**Researcher SWOT Assessment of Sarah Grunblatt**

Sarah Kimball Grunblatt, ThM, MPH, MS, MS, MEd, MEd, MA, BS

School of Divinity, Liberty University

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Dr. Joseph Butler

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**Author Note**

Sarah Kimball Grunblatt, ThM, MPH, MS, MS, MEd, MEd, MA, BS

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Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Sarah Kimball Grunblatt.

Email: [SKGrunblatt@liberty.edu](mailto:SKGrunblatt@liberty.edu)

CONTENTS

[Introduction 3](#_Toc203450674)

[Section 1: Key Result Areas: Identify Points of Research/Writing Development 3](#_Toc203450675)

[1.1 Research and Writing Knowledge Required 4](#_Toc203450676)

[1.2 Research and Writing Dispositions Required 5](#_Toc203450677)

[1.3 Research and Writing Skills Required 6](#_Toc203450678)

[Section 2: Conduct a Personal SWOT Assessment 7](#_Toc203450679)

[2.1 Strengths 8](#_Toc203450680)

[2.2 Weaknesses 9](#_Toc203450681)

[2.3 Opportunities 10](#_Toc203450682)

[2.4 Threats 10](#_Toc203450683)

[Section 3: Plan for Scholar/Researcher Development 11](#_Toc203450684)

[3.1 Development Plan Table 12](#_Toc203450685)

[Conclusion 14](#_Toc203450686)

[References 15](#_Toc203450687)

# **Introduction**

Embarking on the dissertation journey in a doctoral program requires not only intellectual rigor but also a profound self-awareness of one's capabilities and areas for growth. As Roberts and Hyatt (2018) emphasize, the process demands a blend of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that evolve through deliberate reflection and planning. This assignment serves as a personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) assessment, drawing from my personality profile as an Assertive Architect (INTJ-A) and my top strengths from the Thrivin report, integrated with biblical principles and scholarly resources on research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). By evaluating my preparedness for dissertation research and writing, I aim to develop a strategic plan for scholarly development, grounded in Proverbs 16:9: "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."[[1]](#footnote-1) This analysis will identify key result areas, conduct a SWOT evaluation, and outline a development plan to bridge gaps and enhance readiness.

# **Section 1: Key Result Areas: Identify Points of Research/Writing Development**

Based on the program handbook, course materials from research methodology classes, and additional sources such as the APA Publication Manual (7th ed.) and resources from the Jerry Falwell Library, the following bullet lists outline the essential knowledge, dispositions, and skills required for successful dissertation completion. These build on the foundational understanding that a dissertation demands rigorous inquiry, ethical conduct, and effective communication. As Proverbs 2:6 states, "For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding," emphasizing that true scholarly pursuit is grounded in divine wisdom. The lists expand beyond the provided examples to include comprehensive elements drawn from typical doctoral program requirements, emphasizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches, as detailed in key texts on research design and dissertation processes (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).

# **1.1 Research and Writing Knowledge Required**

* Understanding of the five chapters of a dissertation (introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion/conclusion).
* Being able to identify the critical elements of a literature review, including synthesis, gap identification, and theoretical frameworks.
* Familiarity with qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research designs, including their strengths and limitations, such as the use of phenomenological approaches in qualitative studies or experimental designs in quantitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Knowledge of ethical considerations in research, such as IRB protocols, informed consent, and data confidentiality, ensuring alignment with institutional and professional standards (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).
* Understanding of statistical concepts, including hypothesis testing, validity, reliability, and data analysis techniques (e.g., ANOVA, regression), to support empirical rigor (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Awareness of theoretical and conceptual frameworks to ground the study, such as positivism or constructivism as philosophical worldviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Proficiency in APA formatting rules for citations, references, and manuscript structure, including proper use of headings, tables, and figures (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020).
* Insight into the dissertation defense process, including committee expectations and oral presentation strategies, to prepare for viva voce examinations (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).
* Knowledge of common pitfalls in dissertation writing, such as scope creep or insufficient sample sizes, and strategies to mitigate them through iterative planning (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).
* Understanding of interdisciplinary approaches to integrate diverse fields into the research, fostering innovative contributions to the literature (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

# **1.2 Research and Writing Dispositions Required**

* Possess a passionate interest in the topic, including a belief in the value of the study.
* Foster a positive attitude toward learning about statistics, viewing them as tools for insight rather than obstacles.
* Maintain perseverance and resilience in the face of setbacks, such as rejected proposals or data collection challenges, as James 1:12 reminds that, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."
* Exhibit intellectual curiosity and openness to new ideas, even when they challenge existing assumptions, to embrace emergent findings in research (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Demonstrate ethical integrity and a commitment to unbiased, truthful reporting of findings, guided by Proverbs 11:3, "The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them."
* Cultivate self-discipline to manage long-term projects independently, including time management and goal-setting (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).
* Embrace critical self-reflection to refine research questions and methods iteratively, promoting continuous improvement (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).
* Foster a growth mindset, seeing feedback as an opportunity for improvement, rather than criticism (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Display adaptability to evolving research landscapes, such as incorporating emerging technologies or methodologies, to remain relevant in dynamic fields.
* Commit to lifelong learning, recognizing the dissertation as a steppingstone in scholarly development, in line with 2 Peter 3:18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

# **1.3 Research and Writing Skills Required**

* Develop skills in the use of Zotero for reference management and citation organization.
* Gain skills in searching for Jerry Falwell Library database resources, including advanced Boolean operators and filters.
* Proficiency in academic writing, including clear argumentation, concise language, and logical flow, to construct coherent narratives (APA, 2020).
* Ability to conduct comprehensive literature searches using databases like ProQuest, EBSCO, and Google Scholar, evaluating sources for relevance and quality (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Skills in data analysis software, such as SPSS, NVivo, or R for quantitative/qualitative processing, to interpret findings accurately (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Competence in designing research instruments, like surveys, interviews, or observation protocols, ensuring alignment with research questions (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).
* Expertise in synthesizing sources to build a coherent narrative in the literature review, avoiding mere summarization (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).
* Ability to critically evaluate sources for credibility, relevance, and bias, using criteria such as currency and authority (APA, 2020).
* Skills in time management and project planning, using tools like Gantt charts or Trello, to navigate the dissertation timeline effectively (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).
* Proficiency in presenting research findings visually, through charts, graphs, and tables, adhering to APA guidelines for clarity and accessibility (APA, 2020).

These key result areas provide a foundational blueprint for dissertation success, highlighting the interplay between intellectual, attitudinal, and practical elements. They inform the personal SWOT assessment that follows, allowing for targeted self-evaluation and growth planning.

# **Section 2: Conduct a Personal SWOT Assessment**

As an Assertive Architect (INTJ-A) personality type, as detailed in my 16Personalities report, and with my top strengths identified as Heart-Tuned, Studious, Principled, Investigative, Inventive, Differentiator, and Visionary from the Thrivin Strengths Report, I approach research and dissertation writing with a strategic, innovative mindset. This self-assessment draws on these profiles to realistically evaluate my preparedness. The SWOT analysis considers my strengths in strategic thinking and knowledge pursuit, while acknowledging areas needing development, such as emotional intelligence and adaptability to ambiguity. It is grounded in self-reflection from my academic and workplace experiences, where I have excelled in independent projects but struggled with collaborative feedback loops, consistent with guidance on personal growth in dissertation journeys (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).

# **2.1 Strengths**

My primary strengths align with the demands of dissertation research, particularly in intellectual and strategic domains. As an INTJ-A, I possess strong strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, allowing me to see the big picture while attending to details—this is evident in my ability to envision future research impacts and trace problems to their source, as noted in my Investigative and Visionary strengths. For instance, my Studious nature makes me a fountain of knowledge, enabling easy memorization and provision of relevant information, which has helped me excel in literature reviews during prior coursework. Additionally, my Principled disposition drives me to align decisions with values, leading by example and emphasizing the "deeper why" in my studies, ensuring ethical integrity. Relationally, my Heart-Tuned and Differentiator strengths foster deep presence and appreciation of diversity, aiding in collaborative aspects like committee interactions. My Inventive side allows for original thinking, such as developing unconventional approaches to research questions, and my Visionary trait helps in forecasting outcomes and preparing for changes. These strengths have already supported successes, like independently designing a pilot study in a methods course, where my pursuit of knowledge and high standards led to thorough, innovative results, mirroring the strategic planning emphasized in research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). As 1 Peter 4:10 encourages, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace," I view these gifts as tools to glorify God through scholarly work. Overall, they position me well for independent, high-quality scholarly work.

# **2.2 Weaknesses**

Despite these assets, certain weaknesses could impede my dissertation progress if unaddressed. My INTJ-A profile highlights a tendency to appear aloof or detached due to preferring direct communication over social niceties, which might strain relationships with advisors or peers—exacerbated by my Overly Blunt Feedback pitfall, where critical feedback may demotivate others. Impatience with routine tasks, as noted in both reports, leads to restlessness in repetitive data entry or revisions, potentially causing lapses in attention. My discomfort with ambiguity makes adapting to uncertain research scenarios challenging, and neglecting leisure risks burnout from relentless perfectionism and ambition. From the strengths report, overuse patterns like moral arrogance (Principled), excessive idea generation disconnected from needs (Inventive), or withdrawing under stress (Visionary) could manifest as preachiness or isolation. For example, in group projects, I've sometimes dismissed emotional input, focusing solely on logic (Investigative overuse), leading to team friction. Additionally, my triggers, such as dismissal of emotions (Heart-Tuned) or unethical behavior (Principled), might cause emotional flooding or martyrdom, diverting energy from writing. As Hebrews 4:15 assures, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin," reminding me that Christ understands and strengthens us in our frailties. These gaps highlight a need for better emotional management and flexibility to sustain long-term research efforts, as advised in comprehensive dissertation guides (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).

# **2.3 Opportunities**

External factors present numerous opportunities to enhance my research preparedness. My program's research courses offer structured learning in statistics and methodology, aligning with my need for novelty and data collection (Studious and Investigative). Access to the Jerry Falwell Library and tools like Zotero provides resources for skill-building in reference management and database searching. Mentorship from faculty could help navigate social dynamics and office politics, leveraging my strengths in deep conversations and intellectual debate to build buy-in for ideas. Professional development workshops on emotional intelligence would address my growth areas, such as balancing logic with empathy, potentially through peer mastermind groups mentioned in the Thrivin report. My career interests in fields like data science or research science (from 16Personalities) open doors to interdisciplinary collaborations, fostering innovation (Inventive) and visionary planning. Online communities and conferences could expand my network, capitalizing on my resilience (54% in personal growth traits) to recover from setbacks. By engaging these, I can transform weaknesses like impatience into strengths, such as efficient project management, and pursue roles that value my strategic insights, ultimately enriching my dissertation with diverse perspectives, as encouraged in mixed-methods approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). As 2 Peter 3:18 exhorts, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," these opportunities invite spiritual and intellectual maturation.

# **2.4 Threats**

Potential obstacles threaten my dissertation journey, primarily stemming from external pressures and internal triggers. Time constraints from work or personal life could exacerbate my impatience with routine and neglect of rest, leading to burnout as warned in both profiles. Emotional drama or inefficiency in team settings might drain my energy, given my aversion to small talk, micromanagement, and aimlessness. Inefficient committee feedback or ambiguous guidelines could trigger discomfort with uncertainty, causing withdrawal or disproportionate emotional responses (Heart-Tuned overuse). Ethical dilemmas in research, such as data biases, might activate my Principled triggers, resulting in moral arrogance and stalled progress. Broader threats include limited access to advanced tools or funding, which could hinder investigative data collection. Social interruptions or mandatory collaborations might deplete my focus, as I thrive in quiet, autonomous environments. If unmitigated, these could amplify weaknesses like isolating under stress or over-critiquing, derailing timelines. Yet, as James 1:2-4 declares, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing," viewing threats as refining trials fosters resilience. Recognizing these allows proactive planning to maintain momentum, including contingency strategies outlined in dissertation planning resources (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).

This SWOT analysis reveals a strong foundation in strategic and intellectual areas, tempered by relational and adaptability challenges. It underscores the need for targeted development to leverage strengths while mitigating threats, informing the growth plan below.

# **Section 3: Plan for Scholar/Researcher Development**

Based on the SWOT analysis, my development plan focuses on addressing weaknesses (e.g., emotional management, impatience) and threats (e.g., ambiguity, burnout) while building on strengths (e.g., studious curiosity, visionary planning) and opportunities (e.g., courses, tools). The plan includes measurable goals across key result areas, with action steps and self-imposed timelines tied to the current term and dissertation phases. It emphasizes personal accountability, incorporating resources like program courses and Thrivin coaching for sustained progress. As Proverbs 16:3 advises, "Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established," I entrust this plan to God for guidance and success. This holistic approach will guide me through the dissertation journey, ensuring gains in knowledge, dispositions, and skills, aligned with practical planning frameworks (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).

# **3.1 Development Plan Table**

| **Key Result Area** | **Goal** | **Action Steps** | **Timeline or Deadline** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Creating APA Reference Lists for Papers and Dissertation | Become comfortably proficient at using Zotero by the end of the current eight-week term. | 1. Download a copy of Zotero.  2. Watch Zotero tutorial videos on the Jerry Falwell Library website.  3. Use Zotero to create an APA-style citations page for a course assignment. | 1. By the end of Week 2 of this term.  2. By the end of Week 4 of this term.  3. By the end of Week 6 of this term. |
| Enhancing Literature Review Skills | Master identifying and synthesizing critical elements in literature reviews to uncover research gaps effectively. | 1. Review APA guidelines and sample literature reviews from the program handbook.  2. Conduct a practice literature search on my dissertation topic using Jerry Falwell Library databases.  3. Write a 5-page mini-literature review and seek peer feedback. | 1. By the end of Week 3 of this term.  2. By the end of Week 5 of this term.  3. By the end of this term. |
| Developing Positive Attitudes Toward Statistics | Foster a confident, positive disposition toward statistics, reducing impatience and viewing them as tools for insight. | 1. Enroll in an online statistics refresher course (e.g., via Coursera or program resources).  2. Practice basic analyses using SPSS on sample data sets.  3. Apply statistical concepts to a small research question in a course paper. | 1. By the end of Week 1 of next term.  2. By the end of Week 4 of next term.  3. By the completion of the next term's midterm assignment. |
| Improving Emotional Intelligence for Relational Aspects | Build skills in recognizing and validating emotions to address aloofness and enhance committee collaborations, embracing James 4:10, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you." | 1. Read a book on emotional intelligence (e.g., "Emotional Intelligence 2.0") and journal reflections.  2. Participate in a peer mastermind group for feedback on relational dynamics.  3. Practice active listening in one academic meeting per week, noting emotional cues. | 1. By the end of this term.  2. Ongoing, starting Week 2 of next term.  3. By the end of the dissertation proposal phase (estimated 6 months). |
| Managing Impatience with Routine Tasks | Develop strategies to handle repetitive tasks without lapses, incorporating rest to prevent burnout, drawing from Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." | 1. Create a time management plan using Gantt charts for dissertation milestones.  2. Incorporate weekly leisure breaks, tracked in a journal.  3. Break routine tasks into innovative sub-goals, reviewing progress bi-weekly. | 1. By the end of Week 2 of this term.  2. Ongoing, starting immediately.  3. By the end of each term throughout the program. |
| Enhancing Adaptability to Ambiguity | Increase comfort with uncertainty in research through visionary planning and flexibility exercises. | 1. Attend a workshop on agile research methods via the program.  2. Simulate ambiguous scenarios (e.g., changing research questions) in practice sessions.  3. Seek mentorship feedback on adapting plans during proposal development. | 1. By the end of this term.  2. By the end of Week 6 of next term.  3. By the dissertation proposal submission (estimated 4 months). |

This plan integrates my SWOT by prioritizing emotional and dispositional growth alongside skill-building, monitored through quarterly self-reviews and advisor check-ins. It draws on opportunities like courses and tools, addressing threats like burnout with built-in contingencies (e.g., extending timelines if needed). By achieving these goals, I will progress toward dissertation completion with enhanced preparedness, fostering Work Joy and scholarly excellence as emphasized in my strengths profile. Progress will be tracked via a digital personal journal, adjusting as new insights emerge from ongoing self-reflection.

# **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this SWOT assessment and development plan illuminate a pathway for transforming my current research preparedness into scholarly excellence throughout the dissertation process. By leveraging strengths such as strategic vision and principled integrity, while addressing weaknesses like impatience and relational detachment through targeted actions, I position myself to overcome threats and capitalize on opportunities. Grounded in biblical wisdom, such as Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men," this journey is not merely academic but a stewardship of God-given talents. Ultimately, this proactive approach will culminate in a meaningful contribution to the field of leadership, fostering personal growth and fulfillment as a researcher (and possibly a book deal and maybe eventually a Nobel Prize).

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1. All Scripture references will be from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise indicated. Crossway, *Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)