



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**GUIDELINES FOR THE WRITING OF SEMINAR PAPERS**

**For**

**PGD ECONOMICS**

**ECO721**

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

## 1.0 Preamble

Seminar papers are scientific texts and are thus subject to certain requirements regarding format and content. The following paragraphs provide the most essential standards for the writing of seminar papers. The seminar paper constitutes one of the requirements that have to be achieved before award of the PGD Economics.

The seminar paper, including introduction, main section and concluding remarks must be between 25-30 pages. An appendix can only be added (after consultation with the supervisor) if the topic requires the use of large-size figures and tables or comprehensive mathematical expositions. Seminar papers have to have a clear structure. This implies that sections and subsections follow in a logical order and do not merely constitute a random enumeration of aspects relevant to the main topic. The paper has to be subdivided into paragraphs, sections and subsections. Employing sections and subsections only makes sense if sub-chapter 1.1 is, for example, followed by sub-chapter 1.2. Sections, which are shorter than one page should be avoided. When structuring your seminar paper, please make sure to include reader-friendly transitions to guide the reader from one section to the subsequent one.

The table of contents providing the deep structure has to be included directly after the title page. It has to contain page references for all paragraphs, sections and subsections, the headings of which have to be repeated at the respective locations in the text. The introductory paragraph provides a first characterization of the topic. It answers the question why this topic is worth investigating and is concluded by an overview of the structure of the paper. In the subsequent paragraphs, firstly the theoretical foundations of the topic have to be displayed. This is usually done in the form of a review of the relevant literature in the respective field. After that, the specific topic (i.e. a case study or a specific economic or political issue) is dealt with and the results are discussed according to the criteria developed in the theoretical section. The last paragraph contains some concluding remarks. This part emphasizes and evaluates the main findings of the paper (avoid mere summaries). The concluding remarks should also provide interesting perspectives for future research. The structure of a seminar paper can be displayed in the following format:

- i. Section 1: Introduction
- ii. Section 2: Literature Review
- iii. Section 3: Research Methods

The scientific nature of a seminar paper is closely connected to the use of literature that has been published in the relevant field. Existing statements by other authors have to be quoted, controversial approaches have to be displayed and a position regarding their content has to be developed. Please note, however, that the literature review is (merely) of auxiliary nature and does not make up for an independent interpretation and analysis of the relevant economic issue. Throughout the text, all direct and indirect quotations have to be clearly marked and corresponding references have to be indicated. A seminar paper lacking either a complete bibliography or references in the text will not be accepted. Please make sure to indicate all sources of any type of intellectual property. This also applies to all quoted numbers, tables and figures. The infringement of intellectual property rights by passing off ideas of others as one's own is a serious violation of the rules of scientific duty of documentation. Such plagiarism will be graded 5.0. In addition, such plagiarism might infringe copyright law, which will potentially be prosecuted. Please also read the document "Guidelines on dealing with plagiarism" which is available

on the chair's website. On a related note, please make sure to complete and sign the statutory declaration provided by the chair and attach it to the seminar paper as the last page. This form is also available on the website of the chair. Seminar papers lacking this declaration will not be accepted.

## **2.0 Detailed Guidelines**

### **SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Background to the Study
- 1.2 Statement of the Problem
- 1.3 Objectives of the Study
- 1.4 Research Questions
- 1.5 Research Hypotheses
- 1.6 Scope of the Study
- 1.7 Significance of the Study

### **SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Conceptual Framework
- 2.2 Theoretical Framework
- 2.3 Empirical Review
- 2.4 Literature Gap

### **SECTION THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Research Design
- 3.2 Data Analysis Techniques
- 3.3 Model Specification
- 3.4 Apriori Expectation
- 3.5 Econometric Test
  - 3.5.1 Pre-Estimation Test
  - 3.5.2 Post-Estimation Test
- 3.6 Sources of Data

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

#### **1. Background to the Study**

Here, the students describe in general terms, the larger picture of the problem being investigated. This forms the basis for introducing the problem, as well as a way of establishing the relationship that exists between the problem being investigated and the larger area of concern to readers.

#### **2. Statement of the Problem**

The essence of research is to identify problems and proffer solutions for them. Students should be able to state the problems clearly and convincingly, justifying the need to find solutions to it, as well as the implication of such problems. A research problem could be linked to a given theory or fact.

#### **3. Objectives of Study**

The author is expected to state the overall goal of the project, which encapsulates the aim. The purpose of the study is to be stated as seeking a solution to the problem(s) or examining the relationships that exist between that particular problem and other problems. This is achieved by breaking the problem into its component parts through exploration or analysis. Specific statements (objectives) of what the research intends to do to achieve the main aim could be stated. e.g. One of the objectives could read “To identify the variables influencing economic growth in Nigeria.

#### **4. Research Questions**

Research questions help the student to generate answers to the problem being investigated. Such research questions should logically correspond with the aims and objectives of the study. When the research questions are answered, the objectives of the study are achieved. From the general research questions, minor research questions could also be formulated. These are specific questions which may be used eventually for constructing the questionnaire or research instrument.

#### **5. Research Hypotheses**

These are tentative statements of relationships between two or more variables subject to verification. They carry statements about relationships between variables to be proved right or wrong. Hypotheses also guide the researcher in his quest for data. This could be derived from the existing literature or the response questions.

#### **6. Scope of the Study**

The scope of a study explains the extent to which the research area will be explored in the work and specifies the parameters within the study will be operating. Basically, this means that you will have to define what the study is going to cover and what it is focusing on. Similarly, you also have to define what the study is not going to cover. This will come under the limitations. Generally, the scope of a research paper is followed by its limitations. As a researcher, you have to be careful when you define your scope or area of focus. Remember that if you broaden the scope too much, you might not be able to do justice to the work or it might take a very long time to complete. Consider the feasibility of your work before you write down the scope. Again, if the scope is too narrow, the findings might not be generalizable. Typically, the information that you need to include in the scope would cover the following:

- i. General purpose of the study
- ii. The population or sample that you are studying
- iii. The duration of the study
- iv. The topics or theories that you will discuss
- v. The geographical location covered in the stud

#### **7. Significance**

The significance ordinarily should consist of both the theoretical and practical importance of the study. It provides the author the opportunity to justify his/her attempt to solve the problem and essentially state what will be contributed to knowledge by the study if successfully carried out, and how useful the study is to society.

#### **8. Research Structure**

Research structure is basically an outline of the work and you are expected to provide the research structure towards the end of introduction chapter in your seminar paper. The following is a sample of a research structure

### **Section Two: Literature Review**

Literature review contains analysis of models and theoretical frameworks that have been previously introduced to the research area. This chapter contains definitions of main terms and explains search strategy for the secondary data. Viewpoints of other authors regarding the research area in general and research problem in particular should be presented in a logical manner in this chapter. In other words, the literature review is a comprehensive survey of existing literature in the area of research. Sometimes the literature review covers 3 (three) main aspects: conceptual issues, theoretical framework and presentation of empirical studies. However, there is also a sense in which the literature review peruses the existing literature with respect to the key research questions raised. This is to ascertain the quantity and quality of the work done in the area and possible areas of intervention. Literature review could also be approached thematically or by examining the works of authors in the chosen areas. The literature review must seek to present works already carried out which are relevant to the central questions raised in the research. Ultimately, the style chosen depends on the subject matter and Supervisor's preferences.

#### **Guidelines for Literature Review**

Brief explanation of the work to be done, e.g. this chapter presents the various works done in this direction. It could be done under the following headlines:

##### 2.1 Conceptual Framework:

Under this heading, the key words or variables in the research title should be defined and discussed.

##### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

Relevant theories to the problem being investigated in the study should be briefly discussed and linked to the study to provide the right framework for the study i.e. theories on which the study is anchored. It also provides an avenue for reviewing relevant and known literature to the problem being investigated.

##### 2.3 Empirical Review

This provides the researcher the opportunity to review some of the previous works by other authors in the area of concern. A brief historical background will enable the researcher to follow the trend of thought in this area. This will enable or help the researcher situate or relate his study to previous works done. Relevant works can be reviewed chronologically, starting from global perspective, then Africa and finally Nigeria.

#### **Research Gap**

A research gap is defined as a topic or area for which missing or insufficient information limits the ability to reach a conclusion for a question. A research need is defined as a gap that limits the ability of decision-makers (policy-makers, patients, practitioners) from making decisions. Your seminar paper hypothesis should address a research gap which you identify in the literature, a research question or problem that has not been answered in your research area of interest. This shows that you have developed expertise in the body of knowledge and theoretical issues in your chosen research area

### **Section Three: Research Methodology**

The section explains the research process and addresses the issues of research philosophy. Moreover, methodology chapter contains explanation of research design, and the choice and implementation of data collection methods. Sampling aspect of the study and discussions of ethical considerations are also included in this chapter. Research Methodology implies the different methods that could be used in the execution of the study which may involve different research designs.

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This is a brief introduction of the research design of interest by the researcher, and the justification for his choice. Also, it is a summary of the views of some of the authors who have discussed that particular research design.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This has to do with the blueprint of the study that points to what should be expected. It shows the particular research design being adopted for the study and why. E.g. survey, content analysis, historical, experimental, etc. It equally states whether it is qualitative or quantitative study, or a triangulation of both.

#### **3.2 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis techniques allow researchers to review gathered data and make inferences or determination from the information. Most techniques focus on the application of quantitative techniques to review the data. Therefore, students are expected to explain in detail the techniques of analysis adopted in the research study.

#### **3.3 Model Specification**

A model is a theoretical construct representing economic processes by a set of variables and a set of relationships between them. However, model specification, is the process of determining which independent variables to include and exclude from a regression equation

#### **3.4 Apriori Expectation**

It is the expected sign of the parameters in the model specified based on theoretical explanations.

#### **3.5 Econometric Test**

These are diagnostic test done on the variables in the model. It includes pre and post estimation tests.

##### **3.5.1 Pre Estimation Test**

These tests are carried out to ensure that the variables employed in the model are in order. Pre estimation test come after static regression and they include stationarity test, cointegration test, etc.

##### **3.5.2 Post Estimation Test**

These tests are carried to check the reliability and validity of the model estimated. They include stability test, residual test etc.

#### **3.6 Sources of Data**

Students should be able to state where data used in the study were gotten. The source(s) must be a reliable institution such as Central Bank of Nigeria Statistical Bulletin, National Bureau

of Statistics Bulletin, World Development Indicator (WDI), [tradeconomics.com](http://tradeconomics.com), reliable website etc.

Thank you,

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**Ag.** Head of Department of Economics.