

Formal Guidelines for Written Assignments and Theses¹

¹ This guide is based in part on the "Academy of Management Journal (AJM) Style Guide for Authors" (2014, Vol. 57, No. 5,1) and has been adapted to the requirements of the Chair of Business Administration, in particular Strategy and Organisation at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences at the Otto Friedrich University of Bamberg



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1. Literature search

1.1 Acquisition of literature

There are substantial funds available for the procurement of literature. Essential possibilities are:

- Economic databases for journal articles: [Business Source Ultimate](#) | [EBSCO](#), [EconBiz](#), [American Economic Association](#), [JSTOR](#), [wiso](#)
- [Electronic Journals Library](#)
- [Bamberg Catalogue](#)
- [Library network Bavaria](#)
- [Database information system of the University of Bamberg](#)
- Scientifically oriented databases: [ScienceDirect](#), [ResearchGate](#)
- [KVK - Karlsruher Virtual Catalog](#) (provides an overview of almost the entire literature available worldwide)
- [Google Scholar](#) (contains scientific works and working paper)

To manage the (relevant) literature, special literature management programs such as [Citavi](#) (no university license; for Windows) or [Zotero](#) (free of charge; for Windows, Mac, and Linux) are suitable. To learn the basic functions of these programs, the Bamberg University Library offers free courses. Registration and more detailed information can be found in the VC course "Registration for courses at the Bamberg University Library".

1.2 Quality criteria for scientific literature

When selecting sources, it is important to pay attention to their citability:

- Generally considered citable are, for example:
 - Scientific textbooks, specialist dictionaries and encyclopedias, dissertations/ha-bilitations, journal articles
- Usually considered uncitable:
 - Introductory literature/textbooks, transcripts/scripts, seminar papers, general In-ternet sources, general encyclopedias, specialist dictionaries, and consumer magazines.

Even if a source's content is generally considered citable, it is important to *question* its statements/figures/tables and so forth *critically*. Criteria as the seriousness of an editor, the state of research or possible aims of the text (political, financial, propaganda...) should be considered. Journal rankings can help to find respected (highly ranked) journals. For high-quality work, A and B journals should be used. The rankings provided by [VHB](#) can therefore be used. In addition, the [Academic Journal Guide of CABS](#) can be used by selecting journals that are ranked at least with 3-stars. A more nuanced choice of relevant management journals is provided by the Financial Times, the [FT50](#).

2. Structure

2.1 Formal structure

- Title page (*cover sheet at the chair's website*)
 - Table of contents
 - 1.
 2.
 - 2.1
 - 2.1.1
 - 2.2
- } *Next outline level only if at least 2 subsections*

(for more specific contents check chapter 2.2)

- List of figures, abbreviations or tables, if applicable
- Written elaboration
- References
- Appendix (if necessary)
- Eidesstaatliche Erklärung (in german)

2.2 Structure of written elaboration

Introduction

This section introduces the topic. By emphasising the relevance and formulating a clear research question, the reader's interest in the work should at best be aroused. This chapter is not divided

into further sub-chapters. Rather, the aim is to make the work "palatable" to readers and to explain the objectives and structure of the present work in more detail.

Theoretical background

In this section, the theoretical foundations of the thesis are formulated. This includes an explanation of the theoretical lens from which the research question is examined (e.g. Attention-Based View), as well as a presentation of the current state of research (who has said what and when?).

Methodology

In this chapter, the approach to the chosen research methodology (literature research/empirical work) is explained. In other words, it explains step by step which research design was chosen and why, as well as what kind of data was collected and how the data has been analysed.

Results

This section presents the analysed data and answers the research question.

Discussion

In this chapter, the results are critically reflected (including limitations) and synthesised with the literature (= footprint of the work).

Conclusion and outlook

Summary of the work, explanation of the boundary conditions and outlook for future research in this area.

3. Formal Guidelines

3.1 In general

- Page size: Din A4
- Font: Times New Roman 12 Pt.
- Alignment: Left, justified, automatic hyphenation
- Line spacing: 1,5
- Page numbers: Right bottom

- Margins: Left: 3,0
 Right: 3,0
 Top: 2,5
 Bottom: 2,5

3.2 Seitenzahlen

- Roman (I, II, III): Indexes (Table of Contents, References, Annex, Declaration on oath)
- Arabic (1,2,3): Written elaboration (Starting with 1)

- Scope² Bachelor theses: 11.000 words (+/- 10%)
 Master theses: 22.000 words (+/- 10%)

The word count includes the entire main text (from the first heading to the last word of the conclusion) including figures (counts as one word), tables, in-text citations.

All others such as bibliography, list of figures, list of tables, appendix or cover page are not included in the word count.

3.3 Headings

According to the AMJ style, there are only three different levels of headings. It is important that no level may be skipped and that each sub-level must consist of at least two headings.

The outline should correspond to the following example:

METHODS	<i>[Main headings – 1st level: In capital letters, centered, bold]</i>
Data and Sample	<i>[2nd level: left-aligned, bold]</i>
Measures	<i>[2nd level]</i>
<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>[3rd level: indented, italic, bold]</i>
<i>Dependent variables</i>	<i>[3rd level]</i>

² (exc.: cover page, table of contents, list of figures, abbreviations, or tables, appendix etc.)

4. Citation

4.1 In general

In general, foreign ideas must always be correctly identified by literature references! Throughout the entire work, the reader should be able to follow the thought process and check the findings. Which citation style is chosen (AMJ, JMS, APA, ...) is up to the student. The only important aspect is that a standardised citation style is used throughout the whole work.

Relevant citation rules are explained below using the AMJ citation style as an example. Mostly, the underlying logic of these guidelines can also be applied to other citation styles. However, our department recommends that you familiarise yourself with the chosen style in advance in order to eliminate avoidable formal errors.

Direct citation: used when word-for-word copying of individual sections

- Marked by quotation marks
- Page details in the reference required: e.g., 345 or 345 f. (for 345 and the following page 346) or 345 ff. (for 345 and multiple following pages)
- If words are left out within a direct citation, this should be indicated by
 - [.] for an omitted word
 - [...] for more than one omitted word

Example: „*New organizational forms which operate completely outside of traditional boundaries also create challenges for integration.*“ (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009: 495).

Indirect citation: when thoughts and explanations are taken over in the same sense

- Reproductive content in *your own words*
- Changed word order counts as plagiarism
- No page numbers within the bibliography

Example:

- Original (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009: 495): “*New organizational forms which operate completely outside of traditional boundaries also create challenges for integration.*”
- Indirect citation: Challenges to create the conditions for coordination even arise in the absence of traditional organisational structures (Okhuysen & Bechky, 2009).

4.2 Figure and Tables

Before a figure/table is shown, it must be *addressed* in the text, if necessary with "(cf. Fig. Xy)".

After that, it can be *shown* before it is *discussed* in the text.

- Use "own representation" as a source for your own figures
 - ➔ For illustrations created independently by the author, which are not based on existing illustrations from other sources
- If necessary with the addition "based on"
 - ➔ For already existing illustrations from a source modified or altered by the author
- In case of one-to-one adoption of the illustration ➔ direct citation (see above)

4.3 Special cases

Error in the original: add [sic!] directly after the error

- The word sic (lat. sīc) means "really so"
- *Example: "With the help of the regression analysiz [sic!] it could be shown thet [sic!] there is no connection between the examined variables. "(Kaiser, 2005: 162).*

Changes in direct citations: use square brackets and the addition "Author's note ".

- *Example: "These [detailed; author's note] hints for handling direct citations were by no means superfluous. "(Kaiser, 2005: 373).*

Highlighting:

- Highlighting in the original text (e.g., bold, underlining, or italics) must always be adopted. Otherwise, these have to be indicated by a note in square brackets: [emphasis in the original].
- The emphasis in the original text is indicated with the addition "emphasis by the author" in the text.
- *Example: "These notes on dealing with direct citations were by no means [emphasis by the author] superfluous. "(Kaiser, 2005: 373).*

If the original source is not accessible: Reference to secondary literature as a direct citation, in the reference list both sources have to be mentioned

Direct citation within a direct citation: "citation within a citation" between simple apostrophes and also indicate the second (indirectly cited) source (short reference and bibliography)

Example: „*The integration of effort within an organization requires the resolution of both coordination and coordination problems (Gulati, Lawrence & Puranam, 2005; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).*“ (Puranam et al., 2014: 165).

If necessary, data is missing: Use of the addition "Anonymous ", "n.p." (no place), "n. d." (no date). Example in the text: (Anonymus, 2024: 3) for a direct citation or (Anonymus, 2024) for indirect citation.

With several authors:

- If a source of 3-6 authors is cited for the first time, all names are given, each additional citation with the addition "et al. ". The corresponding citation in the bibliography contains all names.

Example: (Puranam, Alexy, Reitzig, 2014) [*erste Erwähnung*]

(Puranam et al., 2014). [*zweite Erwähnung*]

- For seven or more authors: addition "et al." already in the first citation.
- The corresponding reference in the bibliography contains all information.

5. Reference List

In general, all sources used in the elaboration must be listed completely in the bibliography. The data must be given as follows:

Monographs: Last name, initials. Year. ***Title***. Place of publication: Publisher.

Collective works: Last name, initials. Year. Chapter title. In: initials and last name of the publisher (eds.), ***the collective work title***: page reference. Place of publication: publisher.

Journals: Last name, initials. Year. Title. ***Name of the journal***, year (issue if necessary): pages.

Internet sources: Last name, initials. Year: title, URL: link, status: date of retrieval.

Example for a reference list

- Bailey, D. E., Faraj, S., Hinds, P. J., Leonardi, P. M., & Von Krogh, G. (2022). We Are All Theorists of Technology Now: A Relational Perspective on Emerging Technology and Organizing. *Organization Science*, 33(1), 1–18.
- Okhuysen, G. A., & Bechky, B. A. (2009). 10 Coordination in Organizations: An Integrative Perspective. *Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 463–502.
- Orlikowski, W. J., & Scott, S. V. (2023). The Digital Undertow and Institutional Displacement: A Sociomaterial Approach. *Organization Theory*, 4(2), 1–16.
- Srikanth, K., & Puranam, P. (2011). Integrating distributed work: Comparing task design, communication, and tacit coordination mechanisms. *Strategic Management Journal*, 32(8), 849–875.
- Thompson, J. D. (1967). *Organizations in action: Social Science bases of administrative theory*. New York: Routledge.

(The sources used in this example are not generally valid and conclusive but must be chosen according to the topic; the example is only intended to illustrate the correct adoption of the sources)