

Preparing Theses and Dissertations: Basic Guidelines on Using APA Format

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Marleonie M. Bauyot, Ph.D.

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PREFACE

This manual contains styles and forms for theses [undergraduate and graduate] and dissertations supplemented with the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or the *APA Manual*.

The APA Publication Manual is intended primarily as a guide for preparing articles or manuscripts for journal publication. For this reason, many Psychology and Social Sciences Departments of most universities require that theses and dissertations be prepared according to the APA Publication Manual to prepare for their eventual publication in APA journals (APA, 2001). Some Colleges and Universities in Davao region encourage that theses and dissertations be prepared according to that of the Publication Manual to facilitate easier editing should the theses and dissertations be published in the different journals.

The Publication Manual suggests that the preliminary pages of a thesis or dissertation include a title page, an approval page, an acknowledgement page, a table of contents, a list of tables and figures, and an abstract with words not exceeding 350. The entire thesis or dissertation report shall have four chapters (in special cases, five chapters)

while the thesis or dissertation proposal shall only have two chapters, excluding Chapters III and IV which are results, and discussion respectively.

Chapter I of the thesis or dissertation report is the Introduction. This chapter includes a thorough discussion of the literature review, shows a theoretical and conceptual framework, presents the problem and hypothesis to be studied, and describes the research strategy.

Chapter II or the Method describes in detail how the study will be conducted for a thesis or dissertation proposal and details on how the study was conducted for a thesis or dissertation report. This chapter includes discussion on the design, setting, participants, measures, and procedures. For a thesis or dissertation proposal, the discussion on the data analysis shall be included in this chapter while for the final thesis and dissertation report the said section shall be in Chapter III or the Results Chapter. The discussion on the limitations of the study shall also be included in this chapter for the thesis or dissertation proposal. However, for the thesis or dissertation report, it shall be integrated in Chapter IV or the Discussion Chapter.

Chapter III presents in detail a report of the data collected in *relation to or subjected to* the statistical or data analytic treatment used for quantitative researches; emerging themes, and observations thematically analyzed for qualitative researches.

Chapter IV is the discussion part of the thesis or dissertation. It presents the interpretation of the results and their implications in relation to the hypothesis. This chapter may be organized in subsections and integrated in flexible ways, depending on the topic, study design, writing style, etc.

A Summary and Conclusion chapter, which is optional, could also be included and labeled as Chapter V. It provides a summary of the entire thesis or dissertation report and highlights the significant results of the study and their implications. Initiatives that could be taken by other researchers and stakeholders to further the results and implications of the study will also be discussed in this chapter.

The References section provides a list of the references or literatures cited in the thesis or dissertation report. In the succeeding sections of this document a detailed guide on literature citations will be provided.

The Appendices section includes materials or documents needed for complete documentation. Materials appropriate for an appendix are instructions to participants, questionnaires and scales, raw data, sign-up sheets or informed consent forms, and other instruments used in data collection.

An overview of the contents of a thesis or dissertation report is provided to provide a skeletal framework of a thesis or dissertation report. Tips on preparing an abstract, full paper, materials for oral presentation, and a poster are given as well. A sample thesis is included for illustration.

However, this is not a full account, or a replicate version of the *APA Manual*. These guidelines are customized in such a way that rules and tips are intended for amateur APA users to eventually acquire the command of the format. Furthermore, this is the response to the American Psychological Association's statement that, "the (APA) Publication Manual presents explicit style requirements but acknowledges that alternatives are sometimes necessary; authors should balance the rules of the Publication Manual with good judgment (*The APA Publication Manual, 2001*). Needless to say, guidelines pay homage to the latest edition of the publication manual, which deeply encourages researchers and thesis and dissertation writers to peruse. The meeting and collaboration with other colleges and universities eventually opened the possibility of sharing this output with the entire academic community. This action shall hopefully pave the way to further exchange thoughts and ideas with one another on utilizing this

publication, which may eventually expand and develop more linkages and networks to ultimately speak a similar language in research and publication.

This publication acknowledges the President of San Pedro College, *Sr. Nanita M. Handugan, O.P.*, the Vice Presidents *Prof. Ma. Minda M. Lacuesta* and *Dr. Sergio V. Opeña*, and the Dean of Graduate School, *Dr. Desiderio N. Noveno, Jr.*, for their unwavering support in making this goal to fruition. Likewise, the sincerest gratitude is extended to the deans and some faculty of the College's affiliated schools, namely, *Notre Dame of Marbel University*, *Notre Dame University of Cotabato*, and *St. Mary's College of Tagum*, for sharing their resources and expertise. Finally, to *Profs. Iryln Joy Togonon-Tombo* and *Alfred Andrew C. Reyes*, their notable contribution to the academic community are duly recognized by using their graduate theses as samples for the guidelines.

May the guidelines shed light on the vision, mission, and goals, not only as an institution, but as quality research hubs in higher education.

Marleonic M. Bayot, Ph.D.