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## Examiner’s Preliminary Report for a Research Degree Level Candidate

*This is an independent preliminary report, which should be written by each examiner after reading the thesis but before conferring with the co-examiner about it. The report should be exchanged with the co-examiner before the candidate’s oral examination and sent by email to* [*researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk*](mailto:researchdegrees@ucl.ac.uk)*. After the oral examination, a signed copy should be sent by post with the joint report to:* ***Research Degrees, Student Records, Student and Registry Services, UCL, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT***

**Candidate:**  **Patrick Langford**

*(Please enter full name and title)*

**Student Number** *(if known)***:**

**Examination:**  **Doctorate in Professional Educational Child and Adolescent Psychology**

*(Please enter full degree title)*

**Thesis Title:**  **What Are The Effective Features Of Consultation? A Mixed Methods Analysis**

*(Please enter complete thesis title)*

This is a very interesting study which examines the views of Educational Psychologists (EPs) regarding the effective features of consultation. Considering the centrality of consultation to the work of the EP, the research is timely and provides an original contribution to knowledge on many aspects of EP practice.

The overall standard and quality of research is good although the lower quality of writing takes from the key messages being delivered at times.

There are some perceived limitations in this dissertation which could possibly be defended in the viva voce. They include:

1. What is the researcher’s definition of consultation at the end of the research? Few definitions were proffered and it wasn’t clear if the reader had a shared understanding of the concept which unfolded with each chapter. It would also be an appropriate action to propose a definition of consultation at doctoral level.
2. Why was Bronfenbrenner’s earlier 1981 model cited and not his later model? Why was the work not brought back to this framework in the later chapters? Considering the reference to this model, why was a medical language register used in writing up aspects of the research? Why is the voice of the child or young person not more centrally located in the research?
3. Why were the research methodologies not piloted on EPs? How might this have improved the quality of the research?
4. What were the ethical considerations for this research?
5. Some of the code descriptions seemed to overstep the parameters of the code. Describe the process of coding and how it was learned. What could a second coder have brought to the process? Why was this not used as a strategy?
6. In the discussion chapter, there are sections which are not discussed in line with literature. Can links be made between some specific findings and the literature?

I am very much looking forward to meeting Patrick at the viva voce and discussing some of the above points with him, among other aspects of his research, in tandem with the internal examiner.

A breakdown of comments on each chapter is provided below.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduced the topic and some key literature regarding consultation. A paragraph on the history and current status of consultation for EPs would have been useful. I didn’t feel the chapter gave me a broad enough range of definitions of consultation. There was a lack of criticality concerning the poor attention to child voice in the literature and in the reported practices of EPs.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature

A higher level of criticality was observed in this chapter and the research questions emerged from the literature. There was an emergence of the EP as ‘expert’. This becomes confusing as the research unfolds because all participants appear to be seen as ‘experts’. A critical analysis of what this means and the implications of the term expert would be welcome to pave the way for clearer understanding later in the dissertation.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The pragmatic approach is an appropriate paradigmatic choice. There is a lack of methodological literature used to back up points made, particularly regarding sampling and interviews. Ethical considerations were not addressed adequately. The Braun and Clarke model of thematic analysis was explained clearly. I would like to have seen tables and figures in the main body of this chapter to enhance my understanding. A table of deductive codes would be useful. The thematic map of codes was developed but not shown in this chapter. The QCA process was also outlined but lacked literature to back up its use and its suitability. This chapter did not have a conclusion.

Chapter Four: Findings

An overview of the chapter with details of the themes to be written about would be useful to the reader. The thematic map is very detailed but due to the size of the text, a narrative explaining it would be useful, especially when terms such as ‘super code’ is used later in the chapter. I’d like to discuss the coding process and how codes were assigned. In some cases, quotations are given one after another, without adequate comparing/contrasting. This could have enhanced the criticality in the writing. It is preferable to have a concluding paragraph for the qualitative part of the findings before addressing the quantitative section. Similarly, a tight conclusion at the end of the quantitative section and again a synthesis of both parts of the research, leading to a conclusion to the chapter would also have enhanced the reader’s comprehension.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Discussion was limited in places with inadequate reference to the literature. Limitations of the research are clearly outlined.

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| Name: FIONNUALA TYNAN  *(Please print in block capital letters)* | Signed: Fionnuala Tynan | Date: 12/07/21 |