving the ministry problem.

Dissertation Overview (can write and add this at the end)

Chapter 2: Literature Review will (a one sentence summary of what topics your lit review is organized by). Chapter 3: Method will (:one sentence summary— state the intervention (if applicable), the participants, the instruments and data gathering technique) Chapter 4: Results (a:one sentence summary—state one or two of the most important findings especially if the support the hypothesis.) Chapter 5; Conclusions (a one sentence summary of how your findings relate to the ministry problem).

Context

Community Context:

- Describe the population and location that experiences the ministry problem, or the sample population on which that you will conduct your research

Church or Ministry Context:

- Describe the ministry “intervention” that is trying to address the ministry problem.

Hypothesis and/ or Research Questions and Model of Research

The student shall decide whether to pursue a hypothesis (a proposition to verify or falsify) or a research question (an open-ended question). If the student has a hunch about what the result of the findings shall be, a hypothesis is recommended. If the student has no idea of the what the result shall be, a research question is recommended.

Hypothesis or Research Questions

- Hypothesis: Usually stating a relationship between two variables: an independent variable and a dependent variable (most applicable if there is quantitative data). Label as Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, etc.
- Research Questions: Often, in Model 2 research, evaluative of the ministry intervention (most applicable if there is qualitative data). Label as Research Questionn #1, #2, etc.

Model of Research: Model 1: Descriptive or Model 2: Experimental Research

State whether you are doing either model 1: descriptive research (merely describing the state of things) or model 2: experimental research (introducing an intervention and measuring for an improved state of things).

A Model 2 project seeks to improve the world in some way and to present data that it has improved.

A Model 1 project does not seek to improve anything about the world—it gathers data about the world that a later person can use to improve it

Empirical Unknowns

What you need to know that you don't already know to argue for the hypothesis

Establish that the unknown is measurable by either quantitative data (numbers) or qualitative data (words)

Definition of Terms

If establishing a relationship between variables, identify the independent variable and the dependent variable;

If possible, define each variable operationally—how it is being measured by what instrument (e.g. some score on a questionnaire)

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

State the boundaries of timeframe, location, sample size; purposeful limitations to narrow your topic.

State the limitations of the effectiveness of the research design—what might inhibit the validity of its findings?

For example, if your data on your participants depends upon the self-reporting of your participants, state that the subjectivity of the participants is an inherent limitation.

Another example, if the participants have a relationship with you the researcher, state that this relationship has the potential to skew the results. if there are measures you took to offset this (e.g. having someone other than you take the data), state them.

Theological and / or Theoretical Framework

This can be one section or two.

State fully the theological themes related to the project (biblical materials and key theological thinkers) or theoretical constructs related to the project (theoreticians). Please consider the foundations section as part of the ‘argument’ of the dissertation—a justification of why the project is being pursued in the first place and a justification of the research design.

Summary

Summarize how your discovering the empirical unknown contributes to addressing the larger ministry problem

Chapter 2: Literature Review



Introduction

- This chapter begins within an overview of the purpose of your literature and what this section will cover
- The student should strive for 75-100 sources.
- The sources should be varied—both books and articles, both Christian and non-Christian
- Your literature presentation should be organized according to categories appropriate to your topic. Some possible categories are below

Literature Related to the Ministry Problem

Background to the Ministry Problem

Documentation and Descriptions of the Ministry Problem

Literature Related to the Proposed Solution to the Ministry Problem

Previous Attempts to implement your proposed solution

Previous Attempts to implement a solution to a ministry problem parallel to yours

The Theological or Theoretical Basis for your Proposed Solution

Literature Related to the Independent Variable in your Study

Literature Related to the Dependent Variable in your Study

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Restate the empirical unknowns in your study and give the reader an overview of your strategy to measure the empirical unknowns.

Participants

Recruitment and Selection

Explain how you alerted the participants to your study and how you narrowed the pool of potential participants to the actual set you chose. Here you are arguing for validity, in that you are showing the process was fair and unbiased and that you did not seek to skew the results by choosing those participants who would give the results you were seeking.

Characteristics

Once your data is collected, summarize the demographic information about the actual participants. In a quantitative study (many questionnaires / surveys), this is best done with some sort of visual graphic like a pie chart. In a qualitative study (fewer participants who are being interviewed), this is best done in the form of a chart, in which each participant is identified with a number (participant 1, participant 2, etc) and give basic information about each.

Intervention (if applicable, for “Model 2” projects)

Describe the “treatment” you introduced to remedy the “ministry problem.” Were they meetings? Mentoring sessions? Teaching sessions? What happened at these meetings or sessions? When and where did they take place? For how many weeks?

Convince the reader that the treatment has been standardized: all participants received the same or close to the same treatment. If this were a clinical trial for a drug, the experiment is valid, and your conclusion about effects is valid, only if the participants receive the same dosage. If you employed instructors, tell the reader the instructors all followed “the same manual” —the same procedures and curriculum.

Instrument (Be sure to include a copy in an appendix)

Here you should declare and describe the survey / questionnaire you used in your study. There are three possibilities:

(1) you used an existing instrument. State its name and identify its developers and the original published study for which it was used. Tell if you got permission to use it. Tell what it measures and why it fits your study. Describe the instrument (Likert scale, number of items, point values, sample questions and how it is scored).

(2) you modify an existing instrument. State its name and identify its developers and the original published study for which it was used. Tell why the instrument, as it is, is not suitable for your study and tell item by item how you modified it and why.

(3) you created your own instrument. State previous instruments that you modelled your after. Tell why these other instruments were inadequate. Describe your instrument (Likert scale, number of items, point values, sample questions and how it is scored). Justify your

instrument. Tell what it measures and why it fits your study. Describe any trial runs or preliminary field testing you did to see if the instrument worked well before your study,

In the case of an interview script, describe how this script became modified as time went on.

Data Collection

Describe what you did to collect your data: the date, place, setting where you got the participants to fill out the instrument. As you write this, keep repeatability in mind—what would someone have to do to replicate your study?

Data Analysis

Do not PERFORM Data Analysis here (that will be presented in chapter 4—merely speak of what method of data analysis you INTEND to perform in chapter 4

Tell the reader what hypothetical data result would verify (or, for that matter, falsify) your hypothesis. This was your answer to Question 7 on your IRB form.

In the case of Quantitative Data, especially if you intend to compare average (or mean) pre-test scores with average (or mean) post-test scores, you should tell the reader you will compare “central tendencies.”

Often if your quantitative instrument has subscores, tell the reader you will compare central tendencies in both total scores and subscores.

In the case of Quantitative Data, there are three possible statistical tests that you can use to verify your hypothesis:

1) Comparing two groups of scores (This would include pre- and post- scores): T-test, which shows that Group 1 is statistically different from Group 2.

2) Comparing a set of scores to a set of scores: (For example, SAT scores and GPA's) Pearson correlation. The result, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, will be a number between -1.0 (perfect inverse relationship) and +1.0 (perfect direct relationship).

3) Comparing the number of members of one group with the number of members of another group to see the degree of overlap: Chi-Square test.

In the case of Qualitative Data, tell the reader your method of coding the interview transcripts. Often this occurs in stages. Tell the reader what categories you used to classify the comments at the first stage, then what subcategories you used to classify comments in subsequent stages.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Restate the purpose of the study and give an overview of how your results fulfill that purpose. Organize the results around the research hypothesis, purpose or questions stated in the Introduction

Results

Hypothesis 1

Summary Chart

Explanation of data supporting hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 2

Summary Chart

Explanation of data supporting hypothesis 2

OR

Research Question 1

Summary Chart

Explanation of data answering research question 1

Research Question 2

Summary Chart

Explanation of data answering research question 2

Summary

Chapter 5 : Conclusions

Introduction

Summarize the purpose of your research and how your results fulfill that purpose (similar to introduction to chapter 4). Restate your hypothesis and /or research questions. Do not introduce any new data or findings.

Conclusions (many possibilities here of drawing out the implications of your findings—some examples below)

Surprises

State what you discovered that you did not necessarily anticipate

Findings in Relation to Literature

Are your findings consistent with what has been previously thought? Relate your study to the conclusions of others, that you summarized in chapter 2.

Reflections on the Research Design

Discuss the research design, if you believe that it contributed to hindering a more significant results. How would you have done things differently

Recommendations for Future Research

What would you recommend for someone doing similar research? Or for someone attempting to solve your ministry problem?

Recommendation for Ministry

What would you recommend for someone doing ministry to the same target population who face the same ministry problem? Make sure your recommendations are tied directly to your findings in chapter 4. Make your recommendations as specific as possible. Name a responsible leadership party and an action step they should take.

Implications

This can be distinct from the recommendations section. It might include secondary applications of this research, or ways in which the information in this research can be disseminated in more accessible form: teaching seminars, pamphlets, webpages, etc. Answer the question: What are you going to do with this?

Summary and Conclusion

Works Cited

Hanging indents for all references. To keep this format, simply place the cursor at the front of this line and paste or type your reference material. Then press enter. Remember to organize your references alphabetically. Remember to delete this line of text, sample, and any other template text before submitting your paper.

Journal article example:

Abt, E., Rodricks, J. V., Levy, J. I., Zeise, L., & Burke, T. A. (2010). Science and decisions:

Advancing risk assessment. *Risk Analysis: An International Journal*, 30(7), 1028-1036.