

# Guidelines for the Formal Layout of the Academic Thesis

Chair of Digital Marketing and Marketing Transformation

Prof. Dr. Arnd Vomberg

## 1. Language

The Bachelor-, Seminar-, and Master Theses shall be either written in English or German language. The chairs of the area recommend writing in English.

## 2. Page Layout

For Bachelor-, Seminar-, and Master Theses the following length is recommended (**incl.** tables/figures; **excl.** references/appendices):

- Bachelor/Seminar Theses: 15-20 pages
- Master Theses: 40 pages (10% tolerance)

Please note that the maximum number of pages might be adjusted as specific topics are required.

## 3. Page Layout

- Format: DIN A4 (one sided), spiral bound for seminar thesis, hardback copy for Bachelor- and Master Theses
- All four Margins: 2.5 cm
- Font: Times New Roman, 12 point  
≥ 10 point in figures and tables
- Line Spacing: 1.5 for main text, single-spaced for footnotes  
Spacing before and after headings has to be set to 12 point  
Automatic space after every paragraph should be 6 point
- Indentation: First line of a paragraph by 0.5 cm
- Page Number: Bottom right corner (no page number on the first page)
- Paragraph Format: Full justification (automatic hyphenation)

## 4. Structure

The structure has to follow a numerical order. Each sub-categorization has to be composed of at least two paragraphs. The length of each paragraph should reflect its importance for answering the addressed research gaps. For paging, please use Arabic numerals only for your main text. Please use Roman numerals for the following contents:

- Table of contents
- List of abbreviations (Abbreviations listed in official dictionaries shall be exempted)
- List of tables
- List of figures
- List of references
- Literature Tables
- Appendices
- Affidavit

An abstract at the beginning of the theses is **not** necessary.

Example of table of contents:

<b>Table of Contents</b>	
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Conceptual foundations of the Research Endeavour.....	5
2.1 Literature review of XY.....	5
2.1.1 Research Area A .....	7
2.1.2 Research Area B .....	12
2.2 Literature Review of Z .....	16
3. Research Methodology .....	25
4. ... ..	...
5. Conclusion and Implications .....	55
<b>References</b> .....	<b>V</b>
<b>Literature Tables</b> .....	<b>VI</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>VII</b>
<b>Affidavit</b> .....	<b>VIII</b>

Figure 1: Illustration of an exemplary table of contents

## 5. Headlines

Headlines of main chapters shall be in **bold font** whereas headings of sub-chapters shall be in **bold font** as well as *in italics*. Please write 3<sup>rd</sup> order sub-headlines *in italics* and note that for

all headings Times New Roman, font size 12 shall be applied. Moreover, please choose a break of 12 point before and after every headline.

Example of the adequate formatting of headlines:

<p><b>2. A Chapter</b></p> <p>Today marketing shall not only be transaction-oriented and mass-market focused. In times of growing importance of market-orientation [...]</p> <p><b>2.1 A Sub-Chapter</b></p> <p>Your text [...]</p> <p>2.1.1 A 3<sup>rd</sup> Order Chapter</p> <p>Your text [...]</p>
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Figure 2: Example for headline structure

## 6. Figures and Tables

Figures and tables have to be numbered consecutively and provided with an underline. If tables and figures are taken unmodified or modified from other authors, the origin has to be indicated. Tables and figures should appear in the text at the appropriate place. Their content has to be referred to within the text. Please note that tables and figures should be provided with a border and have to be formatted according to page left and right margins.

Example of directly citing a figure:

Evaluative View of Competitive Factors (Competitive Intelligence Driven)			
Descriptive View of Competitive Factors (Backend-Planning driven)		Desirable	Undesirable
		Uncontrollable	Controllable
		OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
		STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

Figure 3: Dual Perspective SWOT framework

Source: Novicevic, Harvey, Autry and Bond (2004, p.87)

Example of a modified figure:

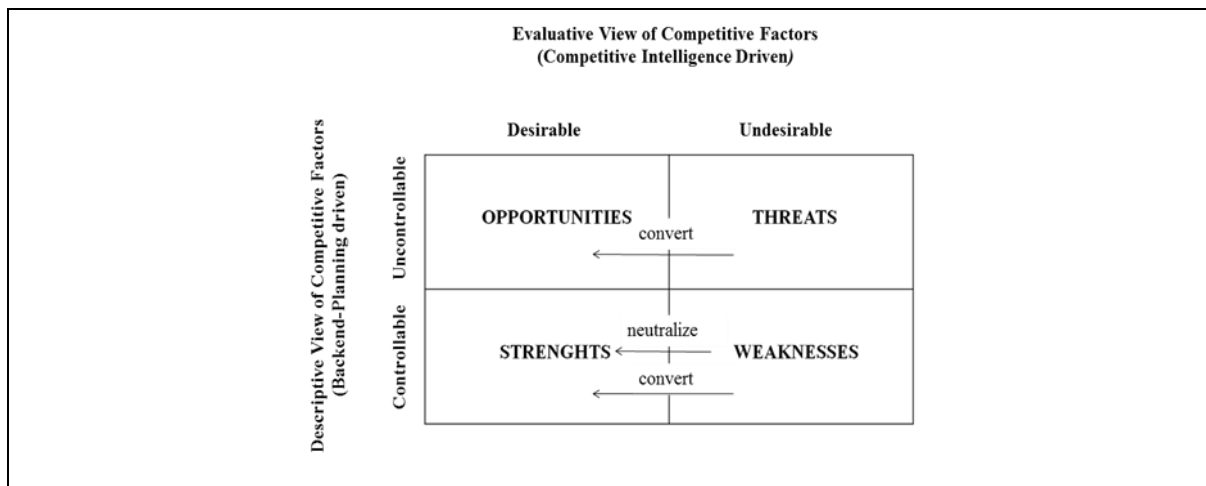


Figure 4: Dual Perspective SWOT framework

Source: Following Novicevic, Harvey, Autry and Bond (2004, p.87)

Example of a self-provided figure:

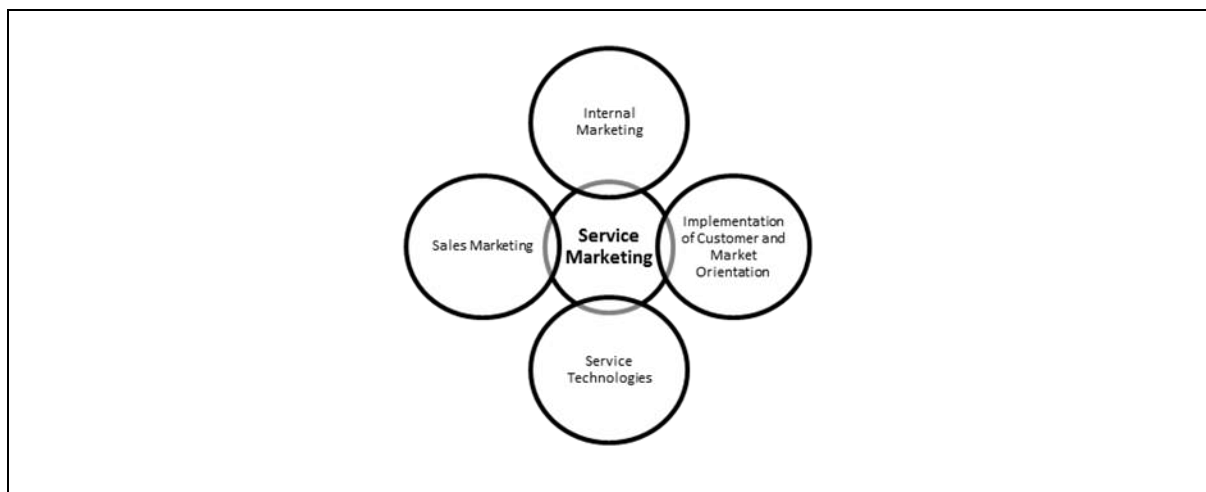


Figure 5: Overview Research Focus (self-provided)

## 7. Accentuations

Titles of books, papers or journals which are named within the text shall be written in quotes whereas expressions in foreign-language shall be written in *italics*.

Example:

The book “Selling today” offers new practices needed to succeed in today’s information economy.

## 8. Footnotes

Footnotes are to be formatted in Times New Roman, 10 point and fully justified. Since in-text citation is required, footnotes shall generally be used sparsely.

## 9. Citations and Reference Style

The guidelines of the **American Marketing Association (AMA)** and the Journal of Marketing can be used directly for the creation and formatting of a bibliography for the theses.

Each text passage that contains ideas of other authors has to be marked. For **citations** within the text, no footnote has to be used. Instead, in-text citation is required. In-text citation follows **APA style** (A guide to APA in-text citation can be found here: <https://www.scribbr.com/apa-style/in-text-citation/>).

Direct citations have to be written in quotes and *italic*. Page number is required when quoting a source (direct citation). No page number is required for indirect citation.

Example for 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, & Rueckert, 1999, p.259).

For citations of 3 or more lines you don't use quotes but put them in an own paragraph, single-spaced, and with additional 1.0 margin on both sides.

Example of indirect citation:

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

For citations of up to five authors, all authors are to be listed for the first in-text citation. For six 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 citing several authors and articles:

AUTHOR TYPE	IN-TEXT CITATION
<b>NO AUTHOR</b>	("Title of the Work" 2018)
<b>1 AUTHOR</b>	(Taylor 2018)
<b>2 AUTHORS</b>	(Taylor and Kotler 2018)
<b>3 AUTHORS</b>	(Taylor, Kotler, and Johnson 2018)
<b>&gt;3 AUTHORS</b>	(Taylor et al. 2018)

If you omit a certain extract within the quote please mark this position with three points in square brackets [...]. Any addition which is not originally part of the quote also have to be put in square brackets.

**References** should begin on their own page and have to be listed in alphabetical order by the first author's last name. Examples for references can be found in **AMA Journals Reference Style Examples**.

## 10. 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.
- 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.

For further information and recommendations for the use of AI in academic research you can refer to the “Guidelines for the Use of AI Tools in the Are Marketing & Sales” published on the chair’s website.

## 11. Affidavit

For each seminar thesis, the following affidavit is to be **included and signed in German language**.

„Hiermit versichere ich, dass diese Abschlussarbeit von mir persönlich verfasst wurde und dass ich keinerlei fremde Hilfe in Anspruch genommen habe, die nicht aus meinen Angaben ersichtlich wird. Ebenso versichere ich, dass diese Arbeit oder Teile daraus weder von mir selbst noch von anderen als Leistungsnachweise andernorts eingereicht wurden. Wört-



liche oder sinngemäße Übernahmen aus anderen Schriften und Veröffentlichungen in gedruckter oder elektronischer Form sind gekennzeichnet. Sämtliche Sekundärliteratur und sonstige Quellen sind nachgewiesen und in der Bibliografie aufgeführt. Das Gleiche gilt für graphische Darstellungen und Bilder sowie für alle Internet-Quellen und von KI-basierten Anwendungen generierte Antworten. Ich bin ferner damit einverstanden, dass meine Arbeit zum Zwecke eines Plagiatsabgleichs in elektronischer Form anonymisiert versendet und gespeichert werden kann. Mir ist bekannt, dass von der Korrektur der Arbeit abgesehen werden kann, wenn diese Erklärung nicht erteilt wird.“

Mannheim, August 31, 2023

Signature

## 12. Thesis Submission

Submission deadline is always **noon** at the latest on the respective day of submission. Please submit the following items:

- One spiral-bound hard copy of the seminar thesis, two hardback copies of Bachelor- and Master thesis to the chair's office (L9,7 Room 209)
- An electronic version of your thesis via email to [office.vomberg@uni-mannheim.de](mailto:office.vomberg@uni-mannheim.de) (PDF **AND** Word document)
- For empirical theses, additionally the collected dataset (in Stata, R, or Python format) has to be submitted.

## 13. Handling of Plagiarism in Academic Writings

Writing Bachelor-, Seminar-, and Master Theses at our department 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. Without indicating the sources of such sentences, particularly those that are accessible via the Internet, they will be considered as plagiarized.

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

#### 14. Literature Review Tables (for seminar thesis)

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) [ <i>Journal of Service Research</i> ]	1. Effect of an employee's negative emotional display on customers' negative emotions (service failure) 2. 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.

**15. Exemplary Cover Sheet:**

*Title*

*(of the Bachelor-, Seminar-, or Master Thesis)*

Bachelor Thesis / Seminar Paper / Master Thesis

Chair of Digital Marketing and Marketing Transformation

Prof. Dr. Arnd Vomberg

Advisor:

*Name of Advisor*

University of Mannheim

*Spring term / Fall term 20XY/XZ*

by

cand. M.Sc. (for Master) /cand. B.Sc. (for Bachelor)

Faculty (BWL/MMM/MMBR/MaKuWi etc.)

*First and last name:*

*Matriculation No.:*

*Address:*

*Telephone:*

*Email:*

Mannheim, *Month Year*