**Structure of the Conventional Dissertation[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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| ***Chapter Name and Purpose*** | ***Possible Sections*** |
| 1. *Introduction.* Chapter 1 introduces the problem to be studied, explains its theoretical context or conceptual base, tells for whom and why the study is important, and defines its terms and limitations. | a. Introduction to the study  b. Problem and purpose of the study  c. Conceptual base  d. Research questions or hypothesis  e. Professional significance of the problem  f. Overview of the methodology  g. Definition of key terms  h. Delimitations of the study  i. Organization of the dissertation |
| 2. *Review of related literature*. Chapter 2 presents and synthesizes literature upon which the study builds, including history and research supportive and unsupportive of the writer’s stance. The last cited study most closely resembles the proposed one. | a. Restatement of the problem  b. Overview of how chapter is organized  c. Review of the theoretical and empirical  literature, organized by problem areas  d. Synthesis and critique of the literature and  how it informs the study |
| 3. *Methodology.* Chapter 3 explains how data are collected and analyzed, aligns problem with technique, identifies exactly who or what will be investigated, and outlines research design and statistical tests, if appropriate. | a. Restatement of the problem  b. A description of the general methodology  c. The research context or site  d. The sample/subjects or participants  e. The instruments and materials used  f. The procedures followed  g. The data analyses made  h. A summary statement of the methodology |
| 4. *Results.* Chapter 4 presents the findings of the data analyses, and graphically displays them if appropriate. It is typically the briefest chapter in the dissertation. | a. Restatement of the problem  b. An overview of the chapter  c. A presentation of results, organized by  research questions or hypothesis  d. A summary in general terms of the results |
| 5. *Conclusions.* Chapter 5 summarizes the findings pursuant to the problem and its methodological treatment. The writer shares his professional perspective in making practical and theoretic recommendations. | a. A summary of results, organized by  how the problem statement was posed  b. A discussion of the findings  c. Recommendations for practice, policy,  and research |

1. C. Steven Bingham (2012) adapted from Glatthorn & Joyner (2005), *Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation*. P. 158 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)