

# Dissertation Examples: Doctoral

## About this document

This PDF lists 55 **doctoral dissertation examples** and thesis examples (2019–2026), each a complete, openly licensed document you can read in full, with a note on what it does well and who it is useful for. Use them to see how a finished dissertation is structured and argued at your level before you write your own.

By [Derek Jansen](#) (MBA) · Reviewed by [Eunice Rautenbach](#) (DTech) · Grad Coach · October 2026

Online version: [gradcoach.com/dissertation-thesis-examples/doctoral/](https://gradcoach.com/dissertation-thesis-examples/doctoral/)

© 2026 Grad Coach. Free to share and adapt under [CC BY 4.0](#) with credit to Grad Coach and a link to [gradcoach.com/dissertation-thesis-examples/doctoral/](https://gradcoach.com/dissertation-thesis-examples/doctoral/). Research questions and thesis titles quoted here remain their authors'; each dissertation keeps its own license.

## Contents

|                                                   |           |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Business &amp; management</b> · 6 documents    | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>Computer science</b> · 2 documents             | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Data science &amp; analytics</b> · 5 documents | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Education</b> · 3 documents                    | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Environmental science</b> · 4 documents        | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Finance &amp; accounting</b> · 8 documents     | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Marketing &amp; advertising</b> · 2 documents  | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Nursing</b> · 5 documents                      | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Political science</b> · 5 documents            | <b>19</b> |
| <b>Psychology</b> · 5 documents                   | <b>22</b> |
| <b>Healthcare</b> · 5 documents                   | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Sociology</b> · 5 documents                    | <b>27</b> |
| <b>How to use an example dissertation</b>         | <b>30</b> |

Want more dissertation examples? Get the full pack of 67 successful dissertations, all free. →

↓ [Download the examples pack](#)

## Business & management

### 1. Essays on the Basel III Leverage Ratio: Leverage Procyclicality, Bank Risk, and Liquidity Creation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Raphael Kasonde · PhD in Finance · Lincoln International Business School · 2026 · 419 pages

**APPROACH** Three-essay format

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The three-essay thesis, which is how a great many finance and economics doctorates are actually built and which almost no student has seen before being asked to write one. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are each a standalone empirical paper on the same instrument, and chapter 1 does the work of making them one doctorate rather than three articles: research background, objectives, an overview of the methodology and data across all three, the contribution, then the structure.

Two sections repay attention regardless of your field. Section 2.2 is headed "**Stylised facts**", an economics convention of establishing what the data plainly shows before any theory is brought to it, which is a disciplined way to stop a literature review from deciding your findings in advance. And section 3.3 is "**Literature review and hypothesis development**" as a single heading, so the review visibly produces the hypotheses instead of sitting beside them. At 419 pages it is the second-longest document in the collection, so read chapter 1 and then one essay, not the whole thing.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Raphael Kasonde, Lincoln International Business School. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 2. Factors Influencing E-Commerce Consumer's Adoption Intention Towards Collection-And-Delivery Points (CDPs): The Case of Vietnam

Van Dat Luong · PhD · Lincoln International Business School · 2025 · 226 pages

**APPROACH** Regression, SEM / factor analysis, Bibliometrics

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

If your study is "does this group intend to adopt this thing, and what predicts it", this is the model, and it is better than most because it does the job twice. Chapters 3 and 4 are two separate empirical studies on the same question, and the second exists because the first left something unexplained: study 1 tests antecedents drawn from innovation diffusion theory and the heuristic-systematic model with regression and MANOVA, and study 2 turns to trust, splitting it into cognitive and emotional trust and testing the emotional half as a mediator with structural equation modeling. Reading them in order shows what a research program looks like from the inside, where the second question is produced by the first answer rather than planned in advance.

Two other things worth taking. Chapter 1 has a section headed simply "**Research gap**", sitting between the imperatives and the aim, so the reader is never left inferring what was missing. And the literature review in chapter 2 is not an essay: it contains a **bibliometric review** with its own research method, descriptive analysis, mapping and a matrix of the factors other studies have tested. That matrix is where the hypotheses come from, so the review visibly produces the model rather than decorating it. Both theories are named and introduced separately in 2.3 before either is used.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Van Dat Luong, Lincoln International Business School. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 3. Board Gender Diversity and Its Impact on Financial Performance and Risk-Taking: A Study of Listed North American Companies

Ambrose G. Houphouet · Doctor of Business Administration in Finance · Sacred Heart University · 2024 · 66 pages

The conventional five-part shape at sixty-six pages, and a study that reports the hypothesis it failed to support as plainly as the one it supported.

**APPROACH** Panel data regression, Secondary data

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The conventional shape, at a length you can actually read in an evening. Its contents page lays out the five parts and where each begins: Introduction on page 7, Literature Review on 13, Data Sources and Methodology on 29, Results and Discussion on 34, Conclusion and Recommendations on 52, References on 56. If you are trying to see how the standard structure distributes weight, this is the diagram.

The reason to read it rather than only look at it is what happens to the second hypothesis. Across 1,874 North American listed firms, he finds that board gender diversity "has a positive and significant effect" on financial performance — and that it has "a negative and insignificant influence on the risk-taking behaviour of the listed North American firms."

The insignificant result is reported in the abstract, in the same sentence as the significant one. It is not buried in an appendix or quietly dropped between the proposal and the write-up, which is what happens to most hypotheses that do not come off. Examiners notice which of those two things you did.

The literature review is also worth a look for its organization: it is split by sub-theme rather than by author, starting at "2.1 Importance of Gender Diversity", so each section argues something instead of listing who said what.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2024 Ambrose G. Houphouet, Sacred Heart University. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

### 4. Exploring the Dynamics of Corporate Governance Change: A Multi-Level Study of Processes and Mechanisms in Corporate Governance Reforms in Nigeria

Judith Chika John · PhD · Lincoln International Business School · 2023 · 357 pages

**APPROACH** Case study, Interviews

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The one to read if you have a theoretical framework and cannot work out what to actually do with it. John uses critical realism with Archer's morphogenetic approach, and then chapter 4 applies it: the findings are organized as Phase I, Phase II and Phase III of a real reform sequence, tracking which actors dominated each phase and how the institutional logics between them aligned or collided. That is a framework doing work, rather than being named in chapter three and abandoned.

Students are told constantly to "apply" a framework and are rarely shown one structuring a findings chapter. Chapter 3 is a good methodology chapter on its own terms: research philosophy stated and argued, then case study design broken into formulation, selection, data and collection methods, with organizational documents and semi-structured interviews handled separately and the sampling strategy given, then data analysis, then "**The Methodological Limitations**" as its own section rather than an afterthought at the end of the thesis. And note section 2.5.4, "**Current Research Limitation on Institutional Theory and Change**":

naming what your own theoretical lens cannot see, inside the literature review, is the same confident move Chardonnens makes about earnings management models above. Two of the five business entries do it, which should tell you something. A caution: at 357 pages it is one of the longest documents here. Read chapter 3 and the first half of chapter 4.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2023 Judith Chika John, Lincoln International Business School. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 5. Detecting Earnings Management

Patrick Chardonnens · Doctoral thesis · University of Fribourg · 2023 · 253 pages

**APPROACH** Archival data, Regression, Machine learning

### WHY WE PICKED IT

An accounting and finance thesis with no participants, no interviews and no survey, built entirely on archival financial data, which is the shape a lot of finance and economics students need and rarely see modeled. Chapters 3 through 6 are four self-contained empirical studies, the first three of them on one phenomenon, the discontinuity in reported earnings around zero, approached from a different angle each time: whether the discontinuity disappeared and why, whether it shows up in Europe but not the US, and whether the standard models actually predict fraud.

The part to read regardless of your field is section 5.2.3, "Criticism of Earnings Management Models". He is using those models, and he devotes a section of his literature review to the case against them before he does. Examining the weaknesses of your own instrument in the literature review is far stronger than conceding them in your limitations, and it is a move almost nobody makes.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2023 Patrick Chardonnens, University of Fribourg. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 6. Promoting Digital Innovation and Transformation: Innovation Champions in the Digital Age

Katharina Drechsler · Dr. rer. pol. · University of Bamberg · 2023 · 274 pages

The cleanest example here of the cumulative dissertation as German-speaking Europe does it, with the whole anatomy visible on the contents page.

**APPROACH** Cumulative dissertation

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The cleanest example in the collection of the cumulative dissertation as it is done in German-speaking Europe, and the contents page shows the whole anatomy at a glance: an introductory paper by the candidate alone, then twelve papers grouped into four named parts, each with its co-authors and its venue printed underneath, from the \*International Journal of Innovation Management\* to HICSS and Wirtschaftsinformatik conference proceedings. The introductory paper is the thing to read.

In this format it carries the entire burden of being a doctorate rather than a stapled folder: it has to state the overarching question, explain what each paper contributes to it, and argue that together they amount to something none of them does alone. It is also organized into named parts, so that Part I groups the papers

about how innovation champions evolved. Grouping the papers rather than listing them is the difference between a structure and a sequence.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2023 Katharina Drechsler, University of Bamberg. Licensed under CC BY.

## Computer science

### 7. Understanding and Mitigating Hallucination of Language Models in Software Engineering

Bonan Kou · PhD · Purdue University · 2026 · 162 pages

**APPROACH** Machine learning, Empirical study

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The best golden thread in the collection, and you can see the whole of it in about five minutes. Section 1.1 puts the whole claim in a single sentence: hallucination of large language models in software engineering can be understood and mitigated by external guidance, self-reflection, and implicit signals. Sections 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 are then those three clauses in order, one per study, and each becomes a chapter.

And section **6.1 is called "Revisiting the Thesis Statement"**, which closes the loop by returning to that exact sentence and saying what the three studies did and did not establish about it. State the claim, structure the work by its parts, come back and answer it. If your chapters feel like separate projects that happen to share a topic, read chapter 1 and chapter 6 here back to back and you will see what is missing. The related work chapter is also unusually well organized, sorted into four themed sections with subsections rather than run as a chronological parade of studies, which is what makes a literature review feel like an argument.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Bonan Kou, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

---

### 8. Systematic and Scalable Memory Safety Assurance for Embedded Software Systems

Paschal Chukwuebuka Amusuo · PhD · Purdue University · 2026 · 166 pages

**APPROACH** Systems engineering, Paper-based thesis

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

A paper-based engineering thesis whose study chapters all run the same internal skeleton, and the skeleton is the lesson. Chapter 3 carries its fullest form: Summary, Introduction, Background, Related Work, **Knowledge Gaps and Research Questions**, then results reported against those questions by number (RQ1-3, then RQ4), Discussion, and **Limitations and Threats to Validity**. Two of those headings are worth stealing whatever your field.

Deriving the research questions in a section explicitly about the knowledge gaps means the reader never has to take on trust that the questions follow from the literature; they watch it happen. And "threats to validity" as a standing section per study, rather than one limitations paragraph at the end of the thesis, is a software engineering convention that reads as confidence rather than weakness. Chapter 1 also splits section 1.1

"Context and Problem Statement" from section 1.2 "Thesis", which keeps the situation and the claim from blurring into each other the way they usually do.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Paschal Chukwuebuka Amusuo, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## Data science & analytics

### 9. Beyond Fairness Metrics: Human Experiences and Differential Outcomes in AI-Mediated Work Settings

Kowe Kadoma · Ph. D., Information Science · Cornell University · 2026 · 140 pages

**APPROACH** User studies, Multi-study

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this if your topic is one where **the standard measure misses the thing you actually care about**, a position more students are in than realize it. Kadoma's argument is that model-centric fairness metrics evaluate the system and not the person using it, so she runs studies that measure human experience instead: perception, evaluation, feelings of control and ownership while doing real work with AI tools.

The dissertation then names what those studies found that a metric could not see. Two things to copy. The framing move is stated plainly in the abstract: these systems are "sociotechnical infrastructure", not productivity aids. Every study follows from that one reframing, which is what a thesis statement is supposed to do. And the contribution is stated as both a finding and a framework, so a reader knows what to take away as well as what was discovered.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Kowe Kadoma, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 10. Understanding and Intervening in Academic Decisions through Course Information Platforms

Mina Chen · Ph. D., Information Science · Cornell University · 2025 · 202 pages

**APPROACH** Mixed methods, Field intervention

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

**Understand, then intervene**, and the title says so, which is the point. Chen studies how students make course decisions on information platforms and then builds and tests interventions on those platforms, so the dissertation moves from description to change rather than stopping at findings and recommending that somebody else act.

If you are doing applied work and have been asked "so what?", this is the structure that answers it: a first half that establishes what is happening and why, and a second that changes something and measures whether it worked. Also a useful model of studying a system you can actually modify, which is a research-design advantage worth choosing deliberately rather than stumbling into.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Mina Chen, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 11. Computational and Statistical Properties of Optimal Transport-Based Distances

Gabriel Rioux · Ph. D., Applied Mathematics · Cornell University · 2025 · 314 pages

**APPROACH** Formal modeling

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The mathematics entry, and the one to open if your dissertation is theorems rather than data and every example you have been shown has a methods chapter. There is no methods chapter here and that is correct. What there is instead: a short introduction, then three self-contained chapters that each open with their own contributions and, in chapters 3 and 4, their own **literature review** placing the work in a live research area. Each carries its results, keeps the long proofs in a section at the end of the chapter, and hands the remaining machinery to a **supplement of its own** at the back, pages 204 to 281.

That proportion is the thing to notice: about a quarter of the document is appendix, because a proof that would break the argument's flow belongs behind it, not in it. Read the introduction and either literature review even if the mathematics is not yours; they are a clean example of motivating technical work for a reader who does not share your specialism.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Gabriel Rioux, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 12. Theory and Practice of Large-scale Logistics: Offline Contextual Bandits and Decomposition Methods

Samuel Tan · Ph. D., Operations Research and Information Engineering · Cornell University · 2025 · 172 pages

**APPROACH** Optimization, Contextual bandits

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The applied-optimization entry, and the clearest example here of **writing a computational method as an ordered procedure**. Tan's methodology sections number the steps: train the model, use it to sample, then characterize the output, with the loss function written out and each step's inputs and outputs named. A reader could implement it.

That sounds obvious and it is rare: most computational chapters describe an approach in prose and leave the reader to reconstruct the order of operations. It also pairs theory with practice deliberately, which the title announces, so it is a usable model if your examiners want both a contribution to method and evidence that it works on a real problem.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Samuel Tan, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 13. Leveraging Data for Inclusive and Equitable Education: A Multi-faceted Study of Educator Perceptions and Practices

Kimberly Williamson · Ph. D., Information Science · Cornell University · 2025 · 213 pages

**APPROACH** Mixed methods, Multi-study

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

A multi-study dissertation on whether data-driven decision-making actually serves equity in education, and a good model of **holding a practical audience in view without softening the research**. Williamson closes on "actionable recommendations for educators and educational organizations", and the studies are built so that those recommendations follow from evidence rather than being appended to it.

Worth reading for the shape if your work sits between a discipline and a profession: the studies answer the research question, and a separate, clearly labeled layer translates them for practitioners. The biographical sketch is also unusually informative about how a career becomes a dissertation topic: a decade as a data architect and reporting analyst in education systems, then a doctorate examining whether that work does what it claims.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Kimberly Williamson, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## Education

### 14. A Critical Ethnography of University Student Activism in Postcoup Honduras

Jairo I. Fúnez-Flores · PhD · Purdue University · 2020 · 373 pages

**APPROACH** Ethnography

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

A specialist read, and the one document here that shows you fieldwork going wrong. Chapter 3 carries Fúnez-Flores's research journal, dated. On 7 January 2019 he messaged two student organizations in Honduras and heard nothing, and the entry is him sitting with that: "I still do not have participants. It is frustrating." A reply came days before the semester started on 28 January, and that group then never wrote to him again.

Every methodology chapter you have ever read presents access as a settled fact. This one shows what it cost, across twelve months in the field. The data analysis section is equally concrete: fieldnotes split into descriptive and reflective halves, research memos written from those, NVivo, and member checking done in public: he put his interpretations in front of student activists at livestreamed forums to be argued with. The caveat is real, though. It is 373 pages of dense decolonial theory, and a student who copies the structure without the grounding underneath it will struggle to defend it. Read chapter 3, not the thesis.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 Jairo I. Fúnez-Flores, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 15. "There is wealth in the struggle": Unearthing and Embracing Community Knowledges Through Organizing Work in Appalachia

Erin Brock Carlson · PhD · Purdue University · 2019 · 183 pages

**APPROACH** Focus groups, Participatory

### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this one if your project involves a community, an employer, or anyone whose time you are asking for. Carlson worked with 11 of the 12 fellows in one Appalachian fellowship cohort, using photovoice, focus groups and site visits to three of their communities, and chapter 3 is unusually honest about the machinery. Section 3.3.1 works through a genuine bind: a properly participatory study lets participants write the research questions, but the ethics board wants approved questions before you are allowed to talk to anybody.

Her answer, two sets of questions with Table 1 on page 62 setting hers beside the ones the participants generated, is a real solution to a real problem rather than a paragraph about rigor. She also states what participants were paid, per activity, in dollars. Section 3.3.2 records a recruitment plan that half failed (host community members were invited, exactly one said yes) and says so. And the coding section treats narratives, images and relationships as three different problems instead of pretending photographs code like transcripts.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2019 Erin Brock Carlson, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 16. Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Culturally Responsive Teaching and Their Sense of Belonging and Academic Self-Efficacy in Higher Education

Yujie Huang · PhD · Purdue University · 2019 · 210 pages

**APPROACH** Survey, SEM / factor analysis

### WHY WE PICKED IT

If anyone has told you your research questions, your methods and your results chapter do not line up, read Table 1 on page 80 before you read anything else in this collection. Huang sets out all five research questions in one table, each against its variables, its scale of measurement, and the exact analysis that answers it.

Everything downstream obeys that table: chapter 4 heads each results section with the question written out in full, and chapter 5 is five numbered conclusions, one per question. That is the golden thread on a single page, and it is the cheapest thing here to copy into your own draft tonight. The study behind it is a survey of 1,061 undergraduates at a predominantly white institution and an HBCU, run through exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Section 4.4 is worth a second look for a different reason: she accounts for every one of the 286 discarded responses by reason, which is how you report data cleaning without sounding like you are hiding something.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2019 Yujie Huang, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## Environmental science

### 17. Social Behavior and the Ecology of Infectious Disease

Leah Valdes · Ph. D., Entomology · Cornell University · 2025 · 147 pages

Basic science that lands a practical recommendation without pretending that was the point all along.

**APPROACH** Field experiment, Behavioral ecology

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

A behavioral-ecology doctorate on how the social lives of bees shape disease transmission in plant-pollinator-pathogen communities. The findings are about social behavior and epidemic outcomes; the applied contribution, an effective and cost-effective way to reduce pathogen transmission in managed pollinators, follows from them rather than driving them.

If your supervisor has asked about impact and you are worried that answering will distort your research questions, this shows the honest order. Its introduction is also a good example of establishing why a system matters ecologically and economically before narrowing to a mechanism.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Leah Valdes, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 18. Environmental DNA for Assessing Species Richness, Genetic Diversity, and Species Abundance

Kara Andres · Ph. D., Ecology and Evolutionary Biology · Cornell University · 2022 · 276 pages

**APPROACH** Experiment, Field experiment

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

**The best example here of validating a method in stages**, and worth reading whatever your field if you are introducing a technique your examiners may not trust. Andres wants to know whether environmental DNA, the genetic material shed into water, can measure not just which species are present but their genetic diversity and abundance.

She does not simply apply it. She tests it in a mesocosm, a controlled tank where the true answer is known; then in a field experiment, checking eDNA estimates against tissue-based genetics from the same population; then in natural conditions, comparing abundance estimates against images from an autonomous underwater vehicle. Each stage checks the method against an independent measure, and the conclusion states the remaining limitations rather than declaring the technique proven. That is how a methodological claim is earned.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2022 Kara Andres, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 19. Nuts and Bolts: Spatial Statistical Model Development for Fisheries

Elizabeth Paige Duskey · Ph. D., Natural Resources · Cornell University · 2020 · 214 pages

**APPROACH** Simulation, Spatial statistics

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The statistical-modeling entry, and its lesson is one most quantitative students never hear: **build simulations before you touch the real data**. Duskey develops spatial models for fisheries and does it by generating biologically and ecologically informed simulations first, using them to test which model structures can recover a known truth. Her own summary of why is the line to take away: it "constrains the infinite realm of possibilities to a manageable set of choices based in reality".

If you are staring at a modeling decision with no principled way to choose, this is the method. The substantive finding matters too: fine-scale trend in Atlantic sea scallops may be far larger than a conventional sequential approach suggested.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 Elizabeth Paige Duskey, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 20. Advancing Regional Water Supply Portfolio Management and Cooperative Infrastructure Investment Pathways under Deep Uncertainty

Bernardo Carvalho Trindade · Ph. D., Civil and Environmental Engineering · Cornell University · 2019 · 297 pages

**APPROACH** Scenario analysis

### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this if **your contribution is a tool** and you are unsure whether that counts. Carvalho Trindade built WaterPaths, an open-source modeling framework for regional water infrastructure decisions, and the dissertation treats the software as a research contribution rather than as an implementation detail, including a deliberately designed test case, the hypothetical "Sedento Valley", offered as a shared benchmark other researchers can use.

That is a generous and unusual move, and it is what turns a tool into a contribution. It is also a strong model for **deep uncertainty**: the work is explicitly about making decisions when the future cannot be forecast, which is a framing more theses need and few name.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2019 Bernardo Carvalho Trindade, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## Finance & accounting

### 21. Biodiversity Risk and Firm Valuation: Regional Heterogeneity and Value-Chain Exposure in Global Capital Markets

Madelein Wentzel · Doctor of Business Administration in Finance · Sacred Heart University · 2026 · 44 pages

The limitations section to copy. Three limitations, each with the consequence spelled out and the study that would fix it.

**APPROACH** Cross-sectional, Secondary data, Regression

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Go to the **limitations passage on page 33**. Most limitations sections are an apology in list form: small sample, one country, self-reported data, and no indication of what any of it costs the argument. This one names the consequence every time.

The first: her design is cross-sectional, and she says why that is not a stylistic choice — there is no time-series dimension because consistent firm-level biodiversity data separate from broader ESG scores does not yet exist. So the analysis "cannot rule out omitted variable bias or reverse causality", and the fix is named too: panel data, instrumental variables, or a quasi-experimental design.

The second is better still. Her regional results hold up statistically, but the mechanism behind them has not been tested, and she says her own explanation for it is "theoretically plausible but requires further decomposition". Writing that sentence about your own favorite idea is harder than it looks.

It is also a useful model for writing about something the data barely covers yet. She is measuring biodiversity dependence through ENCORE, a dataset she notes "remains under development", across more than 10,000 listed firms — and the caution shows in the claims rather than only in the caveats.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Madelein Wentzel, Sacred Heart University. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

### 22. The Effect of Financial Literacy on Firm Performance

Erwin Joseph · Doctor of Business Administration in Finance · Sacred Heart University · 2025 · 103 pages

What to do when two datasets do not line up. His survey runs every three years and his firm data is annual, so he reports the results twice.

**APPROACH** Panel data, Regression, Multiple imputation

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this one for the problem it has rather than the answer it reaches: two datasets that do not line up, and a decision made in the open.

Open it at "**Methodological Innovations in Measuring Financial Literacy**" (**page 12**). He is joining the National Financial Capability Study to COMPUSTAT. The NFCS is run "every three years", so it exists for 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018 and 2021; COMPUSTAT is annual and his sample runs 2009 to 2024. Merge them and two years in three have a hole where the literacy measure should be.

He names the problem — "due to variations in survey participation, missing data is a recurring challenge" — then uses Fully Conditional Specification to impute the gaps, and, the part worth copying, **reports the**

**results both ways:** Panel A on the observed survey data, Panel B on the imputed series, side by side in the tables. The reader can see what the imputation did rather than taking his word for it.

At 103 pages it is also the longest of the professional doctorates here, and the closest in feel to a traditional thesis if that is the shape you have been asked for.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Erwin Joseph, Sacred Heart University. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

## 23. Essays on Financial inclusion, Extreme Weather Events and Development

Tarana Chauhan · Ph. D., Applied Economics and Management · Cornell University · 2024 · 230 pages

**APPROACH** Three-essay format, Econometrics

### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this for a single artifact: **the literature summary table**, Table B.1, running from page 188. Its columns are Paper, Setting, Dataset and Source, Method, Explanatory variables, Outcome variables, and the column most students omit, Sign of effect, which records that droughts raise intimate partner violence where floods show a null effect, and notes for each study what moderated it.

A table like that does something prose cannot: it makes studies comparable, and it makes a gap visible rather than asserted. When you can see that every prior paper used one dataset and one method, the case for your own design writes itself. Build one early whatever your field; it also stops you rereading the same twelve papers because you cannot remember what they found. The topic pairing is instructive too: development economics, weather shocks and gender-based violence in one dissertation shows how an essays-format thesis holds together on a question rather than a dataset.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2024 Tarana Chauhan, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0.

## 24. Three Essays on Sustainable Finance and Capital Markets

William Wei Xiong · Ph. D., Management · Cornell University · 2024 · 208 pages

**APPROACH** Three-essay format

### WHY WE PICKED IT

Open it at "**Literature Review, Regulatory Rules, and Hypotheses**" (**page 131**), the best answer here to "synthesize the literature, don't summarize it." Xiong is writing about trading halts. He opens: "The effect of trading halts is debatable." Then the first school and its authors: halts ease market tensions, reduce volatility, protect liquidity providers. Then the opposing school: halts merely delay volatility and can create a magnet effect dragging prices toward the suspension threshold.

Then: "There can be a middle ground between the above two schools": Harris, who splits volatility into informed and uninformed trading and shows the halt helps for one and harms the other. Position, counter-position, resolution, with the hypotheses built on the unresolved part. Copy the three-move structure directly; it works in any field with a live disagreement. Also the cleanest example here of the three-essay format.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2024 William Wei Xiong, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 25. An Exploration of the Economics of Cyber Law and Policy

Pengfei Zhang · Ph. D., Economics · Cornell University · 2022 · 179 pages

**APPROACH** Regression, Formal modeling

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The theory entry. If your dissertation is a formal model rather than an empirical study, this is the shape: a baseline model, its results, and then **"Appendix A. Extensions and Robustness" (page 59)**, where the model is extended rather than the regressions re-run.

The extension is instructive in itself: the main model covers the takedown half of a notice-and-takedown copyright regime, and the appendix adds the counter-notice procedure as a settlement game: the owner sues, offers to drop the suit if the platform closes, the creator accepts or refuses, and the creator responds only if the threat to litigate is credible, meaning the owner's expected gain must exceed litigation costs. Decision nodes are color-coded by player, with nature's moves marked separately. Two things to take: robustness in a theory paper means showing your result survives a richer model, not a different standard error; and a labeled game tree is worth several pages of prose.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2022 Pengfei Zhang, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 26. Which Financial Measures Can Be Leveraged To Help Close The Unfunded Liability Gap For State Pension Plans?

Selette M. Jemison · Doctor of Business Administration · Sacred Heart University · 2021 · 41 pages

The model for explaining how you built your sample. Every exclusion has a stated reason, and you can picture the data by the end of one page.

**APPROACH** Panel data, Multiple linear regression, Fixed effects

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The model here for explaining how you built your sample, which is the paragraph most students write as one sentence and lose marks for.

Open it at **"Data and Methodology" (page 12)**. She starts from the Public Plans Data, over 3,700 observations covering 2001 to 2018. Then she cuts it, and says why each time. The years 2001 and 2002 go, and the sentence doing it is worth stealing: "To obtain a balanced data set, where each plan is observed during the same time-period, 2001 and 2002 data were excluded." That leaves 2,800 observations across 2003 to 2018. The District of Columbia goes "because 16 years of plan data were not reported". Federal employee plans are out because the source does not track them.

Then she does the thing that makes a sample real to a reader: she describes its shape. About 3.5 retirement plans per state; one each for Hawaii, Idaho, Mississippi, Oregon and Wyoming; fifteen for California and ten for Texas. You finish the page able to picture the dataset, which is the whole job of that section.

It is also a good example of a practitioner question — a working professional asking which lever actually closes a funding gap — answered with public data rather than proprietary access.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2021 Selette M. Jemison, Sacred Heart University. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

## 27. Essays on International Energy and Transportation Markets

Nahim Bin Zahur · Ph. D., Economics · Cornell University · 2020 · 240 pages

**APPROACH** Structural estimation, Three-essay format

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The model for structural estimation, and more generally for **interpreting a number instead of reporting it**. Zahur estimates a conduct parameter for LNG sellers and gets 0.72 to 0.90. He does not stop there.

He tells you that 1 means firms behave exactly as Cournot competition predicts and 0 means fully competitive, and therefore that 0.72-0.90 means sellers are close to Cournot but somewhat more competitive, and that fully competitive conduct is implausible because the estimate is nowhere near zero. Three sentences turning a coefficient into a finding. Most results chapters report significance and move on, leaving the examiner to work out what the magnitude means. Note also how he handles model simplicity: he runs a deliberately parsimonious specification, says so, and reports that adding covariates does not measurably change the fit. Defending a simple model on evidence beats apologizing for it.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 Nahim Bin Zahur, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 28. Financial Market Risk and Macroeconomic Stability Variables: Dynamic Interactions and Feedback Effects

Agnieszka M. Chomicz-Grabowska · Doctor of Business Administration in Finance · Sacred Heart University · 2019 · 33 pages

**APPROACH** Vector autoregression, Impulse response functions, Two-state Markov switching

### WHY WE PICKED IT

Thirty-three pages, seven numbered sections, no chapters. If you have been told a doctorate must be four hundred pages, read this one first: it is built like a journal article, and it was examined as a doctorate.

Open it at "**III. Description of Data and Empirical Testing Methodology**" (**page 7**) for the thing it does best, which is justifying every variable from the research question rather than from availability. She wants to know whether market risk drives macroeconomic stability, so she picks the two variables the Federal Reserve is actually mandated to manage — "the macro variables that stem directly from the Federal Reserve's 'dual mandate' to ensure low unemployment and price stability" — and then splits inflation in two, survey-based CPI against the breakeven rate that reflects bond market expectations.

The detail worth copying is on the same page. Her VIX series runs from January 1990, but the breakeven inflation data only start in January 2003, and instead of quietly using the shorter window she says why: earlier estimates "suffered from serious liquidity constraints of TIPS", with three citations. A reader never has to wonder whether she noticed.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2019 Agnieszka M. Chomicz-Grabowska, Sacred Heart University. Licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

## Marketing & advertising

### 29. Essays on Advertising, Sodium Intake, and Soda Taxes

Ezgi Cengiz · Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Resource Economics · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2022 · 242 pages

**APPROACH** Quasi-experimental, Regression

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read **section 1.4, "Research design" (page 31)**, even if you never touch econometrics. It is the clearest explanation in the collection of what an identification strategy is and why anyone needs one.

Cengiz states the problem in one sentence a non-specialist can follow: firms do not advertise randomly, they advertise where and when people were already going to buy more, so a naive analysis credits advertising with sales it did not cause. Then the fix: compare consumers living on opposite sides of a media-market border, who share business cycles, economic conditions and local demand shocks but are exposed to different advertising because firms buy media by market. Then the payoff, stated plainly: the design "leaves only the level of advertising exposure to explain the differences in beer sales between neighboring DMA populations." Problem, design, what the design rules out, and the structure transfers to any field.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2022 Ezgi Cengiz, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 30. A Pluralistic Approach to Consumer Morality

Shreyans Goenka · Ph. D., Management · Cornell University · 2020 · 157 pages

**APPROACH** Experiment, Preregistered

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The open-science entry, and the one to read if you are running experiments and have been told to preregister. Goenka states that **"the hypothesis and study design were preregistered on the open science framework website"**, in the methods, as a matter of record, before the results. Two other things in the same section are worth copying.

The sample size is justified before collection and on the literature: prior work on binding values typically uses 300-600 participants, so 600 was decided a priori for each study. That is what "a priori sample size" means, and it is a better answer than a power calculation nobody believes. And the procedure includes a filler task, an unrelated word-completion exercise dropped in between the manipulation and the product evaluation, placed there deliberately to reduce demand effects, with that reason stated. Design decisions with their reasons attached, rather than a list of what was done.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 Shreyans Goenka, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## Nursing

### 31. Improving Health Care Proxy Procurement Rates for Hospitalized Adults - A Nurse Led Intervention

Johanna Baldassari · Doctor of Nursing Practice, Post Master's DNP Completion · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2026 · 39 pages

**APPROACH** Quality improvement, Pre/post

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The shortest document in the collection, and it earns its place on one section. **"Project Site and Population" (pages 12-13) is the most concrete setting description in the collection:** a 37-bed adult medical unit in an urban community teaching hospital, 57 nurses, roughly 2,500 discharges a year, patients 65% white and 21% black, 60% aged over 65, average stay five days, medical residents rotating in two-week blocks.

It even says who chose the unit and on what basis. Students are told to "describe the setting" and produce two sentences; this shows what the instruction means, and why it matters: every one of those facts constrains what the intervention could be and what the results generalize to. The measurement section states the outcome as a formula rather than a sentence. Do not use this as a model for length; use it for the setting section.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Johanna Baldassari, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 32. Assessing the Effectiveness of Educational Training on Pain Management Techniques for Intrauterine Device Insertion

Jenna Bird · Doctor of Nursing Practice, Family Nurse Practitioner · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2025 · 58 pages

**APPROACH** Quality improvement, Pre/post

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Open this at **"Limitations" (page 32)** if you have been told your limitations section is too defensive or too vague. Bird does three things most students do not. She names the limitation: a small sample, despite an extended deadline and a lunch laid on to recruit.

She then identifies which specific claim in her own project is under-supported and why: nitrous oxide was the change providers most wanted, and the only evidence for it in IUD placement comes from an adolescent study, so it cannot carry an adult recommendation. And she says the whole area is under-researched and names that as a finding rather than an excuse. That is limitations written as analysis: it tells a reader exactly how far to trust the conclusion, which is the entire job of the section.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Jenna Bird, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 33. The Lived Experience Of Nurses Witnessing End-Of-Life Dreams And Visions Of Dying Patients

Sherilyn L. Herron · Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2025 · 134 pages

**APPROACH** Phenomenology

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this if your supervisor has written "**reflexivity?**" in your margin and you do not know what a satisfactory answer looks like. Herron's methodology chapter contains a subsection headed "Bracketed Experience of Researcher" (page 36) in which she states, in the first person, that she was raised Christian and working class, converted to Catholicism, spent eight years in a Benedictine religious community, worked two years in hospice, and believes the spirit continues after death, all while studying nurses' experiences of dying patients' visions. She is naming every prior belief that could shape what she hears, where a reader can check it against her findings.

Almost every methods textbook tells students to bracket their assumptions; almost no thesis shows what that looks like, and students end up writing a paragraph of throat-clearing. This is the real thing, and it takes about a page. Chapter 3 also argues its way to Husserl's descriptive phenomenology rather than announcing it. Nothing here for you if your work is quantitative.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Sherilyn L. Herron, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0.

### 34. De-escalating Aggressive Behavior in Patients at a Psychiatric Hospital in Central Massachusetts: A Quality Improvement Project.

Bright Ihesiene · Doctor of Nursing Practice, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2025 · 87 pages

**APPROACH** Quality improvement

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

**The clearest model here of what a DNP quality-improvement project actually is**, which matters because it is a different genre from a research dissertation and almost nobody explains the difference. It is not trying to discover something; it is trying to change something in one place and measure whether the change held.

Two things to copy. The intervention is driven by a named theoretical framework, Prochaska and DiClemente's Transtheoretical Model, and he walks through all six of its stages before saying how the model is applied on his units. That is the step most QI projects skip, and skipping it leaves an intervention that is a PowerPoint with no theory of why it should work. And the goals and expected-outcome sections state the target numerically before the results are in (90% of staff on two named units, within four weeks), so the results chapter has something to be judged against. He is also honest that the evidence base for de-escalation training is thin, and runs the project anyway.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Bright Ihesiene, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 35. The Mediterranean Diet & Heart Disease: Measuring Knowledge Through Provider Education

Alexa de Villier · Doctor of Nursing Practice, Family Nurse Practitioner · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2025 · 48 pages

**APPROACH** Experiment

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The one to read if no validated instrument exists for what you want to measure and you are wondering whether you are allowed to build your own. She wanted to measure provider knowledge before and after an education session, found no reliable existing measure, built a 17-item pretest and posttest from her own literature review, and then **stated plainly that "reliability and precision were not confirmed in this study"** (page 12) rather than implying the instrument was validated.

That admission is why this is here, and also why to read it critically: the sample is six providers at one practice, and the defense of the Likert scale leans on a general reliability figure from an unrelated study. Read the Measurement Instruments section for how to construct and describe an instrument, and read the results knowing six responses cannot support much. A weak study honestly reported teaches more than a strong one written up as if nothing went wrong.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2025 Alexa de Villier, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0.

## Political science

### 36. Nations After Democracy: Politics of Storytelling in South Korea and Taiwan

Eun A Jo · Ph. D., Government · Cornell University · 2024 · 320 pages

**APPROACH** Comparative case study

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Chapter 3, "Research Design" (page 39), is the model for a research design chapter that **argues** rather than describes. Jo opens by setting out what existing scholarship claims: that national unity or civic culture underpins democratic institutions, that narratives are path-dependent. Then she states her disagreement and what follows from it.

The design exists to test a claim against rivals, and the reader can see which rivals. Compare it with the Dyzenhaus entry: both are chapter 3, but his is procedural (which case, why, how far it generalizes) and hers is argumentative (what the field believes, why it is wrong, what this study does instead). Different fields want different weightings of the two, and having both here is deliberate, so read whichever your supervisor keeps asking for. It is also a usable model for a paired comparison, South Korea and Taiwan.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2024 Eun A Jo, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 37. An Intersectional Approach to American Citizenship

Adrienne Scott · Ph. D., Government · Cornell University · 2023 · 148 pages

**APPROACH** Survey, Interviews, Mixed methods

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The shortest political science entry and the most useful if you are proposing a mixed-methods design and have been asked to justify it. Scott uses archival data, closed-ended survey questions and semi-structured interviews, and the justification is one sentence doing real work: the research question **"is so analytically complex in that no one method alone can sufficiently answer it"**, followed by which method answers which part.

Most mixed-methods justifications amount to "using both gives a fuller picture", which is not an argument; this one ties each method to a specific sub-question, which is. It also carries an explicit Hypotheses section ahead of "Data and Methods", so you can see hypotheses stated before the data is described, the order that makes a quantitative chapter readable, and the one students most often invert.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2023 Adrienne Scott, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 38. The Violence of Nostalgia: Conspiracy Theorism, White Nationalism, and Restoring American Exceptionalism

Candice K Travis · Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2023 · 319 pages

How to cite primary sources on platforms that delete them: eighty-odd pages of captured, numbered, cross-referenced evidence.

**APPROACH** Digital archive, Discourse analysis

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this for **Appendices A and B** (from page 222), eighty-odd pages of screen captures from Parler, thedonald.win and 8chan, and for the paragraph at the head of each explaining the citation system: every capture has a figure number, its source platform and a describing clause; footnotes in the body cite the appendix location; longer multi-page exchanges live in named supplemental files using the same convention. This is the problem nobody teaches and a great many students now have.

Your primary sources are posts on platforms that deplatform, delete and disappear. Parler was taken offline weeks after some of this material was captured, so a URL in a footnote is worthless. Travis's answer is to capture, number, describe and cross-reference, so the evidence travels with the dissertation and an examiner can check every claim. If your data is social media or anything else ephemeral, look at this before you design your citation scheme rather than after.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2023 Candice K Travis, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 39. The Price of Redistribution: Local Markets and Agriculture in South Africa's Land Reform Program

Alex Dyzenhaus · Ph. D., Government · Cornell University · 2022 · 282 pages

**APPROACH** Case study

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

**The best answer in this collection to "it's only one case, so what can you generalize?"**, the question that stops more qualitative students than any other. Read chapter 3 from page 44. Dyzenhaus does three things in order.

He shows how the literature has treated South Africa: excluded from Africa-wide studies, paired with Brazil or the US, occasionally a single case. Then he says which camp he is in. He states the characteristics that define his case rather than the country: historical rural land inequality, state-led land reform, reform through market means. Then he defines the population of cases his theory should travel to, in three widening circles: minority settler colonies, majority settler colonies making amends to a dispossessed indigenous minority, and any state addressing rural land inequality by market redistribution, with named examples including US reparations to Black farmers, the Scottish Highland clearances and India's colonial land legacies. That is scope conditions, written out.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2022 Alex Dyzenhaus, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 40. Another Postcolonialism: Innovating Sovereignty from Below Through the Responsibility to Protect

Gabriel P Mares · Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2022 · 180 pages

**APPROACH** Political theory, Intellectual history

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

**The only work of pure political theory in the collection**, and it is here because theory students have almost nothing to model themselves on. There is no methods chapter, no data section, no participants.

That is not an omission; it is what the genre is. What stands in for a methods chapter is an explicit statement of interpretive approach: Mares invokes Collingwood's principle that to understand a proposition you must recover the question it was intended to answer, and that therefore "history precedes logic". The dissertation then does exactly that, tracing how Francis Deng's anthropological work on the Dinka of Sudan fed into the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect, and refusing the easier available story, that R2P simply grew out of 1970s human rights discourse, because the intellectual history does not support it. Read it if you are writing conceptual work and every example you have been handed is empirical.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2022 Gabriel P Mares, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## Psychology

### 41. Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Further Validation of the Trent Measure of Vicarious Trauma

Charlotte Mary Tunstall · Doctor of Clinical Psychology · University of Lincoln · 2026 · 278 pages

**APPROACH** SEM / factor analysis, Systematic review, Portfolio thesis

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The only example here of the **professional doctorate portfolio**, and if you are on a DCLinPsy, DEdPsych or DHealthPsy this is the format nobody explains properly. It is not one long thesis. It is three pieces: a systematic literature review written as a standalone publishable article, an empirical study formatted as a journal paper, and a set of structured reflexive sections behind them: a plain English summary, a critical appraisal of the study's design, and a statement of impact and dissemination. A portfolio abstract covering the whole thing and a statement of what the candidate personally contributed open the document.

Read the contents page first and you will understand the shape faster than from any handbook. The review half is done properly: PRISMA-guided, with study selection, a quality appraisal stage and study characteristics reported separately. The empirical half is a measure-validation study, which is worth reading even if you never touch a questionnaire, because of the order it reports things in: removal of invalid data, normality testing, then univariate and multivariate outliers, and only after all that the dimensionality, reliability and validity results. The housekeeping comes before the findings and is shown, not summarized. Note too that section 4.2 is called "Epistemology" and sits inside the method rather than in a separate philosophy chapter, which is how a journal-format paper handles it.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Charlotte Mary Tunstall, University of Lincoln. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 42. The Influence of Cue Generation and Working Memory on Recall from Long-Term Memory

Amanda L. Fordyce · PhD · Purdue University · 2026 · 147 pages

**APPROACH** Experiment

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The clean experimental-psychology shape, and short enough to read in an evening. There is no separate methodology chapter, because in this format each experiment carries its own: Experiment 1 has Method, Participants, Design and Materials, Procedure, then Results, and Experiment 2 follows the same pattern.

If your supervisor has said "your methods belong with each study, not in a chapter three", this is what they mean. Two details worth copying. The tasks are named and described individually under Procedure (Generation Task, Reading Span, Change Detection) rather than being bundled into a paragraph, so a reader can see exactly what a participant did and in what order. And the introduction is organized by construct rather than chronologically, splitting long-term memory and working memory each into encoding and retrieval before the two are brought together in "The Current Study", which is what makes a two-variable research question feel inevitable instead of arbitrary.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Amanda L. Fordyce, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 43. Anchoring Effects: Resolving the Contradictions of Personality Moderator Research

Lukas Röseler · Dr. rer. nat. · University of Bamberg · 2021 · 234 pages

**APPROACH** Meta-analysis, Publication-based thesis

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this if you are frightened of finding nothing. Röseler set out to work out which personality traits make people more susceptible to anchoring, ran meta-analyses across the eight most studied traits, and found no evidence for any of them.

That is the thesis. It passed, and it is more useful than most positive results, because he does not stop at the null: he argues the reason is that susceptibility to anchoring cannot currently be measured reliably, and then discusses what would have to change for the question to be answerable at all. A null result plus a diagnosis of why is a contribution; a null result plus a shrug is not, and the difference between those two things is visible on the page here. It is also worth opening if you are writing a publication-based thesis: his five research articles sit in an appendix, and the 45 pages of frame in front of them are what turn a stack of papers into a single argument. That frame is a clean model of organizing a literature before you meta-analyze it, too: he sorts the eight traits into three paths according to where the prediction came from, exploratory, general judgment and decision-making theory, or anchoring theory specifically.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2021 Lukas Röseler, University of Bamberg. Licensed under CC BY.

### 44. Predictive Language Processing in Late Bilinguals: Evidence from Visual-World Eye-Tracking

Judith Schlenter · PhD · University of Potsdam · 2019 · 267 pages

**APPROACH** Experiment

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

A model of the multi-experiment thesis, which is the standard shape in experimental psychology and one that students coming from a single-study Master's find hard to picture. Four eye-tracking experiments, each testing prediction from a different source of information: the meaning of the verb, number marking, case marking, and implicit causality. They are not four separate papers stapled together, and chapter 9 proves it with an overview table setting all four side by side against the source of information and the level of prediction each one probed.

That table is the thing to look at first: it is what a coherent program of studies looks like from above. Two practical details worth copying. The experimental items for every experiment are printed in full in the appendices, so another lab could rerun it. And the license line on the copyright page carves out quoted material from other authors, which is the correct and often-forgotten way to release your own work openly without over-claiming rights you do not hold.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2019 Judith Schlenter, University of Potsdam. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

#### 45. Word Segmentation in German-Learning Infants and German-Speaking Adults: Prosodic and Statistical Cues

Mireia Marimon Tarter · PhD · University of Potsdam · 2019 · 144 pages

**APPROACH** Experiment

##### WHY WE PICKED IT

Four numbered experiments again (nine, counting the sub-studies), but included for a different reason: experiment 1 does not answer the research question at all. It is a test of whether the method itself is reliable, the Headturn Preference Procedure used with infants, checked across three sessions before it is trusted to carry anything.

Almost nobody does this, and almost everybody should at least think about it. If your whole thesis rests on one instrument, showing that the instrument behaves is not a detour, it is the foundation. The other thing to take from it is how experiments 2, 3 and 4 are motivated: adults first, then nine-month-olds, then six-month-olds, with each study's design justified by what the previous one found rather than by a plan drawn up in advance. The write-up says so in as many words, which is how you show a reader that a program of work developed rather than simply happened.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2019 Mireia Marimon Tarter, University of Potsdam. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## Healthcare

#### 46. Depressive Symptoms Over Time Among Latine Adolescents: Protective Role of Family

Olivia A. Reyes · PhD · Purdue University · 2026 · 212 pages

**APPROACH** Longitudinal, Quantitative

##### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read this one for how to use **more than one theoretical framework without waffling**. Chapter 1 names three: Critical Race Theory with LatCrit, a Family Systems framework, and bioecological and cultural resilience models of immigrant families. Each gets its own subsection saying what job it does here: to situate the population and the structural conditions, to model the mechanism inside the family, and to place both in a migration context. Then comes the part students skip, a short "Theoretical Synthesis" section explaining how the three fit together.

Students are often told to "have a theoretical framework" and respond by naming several and using none. This shows the alternative. The background review before it is also organized well: each subsection is a claim the study depends on (depressive symptoms in Latine families, care utilization, protective familial strengths, country-of-origin differences, sex differences), so by the end of the review the variables in the analysis have already been argued for one at a time. It is longitudinal, which is the other reason to look: "over time" designs are what most students want and few see written up.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Olivia A. Reyes, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

#### 47. Understanding Survival and Suffering: An Individual-Level Joint-Burden Approach for Measuring Health Loss Among Māori and non-Māori

Shane Munn · PhD in Health · Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington · 2026 · 272 pages

**APPROACH** Health metrics, Secondary data

##### WHY WE PICKED IT

The best methodology chapter of anything added to this collection, and the best answer to "how do I write a philosophy section that is doing work". Chapter 2 sets out the major research philosophies, states the author's own, and then does the thing almost nobody does: it aligns the study to **Kaupapa Māori research** and to Mode 2 knowledge production, works through its headings "Co-Production of Knowledge", "Transdisciplinarity", "Contextualisation" and "Reflexivity and Accountability" in turn, and then has a section headed **"Critiques of Mode 2 and Study Safeguards"**.

Naming the objections to your own framework and saying what you built to answer them is the single most examiner-proof move in a methodology chapter, and here it is, in a subheading. Chapter 1 is worth reading for a different reason: it is called "The Origin of This Study" and it traces the research questions to two real prior work programs rather than pretending they emerged from a literature gap. Munn writes as Ngāti Hine and Ngāti Manu, opens with a mihi and includes a glossary of Māori terms, which is also a model of how to handle a language other than English in a thesis without either apologizing for it or leaving readers stranded. The study itself is a national retrospective cohort analysis of type 2 diabetes, so the quantitative work is substantial too.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Shane Munn, Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

#### 48. Minority Family Stress and Sexual Minority Future Family Formation Loss

Muzi Nina Li · PhD · Purdue University · 2026 · 102 pages

**APPROACH** Theory building, Quantitative

##### WHY WE PICKED IT

A **theory-building** thesis, and one of the shortest doctorates in the collection at 102 pages. Its first substantial chapter is not a literature review in the usual sense: it is a paper that develops a new model, the Minority Family Stress Model, by tracing minority stress theory from its foundations through its relational and intersectional extensions and then reconceptualizing it inside family systems theory.

If your contribution is a framework rather than a finding, this is the shape, and it shows the two things such a chapter has to do: give an honest account of what the existing theory already handles, and be specific about the gap the new model closes. Also useful as proof that a doctorate is not measured in pages. Note that it comes from a Department of Educational Studies despite the topic reading as health and family science, which is a fair reminder that the department on the title page is often a poor guide to what a thesis is about.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 Muzi Nina Li, Purdue University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 49. Depression Screening and Psychological Intervention in Pregnancy Care

Emőke Adrienn Hompoth · PhD · University of Szeged · 2020 · 90 pages

**APPROACH** Clinical study, Quantitative

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The shortest PhD thesis here and a useful antidote if you think length is the point. Ninety pages, numbered sections straight through, and the spine is plain IMRaD: introduction, objectives, material and method, results, discussion, conclusion. Three things are worth stealing.

The sample narrows in front of you in section 3.1: 4,593 women went through the screening program, obstetric data were collected for 2,118, then 26 twin pregnancies are excluded with three citations for why and 50 pregnancy losses with a stated reason, leaving 2,042. Nobody has to guess where the number came from. Section 3.2 gives the instrument, its scoring, and the published cut-offs it uses, and then says the thing most people leave out: this is a screening tool, not a diagnostic one, and the word "depression" is used loosely for readability. That is a researcher fencing off an over-reading of her own results before anyone else can make it. And section 7, "New statements of the study", is the Hungarian convention of listing what is actually new in numbered form. Even if your university does not ask for it, writing one is a good test of whether you have a contribution.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 Emőke Adrienn Hompoth, University of Szeged. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 50. Understanding the Relationship Between Health Technology Reassessment and Knowledge Translation

Rosmin Esmail · PhD · University of Calgary · 2020 · 254 pages

**APPROACH** Scoping review, Delphi, Survey, Interviews

### WHY WE PICKED IT

Two reasons to open this one, and the first is the best worked example of a review chapter in the whole collection. Chapter 2 is a scoping review done properly: the protocol was registered with PROSPERO before the search (CRD42018088564), it follows Arksey and O'Malley and reports against PRISMA-ScR, it names the three databases, it says exactly how an earlier review's search was adapted and over what date range, it screens titles and abstracts with two independent investigators, and the inclusion criteria are seven numbered rules with the key term defined by citation rather than by vibe.

If you are writing a systematic or scoping review and your supervisor keeps saying "this is not replicable", read section 2.4 and copy the skeleton. The second reason is the shape of the thesis itself: it is paper-based, so chapters 2, 3 and 4 are standalone studies with their own abstracts and methods, and even chapter 1 is a published paper rather than a written-to-order introduction. Chapter 5 is a short synthesis that pulls the three studies together. Chapter 3 also shows a modified Delphi process and an international expert survey written up in full.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 Rosmin Esmail, University of Calgary. Licensed under CC BY.

## Sociology

### 51. Demographics, operational resources, and grants: Exploring urban forest management program outcomes at the municipal level in New York State

J. Rebecca Hargrave · Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) · University of Massachusetts Amherst · 2026 · 191 pages

**APPROACH** Survey, Systematic review, Secondary data, Three-essay format

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

**The clearest three-article dissertation in the collection**, and the one to open if you have been told to write one and have never seen the shape: three self-contained studies, each with its own introduction, methods, results and discussion, bound by a common question. The first article is a systematic review conducted to **PRISMA** (section 1.2, page 10), with the search strategy, the search results and the coding scheme written out: study structure variables (year, authors, sample size, methods, geography) separated from review data variables (comparators, program components, barriers, intentions).

Students are routinely asked for a "systematic" review and produce a narrative one; this shows the difference, and shows a review used as a first paper that establishes the gap the next two fill rather than as background. The second and third articles are both municipal surveys, the third combining its responses with community characteristics data, so the three together also show a review used to set up two rounds of primary data collection.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2026 J. Rebecca Hargrave, University of Massachusetts Amherst. Licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0.

### 52. Between Hegemony and Enlightenment: Unthinking the Global North-South Divide in Sociological Knowledge Production

Xuewen Yan · Ph. D., Sociology · Cornell University · 2024 · 181 pages

**APPROACH** Bibliometrics, Web scraping

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Read the Methods section (page 47) if your data does not exist in a form anybody has released, and you are trying to work out whether assembling it yourself counts as method. Yan needed the reference lists of forty years of Chinese sociology. CNKI, unlike Web of Science, does not supply reference text, so she **downloaded and OCR'd the articles**, then scraped download and citation counts off the result pages because those are displayed but not downloadable, then merged that with the official metadata.

What makes it a model rather than a war story is what follows: she states the sample of 9,250 articles, then every inclusion and exclusion with its reason. Conference summaries out, because they are not substantive. Book reviews in, because in Chinese sociology a book review is a long essay comparable to a research article. Zero-reference articles out, because citation counts jump discontinuously at one reference. Final analytic sample: 3,746. That is what "justify your sample" means.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2024 Xuewen Yan, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

### 53. Property and Indigenous State Formation in the Honduran Moskitia

Fernando Galeana Rodriguez · Ph. D., Development Sociology · Cornell University · 2021 · 430 pages

**APPROACH** Ethnography, Archival

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

The longest document in the collection and not one to read end to end. Read "**Analysis and Positionality**" (**page 48**) and stop. Galeana Rodriguez had previously worked with the World Bank and expected that to make Miskitu communities distrust him.

It did not. Instead people assumed he worked for an NGO and kept steering him into normative arguments about the property regime, so his actual difficulty was the opposite of the one he had prepared for. That alone is worth reading, because positionality is usually taught as a fixed thing you declare rather than something that behaves unpredictably in the field. Then he does the part almost nobody does: he says his positionality **set limits on the study**, and names two specific lines of inquiry he decided not to pursue because of it. Positionality connected to scope, rather than self-disclosure that changes nothing about the research.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2021 Fernando Galeana Rodriguez, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0.

### 54. Beekeeping in the Anthropocene: Theorizing Conflicts over Honey Bee Health

Eleanor Andrews · Ph. D., Development Sociology · Cornell University · 2020 · 198 pages

**APPROACH** Ethnography

#### WHY WE PICKED IT

Two conventions here that confuse students, both worth seeing done. First, **the methods are in an appendix**, "Appendix I: Plan Bee (Methods)" on page 157, not in chapter three. That is normal in a theory-led ethnography and it is not disorganization; the argument runs on theory and the methods are supporting evidence.

Second, the positionality. Andrews is not observing beekeepers, she is one: bee club officer, mentor, educator, and the writer of the curriculum for the state's Master Beekeeping program. She sets out what that access bought: beekeepers, research scientists and extension agents; a real sense of how discouraging the work is; research questions that came from the community rather than the literature. Then, without softening it, what it cost: "it has been difficult. I have had to repeatedly confront and articulate my own stance(s)" while mentoring the people she was studying. Insider research is common, and this is the honest version of writing it up.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 Eleanor Andrews, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## 55. Refining the Telescope: Addressing Two Challenges to Sociological Research in Online Social Networks

George Edward Berry · Ph. D., Sociology · Cornell University · 2020 · 201 pages

**APPROACH** Computational, Simulation

### WHY WE PICKED IT

The best model here if your work is statistical. Go to **section 3.6, "Limitations" (page 61)**.

Berry opens by naming the assumption the whole chapter rests on, that the classifier's error rate is known, then explains why it cannot be fully resolved (cross-validation estimates it but uncertainty remains; a calibrated model just moves the problem to estimating calibration accuracy), then adds the threats specific to his data: bots and inactive accounts that look like real members of a demographic group and bias the estimate. Two short paragraphs, and a reader knows exactly how far to trust the result. No apology, no "further research is needed" filler. It is also a clean example of the three-paper dissertation with per-chapter appendices, where mathematical derivations sit at the end of each chapter rather than interrupting the argument. Useful if you have been told to "put that in an appendix" and are unsure what survives in the main text.

[Read the full dissertation](#) · [Original record](#)

© 2020 George Edward Berry, Cornell University. Licensed under CC BY 4.0.

## How to use an example dissertation

An example is a map of how one study was put together, not a template to copy. These four steps get the most out of one.

- 1. Read the abstract and the contents first.** They show the shape of the whole document before you spend an hour in it.  
Recommended reading: [Dissertation and thesis structure](#)
- 2. Read the chapter you are writing next.** Look at how it opens, how it is organized under headings, and how it ends.  
Recommended reading: [How to write the methodology chapter](#)
- 3. Check the level and the field.** A doctoral thesis goes further than a master's dissertation, and fields differ in what they expect.  
Recommended reading: [What is a dissertation?](#)
- 4. Follow your own handbook over any example.** Where an example and your program disagree, your program wins.  
Recommended reading: [Every example in the collection](#)

Used this way, two or three good examples teach you more than any amount of general advice.