

Professional Doctorate Template (EdD/DBA)

Complete template for professional doctorates: Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), and similar applied research degrees.

TITLE PAGE

[Page number: i - Roman numerals]

[TITLE OF DISSERTATION:**

****FOCUSING ON PRACTICAL APPLICATION]**

A Dissertation in Practice

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

[University Name]

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

[DOCTOR OF EDUCATION / DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION]

by

[Your Full Name]

[Month Year]

Dissertation Committee:

[Chair Name], Chair

[Practitioner Member Name]

[Academic Member Name]

[External Practitioner Name]

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[Page number: ii]

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ABSTRACT

[Page number: iii]

Abstract

[250-350 words summarizing: problem of practice, organizational context, theoretical framework, methodology, key findings, actionable recommendations, and impact on practice. Focus on practical implications.]

Keywords: [5-7 keywords relevant to practice area]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

[Page number: iv]

Acknowledgments

[Thank dissertation committee, organizational partners, practitioners who provided access, participants, colleagues, family. Acknowledge practice sites and organizations. 1-2 pages.]

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CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

[Start Arabic numbering: Page 1]

Chapter 1: Problem of Practice

Introduction

[Opening establishes the practical problem in real-world context]

In organizational context, [description of the situation]. This situation presents challenges for [stakeholders] who [what they need to accomplish]. Despite efforts to [what's been tried], [the problem persists].

This dissertation in practice examines [specific problem] within [organization/setting]. The study focuses on [what you're investigating] to develop actionable recommendations for [practitioners].

Organizational Context

Setting and Background

[Detailed description of the organization, school, district, or business]

[Organization name/type] serves [population/market]. The organization comprises [size, structure, demographics]. Located in [geographic context], it operates within [broader context: regulatory environment, competitive landscape, educational system].

Stakeholders

Key stakeholders include:

- [Stakeholder group 1]: [Role and interest in the problem]
- [Stakeholder group 2]: [Role and interest]

- [Stakeholder group 3]: [Role and interest]

Historical Context

Understanding this problem requires examining [relevant history]. In [time-frame], [organization] implemented [initiative], which resulted in [outcome]. More recently, [recent developments].

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this dissertation is [clear, specific problem statement focused on practice].

Evidence of the Problem

Multiple sources indicate this problem's existence and severity:

- [Data source 1]: [Evidence - be specific with numbers/examples]
- [Data source 2]: [Evidence]
- [Data source 3]: [Evidence]

For example, [specific example illustrating the problem's impact].

Causes and Contributing Factors

Several factors contribute to this problem:

1. [Factor 1]: [Explanation]
2. [Factor 2]: [Explanation]
3. [Factor 3]: [Explanation]

Impact on Stakeholders

This problem affects [stakeholders] by [specific impacts]:

- Students/Employees/Clients: [Impact]
- Practitioners/Teachers/Managers: [Impact]
- Organization: [Impact including costs, outcomes, reputation]

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative/quantitative/mixed-methods study is to [action verb: explore, examine, investigate, evaluate] [what you're studying] in order to [intended outcome: develop recommendations, inform practice, design intervention].

Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. [Specific purpose 1]
2. [Specific purpose 2]
3. [Specific purpose 3]

Research Questions

Primary Research Question:

[Your main research question focused on practice implications]

Sub-Questions:

1. [Sub-question 1]
2. [Sub-question 2]
3. [Sub-question 3]

Significance to Practice

This study is significant for several reasons:

For Practitioners

Findings will help [practitioners/educators/managers] by providing [practical benefit]. Specifically, results will offer guidance on [application].

For Organizations

The research will benefit [organizations/schools/businesses] by [organizational benefit]. Recommendations will address [organizational need].

For the Field

This study contributes to [field of practice] by [contribution to professional knowledge base]. The findings may be transferable to [other contexts].

Personal Significance

As a [practitioner role], I have experienced [connection to problem]. This study addresses a challenge I have observed in [years] of practice.

Definition of Terms

[Term 1]: [Operational definition as used in this study]

[Term 2]: [Operational definition]

[Continue with all key terms relevant to practice]

Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 reviews literature on [topics], establishing the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology. Chapter 4 presents findings. Chapter 5 discusses implications and provides actionable recommendations for practice.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Conceptual Framework

[Present framework guiding your study - can be theory-based or practice-based model]

This study employs [framework name] as its conceptual foundation. [Scholar] developed this framework to explain [what it explains].

Key Components

The framework consists of [components]:

1. [Component 1]: [Explanation]
2. [Component 2]: [Explanation]
3. [Component 3]: [Explanation]

Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework

[Insert visual representation]

Application to Current Study

This framework applies to the current problem because [connection]. Specifically, it helps understand [how it helps].

Review of Research

[Organize by themes relevant to your problem of practice]

2.2.1 [Theme 1: Related to Your Problem]

Research on [theme] has examined [what's been studied]. [Scholar] found that [finding], while [Scholar] demonstrated [finding].

Key research findings:

- [Finding 1 with implications for practice] (Citations)
- [Finding 2] (Citations)
- [Finding 3] (Citations)

Implications for current study: This research suggests [implication for your problem].

2.2.2 [Theme 2]

[Continue reviewing research organized by themes]

2.2.3 [Theme 3]

[Additional themes]

Review of Practice

[This section is unique to professional doctorates - review what practitioners are doing]

2.3.1 Current Practices

Practitioners have addressed similar problems through various approaches:

Approach 1: [Description of practice approach] - **Implementation:** [How it's implemented] - **Evidence of effectiveness:** [What data show] - **Limitations:** [What doesn't work or contexts where ineffective]

Approach 2: [Another practice approach]

Approach 3: [Another approach]

2.3.2 Best Practices from the Field

Professional organizations recommend [practices]. For example, [Organization] suggests [recommendation].

Case examples:

Case 1: [Organization] implemented [intervention], resulting in [outcome].

Case 2: [Another example from practice]

2.3.3 Gaps Between Research and Practice

While research suggests [what research says], practitioners report [what actually happens in practice]. This gap indicates [what the gap means].

Summary

The literature reveals [synthesis]. However, gaps remain regarding [specific gap your study addresses]. This study addresses these gaps by [your approach].

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Design

Design Overview

This study employs a [qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods] design using [specific approach: case study, action research, program evaluation, design-based research].

Rationale: This design is appropriate because [justification connected to practical aims].

Philosophical Stance

This research is grounded in [pragmatist/constructivist/critical] paradigm, emphasizing [what's emphasized: practical solutions, multiple perspectives, equity].

Setting and Participants

Setting

The study was conducted at [organization description]. The site was selected because [selection rationale: typicality, unique features, access, relevance to problem].

Site characteristics:

- Size: [number of students/employees]
- Demographics: [relevant demographic information]
- Context: [relevant contextual factors]

Participants

Selection criteria:

- [Inclusion criterion 1]
- [Inclusion criterion 2]
- [Inclusion criterion 3]

Sample: The study included [N] participants: [description of participant roles/characteristics].

Recruitment: Participants were recruited through [process]. [Number] invitations were extended, and [number] agreed to participate (response rate: [percentage]).

Positionality

As a [your role] at [context], I have [relationship to setting]. This insider status provided [advantages] but required attention to [potential biases].

Data Collection

Multiple Data Sources

To ensure credibility, data were collected from multiple sources:

1. Semi-Structured Interviews

- **Number:** [N] interviews
- **Duration:** [average length]
- **Protocol:** See Appendix A
- **Recording:** Audio-recorded and transcribed

Sample interview questions: - [Question 1] - [Question 2] - [Question 3]

2. Surveys

- **Instrument:** [Description] (See Appendix B)
- **Distribution:** [Method and timeline]
- **Response rate:** [N] responses ([percentage])

3. Document Analysis

- **Documents reviewed:** [Types of documents]
- **Purpose:** [What documents revealed]

4. Observations (if applicable)

- **Settings observed:** [Where]
- **Duration:** [How long]
- **Focus:** [What was observed]

Data Collection Timeline

Figure 3.1. Data collection process
[Insert timeline/flowchart]

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using [thematic analysis/constant comparative method/framework analysis].

Process:

1. **Transcription:** All interviews transcribed verbatim
2. **Initial coding:** Line-by-line coding to identify concepts
3. **Focused coding:** Grouping codes into categories
4. **Theme development:** Identifying overarching themes
5. **Member checking:** Participants reviewed themes for accuracy

Software: [NVivo/Atlas.ti/Dedoose/MAXQDA] facilitated coding and organization.

Quantitative Analysis (if applicable)

Survey data were analyzed using [software]. Analyses included:

- Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations)
- [Inferential test] to examine [what]
- Statistical significance set at $p < .05$

Integration (for mixed methods)

Qualitative and quantitative data were integrated during [interpretation phase/when], allowing [what integration enabled].

Trustworthiness and Ethics

Credibility

Credibility was established through:

- **Triangulation:** Multiple data sources
- **Member checking:** Participant validation of findings
- **Peer debriefing:** Consultation with [colleagues/committee]
- **Prolonged engagement:** [Duration] at site

Transferability

Thick description of context enables readers to assess transferability to their settings.

Dependability and Confirmability

Audit trail: Detailed documentation of all decisions

Reflexivity: Ongoing journaling about researcher perspectives and biases

Ethical Considerations

IRB Approval: Protocol #[number], approved [date]

Informed Consent: All participants provided written consent (Appendix C)

Confidentiality: Pseudonyms used; data stored securely

Risks and Benefits: Minimal risk; potential benefit of contributing to improved practice

Power dynamics: As [insider/outsider], attention paid to [how power addressed]

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Chapter 4: Findings

Overview

This chapter presents findings organized by research question. [N] major themes emerged from analysis of [data sources].

Participant Overview

Table 4.1. Participant demographics

[Insert table with participant characteristics]

Finding 1: [Theme Name]

Description

[Detailed description of theme with supporting evidence]

The first major finding is that [statement of finding]. This theme emerged from [percentage/number] of participants and was evident across [data sources].

Evidence from interviews:

Participants consistently described [pattern]. As one [role] explained:

[Block quote from interview]

This sentiment was echoed by [another participant type]:

[Another quote]

Evidence from surveys:

Survey data corroborated interview findings. [Percentage] of respondents indicated [finding].

Evidence from observations/documents:

[Additional supporting evidence]

Sub-themes

1.1 [Sub-theme]: [Description with evidence]

1.2 [Sub-theme]: [Description with evidence]

Summary of Finding 1

[Synthesis of what this finding reveals about the problem of practice]

Finding 2: [Theme Name]

[Continue with same structure]

Finding 3: [Theme Name]

[Continue]

Summary

Three major findings emerged: (a) [finding 1 summary], (b) [finding 2 summary], and (c) [finding 3 summary]. Together, these findings suggest [overall pattern/answer to research questions].

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Summary of Study

Problem of practice: [Restate problem]

Purpose: [Restate purpose]

Methodology: [Brief summary]

Key findings: [Brief summary of 3 major findings]

Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Finding 1: [Theme Name]

Interpretation

This finding indicates [what it means for practice]. The prevalence of [pattern] suggests [interpretation].

Connection to literature: This finding aligns with [Scholar's] research showing [connection]. However, it extends understanding by [your contribution].

Connection to framework: This finding supports the conceptual framework's emphasis on [component].

Implications for stakeholders:

- **For practitioners:** [Specific implication]
- **For leaders:** [Specific implication]
- **For policy:** [Specific implication]

5.2.2 Finding 2: [Theme Name]

[Continue interpretation for each finding]

5.2.3 Finding 3: [Theme Name]

[Continue]

Synthesis Across Findings

When considered together, the three findings reveal [synthesis]. This suggests that addressing the problem requires [what's required].

Recommendations for Practice

[This section is crucial for professional doctorates - actionable recommendations]

Based on findings, the following recommendations are made for [practitioners/organizations]:

Recommendation 1: [Specific Action]

What: [Clear description of recommended action]

Why: This recommendation addresses [finding] by [how it addresses it].

For whom: [Who should implement]

When: [Timeline recommendation]

Resources needed: [What's required: time, funding, training, support]

Expected outcomes: [What should result]

Recommendation 2: [Specific Action]

[Continue with same structure]

Recommendation 3: [Specific Action]

[Continue]

Priority Recommendations

Given resource constraints, priority should be given to:

1. [Highest priority with rationale]
2. [Second priority with rationale]
3. [Third priority with rationale]

Implementation Plan

[This section is unique to professional doctorates - practical implementation guidance]

5.4.1 Implementation Framework

Figure 5.1. Implementation roadmap

[Insert visual showing phases, timeline, responsible parties]

5.4.2 Phase 1: Preparation (Months 1-2)

Actions: - [Specific action with responsible party] - [Specific action]

Resources: [What's needed]

Success indicators: [How to know if successful]

5.4.3 Phase 2: Initial Implementation (Months 3-6)

[Continue with specific phases]

5.4.4 Phase 3: Full Implementation (Months 7-12)

[Continue]

5.4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

Metrics to track: - [Metric 1]: Target [value] - [Metric 2]: Target [value] - [Metric 3]: Target [value]

Data collection: [How and when]

Responsible party: [Who monitors]

5.4.6 Challenges and Mitigation

Potential challenge 1: [Challenge] **Mitigation:** [Strategy]

Potential challenge 2: [Challenge] **Mitigation:** [Strategy]

5.4.7 Sustainability

To ensure long-term sustainability:

- [Strategy 1]
- [Strategy 2]
- [Strategy 3]

Recommendations for Research

While this study provides actionable guidance, several areas warrant further investigation:

1. [Research direction 1]: [Rationale]
2. [Research direction 2]: [Rationale]
3. [Research direction 3]: [Rationale]

Personal Reflection

[Professional doctorates often include practitioner reflection]

This dissertation journey has transformed my practice in several ways. As a [role], I entered this study believing [initial belief]. Through the research process, I have come to understand [new understanding].

Key learnings:

- [Personal/professional learning 1]
- [Personal/professional learning 2]
- [Personal/professional learning 3]

Impact on my practice: I will apply these insights by [how you'll change practice].

Conclusion

This dissertation in practice examined [problem] within [context]. Findings revealed [key takeaway]. The recommendations provided offer actionable guidance for [practitioners] seeking to [address the problem].

Ultimately, addressing this problem requires [what's required]. By implementing these recommendations, [organizations] can [expected benefit].

As [relevant practitioner/scholar] noted, “[quote].” This study’s contribution lies in [final statement of contribution to practice].

REFERENCES

[Use APA 7th edition or field-appropriate style]

References

[Alphabetical, hanging indent, double-spaced]

[Include both scholarly research and practitioner resources]

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

Introduction:

[Script introducing study, confirming consent, explaining process]

Demographic Questions:

[Background questions]

Main Questions:

1. [Question 1]
 - Probes: [follow-up questions]
2. [Question 2]
 - Probes: [follow-ups]

[Continue with all questions]

Closing:

[Thank you, next steps, contact information]

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Appendix B

Survey Instrument

[Complete survey with all items, instructions, and response scales]

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORMS

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

[Complete IRB-approved consent form]

APPENDIX D: IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

Appendix D

Implementation Toolkit for Practitioners

[Practical tools for implementing recommendations:]

- Checklist
- Templates
- Timeline
- Resources list
- FAQ for practitioners

FORMATTING CHECKLIST

- APA 7th edition formatting throughout
- Focus on problem of practice, not pure theory
- Actionable recommendations prominent
- Implementation plan detailed and practical
- Multiple stakeholder perspectives included
- Evidence from practice settings
- Practitioner-friendly language (minimize jargon)
- Practical tools in appendices
- Personal reflection included

TYPICAL LENGTH

Professional Doctorate: 120-180 pages (shorter than PhD)

Focus on actionable knowledge for practice, not exhaustive literature review.

Template Complete. Focus on practical application and change in practice settings!