UNIVERSITÄT MANNHEIM
Fakultät für Betriebswirtschaftslehre

CHAIR OF PUBLIC AND
NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

Guidelines for scientific writing

at the chair of

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Preamble

By writing a scientific paper, students should prove their ability to independently edit and understand a scientific topic by using scientific methods within a given period of time. Potential topics emerge from the research profile of the chair, which can be summarized by socially oriented service management in public and nonprofit organizations.

In principle, all papers written at our chair must comply with the rules of formally correct scientific work. Therefore, prior to writing a scientific paper, studying the basics of scientific working is recommended. The following comments on the preparation of a scientific paper at the Chair of Business Administration, Public, and Nonprofit Management are based on the following monographs:

Theisen, M. R. (2013). *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten: erfolgreich bei Bachelor- und Masterarbeit* (16. Aufl.). Vahlen.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7. Ed.). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

In case of deviations, the guidelines of the chair must be followed. In case of uncertainty or general queries regarding the preparation of a thesis or the editing process, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jonas Bruder (coordinator of scientific writing). All content-related questions that affect your thesis can be clarified during the editing process with the respective supervisor.

The entire team of the chair wishes you the best of success and pleasure during the writing of your paper or thesis!

Prof. Dr. Bernd Helmig

1 Special features of different examination formats

1.1 Special features of seminar papers written for the research seminar MAN 710

Application and topic selection
Students who wish to write their seminar paper as part of the MAN 710 research seminar must register for the seminar. There are fixed time periods for this, which are communicated on the chair's website. The seminar paper topics are based on the focus of the research seminar. Depending on the focus of the seminar, students can submit preferences for topics advertised at the start of the semester or develop their own research question(s). Details can be found in the course syllabus on the chair's website.

Deadlines
Students are informed about the deadlines for the seminar papers in the kick-off meeting of the respective seminar.

1.2 Special features of bachelor theses

Application and topic selection
Bachelor students do not have to register for their bachelor thesis at the chair but instead register centrally via the Dean's Office. Students will receive binding information on the administrative procedure for their degree centrally from the Dean's Office. After allocation to our chair, Bachelor students are asked to submit their preferences for the advertised topics. The allocation of topics will be made with the best possible consideration of the individual preferences submitted at the time of registration.

Deadlines
The processing time for bachelor theses is **ten weeks** and begins on a fixed date for all students.

1.3 Special features of master's theses

1.3.1 Application and topic selection

Application
There is no fixed registration date for master's theses; students are free to choose the start date. The master's thesis process at our chair begins with the selection of a topic.

Topic selection
For master's theses, students generally choose a specific master's thesis topic from the list of topics published on our homepage. Students also have the opportunity to propose their own topics that fit in with the chair's profile. The chair's list of topics and guidelines for suggesting your own topics can be found on the chair's homepage under the heading "Teaching" and then in the sections "Master's courses" and "Master's thesis".

If students are interested in a practical thesis with a private, public, or nonprofit organization, it is generally possible to submit a topic suggestion to Prof. Helmig. However, it should be clarified with Mr. Bruder beforehand whether the desired topic corresponds to a research area that fits the profile of the chair. For instance, the mere transfer of already known topics, such as the "development of a nonprofit marketing concept for organization XY", would not fulfill this requirement.

Topic reservation and reading time
Once students have decided on a topic, they contact Mr. Bruder (jonas.bruder@uni-mannheim.de) by e-mail and send him both their topic preference and the completed check sheet for master's theses (can be found on the chair's homepage under "Teaching" in the sections "Master''s courses" and "Master's thesis"). Based on the fact sheet, it is checked whether the students meet the requirements for taking on a master's thesis at the Chair of ABWL, Public & Nonprofit Management - as listed in the module catalog. If the students fulfill the requirements and the topic is still available, students can read up on their preferred topic for **two weeks** without obligation. During this time the topic will not be assigned elsewhere.

Topic registration
When the students decide on the topic, they inform Mr. Bruder. Students are then asked to fill out a form with which they bindingly register for a topic. At the same time, the supervising research assistant is assigned. Students must then arrange a kick-off meeting with their supervisor within one week. If no appointment is made, the topic is released again for other students. The six-week processing period for the proposal begins with the kick-off meeting.

1.3.2 Proposal

Preparation of a proposal
Once the initial literature research has been completed and the students have familiarized themselves with the basics of the topic, a proposal is prepared. A proposal contains the basic building blocks of the planned thesis and is therefore already formally structured like the later master thesis. The proposal should not exceed 2000 words (+/- 10%) (excluding the title page, table of contents for proposal, provisional table of contents, schedule, and bibliography) and should include the following elements:

Title page
Table of contents for proposal
1. Provisional table of contents of master thesis
2. Introduction with problem (practical and scientific relevance), research gap, research goal(s), and research question(s)
3. Theoretical-conceptual foundations with state of research ("state-of-the-art") and theories
4. Methodology with first reflections on the empirical research design
5. Schedule

Bibliography

The proposal should include **a title page** and a provisional **table of contents** (rough outline including estimated page numbers based on the exemplary table of contents of a master's thesis, see Fig. 4) that clearly shows the structure of the thesis. This allows the supervisor to gain an initial overview of the thesis.

The **problem of the thesis** should be described in detail so that the supervisors can recognize the facts on which the thesis is based and where the focus of the thesis should lie. The practical and scientific relevance of the topic should be worked out and the research gaps identified should be described. Building on this, the objectives of the thesis should be formulated on the basis of open research questions that are to be answered.

The **theoretical-conceptual foundations** should also provide an initial overview of the current state of research and theories and/or concepts relevant to explaining the research objective (i.e., a review of the scientific findings already available on the topic). In the **methodology section**, initial thoughts should be given as to which basic research design appears suitable to the students (e.g., qualitative or quantitative) in order to achieve the defined objectives. In addition, the proposal should include a **timetable** outlining the most important milestones of the research project.

In general, when drafting the proposal, special attention should be paid to a scientific writing style, grammar ,and formalities. The proposal will be discussed in a personal meeting with the supervisor. The first version of the proposal must be submitted to the supervisor **within four weeks after the topic has been adopted**. At this point, the date for the approval meeting with the examiner is set by the supervisor. Experience has shown that one or two further coordination meetings follow until all content-related questions regarding the structure of the thesis have been clarified.

Approval of the proposal and processing deadlines

The proposal is discussed in a personal meeting with the examiner, Professor Dr. Bernd Helmig, and approved by him. As soon as the proposal has been accepted, the official processing time for writing the thesis begins. The processing times for master's theses can be found in the relevant examination regulations.

1.3.3 Appendix for master's theses

For empirical master's theses, we recommend the following integration of content in the appendix, differentiated according to the empirical methods used (qualitative and quantitative methods) and the versions (print version and digital version). The appendices in the print version should be written exclusively in the language of the scientific work. For example, in the case of a master's thesis written in English, all appendices in the print version must be translated into English if the data collection is carried out in another language. In the digital appendix, the documents can be inserted in the original language. In the case of English papers, for example, the transcripts of interviews conducted in German are submitted here in the original language.

The formal design of the appendix in the print version corresponds to the regulations in chapter 4.6. There are no formal requirements for the digital appendix. It should be designed in such a way that the various contents are clearly identifiable by means of appropriate headings and numbering. A separate index is not required for the digital appendix. Detailed information on submitting the print version and digital version can be found in chapter 6.

Overview of elements in the appendix of scientific work with a qualitative-empirical research design

Print version

- Data collection: Interview guides/evaluation protocols for secondary data; details on the sample (table format), if not integrated in the main text body

Digital appendix

- Data collection: Interview guidelines in the language used for data collection, if this differs from the language of the paper, for example, in German for a paper written in English
- Data corpus: Raw data, i.e., transcripts with line numbering (no audio files), secondary data if applicable
- Data analysis: Codebook with anchor examples, exported code system if software is used (e.g., MAXQDA)

Overview of elements in the appendix of scientific work with a quantitative-empirical research design

Print version

- Data collection: Data collection instrument, including questionnaire, experimental design, etc.; details on the sample (table format), if not integrated in the main text body
- Data analysis: Descriptive statistics, sensitivity analyses, if necessary, additional graphical presentation of results

Digital version

- Data collection: If applicable, data collection instrument in the language of the data collection, if this differs from the language of the work (e.g., in German for work in English)
- Data corpus: Raw data, secondary data if applicable
- Data analysis: Syntax of the data analysis (e.g., R code), analysis outputs for paid software (e.g., SmartPLS) if applicable

These lists represent the minimum requirements for the annexes. Depending on the master's thesis, the appendices may contain further elements. The supervisors are available to answer individual questions about the appendix.

2 Counseling

The supervision of seminar papers, bachelor and master theses is carried out by the scientific staff of the Chair of Business Administration, Public & Nonprofit Management. If students have any questions regarding their work, they can always contact their supervisor to arrange an appointment. There is no maximum limit for consultation hours. Students can make as much use of the counseling service as they need. For this purpose, they must send their questions to their supervisor at least one day before the appointment. Issues regarding content, formalities, or methodological aspects can be discussed at any time. However, it must be ensured that the students have dealt with the topics in advance. The counseling service does **not** include reading the thesis or seminar paper. An exception to this is the proposal for a master thesis, which is read and evaluated by the responsible supervisor in order to prepare the student for the release interview with the examiner.

3 General information on literature research

Every scientific paper is based on scientific findings. Therefore, a systematic literature search on the respective research topic is carried out in every scientific paper. It is advisable to start with the literature search as soon as you have familiarized yourself with a topic. This includes research in:

- Management journals (e.g., *Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft, Schmalenbachs Zeitschrift für betriebswirtschaftliche Forschung, Die Betriebswirtschaft, Journal für Betriebswirtschaft, Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review, Administrative Science Quarterly, Organization Science*, etc.),
- Journals from the narrower research field of public & nonprofit management (e.g., *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, Voluntas, Nonprofit Management & Leadership, or Public Administration Review, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, etc.) as well as in the
- Scientific literature databases (EBSCO, ABI, WebofScience, JSTOR, etc.),
- Textbooks, i.e., in the basic literature.

4 Drafting the scientific paper

4.1 Formal requirements

Every scientific paper must be formally produced and submitted in an impeccable form. The following aspects must be considered during the preparation:

Font type
Due to readability and comparability, it is required to use the font type "Calibri" with a font size of 12 points in the text (normal character spacing), 1.5 times line spacing, and justification with hyphenation.

Margin
The margins must be formatted as follows:

Top:	2,5 cm (no use of headers)
Bottom:	2,0 cm
Left:	2,5 cm
Right:	2,5 cm
Gutter	1 cm For double-sided printing, make sure that the gutter is always on the inside.

Pagination
For the table of contents and the other directories (e.g., appendix, reference list) the pages are numbered with Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.). In the text, pages are numbered with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.). Page numbers are located in the footer on the right side.

Length

Bachelor thesis:	20 pages (+/- 10 %) incl. headlines, figures and tables
Seminar paper:	5.700 words (+/- 10 %) incl. headlines, figures and tables [1]
Master thesis:	15.000 words (+/- 10 %) incl. headlines, figures and tables

For seminar and master theses, the **word count must be stated separately on a page at the end of the paper**.

If necessary, additional pages, such as the list of contents, illustrations, tables, abbreviations, appendices, and symbols as well as the bibliography or the appendix, the statutory declaration and, if applicable, a non-disclosure notice, may be added although without being counted as actual text pages.

Language, orthography, and punctuation
Regarding the **language**, a scientific writing style is required. A journalistic writing style with filler words and flowery expressions should be omitted. **Spelling and punctuation** should be accurate. For theses written in English, either the British or the American spelling should be followed consistently. A mixture of different spellings is not permitted. When creating a scientific text, the author should avoid referring to him-/herself directly. As an exception, the first-person singular can be used in the methodology section for better readability. In general, the work should be written in the **present tense**. However, the past tense can be used in the methodology section when appropriate. Convoluted sentences, consisting of multiple subordinate clauses or anthropomorphisms (personifications) should be avoided. The author should try to guide the reader through the work by referring to other paragraphs and transitions.

Headings and paragraphs
The distance between headings and text should be 12 pt. The distance between the text and the next heading should be 24 pt. Headings must be left-justified and can be highlighted by font sizes that differ from the text (max. 14 pt).

Paragraphs that follow a paragraph are given an indent of 1 cm. The first paragraph after a heading or other insertions (e.g., multi-line quotations, illustrations, tables) is "blunt", i.e., there is no indentation here. Excessively long sections without paragraphs as well as one-sentence paragraphs should be avoided. As long as it is held consistently, students can decide whether the text only appears on the lowest or also on higher outline levels.

Integration of figures and tables into the text
Figures or tables are often helpful in presenting a complicated subject in an understandable way. Figures and tables must be formatted uniformly throughout the paper (left-aligned/with frame or centered/without frame, etc.). In the case of figures and tables, care must also be taken to ensure that they are very easy to read and are inserted in good quality. The illustrations should always be created graphically and not copied from other sources.

The sources of tables and figures are listed directly below the respective illustration; the source reference always begins with "Source: ..." (see Fig. 1). The short citation style applies (see also section 4.4). The title of the figure or table is formatted in 12 pt font, the references in 10 pt font, flush left with a hanging indent (flush with the title of the figure/table).

[1] Deviating requirements will be announced in the context of the respective seminar.

Figures and tables should be included in the text if the text directly refers to them (otherwise they are better placed in the appendix). Often illustrations or tables are helpful to illustrate complicated facts in a comprehensible way.

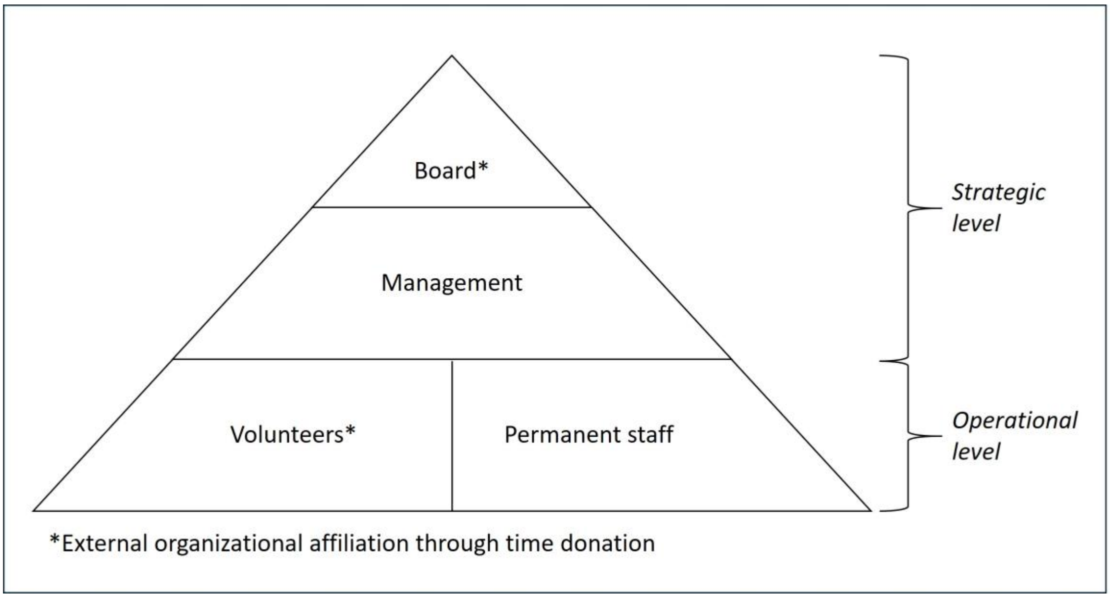

Fig 1: Personnel structures in non-profit organizations
(Source: Own representation, based on Helmig & Boenigk, 2019, p. 96)

The numbering of figures, tables and appendices is consecutive. Figures or tables in the text section of the paper are never self-explanatory: This means that each figure and/or table must be explained in the text. Figures and tables should be integrated into the text section if direct reference is made to them in the text. Otherwise, they are better placed in the appendix. In principle, all tables and figures, whether integrated in the text or in the appendix, should be referenced in the text by stating the respective number (e.g., "cf. Fig. 1" or "in Appendix 1").

4.2 Structure and guidelines on the preparation of introductory directories

A scientific paper should be structured as follows (note: each directory should be created on a new page):

- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of figures (if necessary)
- Table directory (if necessary)
- List of abbreviations (if necessary)
- Symbol directory (if necessary)
- List of appendices (if necessary)
- Text pages of the work itself
- Appendix (if necessary)
- Bibliography
- Reflection on the use of AI tools (if necessary)
- Statutory declaration
- Non-disclosure notice (if necessary)

Title page

The title page should correspond to the following pattern (see Fig. 2). The semester on the title page depends on the date of submission. **No logos** of the University of Mannheim and/or the Faculty of Business Administration may be used. This also applies to the cover of printed works. The title page contains the following information:

- Title of the work
- Type of work
- Name and chair of the supervising professor
- Name, address, and student number of the author
- Date of submission

On the Importance of Cause-Related Marketing
for the Fundraising of Nonprofit Organizations

Type of paper (seminar paper, bachelor’s thesis, master’s thesis)

submitted to

Chair of Business Administration,
Public and Nonprofit Management
Prof. Dr. Bernd Helmig
University of Mannheim

by
Name of the student
Degree program
Student ID number

Address

Semester (Spring or Fall YYYY)

Fig 2: Sample title page
(Source: Own illustration)

Table of contents

The table of contents covers the whole paper and should be arranged accordingly. In general, six basic elements can be distinguished:

- Introductory section (chapter 1),
- Presentation of the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the work (chapter 2)
- methods section, which describes the empirical research design of the study (chapter 3)
- Results section (chapter 4),
- Discussion section, in which the author's own results are discussed against the background of the basic principles from chapter 2, as well as limitations, research outlook, and management implications (chapter 5), and a
- Conclusion (chapter 6).

All parts of the table of contents must relate to the selected topic. This requires "problem-oriented headings". Apart from that, the structure should be clear and without any overlaps. To understand the logical structure of the work, appropriate, short, and meaningful headings should be developed. The respective headings should be self-explanatory. Complete sentences, especially relative and passive sentences as well as questions and dashes must be avoided.

The following formal requirements must be considered:

- **Structure**
  The decimal classification system must be used for the structure. To ensure clarity, a maximum of three levels of headings is permitted. When a chapter is subdivided, it must contain at least two subchapters.
- **Formatting of the table of contents**
  The table of contents must be formatted in Calibri font, size 12 pt. Subheadings must be formatted with hanging indents. Chapter numbering must be aligned with the heading of the respective higher-level chapter.
- **Page number**
  The table of contents is assigned the Roman page number "I", placed in the lower right corner.
- **Examples**
  Figure 3 shows an example of a table of contents for a bachelor's thesis. Figure 4 shows a corresponding example for a master's thesis.

Tale of contents

Fig 3: Example of a table of contents for a bachelor thesis
(Source: Anonymous bachelor's thesis)

Table of contents

Fig 4: Example of a table of contents for a master thesis
(Source: Anonymous master’s thesis)

List of figures and table directory

In the list of figures and the table directory, all figures and tables of the work are listed with titles and page numbers. Figure 5 shows an example (the table directory must be created analogously).

List of figures

Fig 5: Example of a list of figures
(Source: Own illustration)

List of abbreviations

Only technical abbreviations must be explained and listed alphabetically in the list of abbreviations (see Figure 6). This also includes the abbreviations used in the bibliography. Do not use too many abbreviations to keep your text fluent. Common abbreviations are not listed. Abbreviations are written out when first mentioned and are noted in parentheses. For example: “The work of a Nonprofit Organization (NPO) is characterized by …”.

List of abbreviations

DBW	Die Betriebswirtschaft
DEA	Data Envelopment Analysis
FDH	Free Disposal Hull
NPO	Nonprofit organization

Fig 6: Example of a list of abbreviations
(Source: Own illustration)

Symbol directory
All symbols used in the text (e.g., @, €, &, §, §§, %) must be explained and listed alphabetically in the list of symbols, as shown exemplarily in Figure 7.

Symbol directory

€	Euro
§, §§	Section, sections

Fig 7: Example of a symbol directory
(Source: Own illustration)

List of appendices
The list of appendices contains all appendices with titles and page numbers (see Figure 8).

List of appendices
Appendix 1: Results of hospital employee services X
Appendix 2: Excerpt from § 135 SGB V obligation to quality assurance XI
Appendix 3: Model of organizational behavior of hospital employees XII

Fig 8: Example of a list of appendices
(Source: Own illustration)

4.3 Content requirements

The content requirements for the work to be written are determined by the topic. For this reason, only general information can be provided here on the basic expectations placed on the various text components.

The **introduction** (chapter 1 of the thesis) initially includes the problem definition of the thesis (section 1.1). The **problem statement** answers the question of why it is relevant and interesting to write a paper on the chosen topic from a practical and scientific point of view. The problem statement usually starts in a more general way (e.g., general trends in nonprofit management) (practical relevance) and leads the reader more specifically to the actual core topic of the paper based on the current scientific discourse (scientific relevance) (funnel-shaped structure of the problem statement). In some cases, it makes sense to briefly define the central terms of the thesis in the problem statement. In addition, an overview of existing research gaps is required to prepare the objectives of the thesis (section 1.2). In this respect, it may be useful to briefly summarize the current state of research (What do we know about the topic?) and, building on this, briefly address research gaps (What is yet unknown?).

Building on the research gaps identified in 1.1, the **objectives of the thesis** are set out in section 1.2. It is advisable to explicitly present the research objective(s) formulated as question(s) in the thesis. Subsequently, the scientific contribution of the work to the larger discourse can be briefly emphasized. This is followed by an outline of the **course of the investigation** (section 1.3). This should briefly describe how and why the thesis was structured in the given form. This includes an explanation of the chosen sequence of chapters. The course of the study is therefore not a mere reproduction of the table of contents. The justification of the approach is central here.

The **theoretical-conceptual part** of the thesis (chapter 2 of the thesis) includes all the basics discussed in the literature (e.g., definitions, conceptual foundations and theories that justify the relationships to be explained, literature findings, etc.) that are necessary to answer the defined research question(s). The theoretical-conceptual part should not be too broad, i.e., no theoretical-conceptual foundations should be presented that do not concern the core of the work but are only marginally relevant (e.g., no definition of the term nonprofit management if the title of the work is cause-related marketing).

In the **main part of the thesis** (chapters 3 to 5 of the thesis), the research questions raised are answered either conceptually or empirically. In this respect, it is the core of the thesis and should therefore also comprise the largest number of pages. The main part can be divided into **methodology, presentation of results and discussion of the results**. It is expected that the reference to the topic is always maintained, that the arguments are logical and free of contradictions and that controversial topics are also discussed. In addition, personal assessments and comments should always be separated from scientific arguments and identified as such.

In the **methodology section**, the empirical procedure of the work (e.g., data collection and data analysis) is described and justified based on the subject and methodological literature. The **results section** presents the results of the work in a transparent and comprehensible manner, without critically evaluating them (this is part of the discussion). In the **discussion**, the central statements and results of the work are to be critically evaluated against the background of the research objective, considering the theoretical and conceptual background. It is also advisable to present and discuss the limits of the study, i.e., the limitations of your own research work. In addition, implications for future research work and implications for practice are derived from the results of the work. A short **conclusion** (chapter 6) rounds off the thesis.

For master's theses only, students should also write an **abstract** (max. 200 words). This is listed at the beginning of the thesis and does not count towards the word count of the thesis.

Brief overview of the basic structure of the text part of the paper

All things considered; the paper should follow a "red thread" which is based on the following structure:

- **Problem, relevance, question:**
  - Why is it important or interesting to deal with the topic from a practical point of view? (practical relevance)
  - Why is it important or interesting to deal with the topic from a scientific point of view? (scientific relevance)
  - What do we already know from research? (brief summary of the current state of research)
  - What has not yet been discovered or investigated? For implementation topics also: Which problem has not yet been solved or has not been solved in an appropriate or efficient way? (research gaps)
  - What is the specific objective of the work? (research question(s))
  - What contribution can this work make to science? (research contribution)
- **Theoretical-conceptual foundations and state of research:**
  - What has already been found out about the topic? (detailed state of research)
  - Which theories/concepts are used in the relevant specialist literature to explain the topic? How exactly do they explain (partial) aspects of the topic?
- **Methodological approach**:
  - Which research design was used to close the research gap or solve the problem mentioned and why?
  - How exactly was the data collected and analyzed and why?
- **Results:**
  - What are the findings of the analysis or the implementation?
- **Discussion:**
  - How are the results to be classified against the theoretical-conceptual background and the current research discourse? How is the contribution of the work to be assessed in relation to previous research and development? (evaluation of the results)

    Note: All questions raised in the introduction are to be answered within the paper and evaluated in the discussion.
  - What are the limitations of the work in terms of content and methodology? (limitations)
  - What new research question(s) are opening up? (research outlook)
  - What are the implications for management practice? (management implications)
- **Outlook:**

  Brief summary of the work, highlighting the results and the contribution of the work to science and practice

4.4 Citation of sources

When writing seminar papers, bachelor, and master theses at Professor Helmig's chair, citations must comply with the standards of the most recent, currently the 7th, edition of the **American Psychological Association (APA)**. Comprehensive explanations can be found in the APA handbook, available in several editions in the university library:

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7. Aufl.). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

In addition, this citation style is stored in all common literature software processing programs, such as Zotero or Mendeley, and can be selected there. However, when using reference management software, students should critically check every source import and the bibliography at the end of the work for completeness and correctness and adapt it if necessary.

Quotability
Regarding the quotability of articles, it should be noted that only such - published - material may be used whose traceability and verifiability is guaranteed (e.g., not seminar papers, master's theses or lecture notes). It is problematic to cite popular journals where the boundary to specialist journals is blurred (e.g., *manager magazin, Wirtschaftswoche* etc.). In case of doubt, these should be avoided, and another source should be identified, as these magazines often contain general information that does not need to be cited anyway (as is also the case in most other consumer magazines, e.g., *Focus, Stern, Spiegel*, etc.). Purely popular magazines (e.g., *Hörzu, Brigitte* etc.) are by no means worth quoting; they are at best suitable for a topical introduction to the topic to be dealt with. In addition, they do not have to be cited:

- General knowledge that can be taken from a (conversational) dictionary,
- relevant technical terms,
- common terms from specialist lexicons and
- mathematical formulas.

Literature research, quality, and appropriateness of the sources used
The recommended literature should be included in the review of the current state of research. The work should reflect the student's ability to understand the recommended literature. Students must show the ability to reflect it critically. Within the framework of a scientific discussion, the basic and current literature on the subject area should be considered. It is therefore expected that the literature review (clearly!) extends the recommended introductory literature. Good work is characterized by the fact that the latest and, in particular, high-quality publications are included in the review of the current state of research.

Plagiarism
Also, there is the issue of **plagiarism**. To avoid accusations of plagiarism, it is important that students are familiar with the various forms of citation and take them into account carefully. All scientific papers will be checked by plagiarism software.

Formatting of direct quotes (primary and secondary data)
When using direct quotes from primary data (e.g., interview transcripts) or secondary data (e.g., internal firm documents) shorter than three lines, the direct quotes are integrated within the paragraph and marked with quotation marks,
Direct quotes longer than three lines are formatted without quotation marks and are indented (1 cm) with single line spacing,
Primary data is cited with the source, a line number, and a page number: (Interview A, line 123, p. VI).
Secondary data is cited with the source and a page number: (Document B, p. IX).
Figure 9 shows an example of the formatting of direct quotations.

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Fig 9: Example for formatting of direct quotes
(Source: Own illustration)

4.5 Bibliography

After the text part has been written, the **bibliography** must be prepared. The literature used must be listed in the bibliography in accordance with the current version of the American Psychological Association (APA). You will find several editions of the current APA handbook in the university library.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7. Aufl.). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

It must be **formatted** with single line spacing, a distance of 12 pt after the text, and a hanging indent of 1 cm. No justification is used in the bibliography. Instead, the bibliography is left-justified. In the bibliography, the literature cited in the text must be listed alphabetically according to the surname of the author (if no author is indicated, the title takes its place). In case of several works by identical author(s), a chronological order must be applied. Monographs, essays, internet sources, anthologies, etc. are **not separately listed**.

4.6 Appendix

The appendix lists all documents that are relevant for understanding the work but did not necessarily have to be included in the text. These are often interviews, additional evaluations, supplementary material, etc. Appendices are listed one after the other. Tables, illustrations, samples, etc. that cannot be included in the main body can be included in the appendix. The underlying sources for the appendix must be listed in the bibliography. Information contained in the appendix must be referred to accordingly in the text.

In contrast to tables and figures, the title of appendices is placed above the illustration and the source below it. Figure 10 below shows an example.

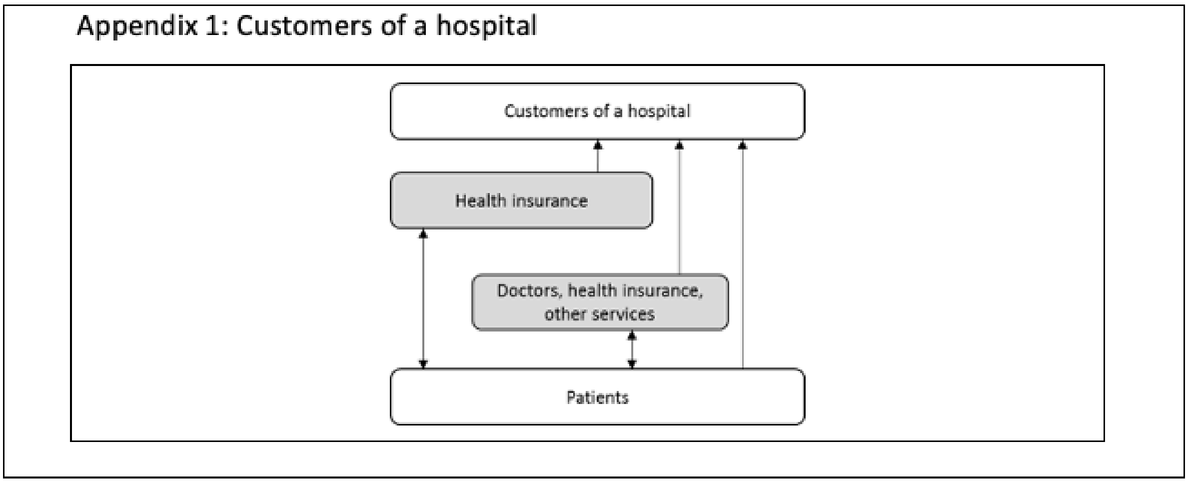

Fig 10: Example for an appendix
(Source: Own illustration)

4.7 Statutory declaration

The statutory declaration on the last page of the seminar paper, bachelor, and master thesis must be **signed personally**. Even if a thesis is written in English, the **declaration must still be made in German.** If the declaration is not made, examiners can refrain from correcting the thesis. The thesis is then graded as “5.0” (not sufficient). The German version reads as follows:

„Hiermit versichere ich, dass diese Abschlussarbeit von mir selbst verfasst ist und dass ich keinerlei fremde Hilfe in Anspruch genommen habe. Ebenso versichere ich, dass diese Arbeit oder Teile daraus weder von mir selbst noch von anderen als Leistungsnachweise andernorts eingereicht wurden. Wörtliche und sinngemäße Übernahmen aus anderen Schriften und Veröffentlichungen in gedruckter oder elektronischer Form sind gekennzeichnet. Sämtliche Sekundärliteratur und sonstige Quellen sind nachgewiesen und in der Bibliographie aufgeführt. Das Gleiche gilt für graphische Darstellungen und Bilder sowie alle Internet-Quellen.

Ich bin ferner damit einverstanden, dass meine Arbeit zwecks eines Plagiatsabgleichs in elektronischer Form anonymisiert versendet und gespeichert werden kann. Mir ist bekannt, dass von der Korrektur der Arbeit abgesehen werden kann, wenn die Erklärung nicht erteilt wird.“

Mannheim, den ... (Abgabedatum) Unterschrift

4.8 Non-disclosure notice

For papers in cooperation with organizations, the partners may require a non-disclosure agreement. In this case, the work may be preceded by a non-disclosure notice based on the following text:

“The following master thesis contains confidential information. Therefore, it was a prerequisite that the thesis would not be made accessible to the public. In order to meet this requirement, the following non-disclosure notice applies: This master thesis was prepared for internal purposes of organization XY. The public display of this Master thesis, therefore, requires the prior consent of Organization XY. According to the examination regulations for obtaining a degree at the University of Mannheim, one copy of the thesis remains under lock at the supervising chair. The work will not be accessible to third parties.”

5 Guidelines for the use of AI tools

Applications based on artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT, Microsoft 365 Copilot, or Grammarly can be of great assistance in tasks such as generating ideas, composing academic papers, and copy editing. However, such tools should be used with caution and are permitted within the university context only under certain conditions. Below you find the corresponding regulations of our chair for writing academic papers.

5.1 Guidelines for the use of AI-based applications

AI-based applications are generally permitted as aids for academic work (Bachelor's thesis, Master's thesis, seminar papers) at our chair. However, the use of such tools is subject to specific conditions. The following guidelines apply:

- **You are solely responsible for the results you submit to your examiners**, even if AI-based applications provide you with incorrect information. It is your responsibility to identify any errors and address them before submitting your work for evaluation.
- **AI-based applications may not be used as standalone sources.** Even if you use such applications, for example, for idea generation, the actual content of your work must be substantiated by reputable and, above all, scientific sources.
- **According to the examination regulations**, all **resources used must be specified**. This also includes the use of AI-based applications. If AI tools are used, the academic paper must therefore contain a **reflection section** (200 to 400 words). The reflection section must state which AI tool (incl. version) was used for which purpose and, if applicable, in which section of the paper. In addition, the exchange with the respective AI and the quality of the results must be critically reflected, classified and evaluated (see chapter 5.2 for reflection questions). The reflection section is to be included in the appendix (print version) of the scientific paper after the bibliography and before the declaration of honor.

It should be noted that many AI applications do not comply with the data protection requirements of the University of Mannheim or the GDPR. Should you decide against using AI tools for data protection or other reasons, you will not incur any disadvantages.

Violation of these guidelines will be considered academic misconduct and may be sanctioned in accordance with the respective examination regulations.

5.2 Guidelines for handling AI-based applications

For a responsible use of AI-based applications, we recommend keeping the following points in mind:

- **Verification** of the results generated by AI-based applications:
  - Are the alleged facts actually accurate? Is there misinformation or incorrect information?
  - Does the response generated by the AI tool actually address my specific concern? Has a general response been created that overlooks certain conditions and peculiarities?
  - What perspective does the text take and what views are expressed? If the text was written by a human, who could that be? How might people with different backgrounds respond to the text?

    - Does the response from the AI tool meet my expectations?
    - What conclusions or assessments do I reach when I include sources that are not available to the AI tool used?
- **Editing** the response from the AI tool and/or the instruction to the AI tool:
    - How do I need to edit the response generated by the AI tool?
    - How do I need to change my prompt to the AI tool?
- **Use of results** generated by the AI:
    - What do I intend to do with the results and is that appropriate?
    - How can I sensibly integrate the results with other content collected outside of the AI tool?
- **Reflection and documentation** of working with AI-based applications:
    - What was my goal with using the AI tool?
    - Which AI application was chosen for this purpose and why?
    - What prompt was submitted to the AI tool or what input was provided? To what extent was the result (not) satisfactory? What changes were made to the input to the AI if the initial results were unsatisfactory? What was "manually" corrected, at what point, and why?
    - What undesired phenomena may I have encountered? How did I deal with them? What should I watch out for in the future?

5.3 Concluding remarks and further information

AI-based applications are expanding and continuously evolving. Therefore, our chair reserves the right to regularly reassess the use of AI tools and to adjust the guidelines for the use of such applications for the writing of academic papers accordingly.

For further information on the responsible use of ChatGPT and tips on handling generative AI tools, please refer to the “ChatGPT im Studium“ (German only) handbook by the University of Mannheim.

6 Submission of the thesis

Bachelor and master thesis must be submitted in duplicate; seminar papers in single copy (on paper printed double-sided) in **due time at the secretary's office of the chair during the opening hours**. Seminar papers can be handed in with stapled strips, whereas bachelor and master must be submitted in bound form or ring binder.

The work must be **submitted electronically** (as PDF via ILIAS) and on time. Potential data sets, associated data, and output files, transcription files or similar (especially in empirical work) must also be uploaded via ILIAS. A corresponding ILIAS group with an upload functionality will be provided for each semester.

We are already looking forward to receiving your work with exciting research results.

Your team of the chair