HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

CHAIR FOR MANAGEMENT

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Guidelines for final theses  
at the Chair of Management

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# Organizational matters

Each Bachelor's or Master's thesis has a supervisor at the chair and is supported by several counselling appointments (usually as part of the final seminar for Bachelor's theses and regular appointments for Master's theses). Co-operations with companies are possible as long as they are compatible with the research orientation of the chair. However, clarification of the legal situation and data protection is required and should be undertaken by the student in advance.

## Time frame

The time frame for writing a thesis begins with the assignment of a topic and registration at the examination office. The time frame is

* 60 days for Bachelor‘s Theses
* 90 days for Master‘s Theses

You can find the registration forms here:   
<https://www.wiwi.hu-berlin.de/en/study/pa/forms>

## Length

The length of the final theses should be:

* Bachelor’s theses: approx. 25-30 pages excluding appendix and bibliography
* Master's theses: approx. 100.000-120.000 characters without spaces. The exact length depends on the topic and is determined with the supervisor.

## ****Declaration of independence****

**In the "**declaration of independence**", which must also be included in the thesis, the author should confirm with his/her signature that he/she has written the thesis independently, has not used any sources other than those specified, has not used any unauthorized aids and has marked all quotations. The declaration of independence must therefore be signed by the author.**

**The text for the declaration of independence can be found in this document** <https://www.wiwi.hu-berlin.de/de/studium/sb/leitfaden.pdf> **of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Informatics. You will also find a lot of useful information on academic writing here. In case of doubt, however, the standard from the document of the Chair of Management applies. If you need clarification, please contact us.**

# General requirements

The final thesis is a written examination paper. It should show that students are capable of independently working on a problem in its subject-specific details and in interdisciplinary contexts using scientific methods within a limited period of time.

Students should provide the following abilities for a **theoretical paper:**

* Ability to structure a problem
* Ability to formulate a clear research question and to focus on the aspects relevant to answering this question
* Ability to search for and critically analyse national and international literature
* Ability to critically compare divergent views on a topic
* Ability to structure your own scientific text and write it in a scientific style
* Ability to strictly adhere to formal guidelines

Students should also provide the following evidence for an **empirical thesis**:

* Ability to carry out methodological and empirical research work
* Ability to work scientifically: Problem - hypothesis - testing - findings - logical conclusion

# Basic preparatory work

## Reflection on the topic and delimitation of the topic

At the beginning of the work, you should be aware of the exact question of the work and the problem to be worked on. What are the aims of the work? What procedure should be used to achieve them? In what larger context is the work located?

Care should be taken to orientate the work stringently to the question posed up to the conclusion and to concentrate on the points that are essential for answering the question.

Helpful procedure:

* Formulate the research question concisely in one sentence (e.g. "The aim of this Bachelor's thesis is to ...").
* Always be aware of the core question and check each point for its relevance to answering it.
* Do not deal with content that is not directly related to the research question or that does not help to answer the research question.

## Literature research

The introductory literature mentioned is intended to provide an introduction to the broad subject area and is not necessarily to be seen as the central literature for the corresponding work, but can certainly be seen as such. When researching the literature, please look for scientific sources. These are scientific articles that have been published in scientific journals or would be suitable for this purpose (e.g. working papers, discussion papers).

The HU has a number of licences for relevant scientific journals to which you have free access. To access the articles, you must either be at a PC in the HU (PC pool or library) or log into the HU network from your private computer. You can find instructions here: <https://www.cms.hu-berlin.de/de/dl/netze/vpn>

There are different approaches to literature research:

* If you have introductory *literature*, you can conduct your literature search in the *following way*:
  + Search for the sources cited in the introductory literature (so-called backward search).
  + Search for the new articles that cite the introductory literature (so-called forward search).
  + Please note: The agreed introductory literature is intended to provide an introduction to the broad subject area and is not necessarily to be regarded as the central literature for the corresponding work.
* A *systematic search* is carried out on the basis of the *relevant keywords*:
  + Search for keywords in library catalogues: <https://www.ub.hu-berlin.de/en?set_language=en>
  + Relevant articles on specific keywords can be found using search engines such as Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com>).

Always take a critical look at the literature you find!

# Structure of the work

## Structuring

The following structure should be adhered to when structuring the paper:

1. Title page
2. Table of contents with page numbers
3. List of abbreviations
4. List of figures and tables
5. Text
6. Bibliography
7. Appendix such as statistics, outputs, etc.
8. Statement of independence (with signature)

In addition to the introduction and the conclusion, theses should comprise 3 to 5 main chapters. Each main chapter should be divided into at least 2 sub-chapters.

No chapter may contain only one sub-point (i.e. point 2.1 must be followed by point 2.2).

Usually, 3 levels of structure are sufficient for a main chapter: 3.1.1 is advisable, 3.1.1.1 too much if in doubt. Use a maximum of 4 outline levels.

Each sub-chapter should be at least half a page of text.

The text of each chapter should be sensibly organised into paragraphs. In a paragraph, the written text has its own context or even its own small topic. Once this idea has been realised, a new paragraph follows. A paragraph usually consists of several sentences. Paragraphs are separated from each other either by an indent or a blank line.

## Front pages

The following title pages are to be used for all work at the Chair of Management:

### Bachelor‘s thesis

Title of this work

##### Bachelor‘s thesis

to obtain the degree

Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Science

submitted by

First name Last name

Matriculation number

submitted to:

Prof. Dr. First name Last name

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

School of Business and Economics

Chair of Management Berlin, month year

### Master’s thesis

Title of this work

**Master‘s thesis**

to obtain the degree

Master of Arts/ Master of Science

submitted by

First name Last name

Matriculation number

submitted to:

Prof. Dr. First name Last name

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

School of Business and Economics

Chair of Management Berlin, month year

## Table of contents

The table of contents provides an initial insight into the structure of the work and reveals its central theme.

It should follow a clear structure and show the individual parts of the work and their corresponding page numbers in the text.

It is essential to ensure that the headings and numbering in the table of contents correspond exactly to the headings and numbering in the text.

### Headings

The headings must not be identical to the wording of the topic.

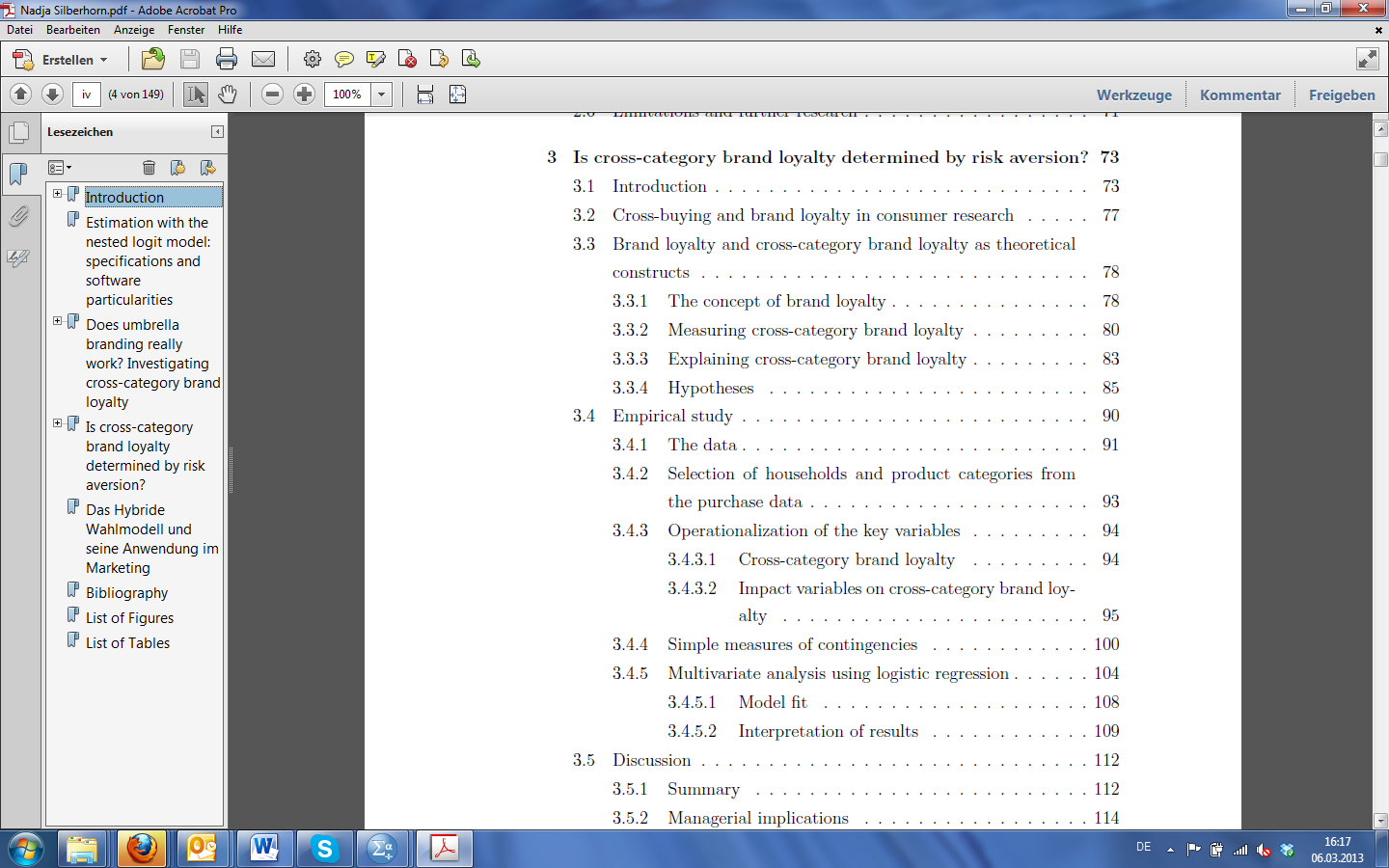
The headings in the table of contents should be concise but informative. It is advisable to choose headings with an analogue structure. In general, no abbreviations or complicated headings should be chosen.

### Structure of the table of contents

The table of contents follows directly after the title page. The page with the table of contents is not numbered.

To improve clarity, sub-items can be indented in the table of contents. Don't forget to include the page numbers!

Example (extract):



## List of tables and figures

If the paper contains figures and/or tables, a list of tables or list of figures should appear after the table of contents. If there are a small number of tables and figures, the list of tables can be combined with the list of figures. This is then given the title "List of tables and figures".

The required information in the list is the number of the figure or table, title and page number.

Examples:

Figure 1: Hierarchy levels in the company.................................................................5

Table 1: Relevant studies on motivation through piecework wages..........................7

No sources appear in the list of tables or figures. Be sure to include the sources under figures and tables.

## List of abbreviations

If you use abbreviations in your work, insert a list of abbreviations after the list of tables and figures.

## Introduction

The introduction should:

* Provide an introduction to the topic and arouse the reader's interest in the question and its answer. For example, current events or historical developments of a phenomenon can serve this purpose.
* Clarify the exact problem or question and state the aim of the work. Here it is often helpful for the reader (but also for the author himself) to formulate a clearly descriptive sentence that summarises the problem and the objective once again. For example: "The aim of this paper is to answer the question of whether...".
* Clarify which structure was chosen to achieve the research objective.

## Conclusion

The conclusion should be:

* A precise overview of the most important research findings.
* Form a bracket to the introduction and answer the questions raised as far as possible.
* Critically evaluate the results once again.
* Provide an outlook on further research questions.

# Formal requirements

## Text

The Times New Roman font in font size 12 pt. should be used for standard text. The headings should be in the same font. The heading of the first level should be 16 pt. The heading of the second level should be 14 pt., the third and fourth level 12 pt.

In addition, the following formatting rules must be observed when writing the paper:

* Line spacing: 1.5
* Side margins: 2.5 cm (or 1 inch) on all sides

## Page numbers

The page numbers are at the bottom (centered or on the right) starting with the main text in Arabic numerals. The bibliography and appendix are numbered consecutively.

The pages of the table of contents, table of tables and table of figures are numbered with Roman numerals. They do not necessarily have to be included in the table of contents.

Further numbering is done from the first page of the text section (including appendix and bibliography) using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).

## Footnotes

Footnotes are placed at the bottom of each page. They are counted consecutively. The font size is 10 pt.[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Figures and tables

All figures and tables must be numbered consecutively and labelled with references. Important figures and tables belong in the text. Tables/figures with background material can also be moved to the appendix. Each figure and table must be referenced in the text - i.e. they may not simply be inserted without explicit reference.

In general, a distinction must be made between figures and tables:

* Tables are abbreviated to *Tab.* and figures to Fig*.*
* Figures/tables must be labelled with a title that provides information about the corresponding content.

Each table/figure must be numbered chronologically (Table 1, Figure 1, etc.). Table 2.1 stands for the first table in chapter 2

References must be written under the figure/table. If figures/tables have been adopted and adapted from other texts, this must be indicated by "Based on [source]". If figures/tables have been created by the author, "Own representation" is inserted.

A figure/table taken from another text must be labelled as a citation.

The font size for tables and figures should be 10pt.

## Example of a regression table

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Table 1: Dependent variable: logarithm of gross wages | | |
|  | InfoeduQC1 | InfoeduQC2 |
| Age | 0.045\*\*\* (0.002) | 0.045\*\*\* (0.002) |
| Age2 | 0.041\*\*\* (0.002) | 0.040\*\*\* (0.002) |
| Married | 0.116\*\*\* (0.008) | 0.108\*\*\* (0.008) |
| Secondary school | 0.060\*\* (0.026) | 0.067\*\*\* (0.015) |
| College | 0.117\*\* (0.055) | 0.153\*\*\* (0.029) |
| A-levels | 0.150\*\*\* (0.050) | 0.193\*\*\* (0.025) |
| InfoeduQC1 | 0.075\*\*\* (0.013) |  |
| InfoeduQC2 |  | 0.057\*\*\* (0.010) |
| InfoeduQC1\*Secondary | 0.039 (0.027) |  |
| InfoeduQC1\*College | 0.115\*\* (0.055) |  |
| InfoeduQC1\*A-levels | 0.155\*\*\* (0.050) |  |
| InfoeduQC2\*Secondary |  | 0.029\* (0.016) |
| InfoeduQC2\*College |  | 0.085\*\*\* (0.031) |
| InfoeduQC2\*A-levels |  | 0.112\*\*\* (0.026) |
| Constant | 6.826\*\*\* (0.048) | 6.872\*\*\* (0.048) |
| Adj. R2 | 0.382 | 0.389 |
| Observations | 12866 | 12328 |

Robust standard errors in brackets. The data set only contains full-time employed men with a school-leaving qualification. The variables InfoeduQC1 and InfoeduQC2 are described in the text and in Table 1. The reference group consists of secondary school leavers. Additional control variables are 24 industry dummies and occupational group variables. Observations from the 1991/1992 and 1998/1999 cross-sections are pooled. Statistical significance at the 1% (5%, 10%) level is denoted by \*\*\* (\*\*,\*).

Source (origin of the table)

## Bullet points

Do not insert blank lines before or after bullet points. The spacing is inserted automatically. Only use the following as bullet points

* these
* or these.

# Style and scientific writing

The work should be checked for spelling and punctuation errors as well as missing words before submission - preferably not only by the author, but also by a proofreader.

In addition, the following aspects must be considered when writing the thesis:

* All theses (Bachelor and Master) can be written in English or German.
* The wording should be clear and unambiguous ("Whoever writes out of focus has also thought out of focus!").
* Short sentences using technically correct words promote readability.
* Buzzwords and incorrectly used foreign words should be avoided.
* Take care not to orientate yourself too closely to the wording of the original text. This applies in particular to non-academic sources, e.g., popular magazines.
* Opinions in the form of "I", "one" and "in the opinion of the author" should be avoided and replaced by phrases such as "this should be noted", "this should be added" and "the opinion must be contradicted".
* Objectivity must be maintained in all statements and lines of argument.

In general, the ability to express oneself in a compact manner is seen as positive:

* Repetitions should be avoided.
* General statements should be checked to see whether they can be deleted or shortened.

# Working with scientific sources

If published sources or secondary materials are used literally or analogously, this must be indicated by a citation. Non-published or verbal information and from others must also be labelled with a citation in the course of the text. Furthermore, all information from the internet must be labelled with a citation. Public magazines such as *Brigitte* or *SPIEGEL* or websites with an unknown author (e.g., Wikipedia) are generally not worth quoting. However, exceptions are occasionally possible, e.g., to motivate the research question in the introduction.

## Citations and quotes

Theses at the Chair of Management follow the APA citation technique. References are incorporated directly into the text instead of footnotes and are therefore part of the sentence. This citation style is obligatory.

A detailed tutorial on this citation style can be found at <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations>.[[2]](#footnote-2) Another good source for citation and formatting guidelines is <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/in_text_citations_the_basics.html>.

This chapter contains examples of how to quote and cite in the text.

### Indirect quotation (paraphrasing)

An indirect quote is a form of citation in which the content of a source is reproduced in the author's (student’s) own words. In the case of theses, this is a most common form of citation. Indirect quotations are not placed in quotation marks. Every indirect quotation contains a reference. In the case of indirect quotations, the surname of the author(s) and the year of publication must be stated.

Examples:

* + Chan et al. (2014) examine how compensation schemes relate to competition and peer effects.
  + The impact of compensation schemes on competition and peer effects is examined (Chan et al., 2014).

In the first example, the author is directly mentioned in the text. The year of the publication follows immediately in parentheses. In the second example, the source is given in the parentheses at the end of the sentence. The year of publication then usually follows a comma.

When referring to a general idea of a source, no page number is necessary in the citation. However, when referring to a particular aspect of the source, such as a finding or an argument, the page number (where it can be found) should be indicated. It is introduced either with “p.” or “pp.” and follows the year of publication. If a quotation extends over more than one page, this is indicated by “pp.”. Leave a space after the “p.” or “pp.”.

Example: Experimental evidence suggests that workers effort choice depends strongly on their own wage but not on their coworker’s wages (Charness & Kuhn, 2007, p. 713).

If multiple works are cited, the citations should be ordered alphabetically and separated by a semicolon.

Example: Experimental studies found that the average productivity of workers is higher under piece rates compared to fixed wages (Lazear, 2000; Shearer, 2004)

If there is more than one reference by the same author(s), the sources should be sorted in chronological order (most recent first).

Example: The tournament structures can lead to sabotage among employees (Harbring & Irlenbusch, 2011; Harbring & Irlenbusch, 2005).

The full stop at the end of the sentence is placed after the reference bracket.

### Direct quotes

In the case of a direct quote, sentences, parts of sentences, terms, definitions, etc. are adopted in their wording. This type of quotation should be an exception. Direct quotes should be identified by citation marks at the beginning and at the end. After the second quotation mark and before the punctuation mark, the source reference with author(s), year and page number is given in brackets.

*Example:* “A cornerstone of the theory in personnel economics is that workers respond to incentives“ (Lazear, 2000, p. 1346).

The source citation should also include a page reference.

### Citing secondary resources (secondary citations)

Secondary citations describe the case when a direct or indirect quote from the text of an author A, who in turn directly or indirectly quotes another author B. This is generally not permitted. Only original sources (B) should be cited. Only if these are not accessible is it allowed to cite from secondary literature. In the reference list, provide an entry only for the secondary source (A) used. In the text, refer to the primary source as follows:

Example: At the time a teacher is hired, it is hard to identify whether he is or could be a good teacher (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006, as cited in Estrada, 2019, p. 546).

### Citation for more than one author

If a source originates from more than one author, special rules must be observed when citing the source.

Table 2: Citation rules by number of authors

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | First quote in the text | The following quotes in the text | First quotation in the text using brackets | The following quotations in the text are in brackets |
| 1 Author | Walker (2007) | Walker (2007) | (Walker, 2007) | (Walker, 2007) |
| 2 authors | Walker and Allen (2004) | Walker and Allen (2004) | (Walker & Allen, 2004) | (Walker & Allen, 2004) |
| 3 authors | Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (1999) | Bradley et al. (1999) | (Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 1999) | (Bradley et al., 1999) |
| 4 authors | Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, and Walsh (2006) | Bradley et al. (2006) | (Bradley, Ramirez, Soo & Walsh, 2006) | (Bradley et al., 2006) |
| 5 authors | Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (2008) | Walker et al. (2008) | (Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez & Soo, 2008) | (Walker et al., 2008) |
| > 6 authors | Wasserstein et al. (2005) | Wasserstein et al. (2005) | (Wasserstein et al., 2005) | (Wasserstein et al., 2005) |
| Group of authors (abbreviation possible) | National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2003) | NIMH (2003) | (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2003) | (NIMH, 2003) |
| Group of authors (no abbreviation possible) | University of Pittsburgh (2005) | University of Pittsburgh (2005) | (University of Pittsburgh, 2005) | (University of Pittsburgh, 2005) |

Source: http://www.apastyle.org/

### Citing from the World Wide Web

Texts from the World Wide Web (WWW) should be made available electronically after consultation with the respective supervisor. For specific details how to cite the text from a web page see here: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples/webpage-website-references>

Internet sources without an author should be treated with caution and must be carefully checked for their suitability for citation.

## The bibliography

The bibliography is a list of all sources cited in the text. The bibliography follows immediately after the main text, before the appendix. The bibliography must be complete.

Sources are listed in alphabetical order according to the author's surnames. Sources that have been read but not cited are not listed in the bibliography. There is no subdivision into different media (books, journals, etc.).

Several sources by the same author are organised chronologically, starting with the oldest. If there are several sources by the same author from the same year, the year of publication should be extended by the addition a, b, c, etc.

Sources by one author without co-authors are to be listed before sources by the same author with others. Texts with different co-authors should be listed alphabetically according to the surname of the second/third etc. author. If authors have the same surname, they should be listed by first name. Titles such as *Dr*. or *Prof.* do not appear.

Sources without an author appear accordingly in the alphabet under the title of the source or are included in the bibliography under the name of the publishing institution (e.g. Spiegel Verlag) and cited as such.

Sources without a year of publication (e.g. internet sources) are included with 'n. d.' and cited as such.

Please provide a doi link for all scientific publications.

### Journal articles

The journal articles should be listed in the bibliography in the following format:

Surname(s), abbreviated first name(s) (year). Title of the article. *Name of the journal*, volume and issue number, first - last page. DOI/link

Example:

Lazear, E. P. (2000). Performance Pay and Productivity. *American Economic Review*, 90(5),1346–1361. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1257/aer.90.5.1346>

### Books

The books are listed in the following format:

Surname, abbreviated first name(s) (year of publication). *Title-subtitle*, Publisher.

Example:

Lazear, E. P., & Gibbs, M. (2015). *Personnel economics in practice* (3rd ed.). Wiley.

Do not include the publisher location.

### Contributions from anthologies

Contributions from edited volumes are listed in the following format:

Surname, abbreviated first name(s) (year of publication). Title of the article. In first name(s) name(s) (Ed.), *title-subtitle* (p. first - last page), publisher(s).

Example:

Porter, M. E. (1986). Competition in Global Industries: A Conceptual Framework. In Michael E. Porter (Ed.), *Competition in Global Industries* (pp. 15-60), Harvard Business School Press.

### Working papers and discussion papers

For working and discussion papers, make sure that you are working with the latest version. Perhaps the paper has already been published in a journal or there is a more up-to-date version?

Example:

Bašić, Z., Bortolotti, S., Salicath, D., Schmidt, S., Schneider, S. O. & Sutter M. (2024). One Size Fits All? The Interplay of Incentives, Effort Provision, and Personality. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 17287*, IZA – Institute of Labor Economics. <https://docs.iza.org/dp17287.pdf>

### Internet sources

Sources from the Internet must be cited with the full Internet address and the date of retrieval.

Surname, abbreviated first name(s) (year of publication, month day). *Title-subtitle webpage*. Title Website. Retrieved “retrieval date”, from “complete internet address”.

Internet sources without year of publication:

Author (n.d.). *title-subtitle webpage*. Title Website. Retrieved “retrieval date”, from “complete internet address”

Internet sources without an author (should always be viewed very critically):

*Title-subtitle* (year of publication, month day). Title Website. Retrieved “retrieval date”, from “complete internet address”.

*Example:*

*Work made in Germany – How employers design good work* (n.d.). BDA. Retrieved November 25, 2024, from <https://arbeitgeber.de/en/themen/sozialpolitik-und-soziale-sicherung/arbeit-made-in-germany/>

More examples on how to treat missing reference information can be found here: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/missing-information>.

### Miscellaneous

Publications by corporations, institutions, authorities or companies must also be listed alphabetically in the bibliography.

University publications (dissertations, working papers, etc.) must have a corresponding reference in brackets.

Bachelor's, Master's and seminar papers as well as lecture materials and lecture notes are generally not citable as they are not generally accessible and cannot be verified.

# Further information

Recommended word processing programs are MS Word and Latex. This file can be used as the basis for the work, as the defined format templates correspond exactly to the specifications. In addition, the formatting no longer changes when the printer is changed.

Open this file and delete the text it contains. If applicable, replace seminar paper above with Master’s or Bachelor’s thesis. Your paper should be written on white DIN A4 paper.

When using the formatting templates for headings ("Heading 1" for the first outline level, etc.), you can generate the table of contents automatically.

In any case, back up your work regularly so that an unexpected incident (such as hard drive damage or a virus) doesn't ruin your work just before the deadline!

# Bibliography

Bašić, Z., Bortolotti, S., Salicath, D., Schmidt, S., Schneider, S. O. & Sutter M. (2024). One Size Fits All? The Interplay of Incentives, Effort Provision, and Personality. *IZA Discussion Paper No. 17287*, IZA – Institute of Labor Economics. <https://docs.iza.org/dp17287.pdf>

Chan, T. Y., Li, J., & Pierce, L. (2014). Compensation and peer effects in competing sales teams. *Management Science*, 60(8), 1965-1984. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2013.1840>

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# Appendix

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1. This is an example of a footnote. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In general, this site offers a wealth of useful resources for academic writing: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)