

TITLE IN ALL CAPS

by

STUDENT NAME

A Dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Fayetteville State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Doctorate of Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

Month/Year of Expected Graduation

APPROVED BY:

Chair of Dissertation Advisory Committee

Dissertation Committee Member

Dissertation Committee Member

ABSTRACT

Name, Title, (under the direction of [dissertation chair's name])

Text goes here. This is usually not completed until the dissertation is completed. Key search terms are placed at the end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Text goes here.

DEDICATION

Text goes here.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF TABLES	xi
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study	2
Significance of the Study	2
Theoretical Framework.....	3
Research Questions.....	3
Researcher’s Perspective	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Definition of Terms (in alphabetical order)	4
Organization of the Study	5
CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Topic One.....	6
Sub-topic.....	6
Topic Two.....	7
Sub-topic.....	7

Sub-topic of Sub-topic	7
Summary	7
CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY	8
Research Design.....	8
Qualitative Inquiry	8
Study Participants	9
Data Collection Procedures and Management	10
Data Interpretation and Analysis	10
Credibility and Trustworthiness.....	11
Risks.....	11
Ethics.....	12
Limitations of the Study.....	122
Delimitations of the Study	122
Summary	133
CHAPTER IV - FINDINGS	144
Description of Study Participants	144
Theme 1: XXXXXXXX	155
Subtheme:	155
Subtheme:	155
Theme 2: XXXXXXXX	155
Subtheme.....	155
Summary	155

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	166
Overview of Study	166
Discussion.....	166
Discussion of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework.....	166
Implications for Teachers, Educational Leaders, and Policymakers	166
Suggestions for Future Research	177
Concluding Thoughts.....	17
REFERENCES	18
APPENDICES	19

LIST OF FIGURES

No table of figures entries found.

LIST OF TABLES

No table of figures entries found.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Broadly describes your research focus and explains why the focus is worthy of study. This section identifies the problem and then discusses your proposed solution (i.e. the title/focus of your study). Then, it should clearly discuss the gap in the literature (a need or opportunity that has been identified by other scholars and researchers in the literature – not your personal opinion) and states how your study (your proposed solution) will further existing research. All statements of fact and statistics should be attributed to the appropriate source and be the most current (i.e. National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Education Progress, relevant state regulatory agencies, federal agencies such as the United States Census Bureau). The overwhelming majority of citations should be **from within the last five years**.

The minimum length is anywhere from 1 ½ pages to four pages. Make sure each paragraph contains at least three sentences (topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion) and make sure each paragraph properly transitions to the next. Also remember that there is only one space after every period. Make sure educational jargon is defined at the time it is introduced and that the word also appears in the Definition of Terms (i.e. achievement gap, students of color). Make sure all racial terms are capitalized (i.e. Black, White, African American).

A note about citations. Single source citations can indicate a lack of rigor. Make sure you have at least two to three citations for your statements of fact. Make sure you have at least three or four for major points or to indicate an issue is a long-standing

concern. Moreover, do not reference “recent studies” with citations that are more than three years old.

Statement of the Problem

Using declarative statements, explain the problem and how and why it has developed over time. It should include the significance, magnitude, and importance of the problem to educational leadership, social justice, and transformative leadership (these are the tenets of FSU’s doctoral program). Previous studies in this area that indicate the gap, identify the gap, and justify your study should be included. Remember, the problem is not your opinion. The problem is identified and supported by other researchers and scholars. This means this section must contain citations. The recommended length can be anywhere from three paragraphs to three to four pages.

Purpose of the Study

This section discusses the purpose of your study and who the purpose will benefit (i.e. practitioners, policymakers, administrators, educator preparation programs, etc.). If this is a qualitative study, you should have language that is consistent with this: *“The purpose/intent/objective of this qualitative [narrative, ethnography, case study, phenomenological] study is to (describe, understand, explore, deepen, develop) _____ (the phenomena you are studying).*

Significance of the Study

Identifies and describes why the study is important to the field of educational leadership/social justice/transformative leadership and states the practical implications of the potential results. It also discusses how the research may extend or contribute to

existing research, models, or theories. Again, this section is not opinion. It should align with existing research, models, or theories or explain unexplored research.

Recommended minimum length is one page.

Theoretical Framework

Frameworks are required components of dissertations at Fayetteville State University. The framework (theoretical = theory or conceptual = model) is the lens through which your study is viewed. It lays the foundation for your research questions and are reflected in your research questions. You cannot develop your research questions without your framework. Before you select it, make sure you discuss with your chair to ensure what you are using provides the best lens for your research aims.

State clearly and forthrightly which framework you are using. Provide history and background that includes the leading scholars and researchers associated with the framework. Explain its tenets, assumptions, and where relevant, its evolution. Most importantly, explain why it is best for your topic and why it is central to understanding the phenomenon under study. Minimum length should be at least two pages.

Research Questions

Research questions are **not** the same as interview questions that you will ask. Research questions are developed from your framework and are greatly influenced by your Statement of the Problem. For example, if your framework is Bandura's self-efficacy, then your research questions will center around the elements of Self-Efficacy Theory. If your framework is Critical Race Theory, your research questions will reflect the elements of CRT. For qualitative studies, there is generally a guiding question with

related questions. While there is no set number of questions, four to five are relatively standard for qualitative studies. Note: **research questions must not be formulated as yes or no questions.**

Assumptions (optional as per committee's discretion)

This section is included if this is a qualitative study. It explains your interest in the topic and any bias you bring to the study. Including it is also an accepted strategy for validation of your study. Although is a highly personal part of your research any facts should be backed up with citations. Suggested minimum length is 1 to 1 ½ pages.

Definition of Terms (in alphabetical order)

All terms specifically relevant to the topic under study should be defined in text as they are used and in this section. Note that generally understood terms do not meet this threshold. Terms are defined according to how they are used in the literature, not how they are defined in dictionaries. For example, secondary education can mean 9th to 12th grade or 10th to 12th grade in the literature. You, as the researcher, get to decide but you must define it according to its specific use for your study and your use of terms must be consistent.

Word: definition with citation at the end

Word: definition with citation at the end.

Word: definition with citation at the end.

Word: definition with citation at the end.

Word: definition with citation at the end.

Word: definition with citation at the end.

Organization of the Study

Explain how the dissertation is organized in this section. Stay consistent with roman numerals for chapter headings (i.e. do not use Chapter One since our chapters are written as “Chapter I”). Remember to have at least three sentences per paragraph.

Minimum length is one paragraph.

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

The introductory paragraph to the literature review restates the purpose of your study. Next, it explains what you are reviewing and its significance to your topic. The literature review should cover some or all of the following (again, check with your chair first): (1) overview or historical background of your problem, (2) analyzes and synthesizes literature related to the foundation, theories, and existing knowledge (this must include research studies with findings – not just journal articles) related to your problem and purpose, (3) analyzes and synthesizes the literature related to the justification of your study.

Before you begin your literature review, develop your list of headings and sub-headings and get them approved. For suggestions, look at other dissertations on your topic to see what areas they covered. Getting approval up front will ensure you are moving in the right direction. You should be reviewing the most recent literature available and that must include other dissertations. You can group the literature according to theoretical perspectives, time periods, reform efforts, or methodology (quantitative or qualitative). Unless specifically requested by your chair, your literature review does not have to include your theoretical or conceptual framework. Literature reviews that are less than 20 pages can signal that you do not have a complete grasp of your topic and the related literature. Be careful that your review does not read like a book report.

Topic One

Sub-topic

This is level three heading

Topic Two***Sub-topic***

This is level three

Sub-topic of Sub-topic. This is level four heading

Summary

Use one or two paragraphs to summarize the findings from the literature review.

CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

The introductory paragraph can briefly restate the purpose of the study in narrative form with your research questions. Then, explain what the chapter will cover. This includes the research design, the study participants, sampling method used, an explanation of data collection and analysis, measures to ensure credibility and trustworthiness, and ethics and risks.

Research Design

The research design is the one of the most important decisions you make. It is directly influenced by your research questions. Since this is a qualitative template, discuss specific features that illustrate its suitability. These should include philosophical assumptions such as epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Make sure to address at least three features and make sure you are citing at least five different researchers. The recommended minimum length for this section is 1 ½ to 2 ½ pages.

Qualitative Inquiry

(Narrative, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Case Study)

For any study, it is highly recommended that you purchase a book on the specific research design you are conducting in order to easily discuss the features of your research approach. This is especially relevant for qualitative studies. You want to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the features of your particular approach. For example, there are two kinds of phenomenological studies that are commonly used in qualitative research, descriptive and interpretative. If you are conducting a phenomenological study,

you need to know the differences between them and discuss which one you are using and why.

Also, make sure you are familiar with the researchers who are identified with each approach. You should pull at least five or six sources that are different from the ones you used in the previous section on research design. Here again, familiarize yourself with the epistemology, ontology, and axiology perspectives. This will give your methodology depth. You should have at minimum three pages. Creswell (2013) explicates the characteristics of the five most common qualitative approaches on pages 104-105. See sample language below.

Samples (1) If I could discover the meaning of one person's or a group of person's lived experiences, I would ask him/her about xxx = narrative; (2) If I could discover the shared lived experiences of one quality or phenomenon in others, I would want to know xxx = phenomenology; (3) If I could discover what actually occurred and was experienced in a single lived event, that event would be xxx = case study.

Study Participants

Describe the criteria you will establish or established for your participants and justify with citations from the literature. For example, if you plan to interview teachers, explain the level (elementary, middle school, secondary), whether not they needed to have a specific length of time in the classroom, the gender if it is pertinent, etc. If you plan to use or used pseudonyms, state that here.

The second part to this section is where you discuss your sampling procedures. Make sure you are not using quantitative terms (i.e. surveys, instrument). Instead, you

should be using qualitative terms (i.e. interviews, recruitment strategies) for qualitative studies. Do not forget to state that before your study commences, you will secure the proper approvals from the relevant entities (e.g. Institutional Review Board, school district, etc.). For your dissertation, demographic data is best illustrated in a table.

Minimum length is one page.

Data Collection Procedures and Management

Describe step by step how you intend to collect your data (for quantitative studies this includes where and how you will collect your data). If data is collected in parallel, be sure to state and explain. Keep in mind that you want to be specific in case other researchers want to replicate the steps. Again, use quantitative terms for quantitative studies and qualitative terms for qualitative studies. For example, typical collection procedures for qualitative studies are observations, field notes, interviews, and review of documents. However, there are different types of observations and different types of interviews. Know the terms/differences and state specifically which ones you will employ. For data management, state how data will be kept, where it will be kept, and how long it will be stored.

Data Interpretation and Analysis

Describe step by step how you intend to analyze your data. Remember, you will begin with raw data. There are some researchers who have established credible data analysis steps for different qualitative approaches. For instance, there is an extensive body of literature on analyzing data for phenomenological studies and case studies. You

can identify such methods by Guba and Lincoln or Creswell, or Yin, or another scholar. Just make sure you cite them properly.

You want to make sure you address the transcription process in detail for interviews, focus groups, and even observations and field notes. It is not enough to simply state the data will be coded for emergent themes. Specifically address whether you are using content analysis, thematic analysis, narrative analysis, constant comparative analysis, inductive/deductive reasoning (or some variation thereof), and the various coding procedures. Read as much as you can about qualitative data analysis to ensure this section communicates rigor. If you are describing this section after you have collected your data, make sure you explain how your techniques aligned with your research questions and your research design. Finally, if you are using a qualitative (i.e. NVivo) or quantitative (SPSS) software management program, explain it and cite it.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

This section is one of the more important ones in this chapter. For qualitative studies, the more common terms are credibility and trustworthiness. In either event, this section needs to detail the measures employed. Here as well, you need to make sure you are citing more than one source. Recommended minimum length is 1 to 1 ½ pages.

Risks

First, define risks for the type of study you are conducting. Second, address how risks are inherent in all research endeavors. Next, discuss any risks or potential harm your participants will face and how you will mitigate them. Recommended minimum length is one page.

Ethics

Explain why principles and ethics are important to research. Then discuss how your study will meet or met an acceptable standard of ethics regarding protecting the privacy and confidentiality of your participants. Here is where you address the informed consent process, strategies to prevent coercion, and any potential conflicts of interest. Make sure you know the document retention policy of FSU. The recommended minimum length is 1 to 1½ pages. Reference your IRB approval letter and Informed Consent in Appendices.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations refer to factors that can impact a study that are beyond the control of the researcher and they exist in all research endeavors (Simon, 2011). In some instances, this section may not be completed until after you have collected and analyzed data. In any event, only discuss aspects of the study that you, as the researcher, did not direct or control.

Delimitations of the Study

Unlike limitations, delimitations result from specific choices made by the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2013). Delimitations are those that the researcher imposes on the study thereby narrowing the focus of the studied phenomenon or topic (Irby, Lunenburg, Lara-Alecio, & Tong, 2015). For instance, the researcher decides if participants will be one gender or another or both, whether the participants, if they are teachers, have three years' experience or ten years' experience. A plethora of decisions are determined solely by the researcher. Explain those here.

Summary

Use at least one paragraph to summarize this chapter.

CHAPTER IV - FINDINGS

Restate purpose of your study here with your research questions. In your second paragraph, introduce your findings. Note that findings are determined from your research questions, not your interview questions. Qualitative studies can have a few as three themes or as many as five or six themes. In general, qualitative studies do not have themes that number in excess of nine or ten.

Description of Study Participants

Give a brief one to two sentence description of your participants. You want to include demographic information that is relevant to your study. For instance, if your study does not mention or is not related to the time period in which your participants were born (i.e. Baby Boomer, Generation X), then you should not include that notation here. Two examples in Level 3 headings are listed below. Note: Pseudonyms are used.

Example 1 - Participant One

Mary is a White second semester freshman enrolled at a public university in the southeastern region of the United States. She was involved with the xxxxxx program while in high school.

Example 2 - Participant Two

Kayla is an African American first semester freshman enrolled at a public university in the southeastern region of the United States. She was involved with xxxxx while in high school. Kayla is a first-generation college student.

Next, discuss themes. Themes are derived from your research questions, not your interview questions. They should be represented by the majority of your participants to

meet the threshold of a theme. If you interviewed 10 persons, then you should be able to cite from at least six of their interviews to support your themes. Minor themes or sub-themes are also typically generated from the data. You can organize the themes according to your research questions. Here again you can get an idea of how to organize them from looking at similar dissertations. If your themes particularly resonate with your framework, you can note so here although further explication will occur in the next chapter.

Themes should be treated as proper nouns and written as such. Themes should also be discussed within the context of the literature although again, deeper explication occurs in the next chapter. When using quotes from participants to explain and justify themes, make sure they are cited according to APA guidelines (personal communication, date of interview). Sample headings are below.

Theme 1: XXXXXXXX

Subtheme: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Subtheme: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Theme 2: XXXXXXXX

Subtheme: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Summary

Summarize chapter findings here. This can be accomplished in one to two paragraphs at minimum. There is no recommended minimum length for this chapter.

CHAPTER V – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Overview of Study

Restate the purpose of your study with your research questions. Next, restate the findings of your study with the themes. Finally, explain what will follow next.

Discussion

This is where you tie your problem, purpose, importance, and findings together. You essentially answer, “What does this mean and how does it extend existing research? What implications does your findings portend for social justice and transformative leadership? Be expansive as possible and discuss consistency or non-consistency with current literature. You should have a good three to four pages in this section.

Discussion of Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This section specifically addresses your findings in relation to your framework. How does your themes relate to your framework? Are they aligned in part or in whole? In what ways do they contrast with existing literature?

Implications for Teachers, Educational Leaders, and Policymakers

This section addresses implications for practitioners and decision-makers. Be as specific as possible and when appropriate, make connections to the existing literature. Try to have at least three substantive recommendations. Remember, all text in a dissertation should be in narrative form. This means the recommendations should not be numbered or bulleted.

Suggestions for Future Research

This section is for additional research. You may suggest different research designs such as longitudinal studies. You may suggest focus on different gender or racial/ethnic perspectives. Again, you have at least three to four substantive recommendations. Remember, all text in a dissertation should be in narrative form. This means the recommendations should not be numbered or bulleted.

Concluding Thoughts

This can also serve as your summary. Permit yourself to be more reflective here on your research, what it means to you and what you hope it means for educational leaders and educational leadership. Recommended minimum is one paragraph.

REFERENCES

Irby, B., Lunenburg, F., Lara-Alecio, R., & Tong, F. (2015). Qualitative Critizue: A Heuristic Tool for Doctoral Students to Use in Improving their Research Skills. *Journal of Education and Literature*, 147-158.

Simon, M., & Goes, J. (2013). Scope, limitations, and delimitations. *Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success*. Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success LLC.

APPENDICES