Différences de structure entre une thèse par essais et une thèse classique

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The Big Picture: France vs. US

Traditional dissertation (France)
“The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of X”
• Exhaustive literature review. One citation every 2 sentences.
• Qualitative interviews
• Integrative conceptual models with many hypotheses
• Scale development and purification, Lisrel, PLS
• One large non-experimental survey, all self reported.

Dissertation with 2/3 essays (USA)
Each essay should ideally be one counter-intuitive effect on a new important topic.
• Almost no literature review, just cite papers if you use them (and cite possible reviewers in the intro).
• Simple and straightforward conceptual model.
• Few or no hypotheses.
• 3 to 5 experimental studies, including one with real choices.
• Simple ANOVAs, regressions
Choosing the Right Topic

Principles

• Primary: What do you want to be known for?
• Secondary: Opportunities.
• KISS (Keep It Simple and Stupid): reductionist approach (not comprehensive)
• Use substance as starting point. Work on big issues.
• Start with a problem. Answer the question “what would marketers, consumers, or policy makers do differently after reading your work.”
• A phenomenon is not just any outcome – it’s an outcome whose cause is in question, and particularly one which is ‘highly unexpected.’ because prior expectations went in a different direction.

Right combination of topic, method, and theory

• The Results: Are they useful to someone with a pragmatic interest in a consumption phenomenon
• The Procedures: Do the methods used to test the explanation inspire some confidence in the results?
• The Theory: Does the explanation of the results conform to and extend theory within a discipline?
Key tradeoffs

Relevance vs. rigor
- Premium for novelty and "big" issues (obesity, financial crisis).
- The state of the art is often crowded.
- If there is no literature on your topic… it’s great news!

Depth vs. breadth
- Specialization works, especially on the method side. Very few people can master both CB and quant tools.
- For tenure, people want to know what’s your field, big idea, mentor?
- Leave time for emerging ideas. First ideas lead to better ones.

Alone vs. with others
- Seek co-authors, cultivate a relationship with a mentor.
- Do not work with other PhD students.
- Go to conferences, present your ideas as much as possible.
- Write the paper after you have done the analyses. Do not get bogged down by the literature review.
- Elevator speech: craft your title and abstract…why is your paper important…what have you contributed

Pragmatic Issues

Practical issues
- Figures and tables should tell story independent of the text. Spend time on them. Add "notes" at the bottom of them.
- Respect formatting rules scrupulously. It shows that you’re not a novice.

Titles and abstract
- Provide results in abstract, not just the variables that were studied.
- Do not say that "your paper has implication for XXX", of course it does!
- Use long titles, starting: "Clever naming or question: Role of IV and Moderators on DV"
- Pleasure as a Substitute for Size: How Multisensory Imagery Can Make People Happier with Smaller Food Portions.
- From Fan to Fat? Vicarious Losing Increases Unhealthy Eating but Self-Affirmation is an Effective Remedy.