

Bachelor's Thesis Rubrics

Empirical (Data Collection) Qualitative Studies

(for supervisor's and student's reference)

Introduction

The purpose of the rubric is to guide students and thesis supervisors as they work together to develop high quality theses. The use of the rubric is intended to provide on-going and flexible evaluation and re-evaluation of the thesis drafts as they are developed.

The rubric has been developed for use with studies employing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research designs and can be used for evaluating both types of theses. Students should develop a working knowledge of the overall rubric, reflecting their understanding of diverse research designs.

Overview of thesis

The culminating product of a bachelor's program, the thesis, is a substantial work of research that contributes significantly to the student's field of study. A student can take justifiable pride in the work required of this capstone experience of professional progress. Developed through disciplined inquiry, the dissertation is the student's original contribution to knowledge in his or her field. Additionally, each dissertation must demonstrate the student's

- expertise in the field of study and the student's ability to identify a significant research problem within the field of study,
- ability to design and implement inquiry appropriate to the identified problem,
- ability to present and synthesize the results of his or her inquiry,
- ability to draw informed conclusions from the synthesis of inquiry results, and understanding of the relevance of his or her conclusions to his or her field of study and implications for future inquiry.

Additionally, the student must orally defend his or her thesis to his or her committee as well as to the faculty and guests invited to the defense. The main purpose of the defense is to allow an opportunity for the faculty of the university to comment on the quality of

the investigation and to judge the student's ability to defend his or her conclusions.

The Thesis Timeline Template

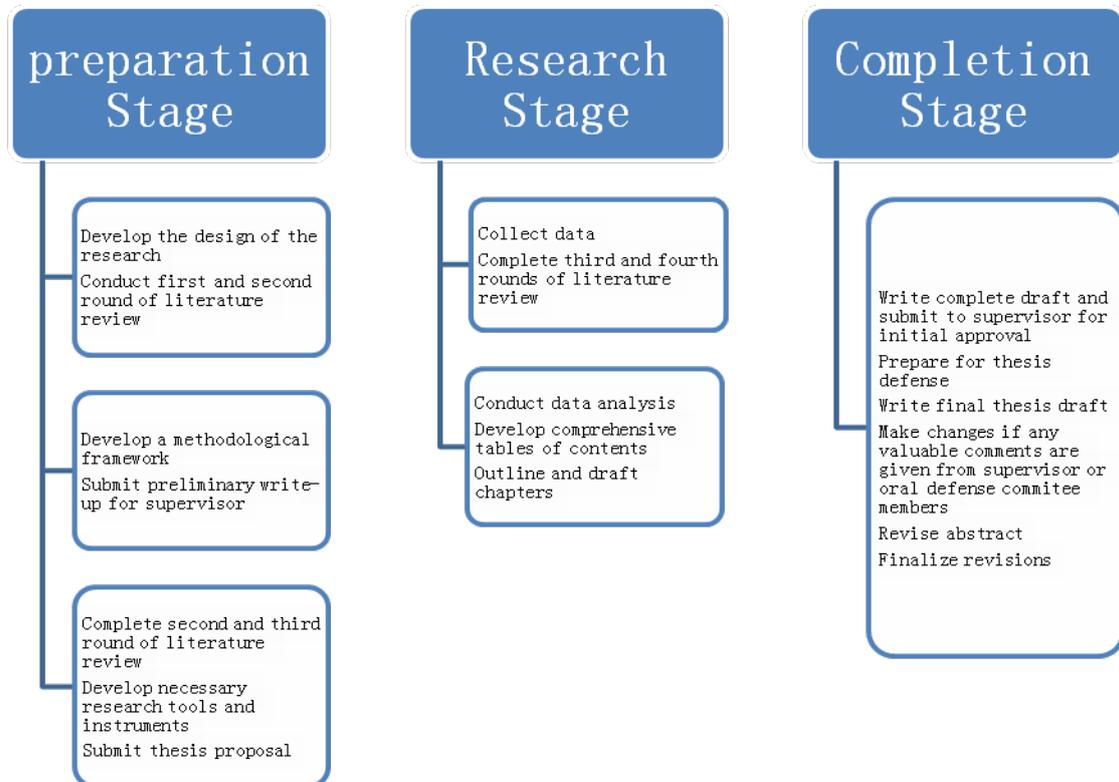


TABLE OF CONTENTS TEMPLATE

Title Page

Abstract

Table of contents

List of tables (only if tables are used)

List of figures (only if figures are used)

Acknowledgements (not required)

Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the problem

Research questions

Purpose or significance of study

Conceptual framework

Review of relevant terms

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Review of literature strand 1, 2, 3, etc.

Summary and implications of literature review

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research questions

Research design/model

Overall and Sample Populations

Instrumentation (reliability and validity)

Data collection

Data analysis methodology

Chapter 4: Findings

Data description/descriptive analysis (Demographic profiles)

Data analysis

Results for total sample, subsample 1, subsample 2, across subsamples, etc.

Results of initial research questions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Implications

Discussion of findings

Subsections for findings for each specific research questions

Limitations of findings

Implications for future practice in local context

Implications for future research

Reference

Appendices

Survey questionnaire

Quality indicators

If a five level rating scale is used for scoring each of the quality indicators in the rubric, in general, ratings of 3 or above are considered satisfactory (further revision may be needed), while ratings of 1 or 2 do not achieve minimal standards for passing. An "NA" (Not

Applicable) category is also used when an indicator on the rubric is not relevant to the manuscript.

Chapter 1 introduction

- The Introduction section has a clear statement demonstrating that the focus of the study is on a significant problem that is worthy of study. There is a brief, well-articulated summary of research literature that substantiates the study, with references to more detailed discussions in Chapter 2.
- The Problem Statement concisely states what will be studied by describing at least two factors and a conjectured relationship among them that leads to an identified problem.
- The Nature of the Study, Specific Research Questions, Hypotheses, or Research Objectives (as appropriate for the study) are briefly and clearly described. Reference is made to more detailed discussions in Chapter 3. If this is a critical literature review, the goals of the review are briefly described here.
- The Purpose of the study is described in a logical, explicit manner.
- In quantitative studies the theoretical base or in qualitative studies the conceptual framework shows which ideas from the literature ground the research being conducted.
- Operational Definitions of technical terms, jargon, or special word uses are provided.
- The Significance of the Study is described in terms of
 - a. knowledge generation,
 - b. professional application,
 - c. social change.
- Chapter 1 ends with a Transition Statement that contains a summary of key points of the study and an overview of the content of the remaining chapters in the study.

Chapter 2 literature review

- The review of related research and literature is clearly related to the problem statement as expressed in
 - a. research questions and hypotheses, or
 - b. study questions and study objectives.
- The review of related research and literature includes the relationship of the study to previous research.
- The review contains concise summaries of literatures that help
 - a. define the most important aspects of the theory that will be examined or tested (for quantitative studies), or
 - b. substantiate the rationale or conceptual framework for the study (for qualitative studies).

- There is literature-based description of
 - a. the research variables (quantitative studies), or
 - b. potential themes and perceptions to be explored (qualitative studies).
- The content of the review is drawn from acceptable peer-reviewed journals or sound academic journals or there is a justification for using other sources.
- The review is an integrated, critical essay on the most relevant and current published knowledge on the topic. The review is organized around major ideas or themes.

Chapter 3 Methodology / Research design

- Research design describes which qualitative paradigm will be used (case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, feminist, narrative, etc.). The choice of paradigm is justified, with explanations why other likely choices would be less effective.
- The Role of the Researcher in the data collection procedure is described.
- Where appropriate, questions and sub questions make sense, are answerable, are few in number, are clearly stated, and are open-ended. When it is proposed that questions will emerge from the study, initial objectives are sufficiently focused.
- The context for the study is described and justified. Procedures for gaining access to participants are described. Methods of establishing a researcher-participant working relationship are appropriate.
- Measures for ethical protection of participants are adequate.
- Criteria for selecting participants are specified and are appropriate to the study. There is a justification for the number of participants, which is balanced with depth of inquiry - the fewer the participants the deeper the inquiry per individual.
- Choices about which data to collect are justified. Data collected are appropriate to answer the questions posed in relation to the qualitative paradigm chosen. How and when the data are to be or were collected and recorded is described.
- How and when the data will be or were analyzed is articulated. Procedures for dealing with discrepant cases are described. If a software program is used in the analysis, it is clearly described. The coding procedure for reducing information into categories and themes is described.
- If an exploratory study will be (or was) conducted its relation to the larger study is explained.

Chapter 4 Findings/Results

- The process by which the data were generated, gathered, and recorded is clearly described.
- The findings

- a. build logically from the problem and the research design, and
- b. are presented in a manner that addresses the research questions.

- Patterns, relationships, and themes described as findings are supported by the data. All salient data are accounted for in the findings.
- This chapter addresses the results from the data analysis only.
- This chapter provides outlining any descriptive or exploratory/confirmatory analyses (reliability tests, factor analysis) that were conducted.
- The tests of hypothesis should be addressed and tables/figures should be used to illustrate and summarize all numeric information.
- For qualitative research, this chapter usually is organized by the themes or categories uncovered in the research.
- When focus groups or interviews were conducted, this chapter provides a brief descriptive (e.g., demographic) profile of the participants first. Direct quotation and paraphrasing of data from focus groups, interviews, or historical artifacts are used to support the generalizations made.

Chapter 5 Conclusion / Discussion

- The chapter begins with a brief Overview of why and how the study was done, reviewing the questions or issues being addressed, and a brief summary of the findings.
- The Interpretation of Findings
 - a. includes conclusions that address all of the research questions,
 - b. contains references to outcomes in Chapter 4,
 - c. covers all the data,
 - d. is bounded by the evidence collected, and
 - e. relates the findings to a larger body of literature on the topic, including the conceptual/theoretical framework.
- The Implications for Social Change are clearly grounded in the significance section of Chapter 1 and outcomes presented in Chapter 4.
- Recommendations for Action:
 - a. should flow logically from the conclusions and contain steps to useful action,
 - b. state who needs to pay attention to the results, and
 - c. indicate how the results might be disseminated.
- Recommendations for Further Study point to topics that need closer examination and may generate a new round of questions.
- For qualitative studies, includes a reflection on the researcher's experience with the research process in which the researcher discusses possible personal biases or preconceived ideas and values; the possible effects of the researcher on the participants or the situation, and her/his changes in thinking as a result of the study.
- The work closes with a strong concluding statement making the “take-home message” clear to the reader.

- The thesis

- a. follows a standard form and has a professional, scholarly appearance,
- b. is written with correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling,
- c. includes citations for the following: direct quotations, paraphrasing, facts, and references to research studies,
- d. does not have over-reliance on limited sources, and
- e. in-text citations are found in the reference list.