



Sounds LIKE A THESIS!

A quick guide on how to write and present your Bachelor or Masters thesis like a Rockstar.

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MAIN SETLIST

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Follow and listen to the full playlist of the e-book on **YouTube**.



* Click on the images to visit the playlist.

The screenshot shows a YouTube playlist interface. On the left, the main video player displays the first video, "How to Develop a Research Idea for a Thesis", with a "PLAY ALL" button. Below the player, the playlist title "Thesis Writing Tips" is shown, along with statistics: "9 videos • 5,429 views • Last updated on Jan 22, 2020". A description follows: "A series to help students in management related courses (e.g. Marketing, management, hospitality) to write their thesis or dissertation at Bachelor and Masters level." At the bottom left, the "Live Innovation" channel logo and a "SUBSCRIBE" button are visible.

The right side of the screenshot lists nine videos in the playlist:

- 1 **How to Develop a Research Idea for a Thesis** (9:26) - Live Innovation
- 2 **How to Write the Introduction Chapter** (7:29) - Live Innovation
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- 5 **How to Write the Results Chapter** (6:43) - Live Innovation
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- 7 **How to Write the Research Limitations** (7:09) - Live Innovation
- 8 **How to Write the Managerial Recommendations** (5:32) - Live Innovation
- 9 **How to Prepare for Your Thesis Presentation** (9:40) - Live Innovation

DISCLAIMER!

Hello my friend, how are you doing? Look, I am really glad you are here.

And if you found this e-book, it can only mean one thing: you are either a Bachelor or Masters student, enrolled in a management related course, trying to write a thesis. You are maybe a bit lost, about to pull all your hair out and give up on it all. Am I correct?

Well, do not worry. I got your back.

First of all, I'm very happy you are here. And do not worry, you will not lose all your hair. In this e-book I'll take you through the entire thesis journey to help you do a wonderful job. And hey, by the end you will enjoy life and even get to know some good new music. Sounds good, right? **But before we start, please note:**

**THESE
ARE OUR
PERSONAL
SUGGESTIONS.**

Scholars normally have different views and/or expectations. So don't forget to discuss your research ideas with your supervisor... and importantly:

**Read carefully and follow the guidelines of
your university.**

After all, your work will be evaluated at your university and institutions have differences among their guidelines. So, now that we are clear, shall we start?

Turn up the volume and let's go!

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE

Artist: Guns n' Roses

INITIAL
CONSIDERATIONS.



ATTENTION!

THERE IS A NEW BAND IN TOWN

Introducing...

LLM

(Large Language Models)



JAM WITH LLM!

Using ChatGPT and Other Large Language Models (LLMs) for **academic research**

My friend, you wouldn't believe it, but so much has happened since we published the first edition of SOUNDS LIKE A THESIS in 2021. At the end of 2022, OpenAI released ChatGPT 3.5, and since then, it seems like we live in a different universe. And why? Because Large Language Models (LLMs), like ChatGPT, have completely changed how we work across several sectors, including academia. And of course, it has also impacted how students and scholars conduct research and write their work, including theses.

From now on, you should see them as an awesome new band, with whom you can jam (co-create) to make amazing songs. Or better said, to write a killer thesis!

WHAT CAN LLMS DO FOR YOU?

In this new edition of the e-book, we will advise how we believe you can co-create with LLMs in an ethical way during your thesis writing journey. So after every chapter of this e-book, we will have recommendations in a new section titled "JAM WITH LLM"!

In short, we'll recommend using LLMs to brainstorm, organize your ideas, and even improve your writing style. But listen up! It's important to always remember: LLMs are tools, not magicians who will do all the work for you. We want and strongly advise you to do the hard work so that you can truly develop yourself as a person and student. Not just aim for a good grade!

So here's the deal we will set from now on, just between you and me:

**LLMS WILL NOT WRITE YOUR THESIS.
LLMS WILL NOT WRITE YOUR THESIS.
LLMS WILL NOT WRITE YOUR THESIS.**

Universities expect your work, not the work of a machine. So, use these tools for support but always cross-check and cite your sources. If you let LLMs take over, you might get caught in the plagiarism trap, you will not develop yourself academically and no one wants that, right?

But do not worry. I will tell you more at the end of each chapter, ok?

So now moving on from LLMs, and before we truly start, and I tell you all about how to develop a thesis idea and write each chapter, let me first give you some other initial advice. These initial considerations are generic tips you should ALWAYS keep in mind while writing your thesis and should help during the entire process, ok?



First, you will write the thesis for your reviewers to read. So help and guide them in understanding your work.

What I mean is that you must work to facilitate their understanding of your work. Very often, it will be clear to you, but not to them. **And remember:** a thesis is a long document. So...

NEVER LET THE READER FEEL LOST!

Look, I will be honest with you: Supervisors and/or reviewers have many other duties apart from reading your thesis. They will probably read it a few days prior to the colloquium, maybe in bed watching a series or lying on the couch.

So what do you have to do? MAKE THEIR READING EXPERIENCE SMOOTH! The easier it is for them to read it, the more they will understand and better evaluate your work.

If the reviewer gets lost, your evaluation will be compromised because they will simply be confused and will not understand what you are trying to achieve or have done.

So how do you make sure the reader is never lost? From the start, you work on two things: **STRUCTURE AND FORMATTING:**

A) STRUCTURE

Remember: The way you structure (organize) your thesis will heavily influence how reviewers read and understand it. And consequently, how they will evaluate and grade it.



So always try to start your chapters (literature review, methodology, results, conclusion and limitations) by **reminding the reader what your research aim is (overall goal of the thesis)**.

Also, finish each chapter with a section titled **“Summary of the Chapter”** in which you remind the reader what was discussed and what the next chapter will cover. This way the reader will always be reminded where they are and where they are going (This should only be one paragraph long).

Finally, avoid super long sections. For example, sometimes in the “literature review” or “results” chapters students often have pages and pages of content without any interruption. When this happens the reader gets lost. So create headings and sub-headings to facilitate the reading and understanding. Ok?

B) FORMAT

The formatting of your thesis, and its overall visual appeal, will indicate to the reader how much attention to detail you gave to it. **In other words, how much you cared about your own work.** So if you submit a thesis which looks careless, the reviewer will immediately develop a bad impression. And not only that, but a well formatted thesis, is a thesis which is normally easy to read and follow.

SO YOUR THESIS MUST LOOK GOOD!

How do you write a well formatted thesis? Well, from the start you should:

- Follow carefully the academic referencing style you will adopt (e.g. Harvard or APA).
- Have original and well designed (and labeled) tables and figures.
- Be consistent with formatting: font sizes, font types, etc.
- Have properly labelled sections.

2

**This is your thesis, your journey.
So enjoy the process and make
it fun!**

This is your journey, your moment. Throughout your thesis writing period, you will have challenging moments. and others which will be extremely fun and exciting. And it will be even more unforgettable if you achieve one thing: **having fun.**

Throughout the entire thesis writing journey, during both the exciting and boring times, try to make it interesting. For example, I always work listening to an instrumental music playlist I created on [Spotify \(click here to listen to it!\)](#) and permanently work on.

I also always like having good coffee (cappuccino, of course) or some nice cold drink. Usually, I also write much better after having done some form of exercise, having gone for a walk and taken a nice shower.

The point I am trying to make is: build in a nice routine for you, one that makes you feel good and happy to work (sounds cheesy, but it is effective!). And remember:

A THESIS IS NOT A SPRINT. IT IS A MARATHON.

So the only way you will ever see the finish line is if you take care of yourself, of your health and truly build a routine that you enjoy. Call me crazy, but during my PhD in New Zealand I built such a nice routine of going to the library, having food breaks and going for drinks (beer, of course) at night after a long day of writing that I truly missed it when I was done.

Oh, and my final suggestion is: **Do not force it.** If one day you feel you are being completely unproductive, you are sitting at your desk, but nothing is happening, let it go. Yeah, really let it go! Go out, meet friends, watch a nice film. Afterwards you will feel rested and will have a nice "guilty feeling". Given that you missed one or two days of work, you will probably be much more productive afterwards - much more than if you had forced work when you did not feel like it.

Ok, so now that we covered the initial considerations,...

ARE YOU READY TO START YOUR THESIS?



THE MASTERPLAN

Artist: Oasis

HOW TO
DEVELOP A
THESIS IDEA.



Alright my friend, so to begin let me ask you a question:

**Do you already have an idea of what you intend to do for your thesis?
Do you perhaps have an idea, but you don't know exactly how to structure it?**

Just please don't tell me you are sitting on your couch squeezing your brain hoping that some interesting and meaningful idea will come out. That is certainly **NOT** how it works!

From now on, let me show you, step-by-step how to develop a fantastic thesis idea for any **management related course at Bachelor or Masters level**. Are you ready? The first step will be how to structure your initial idea.

Let's go!

STEP 1: STRUCTURE YOUR INITIAL IDEA

The very first thing you must understand, in order to structure your thesis idea, is the difference between **CONTEXT** and **THEORY**.

This is extremely important, and something students very often get wrong. After understanding the difference, we'll discuss how to define and combine them to develop your thesis idea, ok?

So here we go, one concept at a time:

A) CONTEXT

Very often I hear the same line from students: "I would like to write my thesis about..." and then they mention a **product** or a **service**. Like, electric cars, robots, or music concerts.. or children under five years of age.... or organic food.... or fast-fashion..." .

Well, well, well... In all of these examples they **only mentioned** the **CONTEXT** of their study.

In a study, **CONTEXTS** are scopes to which, or in which, a study is applied. So it is fairly easy to define, but it does not reveal **WHAT** the study will investigate.

Contexts of study can (or should) be narrowed to, for example:

- **Consumer group:** e.g. High income, Seniors, Loyal customers, Innovators.
- **Product/service category:** e.g. Beer, headphones, food delivery, coffee.
- **Markets:** e.g. Brazil, Australia, Germany, USA.

... and the more specific you define your context,
the clearer your study will be!

So, for example, you can define your context based on all three scopes: sample, market and product/service category. Here are two examples:

- **Example 1:** You can conduct a study involving adults over 50 years (Sample), Brazil (Market) and virtual reality glasses (Product category).
- **Example 2:** You can conduct a study involving Bachelor Students (Sample), New Zealand (Context of market) and music festivals (Service category).

Also, you can choose more than one context of sample, market or product. Usually when this is done, the study involves comparing the different markets, samples or products. And these tend to be very interesting studies!

Here is one example of a study, which would compare two contexts:

- **Example:** A study comparing three consumer groups (low income, medium income and high income) in relation to video streaming behavior (Service Category) in Germany (Market).

Seems interesting, right? Ok, I feel you have understood what a context of a study is.

But what if you do not even have an idea of which context to study?
Would you like to know how to choose the context(s) of your study?

Do not worry, my friend. I've got your back!

It's SIMPLE!

First thing to consider is your personal **passion**. My friend, what are you passionate about? (Please tell me you are **PASSIONATE** about something!). You see, no matter your passion, you can always research it. This way, you will understand it even more and feel even closer to it. Sounds pretty good, doesn't it?

Remember: writing your thesis will require time and a lot of effort. Would you really want to discuss something you are not fond of? Of course not. So follow your passion - sounds like a cheesy line you would tell someone you are interested in a bar on a Friday night, but it is true! Second aspect to consider, is the relevance of the study. For example, how timely is the context that you chose? Currently there are many relevant topics that are of interest to many people: global warming, VR, AI, AR, sustainability, technology experiences...

There are also topics that will always be relevant, no matter the time. So make sure to choose contexts that are: **a)** relevant for society and, **b)** relevant for the industry.

An interesting way to find relevant timely topics for society or the industry is to simply visit credible sites related to both (general news and industry related news sites). Follow those sources, their social media channels and catch up on the main discussion topics around the context you are interested in.

Finally, you might ask yourself: **what if my passion is outdated?** Well, well, well... In case you are interested in researching, for example, coal as an innovative source of energy, you are definitely on the wrong path. But always discuss it with your supervisor. There is always a way to link your interest to a current topic or adjust to frame it into a research topic.

All good with understanding **context**? Great, let's move on!

B) THEORY

Ok, so let's assume you chose Adults (Sample), Brazil (Market) and virtual reality glasses (Product) as **CONTEXT** for your study. Very good start! The following step refers to addressing the question:

WHAT would you like to understand/research about adult Brazilian consumers towards virtual reality glasses?

Answering this question will allow you to define which **theoretical concepts** will form the rationale of your study and indicate what will be researched. For example:

Would you like to

- understand the **motivation** factors for purchasing VR glasses?
- investigate their **willingness to buy** the product?
- analyse their **attitude towards product attributes** of VR glasses?
- examine the **telepresence** experience at work, when using VR?
- establish their **post-purchase evaluations**?
- or maybe investigate how **branding** and **situational factors** influence the decision making process of VR glasses?

All of the concepts highlighted are examples of **theoretical concepts**.
Defining them is **CRUCIAL** for you to define what your thesis will be about.



Spoiler Alert!

Later on, your literature review chapter will cover purely theoretical concepts, not context. So you must define them really well, ok?

And how do you choose your theoretical concepts? How do you know which concepts apply to the context of your study?

Well, the main solution is: read previous scientific studies related to the context of your study. By doing so, you will familiarize yourself with what has been researched and identify research gaps

You were expecting a quicker and easier solution, right?
Well my friend... there isn't one. Sorry.

And how do you find such studies?

- **Google Scholar:** Google Scholar is perhaps the easiest way to start. You simply use keywords related to your context to start with. Go through (this means actually reading!) the studies and see which concepts have already been applied by other researchers and why.
- **Digital library of your university:** Most universities have their internal system of digital catalogues. Does your university have a digital library? Access the scientific journals!
- **Search for research gaps:** Most scientific studies provide (in their last section) ideas for future research directions. You may choose to develop a study suggested previously by those authors (make sure to contact them and inform! They will appreciate it!).

STEP 2: DEFINE YOUR RESEARCH AIM

Once you have defined the context of your study and the main theoretical concepts, the next step involves defining your **research aim**.

What is a research aim? The research aim represents a general statement which describes what your study “aims” to do. Got it? It is really important because it should inform the reader what your study will be about and is usually the first thing reviewers will look at (at least I do). Here are some further hints for developing your research aim:

- It is a statement, which ideally should be **ONE** (TWO maximum!) sentences long.
- It should be **short, objective and clear**, enabling readers of any audience to understand what your study will be about.
- Also, your aim should ideally include your research context (s)
 - **Sample:** Which consumer group (s) will you address?
 - **Market:** Which market (s) will you address?
 - **Product/service:** Which product (s) will you address?
- Finally, your research aim should also include (or provide clear indication of) the main theoretical concepts applied to your study.
 - **Example of theoretical concepts:** Quality, trust, decision making process, willingness to purchase, risk, telepresence, satisfaction, loyalty, etc.

Here are three examples of research aims, combining all of the suggestions above:

- **Example 1:** This thesis aims to investigate the influence of virtual reality (context of product) on the decision making process (theoretical construct) and willingness to purchase (theoretical construct) of millennials (context of sample and service) in Germany (context of market).
- **Example 2:** This thesis aims to investigate and contrast the impact of coffee (context of product) advertisement on Instagram (context of medium) on college students' (context of sample) perceptions of trust, willingness to purchase and quality (theoretical concepts). The study will compare participants in USA and Germany (context of market).
- **Example 3:** This thesis aims to compare concert goers' in Brazil and New Zealand (context of sample) risk perception (theoretical context) towards the use of facial recognition technology during concerts (context of service).

STEP 3: DEFINE YOUR RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Alright, so by now you have understood the difference between **context** and **theory**, and how to develop your **research aim**. Well done, I am already proud of you! You are definitely on the right track.

The next step is to define your **research objectives**. The objectives represent the main steps you need to go through in order to fulfill your research aim. So basically, the objectives are the overall steps of your study.

Essentially, here is the logic to follow when designing your **research objectives**:



You should develop them in a way that after addressing all objectives, you will have fulfilled the research aim of your thesis.

Got it? Good!... But my friend, in case you have not understood, please read the previous sentence as many times as necessary until you do. It's very important you get this right!

Now that you've got it, here are some further recommendations on how to develop your research objectives: First, there is **NO specific number of objectives that your thesis should have**. It depends on each project. But there is a logic to it. For example:

Usually, the **first** objective refers to the **review of scientific literature** of the main theoretical concepts of your thesis. Here is one example to illustrate it:

- **Example:** The first objective involves the review of the relevant scientific literature regarding the concepts of decision making process and willingness to book in the tourism context.

Also, usually, the **second, third, fourth (or more)** objectives of your thesis will describe the **DATA COLLECTION** process of your thesis. Thus, these research objectives should provide an indication of what you want to achieve in the data collection process.

Here are two examples:

- **Example 1:** A structured survey will be conducted with senior alcohol drinkers in order to identify the frequency of consumption and concerns towards alcoholic beverages.
- **Example 2:** A focus group will be conducted with German classical musicians to discuss their self-evaluation of anxiety and sense of belonging.



But pay attention: each step of data collection should be described as a SEPARATE objective. Ok?

And to finish off, usually the **FINAL** research objective describes **managerial recommendations** based on the findings of your study. It should focus on what companies and managers should do, based on the implications of your findings. Here is an example of a final objective:

- **Example:** Lastly, this thesis will provide clear and applicable managerial recommendations for travel agents, tourism professionals and academics on how to better assist senior travelers during their online booking process.



FINAL THOUGHTS

My dear friend, glad you made it all the way until the end! Well done. You definitely deserve a cold beer outside, listening to the playlist of this book on **Spotify (click here!)**. Only this way will you be able to process all the information and reflect on your thesis idea.

But before you go get your cold **Hop House 13** (my favorite beer) from the fridge, let us go through the main recommendations suggested in this chapter:

- **First**, define the **context of your study**. It should be both relevant for the industry and/or also part of your passion.

- **Second**, define the **theoretical topics** for your study. They should be based on the review of previous scientific literature, and logical to what you want to achieve with your study.
- **Third**, define the **research aim** of your study. It should include context and theory, and be clear and concise.
- **Finally**, define the **research objectives** of your thesis. Make sure that you developed your objectives in a way that by completing all of them your aim will be fully addressed. Also, check the first objective is related to the review of the literature, the next ones refer to each stage of data collection and the final one is related to managerial recommendations.



And my final recommendation is: Don't forget to discuss all of your initial research ideas with your supervisor. This is a very important stage to get right. All your following decisions will be based on what your study is about.

Oh, one very final tip for the meeting with your supervisor:

- **Bring coffee for both of you.** Caffeine helps the flow of creative ideas. And in case I'm your supervisor, please bring a cappuccino without sugar - never tea (tastes only like hot water to me).
- **If your supervisor tells jokes, laugh as if you like them.** Jokes from academics are hardly ever good, but being silent will make it even more awkward.

And now... Rock on to the next stage!



JAM WITH LLM!

USING LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS TO DEVELOP YOUR **THESIS IDEA**.

1

Let me be clear: **DO NOT ASK AN LLM TO DEFINE OR CHOOSE AN IDEA FOR YOUR THESIS!**

I know, I know... It is very tempting to write a prompt such as: *“Please suggest a relevant, timely, insightful research idea for a Bachelor/Masters idea that will lead to an impactful study in the field of XXXX that will impress my supervisor and scholars in the field”*.

But by doing so, you will miss one of the most relevant steps in research which is actually learning about the topic and becoming an expert on it. Remember:

SHORT-TERM MEMORY DOES NOT SOLVE COMPLEX PROBLEMS.

So it is very important for you to actually do the hard work of understanding your field to actually develop your critical thinking abilities, as a person, and as a professional.

2

Use LLMs and AI tools to help you identify gaps in the literature, connect concepts and understand complex studies.

One thing that you can do is upload several relevant papers to LLMs and write a detailed prompt asking it to reveal gaps and possible future studies. But again, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT that you have read these papers and understood them. Only then will you be able to know if the LLM is hallucinating or understand the relevance and complexity of the problem it is suggesting.

There are also specific tools that are great in such complex understanding of the literature to reveal gaps. These include: [SemanticScholar](#), [Scite](#), [ConnectedPapers](#), [Elicit](#), [Scholarcy](#), [Research Rabbit](#) and many more!

JAM WITH LLM!

USING LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS TO DEVELOP YOUR **THESIS IDEA.**

3

Set tasks for the LLM to search, summarize and update you periodically with latest news regarding the context of your study.

One of the challenging things of mastering the context of a study is to be constantly updated with the latest news. But what you can do is to ask your LLM to periodically conduct a research of news regarding your topic and send you a summary of the key topics, with direct link (this is very important to control for the hallucinations of LLMs!).

So, for example: you can ask your LLM to send you every Monday morning at 8am a summary of the key news and topics related to your study. You can even ask it to provide a table, with links, titles of the articles, date of publication, source, and a brief description of why it is relevant for your study! This way you will always be updated and have hundreds of timely examples to include in the introduction section of your thesis!

This will also give you an idea of how to adapt or change the context of your study in a way that you cover a topic which is actually relevant and timely.

THIS IS JUST THE START.

The full e-book covers every chapter of your thesis: introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion and managerial recommendations. Plus, it shows you how to present your defense and impress everyone.

€4,99. Less than a coffee.

Sounds
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