

# Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduces the reader to the nature of the dissertation by moving the focus of attention from a broad aspect to a more specific heading. Suggested sections are described in this workbook. Other formats are acceptable as long as all the content described is included.

## Introduce your study to the reader

*(Do not use a heading for this section.)*

### **Background Reading for This Section**

None.

### **Critical Points to Address for This Section**



Begin by briefly introducing the topic of the study. For example, “The topic of the proposed study is exploring incoming college students’ level of math anxiety” or “The topic of the study is emotional intelligence and employee job satisfaction.” Also introduce the context, such as higher education, manufacturing organizations, or healthcare delivery providers.

Identify the purpose of the chapter, how it fits into the dissertation, and the organization of the chapter. Briefly preview the Chapter 1 focus. Identify the major topical areas to be covered in the chapter. End with a transitional sentence to the general statement section.

### **Considerations for Alignment**



- Alignment means congruence between and across all elements of a study, from the problem and purpose to the research questions, research method, research design, and research methodology.
- Good alignment is critical.
- The topic must be pertinent to your academic discipline and scholars and practitioners in the field.
- The topic should align with the title of the study and the intended research focus.
- The setting should align with the setting of your study.

### **Write Your Dissertation**



In your dissertation template, write your introduction section, addressing the following:

- State your introduction, including the topic and setting, the purpose of the chapter, and an overview of the contents.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Introduction

\_\_\_\_\_ Introductory paragraphs introduce the general topic area.

## General Statement

*(This heading may also be called Background of the Study.)*

### **Background Reading for This Section**

Chapter 2, Sections 2.1–2.3, in the *Field Guide*

### Critical Points to Address for This Section



In this section, explain why the proposed study is of important social concern, important theoretical interest, or both. The topic must be pertinent to your academic discipline and to scholars and practitioners in the field. Provide sufficient information to place in context the problem that drives the need for the study. Demonstrate the importance of the problem and its impact.

Discuss pertinent evidence and literature that support the need for or the purpose of the study. Include only those references that provide the historical and current framework for the problem statement. Do not present a comprehensive literature review in this section.

### Considerations for Alignment



- The problem and context must be pertinent to your academic discipline and to scholars and practitioners in the field.
- The importance of the problem should align with the general and specific problems in the problem statement.
- The evidence and literature presented should align with the problem.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the general statement, addressing the following:

- Explain why the proposed study is of important social concern, important theoretical interest, or both.
- Place in context the problem that drives the need for the study.
- Discuss pertinent evidence and literature that support the need for or purpose of the study.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### General Statement [or Background of Study]

\_\_\_\_\_ Describes a practical problem and the need for it to be addressed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Supports the existence and impact of the practical problem with documentation.

## Statement of the Problem

### ***Background Reading for This Section***

Chapter 2, Sections 2.1–2.9, in the *Field Guide*

### Critical Points to Address for This Section



In this section, articulate and document an important research problem worthy of study in your discipline. First, identify and describe the general problem in the discipline that supports the need to conduct the proposed research. Support the existence of the general problem with recent sources (published in the last two to three years).

Next, identify, describe, and document the specific research problem that drives the need for the specific research focus. Back the specific problem with recent sources. Describe and document the problem's impact in terms of negative consequences or adversity, using recent sources. Make sure that your general and specific problems are clearly articulated and documented.

*(Cont.)*

## Critical Points to Address for This Section (cont.)



Your general and specific problems must be congruent with the type of study you are proposing. The nature of the specific problem will influence the choice of research method and research design, which must be appropriate to address the problem. Provide a brief statement explaining how leaders, practitioners, or others might use the results of the study to address the specific research problem.

## Considerations for Alignment



- The general and specific problems are important to and worthy of study in the discipline.
- The specific problem must align with the proposed research method and research design.
- The specific problem must align with the focus of the purpose and the research questions.

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment



Creswell, J. W. (2012). Identifying a research problem. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (p. 8). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Chapter 2: Identifying a research problem. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 58–78). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). Chapter 2. The problem: The heart of the research process. In *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th ed.) (pp. 27–41). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Poblette, P., & Abbott, T. (n.d.). *Problem statements* [PowerPoint presentation]. Retrieved from the Purdue Online Writing Lab, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/957/02/>

Schram, T. H. (2006). Chapter 2: Engaging problem and purpose. In *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 21–38). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the problem statement, addressing the following:

- Describe and document a general problem in the discipline. Describe and document a specific research problem that the research will address.
- Briefly explain how the results of the study could be used to address the specific research problem.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Statement of Problem

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identifies a general research problem that will address the practical problem. What do you want to know that you don't know (that nobody knows) that will help to solve the practical problem?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Focuses in on a specific research problem that the study proposes to address
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Clearly and logically demonstrates how the focus of the study is an important problem, worthy of study.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Impact of the research problem is fully documented and supported.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Discusses how the research study represents a unique approach to the research problem, adds to the research literature, and contributes to practice in the field.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Explains how the study proposes to address the specific research problem.

## TIPS

### from the Research Review Board

- Articulate your research problem clearly, and ensure that it is an important problem worthy of study.
- Make sure your research problem aligns with your research purpose, method, and design.
- Identify a general problem in the discipline that supports the need to conduct the proposed research, and describe a specific research problem that the research will address, backed with recent sources.
- Briefly explain how the results of the study could be used to address the specific research problem.

# Purpose of the Study

## ***Background Reading for This Section***

Chapter 4, Sections 4.1–4.7, in the *Field Guide*

### **Critical Points to Address for This Section**



The purpose of the study is what exactly will be studied and how in order to address the specific problem that drives the research. The purpose statement is a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study. In one brief paragraph, you will provide a succinct statement that identifies the research method, the research design, the research focus, the specific population, and the geographic location of the study. Your research objectives form the foundation of your purpose.

Align your purpose with the study research method and research design. For a quantitative study, the purpose must specify intent to examine either (a) the relationship(s) between two or more variables, (b) differences in one or more dependent variables between two or more groups formed by one or more independent variables, or (c) the effect of a treatment or intervention on one or more outcomes (dependent variables). The purpose should also identify the specific quantitative research design proposed, consistent with the stated research intent.

For a qualitative study, the purpose must specify intent to explore or describe a central phenomenon, bounded situation, or other items of interest, consistent with the proposed research design. Identify the research approach, such as case study, phenomenology, Delphi, grounded theory, and so on. When applicable, identify the specific type of case study, phenomenological study, or Delphi design.

For a mixed methods study, the purpose must reflect the two phases (sequential or simultaneous) of the research and their ordering, consistent with the proposed type of mixed method design. Identify the specific type of mixed methods design, such as explanatory, exploratory, or triangulation.

### **Considerations for Alignment**



- The purpose must address the specific problem and the knowledge gap identified in the importance of the study section.
- The purpose must be appropriate to generate new information to address the problem and contribute to filling the knowledge gap.
- The purpose must be congruent with the proposed research method and research design.
- The purpose must be consistent with the research objectives and research questions (and hypotheses, if used).

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment



- Creswell, J. W. (2012). Specifying a purpose for research. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (p. 9). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). Chapter 4: Specifying a purpose and research questions or hypotheses. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 109–110). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Purpose statement. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://apps.fischlerschool.nova.edu/toolbox/Dissertation/Handouts/The%20Purpose%20Statement%20Handout%20Sep%202019%202012.pdf>
- Schram, T. H. (2006). Chapter 2: Engaging problem and purpose. In *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 21–38). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the purpose statement, addressing the following:

- Provide a synopsis of the purpose of the research. In one brief paragraph, identify the research method, the research design, the specific research focus based on the research objectives, the specific population, and the geographic location of the study.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Purpose of the Study

- \_\_\_\_\_ Provides a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Connects the Purpose of the Study as addressing the specific research problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Includes a single-sentence purpose statement that succinctly describes the focus, methodology, population, and geographical location of the study.  
*Ex: The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the experience of Generation X women in the Los Angeles area who desire to obtain their first executive position in the financial services industry.*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Briefly defines and delimits the specific area of the research.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Foreshadows the hypotheses to be tested or the questions to be raised as well as the importance of the study.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clearly identifies and defines the central concepts or ideas of the study.

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Identifies the unit of analysis in the study.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Justifies the general method of inquiry used in the study: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method.

### For a quantitative study:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Specifies at least two variables and a conjectured relationship between them to describe what will be studied.

### For a qualitative study:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identifies the phenomenon, situation, or factors of interest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indicates and justifies which qualitative methodology will be used.

### For a mixed methods study:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Identifies the specific type of mixed method design—explanatory, exploratory, or triangulation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reflects whether the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study are sequential or simultaneous.

## TIPS

### from the Research Review Board

Purpose is clear and aligned with the research problem. The research method, design, population, and geographic location are clearly identified.

## Importance of the Study

### ***Background Reading for This Section***

Chapter 3, Sections 3.2–3.9, in the *Field Guide*

## Critical Points to Address for This Section



In this section, address the importance of the study, which differs from the importance of the problem. Whereas the importance of the problem pertains to why the problem is an important social concern or of important theoretical interest in the discipline, the importance of the study pertains to the potential contribution of your study to knowledge and practice. Thus, the importance of the study will focus on how the results of your study might address the problem and make an original contribution to the field.



## Critical Points to Address for This Section



First, explain how your study is a unique approach to the problem compared to existing published research on the topic. Briefly describe the focus of published research, backed with citations. Identify the scholarly knowledge gap—what is currently unknown, based on a review of the scholarly literature. Describe how the proposed study differs from, will extend published research, or both, and how the findings of the proposed study may contribute to addressing the knowledge gap. Use tentative language, as you do not know what your results will reveal.

Next, describe the potential contribution of your study to practice and the potential implications of the findings. Describe any practical knowledge gap your study may address. Explain how practitioners in the field might use the results of the proposed study to address the problem.

## Considerations for Alignment



- The potential contribution of the study must match the focus of the specific problem and the research purpose.
- The knowledge gap must align with the new knowledge your study may generate.
- The potential results should not exceed the scope of the proposed research.

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment



Creswell, J. W. (2012). A definition of research and its importance. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 3–6). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). Chapter 2. The problem: The heart of the research process. In *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th ed.) (pp. 44–45). Boston, MA: Pearson.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the purpose statement, addressing the following:

- Describe how the study represents a unique approach to the problem compared to published research.
- Identify any knowledge gaps to be addressed by the proposed research.
- Describe how the results may contribute to theory, practice in the field, or both. Describe the potential implications of the research.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Importance of the Study

- \_\_\_\_\_ Answers the following in a logical, explicit manner:
- \_\_\_\_\_ What is the importance of this research?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ What will it contribute to theory and practice in the student's field of specialization?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ What are implications of the research?

### TIPS

#### from the Research Review Board

- Describe the importance of the proposed research, including how the study represents a unique approach to the problem, how the results may contribute to theory or practice in the field, and what the implications of the research are.
- Identify any knowledge gaps to be addressed by the proposed research.

## Theoretical [or Conceptual] Framework

### *Background Reading for This Section*

Chapter 9, Section 9.1, in the *Field Guide*

### Critical Points to Address for This Section



In this section, place your study in the context of its theoretical or conceptual framework. Quantitative research is theory-driven, whereas qualitative research typically contributes to theory development. Thus, the research method for your study will influence whether you construct a theoretical or a conceptual framework for your research.

If your study research method is *quantitative*, you will need to identify and provide a brief overview of the major theory or theories that support the variables you will examine and the hypotheses you will test. You will also need to describe the germinal and current research about the theory or theories and variables most pertinent to your study. If you are proposing a mixed methods study that involves hypothesis testing, you will provide

(Cont.)

## Critical Points to Address for This Section (cont.)



the information described in this paragraph as it pertains to the quantitative phase of your study. Support the theory or theories with citations of foundational sources.

If your study research method is *qualitative* or *mixed methods*, you will need to develop and present the conceptual framework for your study. The conceptual framework will consist of the concepts most closely connected to the situation or phenomenon of interest. The framework will also include the most pertinent germinal and current literature about the situation or phenomenon and the study population and setting.

If applicable, you may also identify one or more theories pertinent to your topic, keeping in mind that while qualitative research may contribute to existing theories, it is not theory-driven. If your study has an explicit purpose of theory generation, typical to grounded theory studies, explain why existing theories are inadequate to explain the situation or phenomenon of interest. If your study is phenomenological, discuss the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology.

Regardless of the type of study, the theoretical or conceptual framework should focus only on the most pertinent germinal and current literature that places your study in context. This section should not contain an exhaustive review of the literature. Be sure to incorporate citations throughout the discussion.

## Considerations for Alignment



- The research method and the framework (theoretical or conceptual) must match.
- The theories must be congruent with the variables (quantitative/mixed methods).
- The concepts must be congruent with the situation or phenomenon of interest (qualitative).
- The literature reviewed must pertain to the variables or to the situation or phenomenon of interest.

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment



Maxwell, J. A. (2011). Chapter 3. Conceptual framework: What do you think is going on? In *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.) (pp. 39–72). Retrieved from [http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/48274\\_ch\\_3.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/48274_ch_3.pdf)

Ravitch, S. M., & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason & rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schram, T. H. (2006). Chapter 4: Constructing a conceptual argument. In *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 58–73). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the theoretical or conceptual framework, addressing the following:

- Identify and briefly describe the theory or theories that support your study variables and hypotheses (quantitative/mixed methods). Briefly describe the germinal and current research about the theory or theories and variables most pertinent to your study.
- Identify and briefly describe concepts most closely connected to the situation or phenomenon of interest (qualitative/mixed methods). Provide an overview of the most pertinent germinal and current literature about the situation or phenomenon and the study population and setting.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Theoretical [or Conceptual] Framework

- \_\_\_\_\_ Places the study within a particular theoretical area in the field under investigation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Situates the study among other research studies within the theoretical area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Briefly summarizes enough relevant research literature (historical, seminal, and current) to situate and justify the study based on its contribution to the existing body of research, referencing the more detailed discussions in Chapter 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Articulates the theoretical base (quantitative only) or the conceptual framework (qualitative only) to show connection to a certain body of literature (mixed method—address both theoretical and conceptual framework.).

## Research Questions and Hypotheses

*(If you are not using hypotheses, delete “and Hypotheses” from the heading.)*

### **Background Reading for This Section**

Chapter 5, Sections 5.1–5.8, in the *Field Guide*

Chapter 6, Sections 6.1–6.8, in the *Field Guide*

## Critical Points to Address for This Section



In this section, present your research questions (and hypotheses, if used). The research method and research design will determine the type and form of the research questions and the appropriateness of hypothesis testing. You will also support the focus of the research questions (hypotheses) with a brief discussion.

For a qualitative study, you will have one or two central research questions pertaining to the situation or phenomenon of interest. You may have several research subquestions pertaining to different aspects of your research purpose. Hypothesis testing is not appropriate in qualitative research.

For a quantitative study, you may have one or more purely descriptive research questions. Purely descriptive research questions are not sufficient for a quantitative study. Rigorous quantitative research involves research questions pertaining to measurable associations or differences and testable hypotheses corresponding to the research questions.

In a correlational study, you will have one or more associative research questions, along with a null and alternative hypothesis pair for each associative research question. If your study is comparative or ex post facto, you will have one or more comparative research questions pertaining to between-group differences, along with a null and alternative hypothesis pair for each comparative research question. If your study is a type of experiment, you will have one or more research questions pertaining to the effect of the treatment (intervention) on one or more outcomes, and hypotheses pertaining to between-group (e.g., treatment vs. control) comparisons, within-group (pre-test–post-test) comparisons, or both.

If your study is sequential mixed methods, you will have research questions corresponding to the two phases of your study and their ordering. If your study will involve application of a triangulation mixed methods design, you may have separate quantitative and qualitative research questions and you will need at least one research question addressing convergence of the findings between the two phases. If your mixed method study will involve hypothesis testing, you will write hypotheses to align with any quantitative research questions pertaining to testable associations or differences.

Briefly explain how answering the research questions will address the problem, research objectives, and purpose of the study. Support the focus of the research questions (hypotheses, if appropriate) with citations from the literature. Briefly explain how answering the research questions will address the knowledge gap in the literature. The knowledge gap should match the knowledge gap you identified in the Importance of the Study section in Chapter 1 and will present in the literature review in Chapter 2.

## Considerations for Alignment



- Research questions must inform the gaps identified in the literature.
- The potential answers to the research questions must contribute toward addressing the problem and achieving the research objectives.
- The focus of the research questions must address the purpose.
- The research questions must be broad and open-ended.
- The research questions must match the research method and the research design.
- In a qualitative study, the research questions must pertain to the situation or phenomenon of interest.
- In a quantitative study, one or more research questions must pertain to either testable associations or predictive relationships between two or more variables, testable differences within or between groups, or the effect of a treatment on one or more outcomes. For each of the research questions pertaining to association, differences, or effect, write a testable null and alternative hypothesis pair. The null and alternative hypotheses must match each other in terms of focus and directionality or lack thereof.
- In mixed methods studies, the research questions (and hypotheses, if used) must match the ordering of the sequential or simultaneous qualitative and quantitative phases.
- Research questions (and hypotheses) must be consistent across chapters.

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment



- Creswell, J. W. (2012). Chapter 4: Specifying a purpose and research questions or hypotheses. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 109–139). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., Klassen, A. C., Plano Clark, V. L., & Smith, K. C. (2011). *Best practices for mixed methods research in the health sciences*. Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health.
- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). Stating the hypotheses and/or research questions. In *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th ed.) (pp. 39–41). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Schram, T. H. (2006). Chapter 5: Forming research questions. In *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 74–91). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Tashakkori, A., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). Exploring the nature of research questions in mixed methods research [Editorial]. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(3), 207–211.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the research questions, addressing the following:

- List your research questions (and subquestions, if used), using research convention. If your study will involve hypothesis testing, list your null and alternative hypotheses for each research question pertaining to measurable relationships, differences, or effect.
- Support the focus of the research questions with citations from the literature. Justify the alignment of the research questions (and hypotheses, if used) to the research objectives, purpose, and the knowledge gap.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Research Questions [and Hypotheses]

- \_\_\_\_\_ Clearly presents specific research questions and sub-questions to be addressed, referencing the more detailed discussions in Chapter III.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Includes research hypotheses for each research question and sub-question (quantitative only).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Includes research questions that are identified for the qualitative and quantitative phases (mixed method only).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Questions and hypotheses are elaborated on in a discussion format, not simply listed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Connects the research questions to the Statement of Purpose, showing how these questions will address the goals of the study.



### from the Research Review Board

- Present specific research questions to be addressed, consistent with the proposed research method and design. If hypotheses are applicable, make sure the stated hypotheses are clear and testable.
- If hypotheses are included, make sure they align with the research questions and that they are testable.

# Overview of Research Design

## ***Background Reading for This Section***

Architecture map (quantitative)

Decision tree (qualitative)

Chapter 7, Sections 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.8, and 7.9, in the *Field Guide*

Chapter 8, Sections 8.1–8.5, in the *Field Guide*

Chapter 11, Sections 11.1 and 11.4, in the *Field Guide*

Chapter 12, Sections 12.1 and 12.3, in the *Field Guide*

*Qualitative*: Section 7.5

*Quantitative*: Section 7.6

*Mixed methods*: Sections 7.3 and 7.7

## **Critical Points to Address for This Section**



In this section, provide an overview and justification of the proposed research method and research design for your study. Provide adequate detail to reflect your understanding of the nature of the chosen method and design and their appropriateness to your study, keeping in mind that you will provide an elaborate description and justification of these choices in Chapter 3. You will also provide a brief overview of the proposed population and sampling technique, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Back all choices with major and foundational sources.

First, provide a brief description and overview of the proposed qualitative method, quantitative method, or mixed methods. Justify the appropriateness of your choice to address the research problem, achieve the research purpose, and answer the research questions, test hypotheses, or both.

If your method is qualitative, demonstrate your understanding of how the qualitative research method supports inductive inquiry about a problem or situation. Describe how the problem that drives your research indicates the need for a qualitative investigation in order to generate information to resolve the problem. Explain why a qualitative study is most appropriate.

If your method is quantitative, demonstrate your understanding of how the quantitative research method supports measuring variables using numeric data, describing variables statistically, and examining statistical relationships and comparisons using analytic techniques. Describe how the problem that drives your research indicates the need for a quantitative investigation in order to generate information to resolve the problem. Explain why a quantitative study is most appropriate.



## Critical Points to Address for This Section (cont.)



If your method is mixed, demonstrate your understanding of the nature of mixed methods research as a single study with two interrelated phases, either sequential or simultaneous. Describe how the problem that drives your research indicates the need for a mixed methods investigation in order to generate information to resolve the problem. Explain why a single method study would be inadequate and why choosing mixed methods is most appropriate.

Describe how the proposed method is congruent with the purpose of your study. Explain why conducting a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods study will support achieving the research purpose. Avoid circular reasoning. Instead, explain how the nature of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research, as described in Sections 11.1, 12.1, and 7.3 of the *Dissertation Field Guide*, aligns with the information needed to achieve the purpose of your study. Draw connections between the aspects of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods research described in the table and the aspects of your study purpose.

Briefly describe the specific population and the sampling technique. Identify the instrumentation, such as a questionnaire with a Likert-type scale, a known psychological assessment, or an interview protocol. Provide a brief overview of the proposed data collection techniques, such as online survey, semi-structured individual interviews, or observations. Provide an overview of the plan to analyze data. Do not provide detail on these methodological decisions, as you will cover these in Chapter 3.

Once you have established the rationale for your chosen method, you will turn your focus to the specific research design within that method. If your method is qualitative, you will describe and justify the decision to use a particular qualitative research design, such as case study, narrative inquiry, Delphi, phenomenological, or grounded theory. You will also identify and justify a specific type of approach within that design, if applicable. Provide an overview and justification of the proposed qualitative research design. Describe the nature of research conducted with that design and how it differs from other qualitative research designs. Explain how the use of the proposed qualitative research design will address the research problem.

If your method is quantitative, describe and justify the decision to use a particular quantitative research design, such as descriptive correlational, descriptive comparative, ex post facto, experimental, or quasi-experimental. Identify and justify a specific type of approach within that design, if applicable. Provide an overview and justification of the proposed quantitative research design. Describe the nature of research conducted with that design and how it differs from other quantitative research designs. Explain how the use of the proposed quantitative research design will address the research problem.

If your method is mixed, describe and justify the decision to use a particular mixed methods research design, such as sequential explanatory, sequential exploratory, or convergent. Keep in mind that while mixed methods studies involve mixing two methods, there is just one research design—the specific mixed methods approach. Provide an overview and justification of the proposed mixed methods research design. Describe the nature of research conducted with that mixed methods design and how it differs from other

## Critical Points to Address for This Section (cont.)



mixed methods research designs. Explain how the use of the proposed mixed methods research design will address the research problem.

Regardless of the research method, you will need to describe how the specific research design within that method is congruent with the purpose of your study. Explain why conducting a study using that specific research design will support achieving the research purpose. Avoid circular reasoning. Instead, explain how the nature of research with that research design, as described in Chapter 7 of the *Dissertation Field Guide* and in the sources you've been reading, aligns with the information needed to achieve the purpose of your study. Draw connections between the specific research design and your study purpose. Next, explain the congruence between your research questions and the nature of that research.

## Considerations for Alignment

- The research method must be appropriate to address the specific problem that drives the research focus.
- The research design within that method, and the specific type of approach to that design, where pertinent, must be appropriate to address the specific problem that drives the research focus.
- The research method, the research design within that method, and the specific type of approach to that design, where pertinent, must be congruent with the research purpose and the form of the research questions.

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment

Black, T. R. (1999). *Doing quantitative research in the social sciences: An integrated approach to research design, measurement and statistics*. London, England: Sage Publications.

Cozby, P. C., & Bates, S. (2015). *Methods in behavioral research* (12th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Part III: Research designs. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (pp. 293–595). Boston, MA: Pearson.

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## Suggested Resources for Enrichment (cont.)



- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2008). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
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- Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). Part IV: Quantitative research methodologies. In *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th ed.) (pp. 184–309). Boston, MA: Pearson.
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- Plano Clark, V. L. (2010). The adoption and practice of mixed methods: U.S. trends in federally funded health-related research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*(6), 428–440.
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- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Vogt, W. P. (2007). *Quantitative research methods for professionals*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the methodology selected, addressing the following:

- Identify and describe the research method.
- Justify the research method.
- Identify and describe the research design.
- Justify the research design.
- Demonstrate that the research method and the research design derive logically from the problem statement and are appropriate to achieve the purpose and answer the research questions.
- Provide a brief overview of the proposed population and sampling technique, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.
- Support your methodological decisions with major and foundational sources.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Overview of Research Design

- Briefly describes the general methodology and design, including data collection method, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis, with references to more detailed discussions in Chapter 3.
- Shows how the particular research design is the most appropriate to address the goals of the study.



### from the Research Review Board

- Provide sufficient detail about your research design, and make sure it aligns with the purpose statement.
- Present your description and explanation with the rigor that is appropriate to doctoral-level research.

## Definition of Terms

### ***Background Reading for This Section***

Chapter 11, Section 11.2, in the *Field Guide*

Chapter 12, Section 12.2, in the *Field Guide*

## Critical Points to Address for This Section (cont.)



In this section, define important terms pertaining to your study that may otherwise have multiple meanings. The definitions should clarify the uniqueness of the term regarding its use in the context of your study or the pertinent literature. Support all definitions with citations.

Define any technical terms that the reader needs to know in order to understand their meaning. Also define key constructs or variables, as you will use and measure them in your study. If you will use an instrument to measure a given variable or construct, identify the instrument. If you will collect archival data, define each variable as it was measured in the existing data set.

## Considerations for Alignment



- Definitions should focus on only those terms pertinent to your study focus, setting, population, constructs, or variables.
- The definition of each term must be congruent with how the term is used in your study and how it will be measured.
- Do not define common research terminology, widely understood terms in the academic field, or other terms not used in a unique way in your study.

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment



Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). Defining terms. In *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th ed.) (pp. 43–44). Boston, MA: Pearson.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on the definition of terms, addressing the following:

- Define terms used in a unique way in the study, including technical terms, constructs, and variables (quantitative or mixed methods). Each definition should clarify the uniqueness of the term in regard to your study.
- Back up each definition with a citation.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Definition of Terms

- \_\_\_\_\_ Defines important terms as used in this study, especially those that may otherwise have multiple meanings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uses citations to support the origin of the definitions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Defines important technical terms that may be unknown to a reader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Operationalizes key variables or constructs.



### from the Research Review Board

- Make sure key variables or constructs are operationalized.

## Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

### *Background Reading for This Section*

None.

### Critical Points to Address for This Section



In this section, describe the assumptions for the research, the limitations that apply to the proposed study, and the delimitations.

First, explain the assumptions necessary to conduct the research, such as the availability of a sufficient sample, the honesty and openness of the participants, the accuracy of the instrumentation, or the quality and accuracy of archival data. Support each assumption with a rationale.

Next, describe the limitations as they apply to the particulars of your study. Limitations pertain to the weaknesses of the study that are beyond the control of the researcher, rather than to researcher-imposed restrictions. Limitations typically pertain to sampling, measurement, data collection, and analysis. The limitations will differ according to the research method and research design. For example, in a non-experimental quantitative study, the inability to measure or infer causality is an important limitation. In qualitative research, researcher bias is a notable limitation.

The final focus in this section is the delimitations. Describe the delimitations of your study—the researcher-imposed restrictions that limit the generalizability (quantitative) or transferability (qualitative) of the findings. Delimitations stem from the scope of the study in terms of who, what, where, when, and how.

## Considerations for Alignment



- Assumptions should focus only on those assumptions necessary to conduct the research.
- Assumptions should be pertinent to the proposed study methodology.
- Limitations should pertain only to weaknesses beyond the researcher's control.
- Limitations must be congruent with the proposed study methodology.
- Delimitations must be congruent with the scope of the study.

## Suggested Resources for Enrichment



Creswell, J. W. (2012). Advance limitations. In *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) (p. 199). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). Delimiting the research. In *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th ed.) (p. 43). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2013). Stating the assumptions. In *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th ed.) (p. 44). Boston, MA: Pearson.

## Write Your Dissertation



In your dissertation template, write your section on assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, addressing the following:

- Identify assumptions necessary to conduct the research. Support each assumption with a rationale.
- Describe limitations of the study.
- Describe delimitations of the study.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

\_\_\_\_\_ Describes the scope and bounds of the study (delimitations—boundaries researcher has set).

\_\_\_\_\_ Addresses major limiting factors in the study that could possibly affect the results. (If limitations are considerable, explains why the study is being conducted.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Articulates assumptions about facts that are not actually verified.

(Cont.)

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



- \_\_\_\_\_ Addresses potential weaknesses of the study.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Discusses generalizability of the study findings.



### from the Research Review Board

- Identify all important limitations and how they will be addressed.

## Summary

### *Background Reading for This Section*

None.

## Critical Points to Address for This Section



In this section, you will summarize key points in Chapter 1. Do not present any new information. Instead, present brief summaries of the information presented throughout the chapter, backed with citations where appropriate.

Briefly summarize the following information: the specific problem, the purpose and importance of the study, the theoretical or conceptual framework, the focus of the research questions, the research method and design, and the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. End the summary with a transition to Chapter 2. Preview the focus of the literature review.

## Considerations for Alignment



- The summary must match the information presented in the chapter.
- The summary should not contain any new information.
- The focus of Chapter 2 previewed in the summary should match the focus described at the beginning of Chapter 2.



## Write Your Dissertation (cont.)



In your dissertation template, write your summary section, addressing the following:

- Summarize key points from Chapter 1 pertaining to the specific problem, the purpose and importance of the study, the theoretical or conceptual framework, the focus of the research questions, the research method and design, and the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.
- End with a transition to Chapter 2 and its focus.

*Remember: Ensure that your writing is cohesive. The ideas should flow logically and with appropriate transitions between sentences.*

## Self-Check Your Work Against the *Dissertation Handbook*



### Summary

- \_\_\_\_\_ Summarizes key points of the study.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gives an overview of the content of the remaining chapters in the study, bridging to Chapter 2.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conforms to the recommended length of 15 to 25 pages for Chapter 1