

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION - GETTING AN OVERALL PICTURE

FORMAT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS

In the finalisation of a research proposal, dissertation and thesis a researcher must consider the format.

☐ **Proposal**

In proposal the structure is as follows:

(1) Cover page – This page consists of the following:

- ☐ Title- The title should not be more than twenty words. It should be clear and focused.
- ☐ Author(s) identification – This includes stating the authors(s) full names and the name of the department.
- ☐ Caption – A research proposal submitted for the degree of (specify e.g. Doctorate degree of tourism and hospitality management) in Faculty of, then specify the institution e.g. Bindura University of Science Education
- ☐ Date e.g. (February 2016)

The cover page therefore has full title, and the sub-title if any, of the research work; the name of the author, a statement about the degree programme under which the thesis is submitted; the date of submission.

Example of cover page

Factors contributing to late adoption of quality management systems in the hotel industry in Zimbabwe.

Vitalis Basera Khaki

A research proposal submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Commerce, Graduate School of Business of Bindura University of Science Education, Zimbabwe, February 2016.

(2) Declaration

This is the immediate page after the cover page. The declaration is made by the student and the supervisor. This is as follows:

1. **Student's Declaration** 'This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.'

Then the student signs above his/her name, indicates the registration number and date.

1.1. Signature..... Date

1.2. Name: Vitalis Basera Khaki

1.3. Registration number: B1850011

2. **Supervisor(s) Declaration** - 'This proposal has been submitted for review with my / our approval as University supervisor(s).'

Then the supervisors, beginning with the main supervisor, sign and indicate their respective departments. This is as follows:

2.1. Signature Date

2.2. Dr Judy Mwenje

2.3. Graduate School of Business

(3) Abstract

This is immediately after the declaration page. It summarises the entire proposal, pointing out the research problem, the objectives of the study and methods of data analysis. The abstract normally should not exceed 500 words but this usually differs with institutional requirements.

4. Abbreviations and acronyms

This section comes immediately after the abstract. This section should be included in the proposal only if it is applicable.

5. Table of contents

This section indicates the chapters and sections. It lists the chapter and section headings with their corresponding page numbers. In proposals three main chapters are indicated. These are as follows chapter 1, chapter 2 and chapter 3

6. Chapter 1: Introduction

- a. Introduction
- b. Background to the Study
- c. Statement of the Research Problem
- d. Purpose and Objective of the Study

- e. Research Questions and Hypothesis
- f. Significance of the Study
- g. Limitations of the Study
- h. Assumptions of the Study
- i. Conceptual /Theoretical Framework
- j. Definition of Terms

7. Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section consists of highlights of current studies that address the issues in the proposal. Clear gaps in quoted studies should be indicated.

8. Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter highlights the methodology appropriate to the study. This includes the following:

- Introduction
- Research Design/philosophy
- Location of the Study
- Target Population
- Sample Selection
- Research Instruments
- Data Collection Techniques
- Data Analysis

a) References

The reference section is not numbered. It shows all the sources that were consulted in writing the proposal.

b) Appendices

This shows big figures, tables, and associated documents (consent forms, data collection instruments – interview guides, questionnaires. The figures and tables shown on the appendices are the ones that are big more than one page that could not fit in the main document as the pose risk of distorting flow of work.

b) Thesis / dissertation

The thesis is written after the collection and analysis of data. It consists of the following

☐ Cover Page

This page is similar to the proposal in the title and author's identification. However, the caption changes to: A research thesis submitted for the degree of (specify e.g., Doctor of Philosophy) in the School or Faculty of.... then specify the institution e.g., Bindura University of Science Education. Then the date e.g. (June, 2021).

2. Declaration

This is similar to the proposal except that the replaced with thesis. This is as follows:

- o **Student's Declaration** - 'This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.'

Then the student signs above his/her name, indicates the registration number and date.

1. Signature..... Date
2. Name: Vitalis Basera Khaki
3. Registration number: B1850011

- o **Supervisor(s) Declaration** - 'I/we confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under my / our supervision as University supervisor(s)' Then the supervisors, beginning with the main supervisor, sign and indicate their respective departments. This is as follows:

- o Signature Date
- o Dr Judy Mwenje
- o Graduate School of Business

Of late under declaration a new section which declares published work (**declaration publications**) from the thesis is now a requirement. However, this depends on institutions requirements

- o **Declaration publication(s)** - The following publications are associated with the research presented in this thesis:
 - a) Basera, V., Mwenje, J., and Ruturi, S. (2019). A snap on quality management in Zimbabwe: A perspectives review. *Annals of Management and Organisation Research*, 1(2), 77-94.

<https://doi.org/10.35912/amor.v1i2.278>

- b) Basera, V., and Makandwa, G. (2020). Customers' perceptions, expectations and experiences of service quality for hotels in Mutare, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Gastronomy, Hospitality and Travel (JOGHAT)*, 3(1), 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.33083/joghat.2020.30>
- c) Basera, V., and Mwenje, J. (2021). Stakeholders' awareness of quality and quality management systems in Zimbabwean Hotels *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(1): 682-697. <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-126>
- d) Basera, V., and Mwenje, J., (2021). Factors affecting the adoption of quality management systems (QMS) in Zimbabwean hotels. *African Journal of Hospitality, tourism and leisure*, 10(1): 682-697. <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-132>
- e) Basera, V. Mwenje, J. (2021). Model of QMS adoption in the hotel industry: A case study of hotels in Zimbabwe, *Journal of Gastronomy Hospitality and Travel*, 4(1), 26-38. <https://doi.org/10.33083/joghat.2021.55>
- f) Mwenje, J and Basera, V., (2021). Business excellence models and external stakeholders influencing the late adoption of quality management systems in Zimbabwe hotel industry. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*. 10(6):1848-1866. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.196>

3. Dedication

This statement should not exceed 25 words. It should be on a separate page.

4. Acknowledgement

This section should not exceed 150 words and should be on its own page.

5. Abstract

This should not exceed one page. It should consist of the precise summary of the thesis including the objectives, methodology used, findings and recommendations.

6. Abbreviations and Acronyms

This section comes immediately after the abstract. Explain all abbreviations and acronyms as used in the entire thesis.

7. Table of Contents

This section begins on a new page. As in the proposal, it indicates all the chapter and section headings with their corresponding page numbers.

8. Chapters 1-3

Chapters 1-3 have content and form similar to that in the proposal. However, the future tense used in the proposal changes to past tense. Chapter two and three of the theses are similar to the proposal apart from the tense used.

9. Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussion

This chapter interprets and explains the findings about the study objectives.

10. Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter, a summary of the study and implication of the main findings are given. Conclusion and recommendations are given. Areas that need further research are also suggested.

11. References

This section lists the references that have been cited in the thesis. It gives credit to any authors the researcher referred to. Good referencing allows readers to check, the foundations of the researcher's additions to the structure of knowledge in the discipline. This enhances work reliability. Good referencing also tells the reader which parts of the thesis are descriptions of previous knowledge, and which parts the researcher's additions to that knowledge.

12. Appendices

This presents research instruments, charts, graphs, illustrations, big figures, and tables that failed to fit in the body of thesis, etc.

PROPOSAL AND THESIS PRESENTATION FORMAT

The presentation format for the thesis is similar to that of the proposal. There are varieties of presentation formats, and they vary with institutional requirements. Normally a thesis would have the following presentation format:

1. The thesis must be prepared using a word processor using the Times Roman or Arial 12-point typesetting. It should be double spaced and printed on one side of the paper.
2. The text should be justified.
3. A 50 mm margin should be left on the left side of the paper and a 25 mm on the right-side margin of the paper. Typing should begin 40 mm from the top of the paper and should not go beyond 25mm from the bottom of the page.
4. All references must be complete and consistently applied in the format indicated in chapter 7.
5. All figures must be produced using a computer graphics package and have figure number and title.
6. Gender specific words should be avoided. Words like author, researcher, and engineer, for example, should be used instead of 'he' or 'she'.
7. Pagination: The preliminaries (title page, declarations and abbreviations) should be numbered in Roman numerals lower cases (e.g., i. ii. iii)
8. The text, chapter 1 to appendixes should be numbered using Arabic numerals. The number should appear in the centre of the upper margin of the page.
9. Language Used: In writing the thesis, past tense should be used. This is mainly because the author is reporting what has already been carried out and completed.

GUIDELINES IN THESIS PRESENTATION

Various chapters of the thesis must be linked together in a coherent manner. One of the techniques to achieve smooth flow of contents in a thesis is to maintain a thread between adjoining chapters. The author should ensure that each section within a chapter leads on to the subsequent section, and paragraphs of sections are connected to each

other. A common practice is to use 'joining' words or sentences, particularly at the end and beginning of each chapter. A joining sentence at the end of a chapter tells the reader what to expect, while one at the beginning of a chapter reminds the reader of the contents of the previous chapter.

When making calculations in a thesis, the author should define all variables (include units where applicable) and justify all simplifying assumptions. The author should be fastidious in describing experimental, simulation and test conditions. In compiling thesis material, the author should not presume that the reader knows what he/she is trying to do or are familiar with the techniques that one is employing.

Material that does not contribute directly to the discussion, argument, or development of a theme or idea in a thesis interrupts flow. Such material should be excluded. If, for the sake of completeness, the author wishes to include these materials, then they should be placed in an Appendix and referred to in the main text.

In writing a thesis, the author should avoid one sentence paragraphs. Too many of these paragraphs will result in a page having numerous gaps. This will impact a feeling of discontinuity with the content. The author should also avoid long sentences. Long sentences are difficult to read and can obscure an otherwise simple explanation. The author should try to keep sentence length to less than two lines. Appropriate use should be made of punctuation. Punctuation breaks a sentence into readable chunks, reduces ambiguity, and can increase effect and emphasis. However, punctuation should be carefully applied since it can change the meaning of a sentence.

The repeated use of words can make a thesis difficult, if not boring, to read. The author should use a thesaurus to get synonyms to introduce variety. The author should make sure that they are used in the proper context. In compiling a thesis, bombastic words (i.e., flambagitious, octogenarian, barracudas, gigantic) should be avoided. Explanations using commonly encountered words are more effective than pompous

sounding but rarely used vocabulary. Presentation also plays an important part in giving the impression of smooth flowing content.

ROUGH DRAFT

It is important to create a rough draft before the final copy. The rough draft should include any critical components including thesis, supporting statements, facts and conclusions. It is often helpful to have someone other than the supervisor read some sections of the draft, particularly the introduction and conclusion chapters.

REVISE AND AMEND

One should revise the proposal/thesis. The author should proofread to check for spelling errors and be sure the cited information was well documented.

PROPOSAL OR THESIS DEFENCE

In most institutions one must defend one's proposal/thesis. This at times lasts for an hour for a thesis and thirty minutes or less for a proposal. The thesis defense is like an examination in some ways.

10 Valuable tips for your defence / presentation day

- a) Familiarise yourself with the room. Try to visit the room a day before your defence. If there is air conditioning bring a jacket or scarf with you because the temperature can play a role. If their online presentations make sure you have good internet connection, power back up, do test runs before the day.
- b) Be on time. Try to be there at least one hour in advance so you can prepare and start at the time that was allocated to you. Try to stick to the time given for your presentation. For online presentations connect on time before the scheduled time.
- c) Have a check list and go over this. (This is also why you should be on time so you can double check if you have everything.)
- d) Confirm with your Department both the time and date. Make sure that you inform your advisor(s)/supervisor(s) so they can be present during your defence.

- e) Prepare a PowerPoint presentation and do not clutter the pages. Just have bullet points and be prepared to defend these.
- f) Have a backup plan in case there is electricity failure, or your notebook does not work. Have hard copies of your thesis / proposal just in case and also have your defence on an USB flash drive.
- g) Wear comfortable but presentable clothes and shoes.
- h) Before you start with your defence; Please turn off your mobile phone. (Disruptions from a ringing phone can knock you off track and will create a huge negative impact.)
- i) Try to be as clear as possible; if you did not understand a question, ask the panel member to repeat the question.
- j) Last but not the least do not be defensive during your presentation/ defence and keep smiling no matter what!

Before your big day try to attend at least a couple of defences so you can learn from these.