

Thesis Guideline for Doctor of Philosophy Program in Management (International Program)

Rattanakosin International College of Creative Entrepreneurship – RICE

Of

Rajamangala University of Technology, Rattanakosin, Thailand

Introduction

Like other doctorate programs all over the world, Ph.D. Thesis is the major part of your graduation requirement. The form of thesis might vary depending on the program design and the requirement of the host countries of the destinations or particular universities. The format specified in the curriculum of Ph.D. Program in Management is “Three Essays Format” which facilitates and accelerates the graduation process of the students. This “Three-Essays” format is designed to facilitate the students an opportunity to contribute to academia and communities of practice through extensive and high standard academic research. This guidelines helps you understand the idea of “Three-Essays” model of doctoral thesis and its structure.

What is “Three Essays” Thesis Model?

Instead of finishing the whole thesis and betting the graduation results on the acceptance of one final paper depicted from the thesis, three essays model consists of three publishable essays or articles produced according to the standard of well-recognized international academic-peer-reviewed journals. Depending on the editorial norms of the intended journals, each essay should be of normal journal article lengths (5,000 -10,000 words). Each of the three essays are free standings (in the sense that each can be read and understood independently) but should belong to one umbrella topics of the thesis. Highly preferably but not obligatory, they must be developed from the data used to answer the research questions. The three essays are normally preceded in the thesis by a short introduction to the overall topics which may contain essential background information. Each of the essays must be developed based on extensive literature review on both studies’ contexts and relevant disciplines.

Structure of “Three-Essay” Ph.D. Thesis

Components	Required Information
1. Cover Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name of the university - Name of the college - Title of the thesis (umbrella topics) - Year of Enrollment - Full name of the students - Full name of the supervisors - Academic year in which the thesis is presented
2. Dissertation Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Names and Signatures of your thesis committee - Name and Signature of the Program Chair - Name and Signature of the Dean/ Director
3. Acknowledgement to Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciation message intended to sponsors of the research which should include gatekeeping organizations and/or gatekeepers
4. IPR Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The agreement signed between the students and their supervisors on the intellectual property rights
5. Table of Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contents of the thesis divided into Chapters with corresponding page numbers - The content of the thesis must be divided into chapters and sections. Each section can be further divided into sub-sections. Chapters, sections and sub-sections must be enumerated into the following sequential fashion: 1,1.1,1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.2, 1,2.1, etc. - List of Tables - List of Figures
6. Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief description (Maximum length of 3 pages) of objectives, contexts of the study, theoretical frameworks, methodologies and the results of the research that synthesize the articles
7. Keywords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4-5 keywords should be listed below the abstract
8. Chapter One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction (See detailed discussion below)
9. Chapter Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literature Review (see detailed discussion below)

Components	Required Information
10. Chapter Three	- Methodology (see detailed discussion below)
11. Chapter Four	- Results (Essays with brief introduction and conclusion)
12. Chapter Five	- Discussion and Conclusion
13. Bibliography	- Complete list of works cited and referred to in the text (APA 6 th Format)
14. Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detailed information of the various aspects of the empirical research and how it is complied - Data Collection Instrument - Administrative documents that justify the ethical stances and transparency of the research such as letters to the gatekeepers - Materials and or methodology of the experiment - Weighting method - Tables with raw data - Transcription of audio material and/or video recordings

Usually, the number of chapters is five with appropriate length. These appendices are appendices to the thesis as a whole.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter maps out the whole thesis. By reading this chapter, readers and your thesis committee should understand the structure and the contour of the whole thesis. It should clearly state the persisting problems in the context communities that need explanation and solutions. Such a problem guides the rest of your thesis in terms of research problems, objectives and limitations. The structure of Chapter One should be as follows;

Components	Description
1.1. Background of the Study	Brief description of the backgrounds of the situations that contextualizes your studies while stating symptoms and/or problems that need solution in the selected social phenomena.

	<p>The specific information and problems should be backup with information from public sources with in-text and bibliographical citing at the end of the thesis.</p> <p>There should also be a discussion of published articles in peer-reviewed academic journal in the fields conducted to solve similar problems as well</p>
1.2. Significance of the Study	<p>In this section, students are to justify the importance of their thesis and the contribution of the findings to both theories and communities of practitioners</p> <p>Students may divide this section into two subsections;</p> <p>1.2.1. Theoretical significance</p> <p>1.2.2. Practical Significance</p>
1.3. Statement of Research Questions	<p>Here, students recapture the theoretical and practical significance of the study then state research questions while relating these RQs to the three planned essays. There are points that students should keep in mind when stating research questions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RQs should be interrogative sentences starting with interrogative pronouns - The answer of RQs should solve problems stated in (1.1) - RQs will govern the rest of your thesis in terms of theoretical frameworks, population (primary data), and instruments, as well as test of hypotheses
1.4. Statement of Research Objectives	<p>Research objectives must correspond to research backgrounds and research questions. They should be stated in bullet point format starting with infinitive verbs</p>
1.5. Methodology	<p>In this section, students summarize methodologies of their studies. It is preferable for them to divide the explanations of</p>

	the methodologies according to the intended three essays. The discussion should include research direction, research design, and data processing methods. This section is required for your final defense but not at the proposal defense stage
1.6. Definitions of Terms	Like the previous sub-section, definitions of key terms is required for your final defense not the proposal defense. In this part, you list key terms with discuss how you define the key terms used in your research by citing academic works of other scholars. At the end of each term, you state “operational definition” of the term which is specific to this particular study
1.7. Delimitation of the Thesis	In this section, you state the limit of generalizability of the findings of your theses in terms of geography, population groups, or observed variables.
1.8. Outline of the Thesis	Again, this part is only required during your final defense. Here, you briefly describe the structure of each chapters of the thesis
1.9. Conclusion	Here, you write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing the essence of the whole Chapter One with bridging sentences to literature review (Chapter Two)

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Governed by research questions and objectives stated in Chapter One, candidates develop extensive literature reviews with both in-text and end-text citations. It is advisable that students use bibliographical programs for these citations. Literature review grounds the theoretical framework for the thesis, based on which theoretical model is developed, hypotheses are stated, how data collection instruments are developed, and how data are analyzed and discussed. It should be kept in mind that all of the aforementioned steps of your thesis development is governed by literature reviews and literature reviews are governed by research questions and objectives.

Generally, a literature review for social science research has four components namely context(s) of the studies, parent disciplines, and immediate disciplines, and statement of theoretical model and concepts. Your Chapter Two should comprise the following components

Introduction	<p>At the beginning of the Chapter, a brief recapturing the research questions stated in Chapter One. Then, candidates are to state what the contexts of the studies and parent disciplines are.</p> <p>After completing the whole chapter, students might come back to add a brief description how this chapter would be structured.</p>
2.1. Contexts of the Study	<p>Remember that you develop the whole thesis to solve problems stated in Chapter One. Such problems always take place in a context with specific conditions. Contexts can be geographical areas, professional contexts, or certain industry, or a combination of them.</p> <p>Specific conditions of your studies always influence how the problem occurs, their severities, available options for solutions, and so on. They must, therefore, be thoroughly discussed. However, you have to depict only relevant specificities and conditions that really influence the problems and their solutions. General information can be mentioned briefly.</p> <p>Remember that, you are conducting an academic work in the “scientific communities”, therefore, every information and claims of this part must be cited from credible sources.</p> <p>When reviewing the context of your studies, you should always link the discussed factors and specific conditions to the stated problems and research questions.</p> <p>Contexts of the studies can be divided into sub-sections with numbers such as 2.1.1, 2.1.2 and so on.</p> <p>At the end of this section, you should state what theories or parent disciplines are required to answer the research questions.</p>

<p>2.2. Parent Disciplines</p>	<p>Parent disciplines referred to theories candidates and their supervisors find necessary to explain the interested social phenomena, to solve the stated problems (in Chapter One), and answer the stated research questions.</p> <p>Candidates should demonstrate to the readers of their thesis their thorough understanding of the theories by including as much as possible literatures in the field and profoundly discuss them by tackling component by components of the theories. Besides, candidates should discuss how these theories help solve the problems and answer the research questions, what their advantages as compared to other competing theories in solving similar problems are, what their possible flaws that should be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Remember to show readers and examiners that you have accessed to various sources of research papers in the field both international and local journals. Comparing and contrasting between them also make you look smarter.</p> <p>Although you should state when the disciplines emerge in the academic journals, you should, however, focus on recent papers published within the 5 years range.</p> <p>Every now and then, you should relate the parent disciplines to specific conditions of the studies' contexts and reflect how such disciplines must be adapted or interpreted within the lights of the contexts while relating back to the stated problems and research questions.</p> <p>Again, parent disciplines should be presented into sections and subsections with corresponding number. Each paragraphs and sections should have bridging sentences. Remember that you want your readers to feel that they are reading one seamless story.</p>
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2.3. Immediate Disciplines	<p>Immediate disciplines are actually the reflection of the parent disciplines within the context of the study. They usually state hypothetically how problems are understood and how research questions are answered. They also discuss variables and their respective operational definition, their relationships with other variables. By reading review on immediate disciplines, readers should be able to draw a theoretical model with hypotheses.</p> <p>Detailed and critical review of immediate disciplines also allow deeper discussion of the results in Chapters Four and Five as well. Usually, the quality of any research project depends very much on the quality of its literature review</p>
2.4.Theoretical Model and Hypotheses Statement	<p>In this part, you actually represent your immediate disciplines in a graphical format with all variables and their respective hypothetical relationships. Following the theoretical model, brief explanation of the model should be given.</p> <p>The last part of this section should be hypotheses statement (only for the quantitative part of the thesis), hypotheses should be stated. Remember that theses should be testable/falsifiable, conceptually clear, specific and brief, to the point, related to available techniques, related to a priori, consistent with your research questions and objectives, and comprehensive.</p>
2.5. Conclusion	<p>Again, the final part of this chapter should briefly recapture the essence of the chapter while bridging to the next chapter- methodology. This section should be 1-2 paragraph long.</p>

Chapter Three: Methodology

Like literature review, Methodology meticulously explains how you will conduct your theses to answer the stated questions and objectives (in Chapter One) by testing the model stated at the end of the literature review (Chapter Two). By reading this chapter, your examiners should clearly know how exactly you will test

the stated models and hypotheses. Chapter Three has two objectives. The first objective is to let readers fully understand how empirical studies are conducted. The second objective is to justify the validity and reliability of the research and its findings.

First and foremost, you need to justify the paradigm of the research to be adopted in your study by showing the brief discussion of all available paradigms (at least three must be discussed: positivism, constructivism, and critical theory). Even though you place higher weight in discussing the chosen paradigm you need to discuss all available paradigms in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology. You should state why the chosen paradigm is most suitable in answering the research questions stated in Chapter One.

As the thesis mode of Ph.D. Program in Management of RICE is “three-essay” thesis, you should list what are their tentative names which might be altered in later stages. Then after, you have to discuss the research direction, research design, data collection process, data analysis. The final part of Chapter Three should discuss the ethical considerations adopted in your specific study. The structure of your Chapter Three should be as follows

Introduction	<p>At the beginning of the Chapter, a brief recapturing the research questions stated in Chapter One and brief recapturing of theoretical framework in Chapter two should be briefly mentioned.</p> <p>After that, you should tell your readers how this chapter will be structured.</p>
3.1. Overview and Justification of Research Paradigm	<p>As you are going to graduate a Ph.D. degree, your thorough understanding of philosophical stance about your research needs to be demonstrated. Hence, you need to discuss all available research paradigms by touching the aspects of ontology, epistemology, and methodology. As you are going to choose one paradigm, you still have to discuss all available (at least three – positivism, constructivism, and critical theory) paradigms. For the unchosen paradigms, you should state why they are not appropriate for your studies and your research questions and objectives.</p>

	<p>Highest weight should be given to your chosen paradigm. Apart from discussing the three aspects of the paradigm, you should justify why it is appropriate for your stated research questions and objectives.</p>
<p>3.2. Essay One :</p>	<p>Here, you should discuss methodological issues by touching the following issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim to answer which research questions and objectives - Research Design – exploratory, conclusive (descriptive or causal design) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major Data Collection Method - Variables and their definitions and measurements. This part, you need to mention how other scholars define this particular variable. How many dimensions are there? How they relate to your interested other variables? How other scholars measure them? Then, you need to give an operational definition of your observed variables and how would you measure them (adopt, adapt from the work of other scholars or self-develop but ground from a priori of other scholars). Remember that, you must discuss all variables stated in your theoretical framework and hypotheses - Reliability and Validity issues of the scales or data collection instrument. You should discuss how you would like to ensure reliability and validity issues of your variables and their measurements. - Pilot study – Pilot study is highly recommended as it would allow you to adjust the data collection instruments to be more reliable and valid - Data Collection Administration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Target Population and their parameters – to ensure that you collect data from the sources that certainly allow you to answer the research questions. - Sampling Methods – clearly state how your samples will be recruited by referring to the sampling methods conventionally used in social science research. You should justify the choice of your method and mention the potential limitation. - Sample size – if your finite number of your targeted population cannot be determined, then the calculation of sample size must be determined by referring to the conventional sample size of similar studies - Administration of your data collection method – state clearly which method will you use, why do you choose this method and how would you do to ensure highest possible response. - Data Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you prepare your data after collection, how do you arrange the coding, and management of other statistical issues such as missing data, normal score distribution etc. - Statistical and Data Interpretation Method
<p>3.3. Essay Two :</p>	<p>Here, you should discuss methodological issues by touching the following issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim to answer which research questions and objectives - Research Design – exploratory, conclusive (descriptive or causal design) - Major Data Collection Method

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Variables and their definitions and measurements. This part, you need to mention how other scholars define this particular variable. How many dimensions are there? How they relate to your interested other variables? How other scholars measure them? Then, you need to give an operational definition of your observed variables and how would you measure them (adopt, adapt from the work of other scholars or self-develop but ground from a priori of other scholars). Remember that, you must discuss all variables stated in your theoretical framework and hypotheses- Reliability and Validity issues of the scales or data collection instrument. You should discuss how you would like to ensure reliability and validity issues of your variables and their measurements.- Pilot study – Pilot study is highly recommended as it would allow you to adjust the data collection instruments to be more reliable and valid- Data Collection Administration<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Target Population and their parameters – to ensure that you collect data from the sources that certainly allow you to answer the research questions.- Sampling Methods – clearly state how your samples will be recruited by referring to the sampling methods conventionally used in social science research. You should justify the choice of your method and mention the potential limitation.- Sample size – if your finite number of your targeted population cannot be determined, then the calculation
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	<p>of sample size must be determined by referring to the conventional sample size of similar studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration of your data collection method – state clearly which method will you use, why do you choose this method and how would you do to ensure highest possible response. - Data Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you prepare your data after collection, how do you arrange the coding, and management of other statistical issues such as missing data, normal score distribution etc. - Statistical and Data Interpretation Method
<p>3.4. Essay Three :</p>	<p>Here, you should discuss methodological issues by touching the following issues;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim to answer which research questions and objectives - Research Design – exploratory, conclusive (descriptive or causal design) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major Data Collection Method - Variables and their definitions and measurements. This part, you need to mention how other scholars define this particular variable. How many dimensions are there? How they relate to your interested other variables? How other scholars measure them? Then, you need to give an operational definition of your observed variables and how would you measure them (adopt, adapt from the work of other scholars or self-develop but ground from a priori of other scholars). Remember that, you must discuss all variables stated in your theoretical framework and hypotheses

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reliability and Validity issues of the scales or data collection instrument. You should discuss how you would like to ensure reliability and validity issues of your variables and their measurements.- Pilot study – Pilot study is highly recommended as it would allow you to adjust the data collection instruments to be more reliable and valid- Data Collection Administration<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Target Population and their parameters – to ensure that you collect data from the sources that certainly allow you to answer the research questions.- Sampling Methods – clearly state how your samples will be recruited by referring to the sampling methods conventionally used in social science research. You should justify the choice of your method and mention the potential limitation.- Sample size – if your finite number of your targeted population cannot be determined, then the calculation of sample size must be determined by referring to the conventional sample size of similar studies- Administration of your data collection method – state clearly which method will you use, why do you choose this method and how would you do to ensure highest possible response.- Data Analysis<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How do you prepare your data after collection, how do you arrange the coding, and management of other statistical issues such as missing data, normal score distribution etc.
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	- Statistical and Data Interpretation Method
3.5 Ethical Consideration	<p>As a part of scientific community, you should state how your study abide to ethical considerations. Although there are several sets of ethical considerations for social science research, we would like to recommend Bouma (2000)'s principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dignity and Respect - Literature Review - Benefits and Risks - Voluntary and Informed Participation - Public and Informative Research
3.6 Conclusion	For this part of Chapter Three, you briefly recapture the essence of the whole Chapter by referring to each section and the three essays.

Chapter Four: Results

As required by the program completion requirement, candidates must develop three publishable papers according to the statement in Chapter Three as well as the bibliographical norms of the intended academic journals. Make sure that each of the articles show empirical data. The structure of Chapter Four should be as follows;

Introduction	<p>In this section, you refer to the research questions stated in Chapter One, theoretical framework and hypotheses stated in Chapter Two, and methodologies for all three essays in Chapter Three.</p> <p>Then after , you should inform your readers when and how did you collect the data before bridging to your three essays</p>
4.1 Essay One	<p>Restate how this essay answer the intended research question. Briefly explain where and how this essay get published (or in the process of publication). What are the key findings and what should be the answer of its corresponding research questions.</p> <p>Then place the article after the brief introduction</p>

4.2 Essay Two	Restate how this essay answer the intended research question. Briefly explain where and how this essay get published (or in the process of publication). What are the key findings and what should be the answer of its corresponding research questions. Then place the article after the brief introduction
4.3 Essay Three	Restate how this essay answer the intended research question. Briefly explain where and how this essay get published (or in the process of publication). What are the key findings and what should be the answer of its corresponding research questions. Then place the article after the brief introduction
4.4. Restatement of Research Questions	In this section, you reinstate your research questions and you answer them using your empirical findings from the essays.
4.5. Conclusion	The final section of this chapter should briefly summarize the whole chapter by mentioning the essence especially your publications accepted by indexed academic peer-reviewed journals.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion

This final chapters conclude the whole study. It would be nice to briefly discuss how you answered your research questions. You should also refer back to the proposed theoretical model(s) and how they have changed after empirically tested. You should also state how your empirical findings contribute to theories and communities of practice. Hence, the structure of your Chapter Five should look as follows;

Introduction	In this section, you should briefly how your stated research questions are answered and how your research objectives are fulfilled. Three essays and their publications should also be mentioned. After that, you should state how the whole chapter should look like
5.1. Implication to Theories	In this section, you should refer back to your theoretical framework proposed in Chapter Two has been tested empirically according to the

	<p>methodologies proposed in Chapter Three. State how the models have changed and discuss the factors or possible factors derived from samples, context of the studies or the flaws you found in the previous studies. Discuss your findings in the light of the parent disciplines by both confirming and disconfirming the theories proposed by other scholars in the field or a priori. You can divide this section into subsections by parent disciplines.</p> <p>At the end of this section, you should make a brief conclusion and state that your findings contribute not only to academia but also to the industry and/or communities of practices in your field of studies as well</p>
<p>5.2. Implication to Practitioners</p>	<p>Here, you discuss how involved industries to your studies should take the findings to adjust/improve their practices. What are factors professionals should be aware of when performing different tasks? What should business operators, professional associations, public authorities should do to perform better or for a better well-being of the societies or some group of people.</p>
<p>5.3. Limitation of the study and implications of future research</p>	<p>5.3.1. Limitation of The Present Study</p> <p>In this section, you must state the scope of generalizability or applicability of your findings. These limitations might derive from the theoretical models, methodologies, samples, contexts of the studies, observability of certain variables, possible biased from methodologies and other factors, etc.</p> <p>5.3.2. Implications for Future Research</p> <p>The second half of this chapter should state how other scholars or business researchers should conduct their respective studies to lessen or overcome the limitation stated in the first half of the section. What have you missed in this particular study? Where this particular studies should be replicated?</p>

Conclusion	In this final part of the chapter and the thesis, you reinstate the essence of the chapter and the thesis in terms of answers to the stated research questions, implications to theories, and practitioners, as well as the limitation.
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