

Guidelines

for the Formal Presentation of the

Master Seminar Thesis¹

¹ These guidelines are for the most part equivalent to the guidelines by the American Marketing Association (AMA). These guidelines can be found on the following website: ama.org [accessed June 23, 2026]

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A. FORMATTING BASICS

File Types: Word, LaTeX

Font: 12 point, Times New Roman

Text Formatting [Including references]: Double-spaced, full justification, 0pt spacing before and after paragraphs, indent the first line of 2nd and following paragraphs.

Page Layout: 1-inch (2.5 cm) margins on all sides with page numbers in the upper right corner and no header/footer.

See below for an exemplary text format:

1. Headline

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam diam voluptua. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum. Stet clita kasd amet.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua.

1.1 Headline

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam. At vero eos et accusam et justo duo dolores et ea rebum.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy eirmod tempor invidunt ut labore et dolore magna aliquyam erat, sed diam voluptua.

Page Maximum for Master Seminar Thesis:

22-25 pages (main text), 40 pages including all appendices, properly formatted and inclusive of title, abstract, keywords, text, references, tables, figures, and footnotes. Both the literature review table and the comparative literature table must be complete and do not count toward the 40-page limit.

B. MASTER SEMINAR THESIS ORGANISATION

Cover Page: Refer to the exemplary cover page at the end of this document.

Table of Contents

See below for an *exemplary* table of content. Start counting your page numbers in Roman numerals at the Table of Content. **You have to adapt the table according to your needs!**

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C. COMPONENTS

Title

For Master Seminar Thesis, the title is already given.

Abstract

The abstract is limited to 175 words and summarizes the key components of the Master Seminar Thesis. It should include the research question, the methodology used, the most important results, and the scientific contribution of the thesis. It gives the reader an overview of the thesis. Include 4–5 primary keywords that best suit the topic of the Master Seminar Thesis.

Main Text

Please do not add any headers/footers on each page (other than the page number). Headings are formatted according to level:

- PRIMARY HEADING: Centered, title-style capitalization (first letter of each word), and bold, with an extra return before and after.
- SECONDARY HEADING: Flush left with title-style capitalization (first letter of each word) and in both boldface and italics. You must have at least two sections beginning with a secondary heading; if there is only one, the heading should be excluded.
- TERTIARY HEADING: Left justified and indented with sentence-style capitalization (first word only) in italics. Punctuate the heading with a period and begin the first line of the same section on the same line. If only one tertiary heading is used, the heading should be excluded.

Mathematical Notations

Equations should be centered on the page. If equations are numbered, type the number in parentheses flush with the left margin. Please avoid using Equation Editor for simple in-line mathematical copy, symbols, and equations. Type these in Word instead, using the “Symbol” function when necessary.

References

References begin on their own page and are listed in alphabetical order by the first author's last name. Only references cited within the text are included. All references should be in 12-point font and double-spaced.

References should be formatted according to AMA guidelines. See the following website for detailed information and examples: ama.org

Footnotes

Footnotes are to be used sparingly and must be concise. A total of no more than 10 footnotes should appear in a Master Seminar Thesis. Format footnotes in plain text, with a superscript number appearing in text and the corresponding note listed after the reference section (not at the bottom of the page).

Tables

Tables should not appear within the text but at the end of the document. Each table should be numbered consecutively and submitted on a separate page. Please indicate appropriate table placement in the text ("Insert Table 1 about here"). Tables must be numbered in the order in which they are to appear.

Figures

Figures should not appear within the text but follow any tables at the end of the document. Each figure should be numbered consecutively and submitted on a separate page. Please indicate appropriate figure placement in the text ("Insert Figure 1 about here"). Figures must be numbered in the order in which they are to appear. The term "figure" refers to a variety of material, including line drawings, maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, photos, and screen shots, among others.

Appendices

Appendices appear on a new page after the figures. Multiple appendices are labeled with letters (Appendix A, Appendix B etc.) in the order in which they are to appear.

Both the literature review table and the comparative literature table are mandatory appendices.

Literature Tables

Exemplary literature review tables and an exemplary comparative literature table can be found at the end of this document. For the literature review table, please consult with your advisor on which academic papers you will need to include. For the comparative literature table, please determine the columns based on the distinguishing features of your thesis compared to already published work. Your thesis' contribution to the literature should be apparent with the help of the comparative literature table.

Affidavit

For each Master Seminar Thesis, compiled at the Chair of Quantitative Marketing and Consumer Analytics, the following affidavit is to be included and signed:

"I hereby declare that I have written the enclosed Master Seminar Thesis myself and that I have not used any outside help that is not apparent from the information I have provided. I also assure that this thesis or parts thereof have not been submitted by myself or by others as a performance record elsewhere. Literal or analogous adoptions from other writings and publications in printed or electronic form are marked. All secondary literature and other sources are identified and listed in the bibliography. The same applies to graphical representations and images as well as to all internet sources and answers generated by AI-based applications. I further agree that my work may be sent and stored anonymously in electronic form for the purpose of plagiarism checking. I am aware that correction of the work may be waived if this declaration is not given."

Mannheim, August 01, 2026

Max Mustermann

D. IN GENERAL

Language of Master Seminar Thesis: English

Citation Style

Each text passage that contains ideas of other authors has to be marked. In-text citation is required. Direct citations have to be written in quotes and should be used sparingly.

Example of a direct citation:

“A signal is an action that the seller can take to convey information credibly about unobservable product quality to the buyer” (Rao, Qu, and Rueckert 1999, p. 259).

Example of an indirect citation:

Using signaling mechanisms may support sellers in credibly communicating unobservable product characteristics (Rao, Qu, and Rueckert 1999, p. 259).

For citations of up to three authors, all authors are to be listed. For four or more authors, use the first author's name followed by “et al.”. A series of citations should be listed in alphabetical order and separated by semicolons.

Example of more than three authors:

Team performance is very complex because it is a function being determined by a high amount of inputs (Ahearne et al. 2010, p. 458).

Example of citing several authors and articles:

Due to costly consequences in the case of transmitting a false signal, consumers may assume that sellers' signals about high product quality are reliable (Erdem and Swait 1998, p. 137; Kirmani and Rao 2000, p. 69; Rao and Rueckert 1994, p. 88).

If you omit a certain extract within the quote please mark this position with three points in square brackets [...].

Readability

- Write in an interesting, readable manner with varied sentence structure, and use active voice. Use as little passive voice as possible. Keep sentences short so the reader does not get lost before the end of a sentence
- Avoid using technical terms that few readers are likely to understand. If you use these terms, include definitions.

Thesis Submissions

Submission deadline is always noon at the latest on the respective day of submission. For meeting the deadline, only the digital submission (email) is decisive. The printed copies may be submitted at a later date by appointment. Please submit the following to the chair's office:

- One printed copy of your Master Seminar Thesis. You can use a simple “filing strip” or use a simple “spiral binding”.
- An electronic version of your thesis (PDF **and** Word document) submitted by email to quantmarketing@uni-mannheim.de and to your individual advisor.
- PDFs of all cited articles have to be submitted to your advisor using a suitable file sharing service (e.g., Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.)

Handling of Plagiarism in Academic Writings

Writing a Master Seminar Thesis at our chair rests on mutual trust. You commit to complete these assignments independently without any external help. This includes marking those sentences and passages that were taken from other sources. Not indicating the sources of such sentences, particularly those that are accessible via the Internet, will be considered plagiarism.

In case of plagiarism, the chair reserves the right to not assess the entire work or parts thereof. By handing in your paper to our chair you acknowledge these rules and accept that your work might be analyzed by software in order to identify plagiarism.

Online Publication of Master Seminar Thesis

Students (authors) of each Master Seminar Thesis give the Chair of Quantitative Marketing and Consumer Analytics the right to publish the Master Seminar Thesis online on the website

quantmarketing.bwl.uni-mannheim.de

As Google and other search engines might crawl online published Master Seminar Theses, other researchers might identify plagiarism in a Master Seminar Thesis immediately. Therefore, please consider the academic code of honor seriously and cite the references of all copied sentences, ideas, figures and thoughts carefully.

E. Guidelines for the Use of AI Tools in the Area Marketing & Sales²

Applications based on artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT, Microsoft 365 Copilot, GitHub Copilot, or Grammarly can offer significant assistance in, e.g., generating ideas, writing academic papers, and copy editing. However, such tools must be used cautiously and are only permitted in the university context under certain conditions. In the following, you will find an overview of the regulations of the Area Marketing & Sales at the University of Mannheim, as well as recommendations for the responsible use of AI-based applications.

Guidelines for the Use of AI-based Applications

The chairs of the Area Marketing & Sales at the University of Mannheim have jointly agreed that AI-based applications are allowed as a permitted tool for scientific work (bachelor's theses, master's theses, seminar theses). However, the use of such tools will only be allowed under certain conditions.

The following guidelines apply:

- You are responsible for the results and what you submit to your examiners. If AI-based applications provide erroneous information, it is your responsibility to recognize this and deal with it before submitting your results for grading.
- AI-based applications must not be used as a stand-alone source. Even if you use such applications, for example, to generate ideas, the actual content of your work must be substantiated by reputable and, above all, scientific sources.

² All content in this chapter is taken verbatim, without modification, from: Guidelines for the Use of AI Tools in the Area Marketing & Sales, University of Mannheim, [available online here](#) [accessed June 23, 2026]

- According to the examination regulations, you are obliged to indicate all auxiliary materials used. Therefore, the use of AI-based applications must be made recognizable. The statutory declaration, which you must submit with every academic paper, has also been amended to include AI tools. You may find it in the guidelines for the preparation of academic papers.
- **If AI tools are used, the academic paper must contain a reflection section** stating which AI tool was used for which purpose and in which section of the paper. Furthermore, the exchange with the respective AI and the quality of the results must be critically reflected, classified, and evaluated. The reflection part is to be placed in the appendix of your academic paper and must be at least two pages long. Please follow the formal guidelines that apply to the rest of your work. The reflection section is an additional criterion in the evaluation of your work.
- **Where applicable, you must document and submit any queries ('prompts') as well as chat histories** with AI-based applications. This can be done in consultation with your respective supervisor in the form of a separate file or in the (digital) appendix of your work. The prompts and chat histories are to be placed behind the reflection section and submitted in chronological order, according to the corresponding text passages in your paper. They are to be labeled in such a way that a clear assignment to the respective text passages is possible.
- A violation of these requirements constitutes academic misconduct, which can be sanctioned according to the regulations of the misconduct paragraph of the respective examination regulations.

In general, it must be noted that many AI-based applications do not comply with the data protection requirements of the University of Mannheim or the GDPR. If you decide against using AI tools for data protection or other reasons, you will not suffer any disadvantage.

Recommendations for the Use of AI-based Applications

Even though AI-based applications are very useful for many purposes, they have not been optimized to formulate accurate and correct statements or to perform content verification. This results in numerous limitations that must be considered when dealing with such AI tools:

- Facts and misinformation can coexist in AI-generated responses. If you need error-free information, you must verify the AI-generated results using demonstrably reputable or scientific sources.
- AI tools cannot "think," "read," or "compute" in the human sense. While AI-based applications may provide an accurate result for many queries, this is not the same as a human's approach and understanding of content. So don't be fooled by well-formulated answers.

- You yourself can basically, at least theoretically, acquire (almost) any competence at any time on your own or with support. With AI-based applications, you depend on the decisions and priorities of the developing companies or individuals.
- AI-based applications can only combine from a large, but still clearly limited, data set. Similarly, AI tools cannot conduct research themselves. This means that the "real" innovation or research sits in front of the screen and bears your name; AI-based applications can only analyze and (re)combine.

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

- **Review of the initial response of AI-based applications:**
 - Are the alleged facts stated actually true? Is there any misinformation or incorrect information?
 - Does the answer generated by the AI actually relate to my specific concern? If applicable, was a general text generated that disregards certain framework conditions and specifics? What perspective does the text take, and what views are represented? If the text had been written by a human being, who might that be? What and how might people from other backgrounds respond to the text?
 - Does the AI's response meet my expectations?
- **Editing of the response from the AI and/or the instruction to the AI:**
 - Where and how do I need to edit the response written by the AI?
 - (Where and how) Do I need to change my request to the AI?
- **Reflection and documentation of the work with AI-based applications:**
 - How did I act? What result did this lead to? What did I learn today? What should I document?
 - What undesirable phenomena might I have encountered? How did I deal with them? What should I pay attention to in the future?
- **Further use of the results generated by the AI:**
 - What do I want to do with the results, and is it appropriate?
 - How can I meaningfully connect the results to findings collected outside the AI?

Concluding Remarks and Further Information

AI-based applications continue to expand and evolve. Therefore, the chairs of the Area Marketing & Sales at the University of Mannheim reserve the right to re-evaluate the use of AI tools regularly and

adjust the guidelines for the use of such applications for writing academic papers accordingly. If you have any questions regarding the use of AI-based applications as a tool for your academic work, please contact your respective supervisors at the chairs. Further information on the responsible use of ChatGPT as well as tips on how to deal with generative AI tools can be found in the handbook "ChatGPT im Studium" ([available online here](#)) of the University of Mannheim.

Exemplary Cover Page:***Title****(of the Master Seminar Thesis)*

Master Seminar Thesis

Chair of Quantitative Marketing

Prof. Dr. Florian Stahl

Advisor:

Name of Advisor

University of Mannheim

Spring term / Fall term 202Y/2Z

by

*First and last name:**Matriculation number:**Field of studies:**Address:**Telephone:**E-mail:*Mannheim, *Date*

Exemplary Literature Review Tables:

You have to adapt the tables according to your needs!

Author/s (Year) [Journal]	Research Focus	Theoretical Background	Sample	Method/Analysis	Main Findings
Du, Fan, and Feng (2009) [Journal of Service Research] {VHB: A}	- Effect of an employee's negative emotional display on customers' negative emotions (service failure) - Effect of a manager's subsequent positive emotional display on customers' negative emotions (service recovery)	Emotional Contagion (EC) Theory	n = 260 students Laboratory experiment with role-play scenarios in a restaurant setting	ANOVA 1 (service failure): - IV: Waitress' negative emotional display (lower vs. higher) - DV: Customers' negative emotions ANOVA 2 (service recovery): - IV: Manager's positive emotional display (lower vs. higher) - DV: Customers' negative emotions K-means cluster analysis; regression; Chow test IV: Waitress' negative emotional display or manager's positive emotional display DV: Change in customer's negative emotions	- Higher negative emotional displays by the waitress entail a higher increase in customers' negative emotions during service failure. - Higher positive emotional displays by the manager cause a larger reduction in customers' negative emotions during service recovery. - Higher positive emotional displays reduce customers' negative emotions to a larger degree than lower positive emotional displays. - Positive emotional displays cannot fully compensate for preceding negative emotional displays irrespective of the level of the emotional display. - Customers' susceptibility to EC moderates the impact of emotional displays on customers' negative emotions
Example, John (2023) [Journal of Marketing] {VHB: A+}	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing	At vero eos et accusam et justo	N = 123 university professors	Stet clita kasd gubergren, no sea takimata sanctus est Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet.	Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie consequat

Exemplary Comparative Literature Table³:

You have to adapt the table according to your needs!

TABLE 1
Empirical Studies Including Echoversion Components

Citation	Traditional Media		Firm Communications					Online WOM		Consumer Sentiment	Firm Performance
	News Stories		Advertising	Social Media		Press Releases		Social Media		Perceptual Measure	Objective Measure
	Volume	Valence	Spend (\$)	Volume	Valence	Volume	Valence	Volume	Valence		
This study	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Homburg, Ehm, and Artz (2015)				X	X			X	X		
You, Vadakkepatt, and Joshi (2015)			X					X	X		
Dinner, Van Heerde, and Neslin (2014)			X								X
Frison et al. (2014)			X								X
Gijsenberg (2014)			X								X
Reimer, Rutz, and Pauwels (2014)			X								X
Schweidel and Moe (2014)								X	X		
Spotts, Weinberger, and Weinberger (2014)	X	X	X								X
Sridhar, Narayanan, and Srinivasan (2014)			X								X
Sweeney, Soutar, and Mazzarol (2014)									X	X	
Cleeren, Van Heerde, and Dekimpe (2013)	X		X								X
Kumar et al. (2013)				X				X			X
Berger and Milkman (2012)	X	X						X			
Moe and Schweidel (2012)								X	X	X	
Stephen and Galak (2012)	X			X		X		X			X
Tirunillai and Tellis (2012)	X		X					X	X		X
Feng and Papatia (2011)			X					X			
Sethuraman, Tellis, and Briesch (2011)			X								X
Joshi and Hanssens (2010)			X								X
Godes and Mayzlin (2009)				X ^a				X			X
Joshi and Hanssens (2009)			X								X
Trusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2009)	X		X ^b					X			X
Wang, Zhang, and Ming (2009)			X								X
Van Heerde, Helsen, and Dekimpe (2007)			X								X
Carter (2006)	X		X			X					
Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006)								X	X		X
Ahluwalia, Unnava, and Bumkrant (2001)		X								X	
Ahluwalia, Bumkrant, and Unnava (2000)		X								X	

^aGodes and Mayzlin (2009) created a campaign through which customers/agents created WOM but were provided with information by the firm.

^bTrusov, Bucklin, and Pauwels (2009) capture the volume of promotional events as opposed to investment in advertising via dollars spent.

Notes: An "X" indicates that the study empirically assesses the impact of a particular component or the impact of other components on that component.

³ Source: Hewett, Kelly, Rand, William, Rust, Roland T., and Harald J. van Heerde (2016), "Brand buzz in the echoversion," *Journal of Marketing*, 80(3), 1–24.