

Dissertation Analysis

Your Name

By Ken Yan Wong, PhD

Your Name

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How to read this document

Summary

This summary reflects the information that your readers are actually understanding from your writing. It is a great opportunity for you to double check if you are indeed successful at conveying the information that you intended. Also, you get to see any issues with the flow of logic within your own writing.

Comments

These comments refer to what is good about your writing and the issues are within this chapter. These comments are developed from the perspective of an academic researcher who does not have specialist knowledge about your field. This is more likely than not the same profile of your markers.

Some things that I look out for when I reviewed your dissertation:

1. Clarity: whether you have been able to convey complex ideas in a convincing and understandable way for an academic
2. Flow: whether you have been able to demonstrate the ability to convey your thought process and whether your writing flows logically between paragraphs and sections
3. Coherence: Whether the ideas and claims made in this chapter are coherent and in accordance with the stance that you are taking. I will also make note of any contradictions in your writing.

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4. Quality: I will make note of the depth of analysis and synthesis as well. And whether you have demonstrated the appropriate level of thought.

Recommendations

These recommendations are to fix the issues raised earlier and also to further improve the chapter in general. I will make these as clear as possible and refer to supplementary documents as exemplars.

You are free to accept and reject all comments and recommendations as you deem suitable. This is meant to be an additional review of your work and not a replacement of supervision with your appointed tutor.

The comments and recommendations in this analysis and on the document only serve to improve your work. They are meant for you to see where the flaws are and to help you improve the way you convey your ideas. Because of this, I strive to be honest and constructive in my comments and I do not mean any insult.

Overall Analysis

SWOT Analysis of The Dissertation

Strengths

- Able to demonstrate step by step procedures clearly
- Some paragraphs are very effective particularly when they are well structured

Weaknesses

- Analysis is lacking in certain areas
- Discussion needs to be linked back to findings and referenced

Opportunities

- Make use of tables and diagrams to convey complex ideas so as to make these ideas clearer
- Adopt a uniform formatting method to make your dissertation easier to read and follow

Threats

- Language hampers the clarity of expression particularly when it comes to discussions chapters
- Lack of proper formatting affects how well the reader follows your ideas

General Comments and Recommendations

1. I will have to commend you on attempting one of the hardest methods of research available. It is very difficult to synthesise findings from 8 studies, and even more difficult when you are doing it systematically. There is a reason why systematic reviews

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sit on top of RCTs in the hierarchy of evidence. When done properly they have very strong influential power in policies and knowledge development in the field. I'm sure you have worked hard in this review and that deserves some praise!

2. You tend to use the word "value" throughout your thesis but it is not clear what this value exactly is. It is better to use the actual word. Eg. when you say "increasing their value and ability to handle issues in dentistry" in pg. 26 of the document you sent under implication for education you actually mean their ability to problem solve. Use the word "problem solve" instead of "value".
3. Formatting is an issue in this dissertation. The document is in a landscape mode, I am not sure if it was intended or is there an issue with the conversion or formatting. The reason most documents are in portrait mode is that the eyes need to travel less across the page when reading so it makes it easier to take in information. I would suggest you convert it to portrait. Some of the tables are oddly formatted in the document you sent so double check it before you submit it to your markers. I would recommend you adopt a systematic formatting method to help make reading your document more pleasing. When done properly, your reader can more easily digest the information that you are providing and they will know when you are moving to a separate point.
4. Label all your tables appropriately and consistently
5. Decide if you would like to use numbers or spell it out fully and be consistent throughout the thesis (eg. 2 or two). There may be Cardiff Uni guidelines regarding this.
6. Note your paragraph construction. You sometimes have very big paragraphs that have many points made in them. This is hard to digest for a reader and I find myself rereading it several times to take in all the information. As a general rule, every point

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you are trying to make should be a separate paragraph and the other sentences should be supporting this. For example:

I like to eat apples (point). This is because apples provide me with the sugars I need throughout the day (support). Apples are also tastier than oranges in my opinion (support).

However, I hate green apples (point). They are too sour for me and they tend to have thicker skin that gets stuck between my teeth (support).

7. Explain all your abbreviations used the very first time you use it. Your markers will not read the papers that you have selected so they would not know. If you find yourself using many abbreviations, it might be worth having a page titled "List of abbreviations" at the start of the dissertation.
8. Without looking at the search strategy chapter and reflections chapter, I believe you may have some word count problems. If you are struggling in this area, you can make use of appendices to place less important information like details of other data extraction tools that you have not used and your justifications for not using them etc. Remember to signpost your reader to the appendices just so the reader knows you have addressed them.
9. Particularly for the synthesis and discussion chapters think of using diagrams and tables to assist you in conveying your ideas more clearly.

Chapter 1

Summary

This chapter is a background chapter that explains the key terms within this systematic review. Dentistry education has developed over the years with new educational frameworks created to guide educators. Critical thinking and concept learning are 2 of the key skills important to dentistry. Simulated learning is one of the educational theories applied in dentistry but is often compared to the traditional method of teaching. Simulation is thought to develop critical thinking and concept learning. There have been 3 systematic reviews conducted in the past about the effectiveness of simulation on critical thinking. However, there is a lack of focus on how it is effective for concept learning for dentistry students.

Comments

Within this chapter, the keywords have been introduced: simulation, dentistry education, critical thinking and concept learning. The required content is in there, however, there are some areas which are lacking and some issues in relation to the way the chapter was introduced and concluded.

Firstly, this chapter opened with a lot of confusion over the terms Meta-analysis and systematic review which got me very concerned, thankfully the word meta-analysis was never used in the rest of the chapters. I got the sense that you thought that meta-analysis and systematic reviews are the same things which is incorrect and is the main source of confusion which will cost you some marks. I would suggest you re-read Polit and Beck's book again for clarification. To put it in simple terms, it is useful to think of a literature review as having 2

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components to it: a search and a synthesis of selected literature. A different combination of these synthesis and search methods will result in different forms of reviews

Secondly, by the end of the chapter, I still did not know what the review actually is about. It is useful to let your readers know early on what your review is about so that they know where you are going with all the background information presented. At present this is not clarified until Chapter 2. Do not keep your readers guessing.

Thirdly, this gap in the literature is not clear. From your writing, there are many systematic reviews about simulation done about concept learning but you have not told why you still decided to include critical thinking as a focus. It is only until chapter 2 when I realised that you are conducting you are considering literature between 2013-2017 and I inferred that you are adding to the findings of these systematic reviews. Additionally, there was no explanation about why problem-solving is worth exploring. Only the lack of focus on knowledge was explained. But still, that is not very clear either.

On the topic of knowledge, there is a reason why systematic reviews tend to shy away from this topic. Knowledge is remarkably hard to define because it covers everything from factual or propositional knowledge like “the sky is blue” to human understanding of the world. Knowledge itself is a philosophical study we call epistemology. In relation to healthcare, there are many heavily philosophical writings that deal with what knowledge means for professionals. For example, Carper’s taxonomy of knowledge for nurses include more than just factual knowledge (empirical) and include aesthetic, personal, ethical knowledge as part of nursing practice. See: http://samples.jbpub.com/9780763765705/65705_CH03_V1xx.pdf

You will need to be very clear what knowledge actually means in this study. Is it knowledge about cancer for example or the knowledge about how to intubate (these forms of knowledge

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are different as well). In the later chapters, you mention declarative, argumentative knowledge etc. You will have to explain what these mean early on if this is indeed the area you want to focus on in your review.

Recommendations

1. "Meta-analysis" needs to be taken out from the introduction chapter because it is causing confusion. I did wonder if you mean that this background chapter is a narrative review of the topic and you are conducting a systematic review to supplement this. In this case, you will need to look at the way you are expressing the first paragraph of this chapter as it currently does not convey this message. I wonder if it is worth talking about meta-analysis at all because the title of the chapter already says "background" and the term "meta-analysis" is quite confusing when discussed alongside "systematic review"
2. Just a suggestion for further improvement, the theory of PBL seems to be glossed over, I think it is worth explaining the models of simulated learned that have been developed and how critical thinking and concept learning plays a part in simulation. Also, it will be good if you can show examples of how simulation is being conducted in addition to discussing the theoretical side of it. This is of course if you have the word count for it or place it in the appendices.
3. State clearly that this systematic review focuses on the effectiveness of simulation for developing critical thinking and concept learning in nursing education.
4. Explain the gap that resulted in your focus on critical thinking and problem solving
5. Define the type of knowledge you are interested in. Are you referring to skills such as extracting a tooth? Or facts about oral cancer? Or even both?

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6. I would recommend you move all the justifications for quasi-experimental studies, bias, and other methodological justification to your protocol chapter, keep chapter 1 simple and to the point: give your reader a background understanding of simulation.

Prioritisation

There are some things that I would recommend you change as a matter of urgency.

High Priority

1. The confusion between meta-analysis and systematic reviews need to be corrected especially since it is the first paragraph your markers read.
2. The weakness of this dissertation lies in the discussion strength. At present, you have talked at length about the findings of your systematic review but you have not yet pushed it far enough for your reader to learn about the significance of these findings. On the document between pages 75-85, I have indicated where you can further analyse your findings. Remember, your discussions need to be an extension of your findings, not an issue that is relevant so always link your discussion back to your findings.
3. You need to be more specific about what knowledge means. Considering this is one of the measures you are using for your thesis, this needs to be unambiguous to the reader or it will severely damage your arguments.

Lower Priority

1. Formatting is a simple and quick way of getting your message across easier. Your markers will be reading 5-10 dissertation on ends so your job is to make it as pleasant as possible to read your dissertation. Use a uniform font size, sort out the labelling of your headings, standardise your table numbering format etc. The less messy it is the more comfortable it is for your reader to follow your thoughts. Additionally, formatting gives your readers subliminal cues when you are changing directions or

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elaborating a point. It is a very good way to handhold your reader through the dissertation

2. While you have discussed simulation in the first chapter, you seem to have glossed over some canonical works. You might want to consider writing a section about these influential works. You should be at least acknowledging their contribution. While the latest research is important, these will not be possible without the foundations set by these academics.
3. Consider using some diagrams to illustrate your points in the discussions particularly. You will be discussing complex concepts and the reader needs to be able to see the relationships clearly. This also reduces the need for you to write too much about them which will certainly aid in the accuracy of your ideas.
4. You need to write more about the robustness of the studies. Looking at the example Popay gave, they rated each study from low to high in relation to their individual trustworthiness, relevance, appropriateness and weight they lend to the synthesis. This is quite a rigorous way of assessing robustness. Note that this assessment of robustness pertains to the synthesis, not the whole review. So the focus should be on the nature of the studies that you have selected and how well they related to each other to result in your synthesis, not about your search strategy, data extraction method etc.

Stand out from the rest of the students

To make your work distinctly better from the rest of your classmates you should consider going the extra mile in the following ways:

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1. You talked about how simulation learning is useful for students according to your systematic review. You can explore this further by speculating with relevant evidence how simulation can help dentist practitioners. It is impossible to separate education from practice particularly in healthcare, in fact universities train students to practice. Teaching methods that work for students would more than likely work for early career practitioners as well. By exploring this, it shows the depth of your thinking doesn't just stop at curriculum but also extends to healthcare policies and service improvement as a whole.
2. According to our preliminary meeting, you have spoken about how the consideration of bias has changed the way you thought about research methodology as a whole. I would include this revelation in your reflective chapter as well. It demonstrates your awareness of the complexity of research and it will impress your supervisors for your PhD application.
3. Explain in your recommendations chapter that you intend to take this topic further in your PhD. It shows your reader your passion for the research and that there is scope for further exploration. You can briefly describe how you intend to conduct a research about this as well.