

Dissertation Examples: Psychology

About this document

This PDF lists 6 **psychology 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

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Psychology dissertations

1. 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](#)

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2. 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.

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3. Effect of Food Nostalgia on Memory Accuracy and Memory Confidence

Sihan Zhou · M.A., Human Development · Cornell University · 2024 · 53 pages

APPROACH Experiment, Memory task

WHY WE PICKED IT

The Master's-length psychology example, and the one to read for **a procedure written so someone could actually repeat it**. Zhou reports the session length (1.5 hours), the two interleaved tasks, the exact stimulus set (102 American and 115 Indian food images, plus a matched "foil" image per item built to the original stimulus paper's method), the twelve seconds allowed per rating, the presentation in eleven blocks of twenty with fifteen-second breaks, the ninety-second cap on writing a memory, and the five follow-up questions each memory triggered.

She also reports attrition plainly: 66 recruited, 46 analyzed after filtering invalid responses, with the exclusion criteria stated first. Replicability is a word students are told to care about; this is what it looks like as prose.

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4. 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.

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5. 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.

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6. 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.

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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.