



# Information, Recommendations and Notes for a Term paper, Bachelor- and Master-Thesis Layout

Chair of Marketing and Consumer Research

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## 1 ACADEMIC WORK

An important part of university education is to acquire scientific writing skills. This guidebook should help you to write a term paper or a bachelor/master's thesis. Please note that the information given in this manual refers to the guideline that researchers and students at the chair of Marketing and Consumer Research should follow. Professors in other departments may have different preferences.

The first step to a good scientific work is a thorough literature review. This review should present and critically assess scientific work performed so far on the topic. Also, you should give a broad perspective of the literature. So, citing a single article or simply illustrating various articles with a similar opinion is not enough. Furthermore, it is important to cite the a) most recent and b) internationally recognized publications. The literature review should largely depend on scholarly articles. This means that popular science sources like BBC Focus, National Geographic, or Newsweek are not appropriate. Please also make sure to critically examine your sources.

As a second step, it is important that the literature fits to the topic of your research paper. Please avoid citing not relevant sources. Copy and paste without reference to a source counts as plagiarism and is a serious academic offense and may lead to withdrawal from the university! Furthermore, it is important that you select a balanced and objective writing style (e.g., balancing pro and contra arguments). When revising the literature, you should give an overview of all existing arguments, but not your own opinion. Only when conclusions are drawn, it is legitimate to develop an own opinion against the background of pro and contra arguments.

When data is being used in the paper, it is evident that it should be recent. In addition, it is important to integrate the data in the text. If you display figures or tables in a text, you have to discuss them. Otherwise, they seem to be unnecessary.

Finally, scientific papers are characterized by a certain formal style. Make sure that you stick to our guidelines.

## 2 NOTES ON SEARCHING LITERATURE

### 2.1 Literature Sources

It is important to cite scientific articles when you develop a theoretical foundation for your topic. To start with, consult the following sources:

- Handbooks, Encyclopedia or Textbooks

Handbooks, encyclopedias and textbooks are useful resources to understand what has been established in the literature. They give an overview of a certain research area, and also link different research fields. For further research also have a look on the list of references in the back of these books where you could find additional text sources.

- Bibliographies

Bibliographies are compilations of all released books and writings in a subject area. Nowadays, you can often find them in online databases. However, they do not contain the actual literature, but indicate the source in which a particular subject is discussed. In addition, professional bibliographies alongside with the actual references often include an abstract. Useful data bases are: ECONLIT; EBSCO Host; PsycARTICLES; Social Sciences Citation Index.

A list of TUM literature data bases can be found here: <https://www.ub.tum.de/en/databases>

- Internet sources

Be careful when citing information from internet sources. While scientific articles are published after careful review from experts, articles on the web do not go through such a review process. So, if most of your discussion is based on web resources, readers may raise questions about the reliability of your statements. You should keep in mind the following aspects when citing internet sources: International organizations, federal institutes, federal offices, etc. often provide useful and reliable information and downloads. They can be good sources and may be used as a reference. However, private associations/unions/parties & special interest groups etc. mostly pursue their own interest, and information provided by them may be biased, and scientific objectivity cannot be guaranteed. However, if you want to present different opinions regarding your research topic, these internet resources may contain relevant information.

### 2.2 Recommendation for Literature Research and Evaluation

- Most literature can nowadays be accessed online. Students are able to order books and journals from the online catalogue at the TUM university library. TUM students also have access to the Bavarian State Library ([www.bsb-muenchen.de](http://www.bsb-muenchen.de)).

- If you can't find literature at the TUM or the Bavarian State Library, the following catalogues are very useful: Bibliotheksverbund Bayern (<http://www.bib-bvb.de/bvb.htm>), Gemeinsamer Bibliotheksverbund (<http://www.gbv.de/vgm/>) and the Südwestdeutscher Bibliotheksverbund (<http://www2.bsz-bw.de/cms/>).
- The literature supply should go hand in hand with the creation of an own bibliography and rough draft. Software tools such as Citavi or EndNote can be very useful in this.
- It is practical to note demonstrative assumptions, astonishing phrases and other useful viewpoints (also own ideas) with references while reading, because it is often difficult to find single phrases again when writing the paper.

### **3 BODY AND CONTENT OF THE THESIS/TERM PAPER**

#### **3.1 Cover Page**

The cover page of bachelor/master's thesis should look like the sample cover page from the university (as download available at [https://portal.mytum.de/corporatedesign/vorlagen/index\\_wissenschaftliche\\_arbeiten/](https://portal.mytum.de/corporatedesign/vorlagen/index_wissenschaftliche_arbeiten/)). Students from the TUM School of Management please use the sample cover page that can be found in the end of this document. There, you can also find a template for term paper cover page. In general, please do not use faculty/department logos.

#### **3.2 Structure**

The outline of an academic paper should reflect the topic and the content, and give details about the specific focus that you choose for the paper.

The paper/thesis should have a logical flow of thoughts. This implies that a non-informed reader should be able to understand the content of your work when reading the outline.

The sections of the paper/thesis should be arranged in a way that aspects of equal importance are on the same structural level. All structural levels with a subcategorization have to consist of at least two (sub-) sections (i.e., a subchapter 2.1 is followed by 2.2).

The form of the classification system can be chosen freely, however, the selected form has to be used consistently throughout the paper/thesis. The numeric classification is used quite often. Keep in mind that too many subcategories make it difficult for readers to follow the structure.

Example of numeric classification:

1

2

2.1

2.1.1

2.1.2

2.1.2.1

2.1.2.2

2.1.3

2.2

2.3

3

etc.

The table of content is followed by the list of tables/figures and the list of abbreviations. List of figures/tables, abbreviations, reference and appendix should not be included in the numeric classification.

### **3.3 Abstract**

The abstract of your thesis should provide a short summary of the content (max 1 page for bachelor/master's thesis, ½ page for term paper), and it includes a short description of the motivation for the research topic, objective, theoretical background, methods, results and conclusions.

### **3.4 Table of content, tables and figures**

The abstract is followed by 1) table of content, 2) list of tables, 3) list of figures, and 4) list of abbreviations. All pages before the main body of the text have small roman numbers (i, ii, iii). The running text (i.e. from the introduction) starts with Arabic page numbers (1, 2, 3, ...).

## **3.5 Text**

The text should be logical, concise and objective. Neutral and value-free arguments are indispensable, and too much use of “I”, “one” and “we” is not desirable.

### **3.5.1 Introduction**

The introduction should contain the following aspects:

1. Problem statement/Motivation for the research topic
2. Aim/Objective of the paper/thesis
3. Overview of the paper/thesis structure

The justification of the problem statement and the objective are essential. A clear definition of the paper’s/thesis’ aim is necessary for well-structured writing. Check coherence of the definition with other parts after you finish writing the manuscript (and check whether you reached the objective).

### **3.5.2 Main Part**

The main part should be structured logically, and should convince the reader. Structure and content should meet argumentation style. The chapter headings should inform about the contents. Also transitional sentences should interlink the different chapters.

### **3.5.3 Conclusion**

The purpose of the final part is to conclude the paper/thesis. It is often composed of a summary, implications for research, managerial/policy implications and limitations. It is important that the results reported in conclusion correspond to the aim/objective of the paper/thesis stated in the introduction.

### **3.5.4 Figures, Tables, Graphs**

Figures, tables and graphs serve as illustration arguments. These illustrations should be understandable by themselves, which means they contain all necessary information such as units on the axes for graphs. However, it is still necessary to discuss figures and tables in the text. Figures, tables and graphs should have a meaningful title and a reference. If you created the table/figure yourself (e.g. in a survey) cite “own source” or “own illustration”. The list of tables/figures should include titles and page numbers of all figures and tables in the paper/thesis. References, however, are not part of the title of the figure/table and therefore should not be displayed in the list of tables/figures. As a general rule, titles should be above the figure/table

and the source should be placed below the figure/table. Figures and tables are numbered consecutively (e.g., Figure 1: Changes of the Gini coefficients in Germany from 1956 to 2006).

### 3.6 Reference List

The reference list follows the running text and should have a coherent structure. It contains all sources that have been used in the term paper or thesis. Each source contains the essential bibliographical descriptions (i.e., name(s) of the author(s), title of the publication, edition, place and year of publication). Sources are listed in alphabetical order. A separation into books, essays, web pages etc. is not helpful to the reader and should be avoided. The examples below demonstrate how to cite different publication types (for more information see Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition (2012), pp. 198ff). The reference list should be clear and complete, so that the reader can easily find the references.

- Examples:

#### Book:

Author, A.A. (2015). *Title of work*: Location: Publisher.

Author, A.A. & Author, B.B. (2015). *Title of work*: Location: Publisher.

#### Chapter in a book:

Author, A.A., & Author, B.B. (2015). Title of chapter. In A. Editor, B. Editor, & C. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (pp. xxx-xxx). Location: Publisher.

#### Journal article:

Unnevehr, L., Eales, J., Jensen, H., Lusk, J., McCluskey, J., and Kinsey, J. (2010): Food and Consumer Economics. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 92(2), 506-521.

#### Internet article:

Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Statistisches Jahrbuch 2014. Deutschland und Internationales. [https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/StatistischesJahrbuch/StatistischesJahrbuch2014.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/StatistischesJahrbuch/StatistischesJahrbuch2014.pdf?__blob=publicationFile), accessed October 21, 2015.

The last modification date on the internet page can be used as publication date. If that is not available, the date it was accessed is used. Anyway, it is recommended to print or to save the cited pages to be able to document the citation.

In case there is no author, the editor (see example above) is used for reference. If neither author nor editor can be identified, the source is to be arranged as w.a. (without author) or anonymous. However, internet sources shouldn't be cited (or just in exceptional cases) if the author is not given.

### **3.7 Appendix**

The reference list is followed by the appendix. The appendix only contains content that is supplementary to the text such as SPSS outputs, questionnaire, and interview transcripts.

### **3.8 Declaration of authorship**

A term paper, bachelor's or a master's thesis ends with a signed declaration of authorship. An example is given at the end of this document.

### **3.9 Document examination**

The Technical University of Munich examines and verifies if student work (seminar papers, bachelor's and master's theses) contains plagiarism. In addition to the printed version of the document, you have to submit a PDF version of the work.

### **3.10 Data documentation**

In order to document the data used in a bachelor's or master's thesis, a ZIP folder has to be created containing complete data sets used for the analyses (SPSS, STATA, Excel, or other) as well as the command files. Please add a PDF file with the thesis to the data files when creating ZIP folder and send it to the Chair.

## **4 CITATIONS**

Please use citations for all types of information that you borrow from other authors.

You can cite any kind of published sources. The fact that a source is published guarantees the traceability and the verifiability of the used materials.

You can exceptionally cite bachelor's and master's theses, lecture scripts, general encyclopedias, as well as written or personal communication information if you indicate the source, place and time of the communication.

You may not cite popular magazines (e.g., "The Economist", "Financial Times"), except you want to emphasize practical relevance or the fact that the topic is up to date. It is not suitable to

use them to develop your research question and hypothesis. Because they are not reviewed by experts, the accuracy of information is often questionable.

You do not need to cite general knowledge, relevant technical terms and simple mathematical formulas.

#### 4.1 Types of Citation

Direct quotations are reproductions of word for word material, directly quoted from another article. When quoting, provide the author, year, and specific page of citation in the text. Text passages cannot be altered, so the letters and characters should be reported accurately. If you want to skip a certain part, indicate it with dots (i.e., ...). Your paper should only contain a few direct quotations.

- Example: "...the analysis shows that consumers are likely to remain imperfectly informed on most issues because of the costs of information, primarily the opportunity costs of information processing" (Swinnen, McCluskey, and Francken, 2005, p. 187).

When paraphrasing or referring to an idea of others, provide author and year. If you quote from a book, provide the page number as well. It helps an interested reader locate the relevant passage.

- Example: Due to the cost of information consumers are said to stay not fully informed on most topics (Swinnen, McCluskey, and Francken, 2005, p. 187).

Citing from others, but not the original source is called secondary citation. It can be justified only if the original text - despite intensive search - cannot be found.

- Example: "The [...] press appears to me to have passions and instincts of its own. [...] In America as in France it constitutes a singular power, so strangely composed of mingled good and evil that liberty could not live without it, and public order can hardly be maintained against it." (Tocqueville, 1853, cited according to Swinnen, McCluskey, and Franck, 2005, p. 175).

#### 4.2 Format of Citation

References should be given in the text. When there is more than one title from the same author within one year, the references are given small alphabetic characters (e.g. Federal Statistical Office, 2005a; 2005b). They also should appear in the reference list. In case of three or more authors, only the first author is being mentioned and the others are replaced by "et al." (e.g., Meyer et al., 2008). However, in the list of references, all authors have to be named.

## 5 FORMAT OF THE THESIS

### Bachelor's and Master's Thesis:

- Front page: Templates are as download available at: [https://portal.mytum.de/corporatedesign/vorlagen/index\\_wissenschaftliche\\_arbeiten/](https://portal.mytum.de/corporatedesign/vorlagen/index_wissenschaftliche_arbeiten/) and for students from the TUM School of Management at <https://www.mgt.tum.de/download-center>
- Margin: Normal margins (left 2.5 cm, right 2.5 cm)
- Font size: Text, structure, literature source 12 (Times New Roman) or 11 (Arial); Footnotes appropriately smaller
- Spacing: Text and structure 1.5 spaced; reference list and footnotes single spaced
- Format: Justified
- Length: ca. 30 pages (B.Sc.), 70 pages (M.Sc.), respectively
- General: For printed version: Soft cover adhesive binding (no spiral binding / no book binding)

### Term-paper:

- Margin: Normal margins (left 2.5 cm, right 2.5 cm)
- Font size: Text, structure, literature source 12 (Times New Roman) or 11 (Arial); Footnotes appropriately smaller
- Spacing: Text and structure 1.5 spaced; reference list and footnotes single spaced
- Format: Justified
- Length: Generally, ca. 10-15 pages (including structure). The instructions from the adequate seminar are relevant.

### **Important remark regarding the usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

If the use of aids in particular artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT has been prohibited by the examiner, the use of such tools constitutes an attempt to deceive and leads to the assessment of "insufficient" or "failed".

If the use of artificial intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT) has been permitted as a research tool for seminar papers or similar by the examiner, it must clearly be indicated in the text where contents of ChatGPT or similar have been adopted.

## 6 RECOMMENDED LITERATURE

Bailey, S. (2006): *Academic Writing for International Students*. Routledge Study Guide. Taylor & Francis, Second Edition.

Silvia, P. J. (2007): *How to Write a Lot. A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*. American Psychological Association, First Edition.

Swales, J.M., and Feak, C. B. (2004): *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*. Michigan Series in English for Academic & Professional Purposes. University of Michigan Press.

Tissington, P., Hasael, M., and Matthiesen, J. (2009): *How to Write Successful Business and Management Essays*. Sage.

Brauner, Detlef J. und Hans-Ulrich Vollmer: *Erfolgreiches wissenschaftliches Arbeiten, Seminararbeit – Diplomarbeit – Doktorarbeit*. Verlag Wissenschaft und Praxis, Sternenfels: 2004.

Disterer, Georg: *Studienarbeiten schreiben – Diplom-, Seminar- und Hausarbeiten in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften*. 2. Aufl., Springer Verlag Berlin/Heidelberg: 2003.

Stickel-Wolf, Christine und Joachim Wolf: *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten und Lerntechniken, Erfolgreich studieren – gewusst wie!* 3. Aufl., Gabler Verlag Wisbaden: 2005.

Theisen, Manuel R.: *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten. Technik – Methodik – Form*. 12. Aufl., Verlag Franz Vahlen, München: 2005.

**Bachelor's Thesis or Master's Thesis**  
for the Attainment of the Degree  
**Bachelor of Science or Master of Science**  
at the TUM School of Management  
of the Technische Universität München

**Title (German)**  
**Title (English)**

Examiner: Prof. ...  
Chair/ Professorship for ...

Person in Support: H. Mustermann

Course of Study: TUM .....

Submitted by: Tom Mustermann  
Strasse 5  
80000 München  
Matriculation Number 01234567

Submitted on: 00.00.0000

**Recommended front page of a Term paper and Table of contents:**



**Term paper** in module / seminar  
.....(*Mark the module*)

***Title of the Term Paper***

Chair of Marketing and Consumer Research  
Instructor: .....

Presented by  
Student ..... (*Name, Immatriculation number*)

---

List of figures (*new page*)

Figure 1:.....(*Page*)  
Figure 2:.....(*Page*)  
(*etc.*)

List of tables (*new page*)

Table 1:.....(*Page*)  
(*etc.*)

Table of content (*new page*)

1 Introduction	2
2	2
2.1	2
2.2	3
2.2.1	3
( <i>etc.</i> )	
Reference list	( <i>Page</i> )
Appendix	( <i>Page</i> )

**Recommended design of an affidavit necessary for a bachelor or master thesis.**

**Declaration of authorship**

Last Name:

First Name:

Date of Birth:

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted is my own unaided work. All direct or indirect sources used are acknowledged as references.

I am aware that the thesis in digital form can be examined for the use of unauthorized aid and in order to determine whether the thesis as a whole or parts incorporated in it may be deemed as plagiarism. For the comparison of my work with existing sources I agree that it shall be entered in a database where it shall also remain after examination, to enable comparison with future theses submitted. Further rights of reproduction and usage, however, are not granted here.

This paper was not previously presented to another examination board and has not been published.

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(Place, Date)

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(Signature)