GUIDANCE NOTE ON dissertation structure, triangulation, critical assessment and analysis of the research findings

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The Structure of the thesis:

1. Title
2. Acknowledgments
3. Abstract or Summary
4. Introduction and Literature Review
5. Research question(s) and maybe hypothesis or null hypothesis
6. Aims
7. Objectives
8. Methodology
9. Results & Analysis of Results
10. Discussion
11. Conclusions & Recommendations
12. References or Bibliography
13. Appendices
A very basic idea of a research conceptual framework:

Why use a Conceptual Framework?

- Provide boundaries for your research
- Establish links, relationships & influences
- Consider flows & fluxes, drivers & barriers, inputs & outputs
- Guide analysis & weight the inter-relationships
Approaches to mixed methods research:

- Stakeholder analysis
- Desktop survey
- Scoping study and testing of approach
- Snowball methodology - Ask key individuals and contacts to recommend other useful people and sources
- Critical analysis of literature & sources
- Triangulation of findings and approaches

Identify key organisations and individuals:

- From literature
- From desktop
- From snowball method – personal recommendations
- From case studies

An example of an approach to critical assessment and analysis of the research findings:

As explained in the Methodology, a process of gathering critical information on. This data and information gathering was then used to address issues and research paradigms identified from the literature review. Here, the key findings and outputs are presented and summarised in order to establish the contributions of this research to the academic and scholarly debates on this topic.
From the above, it is possible to reach the following conclusions in terms of the evidence gathered from the primary research:

1) 
2) 
3) 

These findings agree / disagree / differ from / concur with......etcetc the statements by / reports from ...../ ........ as described and highlighted in the literature review......
Using the literature to inform your approach..........

Key theme from the research literature

Issues in relation to the case study

Questions posed of stakeholders and policies

Drawing out key research themes and paradigms

E.g., Policy forms

E.g., Policy outcomes & implementation
1) To inform your approach

2) To direct your methodology

3) To critically analyse your findings

Importantly, you draw out key research themes from the literature and then use these to guide and frame your research. You then employ the same themes in the critical analysis of your own triangulated findings, and use all this to guide and inform your Discussion.

Once you have decided on your methodological approaches then test and refine:

- Trial run of approaches
- Chance to test, consider and review
- Can still use data & information from this first run
The process of triangulation – example of farming in Libya:

Information and data were gathered from a number of distinct sources. Firstly, an in-depth literature review helped to identify critical questions and to set the context of the research. Then opinions and information were gathered from two separate cohorts in terms of stakeholders in Libyan agriculture and with distinctive roles and concerns in terms of Libyan agricultural policy.

The stakeholder analysis identified the governmental and agency officers and staff as key stakeholders in the formulation of policy. The farmers were identified as key stakeholders in terms of the receipt of policies and policy outcomes and in their application. Thus, two distinctive sets of stakeholder opinions could be gathered (from policy formulation to policy application) and these could then be critically assessed and compared. Finally, along with these sources of information and insight, a rigorous and comprehensive gathering and critical analysis of documents and other materials was carried out. This meant that agricultural policies and performance could be assessed by triangulation of stakeholders and of official documentation and sources.
From very simple, to exceedingly complex and supported by in-depth data gathering and maybe computer modelling
A real conceptual framework, from a study of the World Games in Kaohsiung:

To guide the research process.
Used as a tool for analysis:

Findings as developed from the research framework

**Economic Impacts**
1. Promotion of green labels and green procurement system in planning process
2. Plan for retention of regular visitors
3. Leveraging effect to involve local communities in the Games and to enhance international business linkages
4. To offer host residents jobs during construction and after the Games

**Social Impacts**
1. Consultation in host areas
2. Relocation issues
3. To involve marginalised regions in planning schedule
4. To involve international business linkages
5. To involve international business linkages
6. To better integrate KCKD in planning process
7. To improve economic development in host areas
8. To promote sport activities

**Environmental Impacts**
1. Protection of natural resource and cultural heritage: protective development and FIA
2. Sports facilities: followed Green Building Indexes; its creation is necessary and to achieve multi-purpose
3. Transport: 70% per cent rely on KCKD, encourage clean transport, e.g. walking and cycling
4. Energy: encourage green buildings and the use of renewable energy
5. Water management: new buildings followed water resources indicators; efforts to avoid contaminating water, preserve the quality of natural water, enhance flood storage and create waterfront leisure space
6. Waste management: use of recyclable materials
7. Biodiversity: green spaces and plants were re-located and natural vegetation was maintained

**Local Community**
+ Agree (M=3.50)
* Uncertain (2.50<M<3.50)
- Disagree (M<2.5)

**Towards a Sustainable Sports Mega-Event**
Summary of the critical assessment and analysis of the research findings

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<th>Key research focus or question (literature &amp; existing studies)</th>
<th>Evidence from the stakeholder survey - policymakers (legislative mandate / agencies)</th>
<th>Evidence from the stakeholder survey - policy makers / implementers (formers)</th>
<th>Evidence from the document search and analysis</th>
<th>Critical assessment of the findings</th>
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<th>Evidence from the stakeholder survey – policy receivers / implementers</th>
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You are now in a position to proceed. Remember that in writing the thesis you are telling a story. Once upon a time.........

Think about logic and linearity – throughout the story from beginning to end. Each section should lead logically to the next and at each point, you should be drawing closer to answering your core questions – so keep these in mind at all times. If you are working on a topic that you find does not help you answer the core questions, then either stop and do something which is more relevant, or alter the question. The question may evolve as you gain increased insight into the research issues. Nevertheless, essentially, if you find a rich vein of research but it does not relate to the questions, then it may be that the questions as they stand are wrong.

As you write, consider what you are saying and question how much sense it will make to the reader. Imagine you are reading this to a small child – does the story flow? Does it hold the attention? Does the reader want to know more? Or not??!

At each stage of the thesis, there should be linearity in a horizontal sense, but also, at each point you should derail deep for greater understanding and weakness. The mark of a PhD is its ‘novelty’ i.e. the new insight it brings to the research topic, the new academic thought and new ‘science’. You may make important contributions to pragmatic and professional literature and guidance, but this does not amount to a PhD, but rather it is the icing on the cake. Think about what you may contribute interims of ‘newness’, and perhaps noel methodical approaches. Just doing a case study in a region or areas where it has not been done before, is not enough. Think about this before you proceed.