

Review of Recent University of Ottawa Clinical Psychology Dissertations (2013)

- In March 2013 reviewed available dissertations, both at the School of Psychology and on University of Ottawa research website <http://www.ruor.uottawa.ca/en/>
- For the period 2007-2013, 51 dissertations were available for review
- Data presented at meetings of the Clinical Program Committee and the Management Committee

Area of Research

- Based on the content of the dissertation (not simply the research supervisor's area), 31 were in the area of Clinical Psychology, 6 in Community Psychology, 4 in Behavioural Neuroscience, 4 in Cognitive Psychology, 4 in Developmental Psychology, and 2 in Social Psychology

Dissertation Length

- Total number of pages: mean of 195, range of 83 to 363
- Number of pages in the general introduction section: mean of 32, range of 9 to 66
- Number of pages in the general discussion section: mean of 20, range of 3 to 69

Format

- 31 dissertations in multiple study format, 20 dissertations in monograph format
- Of the 31 dissertations using the multiple study format, 24 involved data from 2 or more data sets and 7 involved data from one data set (i.e., the multiple studies were based on the same data set)
- In terms of the number of studies included in the dissertation, 20 included 1 study, 13 included 2 studies, 17 included 3 studies, and 1 dissertation included 4 studies

Research Methods

- A wide range of research methods used in the dissertations (86 studies in total)
- Correlational designs used in 63 studies, experimental designs used in 16 studies, qualitative designs used in 2 studies; 4 studies were meta-analyses and 3 studies were systematic reviews

Research Samples

- University students were participants in 10 studies, animals were used in 6 studies
- Of the remaining 70 studies, 22 used data from youth, 42 used data from adults, and 6 used data from older adults
- In the 70 studies, 50 involved data collected specifically for the dissertation and 20 involved the use of archival data (including both publicly available data sets and data sets from the dissertation supervisor's research)

Some Conclusions

- A wide range of research areas and research methods are suitable for dissertation research in the clinical psychology program
- This flexibility in the nature of the dissertation is a strength of the program, but the range of options means that students and their dissertation supervisors need to actively collaborate on (a) the nature and scope of the dissertation and (b) conducting the research in a manner that fits with the program's course requirements and clinical training requirements
- As mentors, dissertation supervisors play a key role in aiding students in managing the program's research, course, and clinical training requirements

Some Recommendations

- The range of research methods and statistical analyses used in these dissertations highlights the need for the School to continue to offer advanced research methods and statistics courses that have been taught in the past several years (e.g., structural equation modelling, hierarchical linear modelling, qualitative research)
- The School should also consider offering courses in (a) conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses and (b) analysis of large archival data sets (e.g., nationally representative data sets from Statistics Canada and Health Canada that are available through the Research Data Centre at the University of Ottawa's Morisset Library)
- As the clear majority of dissertation research in the clinical program involves data from human participants outside of the university, the development of positions in the School to aid in the recruitment of such research samples is likely to be greatly beneficial to students' dissertation work