

THESIS WRITING AT MASTER'S LEVEL IN EDUCATION

Tara Prasad Avasthi

Teaching Assistant, Department of Geography

Education, T. U., Nepal

star2012avasthi@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper has highlighted the thesis writing format for Master's Degree in Education at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. It briefly describes the process to make uniformity in the style of writing. Here focus has been given on American Psychological Association (APA) style. This format is commonly adopted in most of the Departments in the Tribhuvan University, and Department of Geography Education is one of them. It is essential for the students and researchers who involve in theses research and formatting their writings. It is a very important aspect of Master's level research for students and an essential element of research reporting. Moreover, it gives good ideas and way-out in thesis writing.

Key Words: Master's Degree, thesis, APA style, Thribhuvan University

INTRODUCTION

Research is the scientific and systematic process of inquiry and discovery. Every time researcher seeks the answer to question/s and tries to understand about the essence of it. For the geographer, research is the process of trying to gain a better understanding of the relationships between humans place, space and environment. Research report/thesis is the finished product of at least in the partial fulfillment for the receptive degree. It is important because a piece of work is usually judge by the standard of the finished product, despite how well things may have gone during the research process (Kitchen and Tate, 2000). All known that term 'research' is called 're..... search'. Therefore, a research report/thesis will need to balance depth and detail with breadth to produce a well rounded report and to develop a coherent and consistent plotline that tells the story of the research. There are discussions of what research was done, how it was done, and result and conclusion of research (Wiersma and Jurs, 2005). The thesis paper may report comparative or descriptive research. Other options include an extensive and original review of the research literature or a project (e.g. curriculum development). In all cases, the topic is chosen by the student with the assistance and approval of the advisor or supervisor among the teaching faculties. The advisor has the prerogative to veto a proposal if the selected option or topic is not appropriate. In that situation any specific format or style is mandatory. That may either assigned by the Department or the University. In such contextual ground all students requires to adapt an American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) Publication Manual (6th edition onwards) and follow the guidelines and referencing system for all thesis, paper/

projects, literature reviews and comprehensive exams accordingly. To this point this paper has been trying to highlight some specific points which are applicable in their writings.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a mandatory requirement of Master's Degree, all students require to participate in writing thesis or research project proposal. Each research proposal must be approved by the respective Departmental Research Committee (DRC) or any other review committee under functions and or mentioned anywhere according to the rule and regulations of the University or Department. But, at Tribhuvan University such type of practices are yet to be well spell out in practice. In practice, research proposal used to be formalized only by the review of the supervisor and not well discussed in front of the committee. Therefore, students may wish to follow the procedures in filing only. In any case students should have their research procedures reviewed by the DRC to ensure that they strictly adhere to ethical research practices. The advisor will assist the student in obtaining approval from the DRC.

An obvious form of student misconduct is plagiarism. Copying or quoting directly from source material without providing quotation marks or crediting the source is a fundamental issue of ethical part of the researcher. A more subtle form, but equally improper is paraphrasing material or using an idea that is not properly introduced and documented (i.e., no reference citation provided) leads the quality of research as well as researcher. The Department of Education requires following the student conduct and disciplining

policy of Tribhuvan University. But there is a lacking for direct monitoring. Thus, it is not implemented yet. Therefore, strong recommendation has been made for effective action against plagiarism and such unethical practices immediately.

ROLES OF DEPARTMENT AND STUDENTS

The student's advisor is generally the first faculty. As first faculty or committee chair, the faculty member has to approve the student's thesis topic and its research proposal. She/he has to guide the student through the entire process of conducting and completing the thesis research. Based on the expertise domain and research scope co-supervisor or any third person could have been allocated to maintain the research quality and standardization according to the theme of the work. This entire conducive environment has to be created by the Department. Student's responsibility is to share the scope and content with another allocated expert faculty member in order to improve the quality. Most importantly, it is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the literature in her or his areas of interest. Based on this literature, the student presents the advisor with one or more topics/research ideas and works collaboratively with the advisor in developing, conducting, and writing thesis (Capital, 2007).

ROLE OF FACULTY OR INSTRUCTOR

It is the instructor's responsibility to provide general guidance and constructive feedback in the development of thesis or research paper related activities associated with a particular course. These activities may be graded by the instructor. The grade assigned by the instructor may not bear on the acceptability of the work as it relates to the Master's Degree thesis requirement but student requires improving the quality. All aspects of the paper (i.e. topic, statement of the problem, objectives, statement of the research or test hypothesis/ses literature review, research design, methods, etc.) must be approved by the advisor or instructor prior to start the activities. Approval does not imply or guarantee to complete the research. It is the student's responsibility to obtain advisor's approval and maintain communication with the advisor throughout the process of developing and implementing the project. This situation may occur when a student wishes to work on a project associated with the faculty member's research. The advisor must approve the topic.

It is the student's responsibility to schedule a meeting with both faculty members. The advisor and other faculty member review the student's proposal

and specify how they will share responsibilities for supervision of the student's work. For example, an advisor may assume primary responsibility for the student's writing and development of all sections of the thesis with the exception of the research design and methods sections. The other faculty member assumes responsibility for the design and methods sections. Primary responsibility means that the faculty member guides the student through the work and provides most, if not all, of the input in the initial development of the work (APA, 2010). The faculty member who does not have primary responsibility provides input informally and/or in reviewing the work when it is well underway.

THE PROCESS AND TIMELINES

Discuss a thesis research or paper topic with your advisor. Decide on a topic for your paper as early as possible. All planning related to a Master's thesis should be discussed with and approved by the student's advisor. Get advisor approval of your thesis topic. This is also necessary when you are developing your proposal in conjunction with a course. Once a student's topic has been approved, the next task is to develop a proposal. Talk with your advisor and propose a second reader (or two additional committee members for a thesis). Ask these individuals to serve in your committee. Draft your "Introduction" chapter and discuss it with your advisor. Review the related literature and draft your "Literature Review." Get your advisor's feedback and approval. Draft your "Methods" chapter and discuss your proposed procedures with your advisor. Submit your proposal to the Department Research Committee (DRC) or Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once you have gained DRC or IRB and advisor approval you may begin data collection. Keep your advisor informed on a regular basis as you make decisions related to the data (Williams, 2010). Write improved drafts of your Introduction, Literature Review, and Methods chapters. When you have finished collecting data, discuss the results with your advisor and draft your "Results" chapter. Finalize the first four chapters. Draft your "Discussion" chapter and discuss it with your advisor. Provide your advisor and readers with a finished paper at two weeks before the deadline. Prepare for an oral presentation of your paper. Your advisor will help arrange this presentation (Neyhart, 2010).

GUIDELINE FOR STUDENTS

Numbers of small but important nitty-gritty things are required when writing the thesis or research report. Some of those are common but very

important and with negligence affect the quality of presentation of the factual evidences.

Paper and Page - It is required to A4 size, white paper of 80 gm. weight. Only one side of paper should be used for typing purpose. Margins should be 1.5" in left and 1" at top, bottom and in right. Page numbers should be given at the bottom and centre parts of the paper. In preliminary pages, page numbers should be given in small roman (i, ii, iii) number.

Font and Font Size - (in English Medium)

The following font and font size are recommended

Description	Chapter Heading	Heading	Sub-Heading	Text
Font style	Times New Roman (TNR)	TNR	TNR	TNR
Font size	16	14	12	12
Format	Bold	Bold	Bold	Normal
Line space	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Case	Upper	Lower	Lower	Lower
Para space	12pt. (Before only)	None	None	None

Font and Font Size - (in Nepali Medium)

Description	Chapter Heading	Heading	Sub-Heading	Text
Font style	Himchuli	Himchuli	Preeti	Preeti
Font size	22	18	15	15
Format	Bold	Bold	Bold	Normal
Line space	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Para space	12pt. (Before only)	None	None	None

Table and Figure - In table, table number (in Arabic/preeti), source, table heading, footnotes, captions etc must be included. Space, title, data etc of the table must be clear. In figures title of the figure, number of figure, index, and name of variables must be included.

Reference Form and Appendix - it is preferable to use APA (American Psychological Association) format for writing reference. Reference should be arranged in alphabetical order. Reference should be placed in separate page. Each appendix should be placed in different pages with headings like appendix I, II, III.

Student requires preparing the thesis with Title page, Recommendation letter to be written by the thesis supervisor, Approval letter by dissertation evaluation committee, Acknowledgements, Table of contents, Abbreviations and Abstract are required. Pages of the initial section usually numbered with Roman alphabets i.e. i, ii, iii and so on. The content of the thesis starts just after the initial section. Usually the content followed the introduction chapter, review of the literature, methodology, analysis and interpretation of data, conclusions and recommendation, acknowledgement, references and finally the appendix. Sub title of each chapter can be decided accordingly to the topics of the research.

CONCLUSION

This paper has been focused on thesis format specifically designed and recommended for the Master's Degree in the Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University. APA is the widely used format for the academic degree and the same is recommended here with some special requirements of students, faculties and institution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is based on mini research entitled 'APA format for M.Ed Thesis Writing' funded by Dean's Office, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University.

REFERENCES

- APA., 2010 Frequently asked questions about APA style. American Psychology Association Retrieved from <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>
- Capital Community College. 2007. A guide for writing research papers. Retrieved from <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/apa/>
- Kitchen, R. and Tate, N. J., 2000. Conduction Research in Human Geography: Theory Methodology and Practice. London
- Neyhart, D. and Karper, E. 2010. APA formatting and style. Purdue University Online Writing Lab. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- APA., (6th ed.) 2010. Publication manual of the American Psychological Association Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Williams, O. 2010. American Psychological Association (APA) format (6th Edition, 2009). Retrieved from <http://umclibrary.crk.umn.edu/apa6thedition.pdf>
- <http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/apa/index.html>
- Wiersma, W. and Jurs S.G. 2005. Research Method in Education: An introduction. Boston