

Faculty members and Students

Please find below the outline for thesis writing. It is a guide to organization and presentation of research in form of thesis as well as organization of material within chapters. Chapter contents tell you what needs to be included in each chapter and how sequence of this content can be as consistent across different departments as possible.

For overall format guidelines please follow APA or any other manual as prescribed for your discipline. This is not meant to be format guide.

Overall thesis organization

Title

Examiners' certificate

Dedication (optional)

Acknowledgements

Abstract

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

(This is just an example)

1.1 Happiness: Conceptual Definitions

1.2 Quality of Life

1.3 Happiness and Quality of Life

1.4. Theories linking Happiness and Quality of Life

1.4.1. theory 1

1.4.2 theory 2

1.4.3 Theoretical framework of your study

1.5 Summary

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Correlates and predictors of happiness identified in research

2.3.1 Biological factors

2.3.2 Personality traits

2.3.3 Situational factors

2.2 Happiness and Quality of Life

2.3 Indigenous Researches/ Research conducted in Pakistan

2.4 Rational of the Study

2.5 Objectives of Study

2.6 Research questions / hypotheses, hypothesized model

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

3.2 Sample / Participants

3.3 Operational Definitions of the Variables

3.4 Measures

3.4.1 Happiness Inventory

3.4.2 Quality of life

3.4.3 Scale development (if applicable)

3.5 Procedure

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Chapter IV: RESULTS

4.1 Analyses

4.2 Descriptive analyses

4.3 Inferential analyses / Hypotheses testing

4.4 Summary of the Findings

Chapter V: DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion

5.2 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

5.3: Suggestions for Future Research

5.4 Implications of the Findings

References

Appendices

Content Guide for each Section

Abstract

Should only mention (a) what was investigated clearly giving variables in your title for example “the study investigated the relationship between happiness and quality of life among cardiovascular patients”, (b) hypotheses/ research questions; (c) sample; (d) measurement; (e) analysis; (f) findings and implications of the findings.

Introduction and Literature Review

First paragraph of introduction should give a very brief (two -three sentences) description of variables under investigation then state what will be presented in the chapter in the sequence in which they are presented.

Below is an example:

Hope for recovery and positive view of future can be a source of strength for people who are suffering from a major disease. This research is going to investigate how optimism is related to /affects quality of life among people with coronary heart disease. The following chapter will present definitions of the concepts of quality of life and optimism. It will also clarify some related terms, present existing information on optimism, quality of life and heart disease. It will then focus on relevant research in these areas and provide theoretical rationale for the relationship between variables. At the end after summarizing material presented in chapter, questions for the study will be formulated. Possible contribution of this study to existing body of knowledge will also be discussed.

Main body: Tips to remember

- Give sub headings in intro to organize your material.
- Link one paragraph to next with some explanatory or linking sentence.
- When providing summary of a research study or article include all relevant information but keep to format of citation. Do not give first names or initials.
- When a study is very relevant or your research is based on it, give detail as well as evaluation and comment how it could be done if repeated. What findings suggest, how findings can be applied to our cultural context and what are implications for further investigation.

Remember thesis is a story and introduction is the main script of that story where you set the stage for investigation. So start with a preamble (*tamheed*), introduce the variables, say all you know about variables and their relationship, convince the reader why it is important to learn about this topic. Clearly and in detail describe what has been done

before in this area. Also give relevant research conducted in Pakistan, What more can be done to improve the understanding of this phenomena and what unanswered or inconclusive findings are identified in research. These are called gaps in evidence. Once you identify the gaps (research authors sometimes comment upon these gaps and then choose one or two for their own study. You can choose from previous or by reading extensively will be able to develop your own gaps in existing evidence.

At the end a summary is a MUST. Summary should briefly overview all that was said in chapter and then identify questions or formulate hypotheses for investigation in view of the literature presented in introduction chapter. These must be linked both to existing research as well as theoretical perspective.

Methodology

Note: In case of more than one study, prepare method section for each study separately.

Start method section with re-presenting your research statement.

“This study is investigating quality of life among heart patients and examining its relationship with

Methodology for a Quantitative Study

Design: briefly describe design of the study e.g. between group design, correlational design, repeated measure design, Qualitative, Mixed methods etc.

Sample: Describe you sampling strategy and sample, how it was selected, where it was recruited from, inclusion/exclusion criteria, sample size, demographic characteristics of the sample, response rate etc.

Operational Definitions

Define constructs (variables) in terms of their measurement / assessment or how you are going to assess them in your study e.g. if you assess through already developed scale/questionnaire then how the author of the respective scale defines that construct. If you develop your own scale/questionnaire then how you conceptualize the construct for development of the scale.

Assessment Measures

– give detail of scales/ questionnaires with author, reliability reports as well as item examples. If you develop your own scale / questionnaires then give detail of the process in this section and if translated scale then give detail of the process.

Procedure

Provide detail of procedure i.e. getting required approvals and permissions, making logistic arrangements for data collection; how the potential participants approached; how the data was elicited e.g. were the scales/questionnaires distributed among participants and collected later on or were they completed in the presence of researcher....

Ethical Considerations

Give detail of all ethical issues pertaining to your research e.g. getting proposal approval; permission for sample recruitment; permission from authors to use their scales / questionnaire and if need to translate; informed consent of the participants; maintaining confidentiality of data; storage of data; publishing data etc.

Results

Demographics: can either go in sample section or presented in early part of results

Descriptive Statistics of the variables under study; Psychometric analysis (reliability) of the questionnaires /scales used in the study

Inferential Statistics for hypotheses testing give results one by one according to hypotheses

Give preamble for each analysis, present analysis in table form and then interpret analysis in qualitative way. Conclude by stating whether hypothesis was supported, partially supported or not supported.

Tables must be prepared as per APA prescribed format. Use tables mainly for inferential analyses results such as t-test, ANOVA, regression, correlation etc. For demographics use only if many sample characteristics need to be displayed. Graphs may be used to represent mean and SDs. Under each table give description of your results in qualitative manner and not to repeat numbers and figures if given in tables. Do not repeat sample information in tables and figures/charts.

Conclude your results chapter with summary of the main findings.

Discussion

First para should be summary of your findings- a brief one. Then address each finding, relate it to theory and previous research and also discuss in the cultural context, provide explanations for your findings. At the end provide a summary and general discussion.

Limitations and strengths of your research, and further suggestions for future research can be a separate subsection in discussion chapter. Implications at end of discussion chapter and implications must be within the scope of your research, not generalized implications.

Methodology for a Qualitative Study

There is no qualitative methods but a number of approaches that fall under the paradigm of “qualitative.”

Principles of selection

Qualitative research in many cases includes non-probability sampling. The researched elements could include one or more of various categories; people, happenings, behaviors, speech, written and visual materials, etc.

The sample selection criteria should be clear, as well as the rationale for such selection from a theoretical point of view:

1. The sources of the data should have their own rationale; e.g. participants/respondents, documents, texts, settings, etc.
2. Limitations of the data should be analyzed, mentioned and discussed (non-response, refusal to take part, avoiding of questions by the respondents, etc.).

During the research various matters should be considered: the access process, mode of data collection and record, individuals who collected the data, time or timeframe of data collection, how the study was explained to the respondents.

Ethical considerations

The following matters are important:

- a. Anonymize information regarding respondents.
- b. provide details of ethical approvals or permissions, if unable to obtain permission for any purpose it should be mentioned as well.
- c. procedures for informed content needs to be provided.
- d. any other ethical concerns that came up during the research need to be discussed.

Analysis & Interpretation

The steps of the analysis need to be made as clear as possible one by one:

- How was the analysis conducted
 - How were themes, concepts and categories generated from the data
 - Whether analysis was computer assisted (and, if so, how, name of the software with citation, etc.).
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- Analytic rigor:
 - Steps taken to guard against selectivity in the use of data
 - Triangulation and what frameworks or theoretical approaches were used
 - Member and expert examining or checking
 - The researcher should state his/her own position. For example, have they examined their own role, possible bias, and influence on the research?

Consideration of context

- The research should be clearly contextualized. For example”
- How does the research fit in the culture where it was conducted? Information about the settings and respondents needs to be provided.
- The study should integrate the phenomena being researched in its own social context rather than keeping it de-contextualized.
- Any unique influences should be identified, mentioned and discussed

Presentation of data:

- Quotations, field notes, and other data where appropriate should be identified in a way which can enable other researcher to make a connection between data, instrument and results (validity).
- A clear line between the data and its interpretation