

**THE FUNDAMENTAL STEPS IN WRITING A
DISSERTATION: A REVIEW OF COMMON
MISTAKES AND ERRORS ASSOCIATED
WITH STUDENTS' PAPERS**

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FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

- In writing a dissertation, one of the crucial steps is:
- Choosing a researchable topic

- Principle Guidelines
- There are five principal guidelines a student must be familiar with:
 - (1) Study Introduction
 - (2) Review of Literature
 - (3) Methodological Approach
 - (4) Research Findings
- (5) Data Interpretation/Recommendation

- What Does a Research Introduction Consist of?
- A research introduction consists of the following:
 - (1) Background
 - (2) Purpose of the study
 - (3) Problem statement
 - (4) Theoretical framework
 - (5) Variable definitions
 - (6) Scope of the study

- Review of Literature
- Literature review in any research endeavor is the strongest base that gives information support to your dissertation and your possible claim.

- (1) It reviews existing work that are relevant to your study
- (2) It consolidates the entire research
- (3) It weighs what already exists and how what is being presented matters in the future

- (4) Insufficient Literature does not help your dissertation or any research
- (5) Detailed literature abstracted from sources relevant to your research legitimizes your claim and significantly validates your view point
- (6) It is always advisable to increase the landscape of your literature review

- **Methodological Approach**
- A dissertation's methodological approach should follow the following steps:
 - (1) **Research Method – What Research Method are you applying?**
 - (2) **Instrumentation**

- (3) What is your sample, the sample size and sampling method
 - (4) Did you test your study for Reliability and Validity?
- (5) Remember your statistical measure and finally
 - (6) Your findings and analysis

Reliability & Validity Examples

- Reliability:
- The degree at which a particular procedure enables a researcher to collect the same data each time in repeated observation of the same phenomenon
 - » (consistency in data classification than replication)

- A reliable study therefore:
 - (1) should always produce the same results from the same set of data irrespective of circumstances
 - (2) coders in such study must agree on the units of analysis

- If agreement among coders is perfect for all units, then reliability is assured
- But where there are no agreement among coders no matter how good the study turns out to be, reliability is absent
- Reliability may take the form of (a) stability (b) accuracy and (c) reproducibility

Validity

- The focus on whether an instrument actually measures what it intended to measure
 - (Explanation)
- A research exercise may be valid and not reliable and vice-versa

Research Findings

At the methodological approach level, a student will be able to report the following:

- (1) Demographic descriptions
- (2) Quantitative or Qualitative Data Analysis
- (3) Research findings

At this part of the dissertation, details of the findings must be clearly presented

- Research Results Outlay
- At the research result outlay, the student has to show:
 - (1) competence in interpreting and discussing the data collected
 - (2) competence in using statistically analyzed data to support various claims

DISCUSSION CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- At the discussion level of a dissertation, a student must show mastery in:
 - (1) leading a detailed discussion as to what the study proposed and has achieved
 - (2) Thoroughness in discussing the fundamental landscape of the study with reference notations where necessary

- (3) Guiding the reader to a clear understanding of the study by bringing some of the key issues that surrounds the introductory elements of the study
- (4) Working the reader on a journey through a forest of literature reviewed that will legitimize and strengthen your discussion

- (5) stretching the horizon of your entire study at the wheels of your discussion to lead your reader through a refresher moment
- (6) Boosting and eloquently re-echoing the various perspectives methodically articulated from the introductory to the mainframe of the methodological outlay of the study

CONCLUSION

(1) Conclusion and summary speaks to the end

(2) It actually epitomizes your findings

(3) It addresses and offer effective strategies that geared the study and the researcher to a summative stand



- (4) It sometimes recogitate but in a summative form
- (5) A dissertation conclusion should sound and lead to the end of the isle
- (6) Because the discussion begs for details, the conclusion bridges the entire study for easy access to the recommendation in brief

• Recommendations

- Recommendations are very necessary in any dissertation endeavor
- It helps to show how the present research can be extended to investigate other areas that correlate to the present topic
- A recommendation is necessary for practical application of future research to the profession

Common Mistakes and Errors

- In writing dissertation, students makes common mistakes and errors such as:
 - (1) Lack of accurate introduction
 - (2) incoherent study abstract
 - (3) Lack of clarity and poor organization of thought

COMMON MISTAKES CONTD.

- (4) Lack of organization of ideas, content and source materials
- (5) Rush in writing and sequencing of ideas
- (6) Carelessness and poor usage of words

- (7) Writing styles is another common mistakes students make while writing dissertation such as:
 - (i) continuity in the presentation of ideas
 - (ii) expression must be smooth
 - (iii) must maintain consistency in linking ideas and viewpoints
 - (iv) precision and clarity in expression

- (8) Grammar and Usage almost always run dissertation writing students into some difficulties such as:
 - (i) use of verbs
 - (ii) subject verb disagreement
 - (iii) inappropriate use of pronouns
 - (iv) inappropriate use of conjunctions

- (9) Style and Mechanics are necessary nuts that should be firmly tightened as you write your dissertation by making sure that:
 - (i) punctuation is in order
 - (ii) spacing after punctuation marks
 - (iii) consistency in using period (.), comma (,). Semicolon (;), dash (-), question marks (?) etc.

- (10) Spelling should conform to standard English language as clearly indicated in an English dictionary such that:
 - (i) capitalization must adhere to the use of uppercase letter for the first letter of a word
 - (ii) spell check your work
 - (iii) reread your work 100 times and peer review is necessary

- CREDITING SOURCES (CITATION)
 - When is the Proper Time to cite?
- There is no time most appropriate to cite your work.
- Citation must be an on-going exercise in writing a dissertation because any research endeavor must cite the work of people whose ideas, theories, or research influenced their own work directly or indirectly.

- Citation is very crucial in any empirical research
- In the absence of adequate citation or using data that does not belong to a researcher or a doctoral student writing a dissertation provides room for the “P” word
- P stands for Plagiarism otherwise referred to as

Academic Fraud



- **PLAGIARISM**

- The process where by a researcher claims credit for the words, ideas, and concepts of others.
 - Dissertation writing students or authors of any scholarly work do not present the work of others as if they were theirs.
- Whether paraphrasing, quoting an author directly, or describing an idea that influenced your work, you must credit the source.

- Another type of plagiarism is referred to as:

- **Self Plagiarism**

Defined as the practice by which a researcher presents a previously published work as though it were new

These identified errors made by students either knowingly or otherwise is detrimental to the furtherance of completing and defending your dissertation

It may also lead to the termination of your studentship and quest for a terminal degree

CITING SOURCES/REFERENCES

- Sources as crucial as they are in the writing of a dissertation or any scholarly work must follow the set APA standard.
- Whether your citations are periodicals such as:
 - (i) journals
 - (ii) magazines
 - (iii) newspapers
 - (iv) newsletters
 - (v) books, published research work etc.

- It should be cited and documented properly and in the order such as:
 - (1) citing one work by one author
- Ojukwu, C. O., (2012). Justice, equity and peace should be a bedrock in African unity. National Sun, 12, 12-20

- For more details see the handout attached
 - On the following:
 - (i) citing one work by multiple authors
 - (ii) When multiple authors are quoted the second time
 - (iii) quoting work that was quoted by another source

- **CONCLUDING THE PRESENTATION**
- In writing any dissertation a student should be very cautious and make sure all loose ends are tightened as you progress
- Work with your dissertation committee and be always prepared to take surprising bottlenecks and challenges associated with this crucial scholarly exercise.



PART TWO - PRESENTATION

THE FUNDAMENTAL STEPS IN SUBMITTING IRB PROPOSAL APPLICATION

IRB

The acronym IRB stands for:

- * Institutional Review Board which is an offshoot of the Federal Government Agency that upholds the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in any research endeavor.
- * For any research endeavor on the campus of BSU to move forward, it must seek IRB approval.

- The Steps to submitting a proposal must:
- (a) complete an IRB application
- (b) submit the first three chapters with references
- (c) attach the study instrument (survey)
- (d) submit a consent form
- (e) submit a letter of support from the research faculty advisor

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- (f) Make sure that the application form is properly filled out most importantly researcher's name, working e-mail, telephone number, address, name of faculty advisor, title of the research and so on.

- (g) The 15 Questions on the application form must be answered as they reflect to your research. For example Questions #4

Describe the risk of the subjects? Could the research be done without using humans?

- (h) The answer to this question is determined by two cardinal factors:
 - (1) if your research is using a primary data
 - (2) if the research is using a secondary dataExplain briefly

Submission

- (a) Submit three copies of your IRB package to the Graduate School
- (b) Your submission must be in a package and not loose stapled papers.
- (c) Please allow 2-4 weeks for the IRB review process to be completed prior to the submission of the proposal.
- (d) 2 weeks for proposal using secondary data and 4 weeks for those using primary data.

- As soon as your proposal application is either approved or denied, you will receive an e-mail with your approval or rejection letter attached.

- Please stop calling, your interest and research is very important to us and we are working very hard for you and will surely return to you and your faculty advisor when the review is completed.

INTERACTIVE SESSION!!!

THANKS

FOR

BEING SUCH A WONDERFUL

AUDIENCE

