**Master Thesis**

**Title**

Chair

First supervisor

Second supervisor

Submission date (Vallendar, May 20th, 2023)

**Name, Surname**

Student ID

Date of Birth, Place of Birth

Street, House Number

Postcode, City

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Information about this thesis (#please always include and update before you submit):

Number of words: 2513

# Scope and problem

This chapter should give a short overview the scope and goal of your thesis, identify potential addressees and explain the relevance of its contribution. Please explicitly formulate the goal of your thesis in two or three sentences! Doing that will force you to be as precise as possible and help you not to lose track later on. In addition, briefly outline the structure and procedure of your thesis at the end of the chapter!

Wrong: “In this bachelor thesis I study problem XY, because my supervisor told me so or a specific company has the problem.”

Right: Start with the overarching research question and argue, why it is relevant for a certain industry, respectively consumers.

For a seminar or Bachelor thesis, this first chapter should account for about 1.5 to 2 pages and 2.5-3 pages for a Master thesis, respectively.

# Chapter 2

Some introductory notions in advance:

* Experience has shown that it is wise and recommendable to save changes in your document as different versions during the writing process. Doing that facilitates recovering earlier ideas in case you face technical problems with your file or if you just want to pick-up an idea you had a week ago. For organizational convenience we recommend to name versions as follows: topic\_date.docx.
* Example for file names: A version of a Bachelor Thesis on “Search engine marketing” saved on the 01/02/2017 gets the name “Search engine marketing\_20170201”. By putting the date in reverse order, your most recent version will always show on the top position of the respective folder.
* Take some time to get to know all the features of your text programme. This may seem tedious in the start but can save you a lot of time later on. If you plan to use word, make sure that you know how to make full usage of “format templates” / “Formatvorlagen”.
* This template file already incorporates all formal requirements for paragraphs, table of contents, list of figures, page margins etc. by default. Therefore, use it!
* Most text processing programmes provide a reliable spell-checking tool. Use it!
* Avoid synonyms! If you are using one term (e.g., consumer or firm), stick with it and do not introduce another (e.g., customer or company)! Carefully search for synonyms before you submit the paper.

# Chapter 3

## Sub-chapter 1

### Sub-sub-chapter 1

#### Outline level 4a

Bachelor and seminar theses usually do not require a fourth outline level!

#### Outline level 4b

### Sub-sub-chapter 2

## Sub-chapter

If you are using MS Word, use cross-references for tables, figures, and equations (“Querverweise“ – under tab References / Cross-references and References / Insert caption). Cross-references help you reference the correct table, even if another table is created before the referenced one. As such, you can save you a lot of time! For example, here, I reference Figure 1 (when you perform ctrl+click on “Table 1”, Word jumps to that object).

Examples for equations:

Present equations in a clear and understandable way and reference them in the text. Please ensure that all (!) variables are defined in the text. Very elaborative equations and proofs are listed in the appendix. For complex equations, we recommend the use of the free version of the software Mathtype.

You may have many equations in your thesis and therefore, will need to implement a consistent numbering. To implement this formatting you only have to add a „new category“ to the caption settings of MS Word (follow “references”, “insert caption”, “new category” and name it “( “). Whenever you want to insert an equation go to „references“, insert caption“, then choose this category, delete the space from the resulting („ 1“) and you’re done.

( 1)  (i∈I, qi≥0),

( 2)  (i∈I, qi≥0),

where:

I: consumer index quantity

qi: demand of the ith consumer

Ui: Utility of the ith consumer.

You can refer to equations by going to “references”, “cross-reference“ and choosing the reference category „( „ and the respective formula.

Example: Property (1) gives the increase in utility caused by an additional unit of consumption quantity.

Notes on using figures and tables

Most importantly: Use figures and tables!!! They help the reader in understanding getting your message and they help you to structure your thoughts. Do not paste them from other sources, but create own figures (e.g., via PowerPoint or Visio).

Make sure that you consistently place the captions for tables and figures above or below the table/figure.

If your thesis includes a literature review, develop a summary table that lists key research papers and their major differences. You can leverage this for your literature review. Table 1 contains one example:

Table 1: Relevant Literature by Theoretical Lens and Derived Hypotheses

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Literature**  |  | **Derived Hypothesis** |
| **Theoretical Lens** | **Principles** | **Relevant****Papers**  | **Empirical Evidence** | **Refund vs. Extra Payment Sequence Preference and Resulting Reaction** | **Existence of Threshold for Magnitude of Last Bill** |
| Prospect Theory’s value function (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979) | Silver lining principle without loss aversion for advance payments | Jarnebrant et al. (2009) | Lab studies with up to 163 participants | Refund sequence preference; positive reaction to refund sequence  | No threshold: More refund always better |
| Silver lining principle with loss aversion for advance payments | Not available | Refund sequence preference; positive reaction to refund sequence with α < .88 | Threshold exists  |
| Hedonic editing without loss aversion for advance payments | Not available | Not available | Not applicable | Not applicable |
| Hedonic editing with loss aversion | Thaler (1985) | Lab study with up to 87 participants | Refund sequence preference; positive reactions to refund sequences with small refunds. For refund sequences with high refunds, the preference is the same as for any extra payment sequence.  | Threshold exists |
| Mental accounting (Thaler, 1985) | Budgeting | Heath and Soll (1996) | Lab studies with up to 114 participants | Refund sequence preference; positive reaction to refund sequence. | No threshold: More refund always better |
| Decoupling of payments from consumption | Prelec and Loewenstein (1998); Patrick and Park (2006) | Lab studies with up to 215 participants | Extra payment sequence preference; positive reaction to extra payment sequence. | No threshold: More extra payment always better |
| Value of sequences theory (Loewenstein and Prelec, 1993) | Preference for improvement of the utility of the events | Matsumoto et al. (2000); Schmitt and Kemper (1996); Chapman (1996) | Lab Studies with up to 376 participants | Refund sequence; positive reaction to refund sequence. | - |
| Preference for little deviation from uniform utility spreading | Lambrecht and Skiera (2006) | Billing data of tele-communications customers | - | Unclear |

Notes: from Schulz, Fabian / Schlereth, Christian / Mazar, Nina / Skiera, Bernd (2015): “Advanced Payment Systems: Paying too much today and being Satisfied Tomorrow”, International Journal of Research in Marketing (IJRM), 32(3), 238-250

The line spacing of tables should be at least 1.0 lines. The font size should be at least 8 pt. Figures and tables in the main text are numbered and labelled with a title. The numbering can be continuous or independent for each chapter.

Each Figure and Table must be referenced at least once in the main text. Tables and figures in the appendix are numbered separately and labelled with a preceding “A”. In case of a direct quote, the source needs to be cited. In case of adapted figures and tables from the literature, they need to be cited as “Following…” or “Referring to…”. The addition “Own representation” for figures and tables designed by the author himself is not necessary. Figures and tables have to be integrated into the text if they are referenced within the text. Extensive illustrations such as questionnaires, legal texts, etc. need to be put into the appendix.

Figure 1: Different specifications of demand functions



Table 2: Results from the optimal flat tariff for homogeneous customers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Quadratic willingness-to-pay function |
| Demand function |  |
| Optimal base price |  |
| Profit (per customer) |  |
| Demand quantity |  |
| Sales |  |

Remark: You can easily avoid page breaks within tables by using the Word formatting option „do not separate paragraphs“/„Absätze nicht trennen“.

# Conclusion

For a seminar or bachelor thesis, your conclusion should typically fill about one page; for master theses the equivalent is two pages. Purpose of the conclusion is to sum up results from your thesis and outline further perspectives. If applicable, you should differentiate between managerial and research implications.

# Appendix

If necessary, you can insert an appendix here. Please make sure that the reader fully understands your thesis without reading the appendix. Consequently, show all tables and figures that are a crucial part of your argumentation in the main text and do not move them to the appendix!

# Formal Requirements

## Language

Seminar paper: English

Bachelor thesis: German or English (optional)

Master thesis: English

## Length

Please refer to the WHU regulations for details about the length of your thesis.

## Margins

Top: 2.5 cm

Bottom: 2.5 cm

Left: 2.5 cm

Right: 2.5 cm

## Formatting

For the main text, use “Times New Roman” font, 12pt. Footnotes are in 10pt font. The paper (text, indexes, etc.) needs to have 1.5 spacing and footnotes need single spacing. Accentuations within the text should be done either through **bold** or *italicized* print, but do not use underlining or a ***combination*** of the previous elements.

## Citations

To manage citations, we recommend the usage of Citavi or Endnote, which are available for WHU students @mywhu. Please use a uniform citation style throughout your thesis or assignment (e.g. APA or Chicago).

Ensure that at least parts of the references are from scientific journals. One indicator about the scientific quality of the journal is the VHB-ranking:

<https://vhbonline.org/fileadmin/user_upload/JQ3_MARK.pdf>

Or the ERIM star ranking:

<https://www.erim.eur.nl/about-erim/erim-journals-list-ejl/>

Every reference has to be verifiable. As a result, foreign ideas should be marked as such.

**Example**

The significance of the key account manager is highlighted many times in literature (Brielmaier, 1998; Workman, Homburg, and Jensen, 2003; Jensen, 2004).

This methodology is used for up to three authors. With more than three authors, only the first one is mentioned with the addition “et al.”.

**Example**

Sales force model-builders have to find effective ways to disseminate models to the practitioner community (Mantrala et al., 2009).

Skiera (1999, p. 243 ff.) has shown that two-part tariffs lead to an increase in profits.

Verbal quotations have to be put into quotation marks. Furthermore, list the page number as part of the citation.

**Example**

“The Sales Territory Alignment Problem is a difficult problem meshing combinatorial and personnel complexities.” (Zoltners and Sinha 2005, p. 329).

Omissions within quotes can be represented with continuous dots … . English quotes should not be translated into German.

**Example**

Noble and Gruca (1999b, p. 459) support this view: „There is little comparative research how companies go about setting prices. (…) For many other marketing decisions, much is known about what works and what does not”.

At the end of the document, arrange the references alphabetically according to authors’ names. In case of multiple works from the same author, start with the oldest one. In case of multiple references from the same author from the same year, works are to be labelled with lower case letters behind the year of publication starting with “a”.

# Criteria of Evaluation

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | not applicable | inadequate | sufficient | satisfactory | good | very good |
| **A) CONTENT [ca. 25%]** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| structure and weighting |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| goal setting/clarification of relevance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| combination of goal/research question and theory/methodology |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| plausibility of argumentation line |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| critical reflection of own work |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **B) FORM [ca. 15%]** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| appearance and formalia |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| spelling, punctuation, and grammar |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| appropriate (scientific) language |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| linguistic clarity and intelligibility |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| adequate use of tables and illustration |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **C) LITERATURE [ca. 15%]** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| quality of references |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| depth / completeness of the literature |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| correctness of citation style |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| extraction & illustration of relevant information |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **D) EMPIRICAL/DATA ANALYSIS (optional) [ca. 25%]** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| quality of data collection |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| quality of data analysis (statistics) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| quality of empirical-based conclusions |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **E) DIFFICULTY [ca. 20%]** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ability to work independently |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| innovativity / creativity of own contribution |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| commitment / effort |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# **Submission**

You are instructed to submit your thesis before the submission deadline via Moodle.

In order to avoid a bloated appendix, you should separately submit the following electronically (via flash drive or cloud link), if applicable:

* A folder with the most important references, if available as PDF.
* In case of a quantitative study, all data (e.g., SPSS, Excel, SAS, JMP … files including all calculation steps), including your raw data.
* In case of a qualitative study, the summary of the conversation and the audio and transcript version of the conversation.

# Table of references

This is a recommendation for the format of the literature section. Other formats are also possible, as long as they are consistently used. For example, please ensure that the use of capital letters is always consistent and that each journal article lists volume number, issue number, and the page number.

Firner, H., & Tacke, G. (1993). Bahncard: Kreative Preisstruktur. *Absatzwirtschaft*, *36*(5), 66-70.

Isermann, H. (1998). Logistik - Gestaltung von Logistiksystemen. Landsberg / Lech.

Kaas, K. P. (1977). Empirische Preisabsatzfunktionen bei Konsumgütern. Berlin et al.

Marketing Science Institute (2008). MSI Current Research Priorities. http://www.msi.org/research/index.cfm?id=43 (01.07.2008).

Mathes, H. D. (1978). Produktentscheidungen in komplexen Kaufsituationen. Diss. Siegen.

Ohse, D. (1998). Quantitative Methoden in der Betriebswirtschaftslehre. München.

Phlips, L. (1989). The Economics of Price Discrimination". Cambridge.

Skiera, B., & Spann, M. (1998). Gewinnmaximale zeitliche Preisdifferenzierung für Dienstleistungen. *Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft*, *68*, 703-718.

Skiera, B., & Albers, S. (1998). COSTA: Contribution Optimizing Sales Territory Alignment. *Marketing Science*, *17*(1), 196-213.

Tacke, G. (1989). Nichtlineare Preisbildung: Theorie, Messung und Anwendung. Wiesbaden.

Wilson, R. (1993). Nonlinear Pricing. New York.

# AI Declaration

Last name: First name:

**Did you use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) to prepare your thesis?**

If you answer NO, please indicate shortly why (50-150 words).

If you answer YES, please answer:

**1. Which tools did you use?** (up to 200 words)

**2. For which parts and purpose of your thesis did you use the AI tools?** (up to 400 words)

[Answering this question is important. However, it is not an adequate substitute for a detailed indication of where in the manuscript AI-generated text was used.]

**3. How was your experience?**

Please write a brief personal reflection note (200-400 words) on your experience using the AI tools. Please tackle at least the following aspects:

* To which extent did the AI tools improve your productivity?
* Did you experience any drawbacks and explicit mistakes in the output of the AI tools?

# Declaration

Last name: First name:

**Affidavit**

I hereby declare that I have written this

**Seminar paper/Bachelor thesis/Master thesis**

on my own and with no other help than the literature and other supportive material listed in the appendix. Citations of sentences and parts of sentences are declared as such, while other imitations are clearly marked and linked to original sources with regards to extent and intention of the statements made. This thesis has never been handed in to any examination authority before and it is also not yet published.

Place, date:

Signature