

PhD viva questions

'Why did you choose this topic for your doctoral study?'

'How did you arrive at your conceptual framework?'

What led you to select these models of?

What are the theoretical components of your framework?

How did you decide upon the variables to include in your conceptual framework?

How did concepts assist you to visualise and explain what you intended to investigate?

How did you use your conceptual framework to design your research and analyse your findings?

'How did you arrive at your research design?'

What other forms of research did you consider?

How would you explain your research approach?

Why did you select this particular design for your research?

What is the link between your conceptual framework and your choice of methodology and how would you defend that methodology?

Can you explain where the data can be found and why your design is the most appropriate way of accessing that data?

'How would you justify your choice of methodology?'

Please explain your methodology to us.

Why did you present this in the form of a case study?

What choices of research approach did you consider as you planned your research?

Can you tell us about the 'quasi-experimental' research that you used?

I did not watch your video until after reading your thesis. I wish that I had viewed it earlier ~ it was very good. Why did you decide to include a video in your thesis? What was its role?

'Why did you decide to use XYZ as your main instrument(s)?'

How do your methods relate to your conceptual framework?

Why did you choose to use those methods of data collection?

What other methods did you consider and why were they rejected?

How did you handle the data that came from open-ended questions?

Tell us how you managed to achieve a 100% response rate from your respondents who, as adolescents in schools, are not known for complying with such requests

'How did you select your respondents/materials/area?'

How did you decide upon your research boundaries?

What was the universe from which your sample was selected and how did you define it?

What is the relationship between your respondents, the research design and the conceptual framework?

Why did you choose these respondents rather than other respondents, how do you justify that choice?

How did you arrive at your conceptual conclusions?

What are your conceptual conclusions?

Were you disappointed with your conclusions?

How do your conclusions relate to your conceptual framework?

How did you distinguish between your factual and conceptual conclusions?

How generalisable are your findings, and why?

How did you triangulate your data?

Were you objective or subjective in your role as a researcher?

How did you relate the various stages of your research one to another?

How did you analyse your data, and how did you arrive at meanings from that analysis?

What is your contribution to knowledge?

How important are your findings, and to whom?

How do your major conclusions link to the work of Rose? (Give examples.)

The absence of evidence is not support for what you were investigating, neither is it confirmation of the opposite view. So how do you explain your research outcomes?

We would like you to critique your thesis for us.

How else might you have undertaken your research?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of your research?

What would you do differently if you repeated your research?

What are YOU going to do after you gain your doctorate?

Why did you really want to undertake doctoral study?

How is gaining your doctorate going to advance your career?

What are you going to publish from your thesis?
(If you have not already thought about this question – please do so now!)?

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us about your thesis which you have not had the opportunity to tell us during the viva?

– Trafford and Leshem 2002: 40-46