

WKU Educational Leadership Doctoral Program Dissertation-in-Practice

Chapter 2 Quality Rubric

-Version: October 2, 2024-

This tool is designed to help WKU EdD students, course instructors, and chairs/committee members understand the features of a high-quality Chapter 2 as it appears in WKU improvement science dissertations in practice. Chapter 2 describes the root cause analysis study that helped the student better understand the root causes of the problem of practice in their context and informed the interventions described in Chapters 3 and 4 of the dissertation-in-practice. This tool should be used in conjunction with the dissertation-in-practice framework found in Appendix A of the *WKU EdD Student Handbook*, the *WKU EdD Writing Rubric*, and relevant improvement science sources like Chapter 4 and 5 in *Improvement Science in Education: A Primer* (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).

Chapter element	Proficient	Developing	Unacceptable
<i>Introduction</i>	Briefly but accurately describes the purpose of the root cause analysis in improvement science, citing appropriate sources, and why the root cause analysis was important to understanding the problem of practice described in the present study.	Intro may need to be strengthened in terms of more thoroughly or accurately describing the root cause analysis process, citing appropriate sources, or thoughtfully connecting the process to the problem of practice featured in the present study.	No introduction; or the introduction fails to accurately describe the root cause analysis process; or the present study is not referenced or connected to the description of the process.
<i>Root cause analysis literature review</i> <i>-description of lit review process-</i> <i>-quality and accuracy of lit review process-</i>	Thoroughly and accurately explains how the literature review was conducted, including relevant search terms and how the search was further refined based on the results. Search terms described are accurate and appropriate to the overarching problem of practice described in Chapter 1 and	Informed readers can tell that search terms may need more refinement or that there is relevant literature not included in the chapter. There may be some evidence that some of the literature described focuses more heavily on interventions/solutions to	The literature review process reveals errors in technique or omission of obviously relevant search terms. Literature reviewed does not address root causes of the problem of practice described in Chapter 1 and/or does not

	<p>focus exclusively on what researchers and practitioners have discovered about the root causes of the overarching problem. <i>Includes relevant literature related to leadership theory or practice.</i></p>	<p>the problem than root causes. May neglect relevant leadership literature.</p>	<p>address relevant leadership literature.</p>
<p><i>-organization by root cause categories-</i></p>	<p>Subsections of the literature review are organized according to the root causes studied or discovered by the various sources cited.</p>	<p>Subsections may need refinement to more accurately or logically group sources according to root causes.</p>	<p>The literature review is poorly or incoherently organized.</p>
<p><i>-depth of description-</i></p>	<p>Literature is described in sufficient depth that the reader can understand how the researcher(s) came to their conclusions about the root cause under investigation.</p>	<p>More explication is needed to help the reader see the relevance of some studies described or how the authors came to their conclusions.</p>	<p>The techniques and findings of the studies described are unclear.</p>
<p><i>-lit review summary-</i></p>	<p>The literature review concludes with a summary of the various root causes of the overarching problem as revealed by the literature.</p>	<p>Improvements are needed to clearly and accurately synthesize the findings of previous literature.</p>	<p>There is no synthesis of the findings; or the synthesis appears to be inaccurate to the findings.</p>
<p>Root cause analysis methods</p>			
<p><i>-restatement of the RQ(s)-</i></p>	<p>Restates the guiding research question for the study, relating them clearly to the local problem under investigation.</p>		<p>Methods are not connected back to the research question.</p>
<p><i>-setting and RCA visual tools-</i></p>	<p>Briefly describes the setting of the research with a focus on root causes discovered by the</p>	<p>May require additional explanation of why the root causes under investigation are</p>	<p>Root causes described are not clearly connected to literature,</p>

<p><i>-leadership-related root causes-</i></p> <p><i>-justification of root causes chosen for analysis-</i></p>	<p>literature that may be relevant to the context. Includes a fishbone diagram, 5 Why's protocol, or other tools that were used to organize possible root causes that will be further explored within the context based on the literature reviewed. Such visual elements accurately reflect the literature and are worded to make it clear how each cause may contribute to the problem.</p> <p>Considers root causes that may be related to leadership theory, research, or practice</p> <p>A narrative description of visual tools describes which of the root causes were chosen for further investigation within the context of the root cause analysis study, and why. For example, students might exclude root causes revealed in the literature that are obviously not relevant for their context, or over which stakeholders have limited control.</p> <p>Describes the participants for the root cause analysis study.</p>	<p>grounded in literature and are appropriate for the study and/or problem of practice. Visual elements need better alignment with the literature.</p> <p>May need to strengthen the considerations of leadership theory, research, or practice to the root causes.</p> <p>More explanation is needed to show why the root causes chosen for further investigation are appropriate for the study.</p> <p>More explanation of why participants were chosen,</p>	<p>the problem of practice, or relevant to the context.</p> <p>No consideration of leadership dimensions of the root causes.</p> <p>There is no coherent explanation for why</p>
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<p><i>-participants-</i></p>	<p>Participants should be purposively chosen to represent the relevant “users” of the problem. Describes how the researcher obtained access to these participants and secured their voluntary involvement. Describes IRB approval process for obtaining informed consent.</p>	<p>and/or how access to participants was ethically obtained, is needed.</p>	<p>participants were chosen or how access was ethically obtained.</p>
<p><i>-pre-existing data-</i></p>	<p>Describes relevant pre-existing institutional data sources that were reviewed for evidence of root causes of the local problem.</p>	<p>More rationale for the use of pre-existing data is required, or relevant institutional data has been overlooked.</p>	<p>There is no effort to utilize existing institutional data or institutional data chosen is not appropriate for the study.</p>
<p><i>-instrument description-</i></p>	<p>Describes the instruments used to conduct the root cause analysis. Instruments should reflect both quantitative and qualitative methods appropriate to the context and problem of practice. Describes the design of each instrument, supported by relevant literature. Narrative describes how each instrument or item(s) of the instrument address the various root causes under investigation. For pre-existing instruments, describes relevant research literature that previously utilized the instrument and</p>	<p>Needs a stronger rationale for instruments chosen, or how each instrument relates to the root causes under investigation. May need more balance between quantitative and qualitative methods.</p>	<p>No rationale provided for instruments chosen; or instruments are not appropriate for the problem of practice or the root causes under investigation.</p>

<p><i>-planned data analysis techniques-</i></p> <p><i>-IRB process-</i></p>	<p>reliability and/or validity of the instrument, if appropriate.</p> <p>Describes intended method of analyzing the results of each instrument, supported by relevant literature. Analysis methods are appropriate for the instrument.</p> <p>Describes IRB approval process for all instruments.</p>	<p>Needs a more justification for the analysis methods chosen and their appropriateness for the instrument.</p> <p>Needs a more thoroughly description of the IRB approval process.</p>	<p>No analysis plan offered or analysis plan is inaccurate for the instrument/method.</p> <p>IRB approval process note addressed.</p>
<p>Root cause analysis results</p> <p><i>-summary of quantitative methods and findings-</i></p> <p><i>-summary of qualitative methods and findings-</i></p>	<p>Describes results from quantitative instruments. Summarizes the quantitative findings, accurately describes specific quantitative findings that illuminate relevant root causes and possible solutions to the local problem.</p> <p>Describes results from qualitative methods. Summarizes the qualitative data analysis process and accurately describes themes and findings from each qualitative protocol that address relevant root causes and possible solutions for the local problem. Addresses how triangulation was achieved and</p>	<p>Description of the quantitative results needs more explication to accurately describe findings or connect findings more clearly to relevant root causes and possible solutions to the local problem.</p> <p>Description of the qualitative results needs more explication to accurately describe the data analysis process and/or themes and findings and to connect findings more clearly to relevant root causes and solutions to the local problem. Narrative may not fully or accurately describe triangulation and trustworthiness.</p>	<p>Description of quantitative results is inaccurate and/or incomplete. Results do not illuminate root causes or solutions for the local problem.</p> <p>Description of qualitative results is inaccurate and/or incomplete. Results do not illuminate root causes or solutions for the local problem. Triangulation and trustworthiness are not addressed.</p>

<p><i>-synthesis of quantitative and qualitative results-</i></p>	<p>how trustworthiness of the findings was ensured.</p> <p>Synthesizes the combination of quantitative and qualitative results to thoroughly and accurately described the root causes and possible solutions identified that are relevant to the local problem.</p>	<p>Results need more synthesis and/or stronger connection to the root causes and possible solutions relevant to the local problem.</p>	<p>Results are not synthesized and/or do not clearly or accurately convey root causes and possible solutions relevant to the local problem.</p>
<p>Root cause analysis limitations</p>	<p>Accurately describes limitations to the root cause analysis design or results.</p>	<p>Limitations require more explication.</p>	<p>Limitations have not been identified or are inaccurately presented and/or obvious limitations are omitted.</p>
<p>Conclusions and recommendations for interventions</p>	<p>Accurately draws conclusions from the root cause analysis in terms of implications for interventions, connecting to appropriate literature when relevant.</p>	<p>Stronger linkages between the findings and implications for interventions are required.</p>	<p>There are no clear linkages between the root cause analysis findings and possible interventions.</p>

Hinnant-Crawford, B. (2020). *Improvement science in education: A primer*. Myers Education Press.