

Thesis in (inter)cultural studies

Thesis structure – an outline:

Preliminary pages

Title page, a declaration of originality/certificate of research – as prescribed by the institution



Abstract

a short summary detailing the purpose, the relevance, the approach and the results of the paper
(100 - 150 words)



Table of contents

lists the chapters and subchapters as well as the contents of the appendices, and indicates the page numbers where all these can be found



Lists of tables, figures, acronyms (if relevant)



Introduction

The introduction should:

- specify the point/topic of the study
- explain why the topic is relevant/interesting
- explain how the analysis relates to the problem
- specify the exact research questions/hypotheses
- explain how the study relates to previous work in the field and how it is expected to benefit the field
- preview the structure/chapters of the thesis



Review of the Literature

The review of literature must:

- define the key terms and concepts,
- describe relevant theories to provide a theoretical background to the study
- present earlier research concerning the issue

The literature review can be organized around concepts or the chronology of earlier research but in any case must be focused to suit the purposes of the research.



Research design and method

Empirical research

Theoretical/conceptual framework

Theoretical research

The **What? How? & Why?** chapter

This chapter contains information about the methodological and theoretical approach, methods, procedures of data collection and analysis, ethics, validity/ reliability/trustworthiness of the research. The following points must be dealt with:

- (re)stating the research question(s) (What questions arise based on the lit. rev. and the researcher's focus/interest?)
- the approach of the research (qualitative, quantitative or mixed)
- reference to earlier research to justify the approach and methods.
- description of the methods of data collection:
What? How? Why?
(Before getting down to the details, a one or two-sentence summary of the research process should be given.)
 - Setting (a description of the context, e.g. the place, general and specific background, etc.)
 - Participants or set of materials (texts) analysed (rationale for selection, variables,)
 - Procedures (What happened, how long did the procedures last?, etc.)
 - Instruments (questionnaires, interviews, diaries, observation protocol, document analysis, framework for discourse analysis, retrospection, etc.)
- methods of data analysis – description of procedures and methods
- validity/reliability/credibility/trustworthiness/ generalizability/transferability/limitations
- ethical issues, if relevant
- restating the aim of the research and the research question(s) (first stated and justified in the introduction.)
- explanation of the analytical framework in relation to the aim(s) and research question(s), i.e. explain what theory provides the basis of the analysis/interpretation, e.g. a particular theory and/or method. It also has to be explained/justified why this is the appropriate approach. The following methods (and a combination thereof) are often used in analysing cultural products: content analysis, narrative analysis, thematic analysis, semiotics, ideological approaches, typological approaches, genre study, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, visual analysis, historical study, "auteur" study, impact/reception study (i.e., how the product has impacted the audience/users, how it was received), etc.
- explain the practicalities & process of the analysis, i.e.:
 - describe what product (text, film, etc.) was chosen and why (i.e., why is it exactly this product that is best suited for the purpose of the analysis);
 - describe and justify the steps of the analysis (i.e., how the analysis was carried out?);
- any issues of research ethics (if relevant).



Results/Findings*

the presentation/description of the results of the data analysis



Analysis

- This is a disciplined presentation of the description and interpretation of or possible solution(s) to the problem under scrutiny as envisaged by the writer. It should build upon the work of other researchers in the field, and should be carried out based on the theoretical/conceptual framework described in the previous chapter. Depending

Discussion/Interpretation*

explanation and interpretation of the results with respect to the original research questions (and hypotheses) and the consequence of the results

* These two chapters are often merged into one:
'Results and discussion'

on the topic and approach of the inquiry, the analysis can be descriptive, interpretive, critical or argumentative.

- All arguments/claims put forward by the author must be accompanied by some form of supporting evidence (e.g., examples, figures, facts, views of other researchers)
- reference should be made to the criteria of analysis described in the previous chapter where necessary.
- This section ends with an evaluation of the proposed solution(s), showing that it is (or these are) exempt from the weaknesses identified in the opposing view(s), or with a summary of the main findings of the analysis in answer to the research question(s).



Conclusion

- a brief restatement of the problem/issue/research questions,
- a summary of the main findings of the analysis,
- a discussion of possible alternative interpretations and views,
- an overview of possible practical implications (where appropriate), or of how the study contributes to current knowledge
- limitations of the study and suggestions for further research



References

APA or MLA depending on the subject



Appendices

Textual, visual or numerical data and documents to illustrate certain points of the analysis

In a thesis in English texts appearing in another language must be translated into English and both the original and the translated text must be appended. (E.g. a questionnaire administered in Hungarian must also appear in its English translation.)