

Reasons why your work may not be excellent

Motivation and formulation of research question: Is the thesis driven by a clear purpose? Does the thesis address issues that are in urgent need of attention? Does the thesis reflect the state of the art in the respective field? Does the thesis conceptualize a relevant theoretical puzzle or identify a clear research gap?

Background research: How well was the background research conducted? Does the thesis show a breadth and depth of research? Does the thesis demonstrate a clear engagement with the most relevant authorities in the field and the most relevant highly recognized publications?

Conceptual clarity: no definition of core constructs, conceptual density, weak grounding in the literature, poor analytical integration among concepts.

Methods: No or poor description of the methodology used. Inconsistencies in the research design. Lack of details about sampling, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Transparency of the link between data and interpretation (no concept tables, no illustration tables how concepts appear in the data). Thin data, lack of triangulation.

Findings: Interpretive claims are not supported by empirical evidence. Use of empirical evidence not supported by theoretical narrative. Misalignment between data and theory.

Contribution: The research question is not answered. There is a lack of discussion of how findings map into extant literature. So what? – Extending and/or challenging previous work. Lack of theoretical and managerial implications.

Formalities: Lack of proofreading, poor argumentation, incomplete references, and no sharing of how you actually conducted the analysis (e.g., MAXQDA file with its coding). Missing signed forms or data.

AI use: There is a lack of an AI statement explaining how AI was used to support your thesis (see the reflection/documentation document). Original writing was replaced with generative AI text. You failed to document your general progress after each consultation and did not share intermediary versions of your thesis in a colloquium or in our consultation hours.

Independence in the process: You asked many questions that you could have answered yourself by using the guidelines on the website or other sources; you needed several additional consultation meetings beyond the ones scheduled in mutual agreement, and asked many questions via multiple emails.