Template: Developing a logical argument throughout a dissertation (core structure)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Element of logic* | *Content in this dissertation* |
| **Establishing the substantive and theoretical focus and significance, and the methodological approach** | |
| Title  (incorporating keywords from central question) | Title: |
| **1: Introduction** | |
| Central question  (broad problematic issue in substantive area) | Central question: |
| Substantive aim  (specified topic within substantive area, in particular context) | Substantive aim: |
| Theoretical aim  (conceptual orientation framing investigation of the substantive topic) | Theoretical aim: |
| Methodological aim  (methodological stance, design and methods for addressing the substantive topic) | Methodological aim: |
| **Identifying, evaluating and building on the most relevant existing knowledge** | |
| **2: Literature Review** | |
| Review questions for substantive aim  (issues related to substantive topic) | Review question(s), substantive aim: |
| In summary, the answer to each review question, substantive aim: |
| Review questions for theoretical aim  (selecting theoretical framework, defining concepts) | Review question(s), theoretical aim: |
| In summary, the answer to each review question, theoretical aim: |
| **Building towards the sample and focus of the data collection instruments** | |
| **3: Research Design** | |
| Review question for methodological aim  (issues relating to methodology and methods) | Review question(s), methodological aim: |
| In summary, the answer to each review question, methodological aim: |
| Research questions for achieving substantive aim  (informed by answers to review questions) | Research questions: |
| Sample: relevant to substantive aim  (sources of empirical evidence to answer the research questions) | Sample (e.g. sites, informants, texts, observations): |
| Why this sample is being chosen and how it can contribute to answering the research questions: |
| **Focusing the data collection instruments** | |
| Data collection instruments: relevant to substantive aim  (also reflecting theoretical aim) | Instruments (e.g. online survey, observation schedule): |
| Any instruments or raw data to be included in appendices, as supporting evidence of the design: |
| In summary, how the items within instruments are designed to obtain answers to specific research questions: |
| In summary, how these items employ concepts of theoretical framework: |
| **Focusing the presentation of the findings** | |
| **4: Findings** | |
| Empirical findings: relevant to substantive aim  (order of presentation, linkage with research questions) | In summary, how presentation of findings is organized (e.g. findings relating to each research question in turn): |
| In summary, the way that the presentation of the findings has been organized is signalled to readers: |
| In summary, the answer that particular findings give to each research question: |
| **Focusing the discussion of the findings** | |
| **5: Discussion of Findings** | |
| For substantive aim, theoretical aim  (synthesizing findings, implications for literature demonstrating their significance) | In summary, contribution that answers to the research questions make to achieving the substantive aim: |
| In summary, implications of answers to the research questions for substantive, and possibly theoretical, literature reviewed: |
| In summary, any implications of answers to the research questions for other relevant literature domains: |
| Theoretical aim, methodological aim:  (how research approach may affect findings) | Impact of the strengths and limitations of theoretical framework on the findings: |
| Impact of strengths and limitations of the methods on the findings: |
| **Articulating and evaluating the contribution of the research to the substantive and theoretical focus** | |
| **6: Conclusion** | |
| Knowledge gained | Summative claim stating what knowledge the research has generated about the substantive topic: |
| Evaluating achievement of substantive aim, theoretical aim, methodological aim, success of the research, what learned | In summary, how far the research questions have been answered and the substantive aim achieved: |
| In summary, how far the theoretical aim has been achieved by using the theoretical framework to guide investigation of substantive topic: |
| In summary, how far the methodological aim has been achieved through the research design and data collection instruments: |
| Overall evaluation of the research, ways in which the design might have been improved: |
| Degree of certainty about how far findings from context investigated can be generalized in contributing to answering central question: |
| Implications for research, possibly policy and practice | List of any recommendations for researchers, policy-makers, practitioners supported by evidence from the findings and literature: |

|  |
| --- |
| **Signposting to highlight the logic of the overall argument developed** |
| 1. Is it stated at the end of the introductory chapter how the argument will be developed in other chapters? |
| 1. Is there an introduction to each of the other chapters indicating what will be covered in each section? |
| 1. Is it stated at the end of each other chapter (not conclusion) how the overall argument will be taken forward? |
| 1. Are all references to literature in the text fully and accurately presented in the reference list to enable readers to find them? |
| 1. Does the labelling of appendices make clear their contribution to the development of the overall argument? |