



**BERGISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT
WUPPERTAL**

Institute for Educational Research

School Socialization Research Group

Information on Master's thesis

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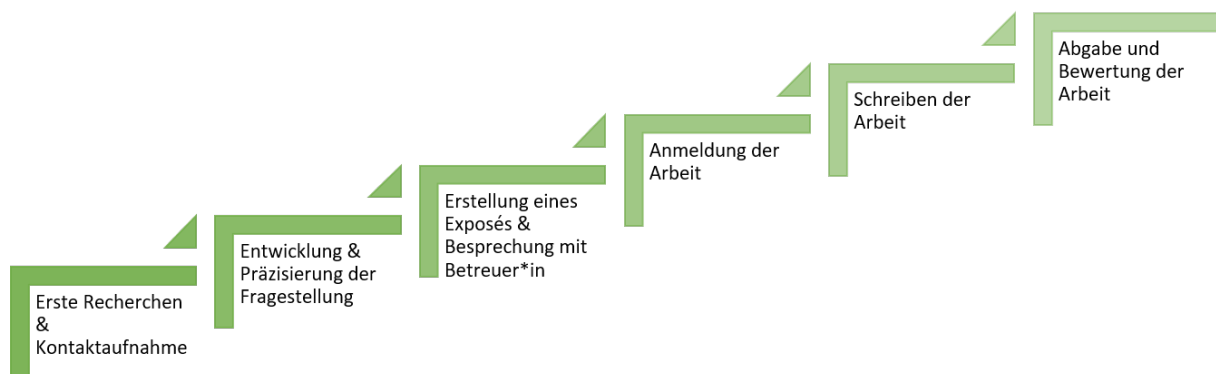
1. General

We appreciate your interest in writing a thesis in the School Socialization Research Group! Master's theses written in this research group should connect to the research foci of the research group. This means that they should deal with **school socialization** with a focus on **cultural diversity and social inequality**.

Writing a thesis in this research group requires working independently on a scientific question using scientific methods. In any case, you should include both theoretical literature and **current empirical literature (including literature in English)**. You should also have basic knowledge of empirical research methods or be prepared to familiarize yourself with them.

2. Procedure

If you would like to write your thesis in the School Socialization Research Group, the further procedure is as follows:



Initial research and contact

Already several months before you want to start with the actual work, you should start finding a topic. To familiarize yourself with the **content of the research group**, take a look at the research foci, publications, and projects of the research group on the [website](#). You can write your thesis on announced topics of the research group, but you can also develop your own research idea. It is very important that you are really interested in the topic, so that you can enjoy working on it over a longer period of time.

As a next step, please conduct a small **literature search** on aspects you find interesting and note down a few exemplary topics and questions for your thesis. Also familiarize yourself with your own **examination regulations**, etc., e.g. with regard to formal requirements for theses (scope, processing time, etc.).

Then make a **personal appointment** with the desired supervisor to clarify whether there is capacity for supervision. Bring a list of the literature you have read as well as your ideas for possible topics or questions. It is usually advisable to write the thesis with someone you have already met in a course.

Development and specification of the research question

In a personal discussion with your supervisor, you can further **specify and narrow down the topic**. Be patient - the development of a scientific question is often a long process that can take several weeks and may also require further literature research.

Try to formulate your question in a **concrete, precise, and answerable** way that is not too broad. Examples of less precise and concise research questions in our field are:

Not very precise	Precise
Intercultural friendships among young people	How are intercultural friendships related to perspective-taking skills in young people?
Gender stereotypes at school	How do gender stereotypes affect the mathematics performance of primary school students?

In order to answer your research question, you should conduct your own empirical research as part of your Master's thesis. This could be, for example, interviews with teachers, surveys with students, preservice teachers, or similar.

Preparation of an exposé and discussion with the supervisor

Open science refers to a research approach that prioritizes transparency and ethical practices, ensuring the availability and reproducibility of research findings and materials. This working group embraces and applies open science practices to promote more transparent, accessible, and reproducible research. As part of this approach, we require our bachelor's and master's students to write an **exposé** as their first step into open science. The exposé outlines the planned research question, hypotheses, and planned data analysis before data collection or data analysis begins. This process helps prevent research misconduct and ensures integrity by sticking to a predefined plan, regardless of the research results. By following this approach, we maintain an unbiased and transparent research process.

For further reading:

- Kathawalla, U.-K., Silverstein, P., & Syed, M. (2021). Easing into open science: A guide for graduate students and their advisors. *Collabra: Psychology*, 7(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.18684>
- van der Zee, T., & Reich, J. (2018). Open Education Science. *AERA Open*, 4(3).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858418787466>

Thus, as soon as your research question has been decided, you should prepare an **exposé**. This should be a **maximum of three to five pages** long and include the following aspects:

1. Title page: Name, degree programme, matriculation number and working title
2. Introduction to the topic (highlighting the relevance of the topic)
3. Brief summary of key theories and current empirical findings (this should only be a very brief overview at this stage)
4. Research question and, if applicable, hypotheses (for quantitative studies)
5. Planned methodological procedure
6. Preliminary outline of the entire thesis

A [template](#) can be found later in the document. Please send the exposé to your supervisor to receive **feedback**. Please allow sufficient time (one to two weeks) so that your supervisor has enough time to read it. As soon as the exposé has been discussed and, if necessary, revised, you can register the thesis.

Registration

To register the thesis, use the appropriate form from the website of the [Central Examination Office \(ZPA\)](#). Submit the form to your responsible administrator at the **ZPA**. You will then receive confirmation by post from the ZPA, including the deadline for submission.

We **also ask you to send** the forms that you submit to the ZPA **by e-mail to our secretariat** (heschroeder@uni-wuppertal.de). Please include the following information in your e-mail: The topic of your thesis, your degree program, the examination regulations under which you are writing and the desired deadline.

Writing the thesis

You have 6 months to write your Master's thesis.

Please note the tips on [literature research](#), [citation](#), [language](#) and [structure](#) later in this document. If you have any **questions or problems** during the writing process, please contact your supervisor and make an appointment for a consultation.

Submission and assessment of the thesis

Submit your thesis to the **Central Examination Office (ZPA)**. The exact requirements (e.g. number of copies to be submitted, CD to be enclosed, etc.) can be found on the website of the [Central Examination Office](#). In addition, send the thesis as a pdf file to your supervisor.

The correction time is **eight weeks** - please plan for this in view of your application deadlines for the "Referendariat" or similar. The grade will then be displayed in your student account.

If you would like feedback on your work, you can receive this by email or in a personal meeting. Please contact your supervisor in this regard.

3. Formalities and tips for scientific work

Language	English or German
Page number	appr. 60 pages (without appendix)
Font	Times New Roman, font size 12, line spacing: 1.5 times
Page margins	2.5 cm

TIP: General tips on scientific work as well as regularly held workshops on research methods can also be found on the pages of the Institute for Educational Research: <https://www.ifb.uni-wuppertal.de/de/studium-neu/beratung-und-qualitaet/wissenschaftliches-arbeiten/>

Literature research

The basis of your work should be scientific literature, i.e. mainly original empirical studies and partly also chapters from textbooks or handbooks. You can find original empirical studies mainly in subject-specific databases, which you can access via the website of the [university library](#). For example, the following databases are suitable for a literature search:

- PsycINFO (in the field of psychology)
- Fachportal Pädagogik (in the field of educational research/educational science)

However, you can also find literature relatively easily via the following platforms:

- [Google Scholar](#)
- [ResearchGate](#)

Since most databases are international, it is best to also search for English-language keywords. You can find further tips on literature research e.g. in the [Uni@Home course of the university library](#).

Language

Since Master's theses are scientific texts, there are a few things to keep in mind when using language. For example, it is important that all technical terms relevant to the topic are introduced and **defined**. Make an effort to use **clear, precise, and understandable** language.

Sensitive use of language is also particularly important when dealing with diversity issues. The following resources can provide guidance in this regard:

- [Notes on gender-sensitive language](#) from the Bergischen Universität
- [Guidance on „bias-free language“](#) (e.g. in relation to disability, gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity, etc.) from the American Psychological Association.
- [Inventory of migration terms](#) (here you will also find, for example, an overview of criticism of terms such as “migration background”).

Citation

In principle, for any information you have taken from other works, you must indicate where it came from.

It is considered **plagiarism** if you take parts from other works or paraphrase without identifying the source with a citation, but also if you translate foreign-language texts and pass them off as your own. Theses based on this kind of scientific misconduct will be graded as "not sufficient".

Please cite according to the following guidelines:

- Guidelines of the American Psychological Association (**APA Style**), these can be found e.g. on the [APA Style Website](#) or in the handbook: American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.).
- Guidelines of the German Psychological Society (**DGPs**) (APA guidelines adapted to the German language): Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie (Hrsg.). (2019). *Richtlinien zur Manuskriptgestaltung* (5th, revised and expanded edition). Hogrefe.

According to APA style citation, you should always mention the last names of the authors and the year of publication in the text. For example:

Foreigner objectification is negatively related to the life satisfaction of young people in Germany (Juang et al., 2021).

Juang et al. (2021) found in a study that...

In the bibliography, all sources cited in the text are listed in alphabetical order. For example:

Article: Schachner, M. K. (2017). From equality and inclusion to cultural pluralism – Evolution and effects of cultural diversity perspectives in schools. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology, 16*, 1-17.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.2017.1326378>

Book: Banks, J. A. (2015). *Cultural diversity and education* (6 ed.). Routledge.

Book chapter: Civitillo, S., & Juang, L. P. (2020). How to best prepare teachers for multicultural schools: Challenges and perspectives. In P. F. Titzmann & G. Jugert (Eds.), *Youth in multicultural societies: New directions for future research and interventions*. Psychology Press.

Structure

Empirical thesis

An empirical thesis consists of an abstract, an introduction, a methods section, a results section, and a discussion section. To get a more precise idea of the structure, it is best to research sample articles in professional journals in psychology, educational science, and pedagogy and follow their structure.

Title page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of supervisor and department, semester • Title of the thesis, type of thesis • Name of the author, matriculation number, postal address, e-mail address, submission date.
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • „Preview“ of the actual work, contains summary of objectives, methods, results, and conclusion of the thesis • In German and English • Length: 100-250 words • Typically contains no or only a few references/citations
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance: Why is the topic of the thesis important? What is the (societal) problem? • Contribution of your work: Which research gap or problem does your work address? • Aim of the work and research questions: What overarching question(s) does the work aim to answer? • Brief description of the structure of the work
Theory section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and definition of central concepts • Presentation of central theories and overview of the state of research: The central theories and findings should not only be listed, but should be set in relation to each other (e.g. by drawing comparisons or pointing out contradictions, as well as summarizing essential conclusions). The presentation should have a red thread and clearly lead up to the hypotheses or more detailed research questions.

Questions/ Hypotheses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derive the hypotheses or more detailed research questions: You can also number them, e.g. Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2 etc.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study design and procedure: How was the sample recruited? How did you obtain parental consent? Did you conduct a questionnaire study/observational study/experiment? Sample: Who participated in the study? Average age? Gender distribution? Socio-economic status? Etc. Measures/materials: Which questionnaires or scales were used (sources)? How many items did the scales have? What was the reliability (e.g. Cronbach's alpha)? Which response scale was used? What questions were asked in an interview? Planned analyses: Which statistical methods do you intend to use to analyze questionnaire data? Based on which method will you analyze your interview data? How will you code observation data, for example? Important: In this section, no results should be reported yet.
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting the results: Here the results are presented without being interpreted or discussed. Describe the results of the descriptive analyses first and only then the results of the inferential statistical procedures. Figures or tables: Where appropriate, present results in figures or tables. Format the tables according to APA style.
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief summary of the objectives of the study Summary of main findings: The results should be summarized here in substantive language, not statistical language. You should relate the results to the hypotheses, i.e. do the results support the hypotheses or not? Interpretation of the results: What do the results mean in relation to your original research question? To what extent are the results consistent with what other researchers have found? If your results are unexpected, try to explain why this might be the case. Limitations of the study: Where did your study have methodological weaknesses (e.g. small sample size, inappropriate measurement instrument)? Implications: How does your study contribute to a better understanding of the problem area and how could future research link to it? What are the implications of your findings for practice/society/for specific professional groups etc.?
Bibliography	
If applicable, appendix, list of tables, list of figures	
Affidavit	

Literature-based thesis

A literature-based thesis is a theory-based, comprehensive, and critical literature review on a specific topic. Unlike an empirical thesis, you do not collect data yourself in a literature-based thesis. A literature-based thesis consists of an abstract, introduction, main body, conclusion, and implications.

Title page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of supervisor and department, semester
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title of the thesis, type of thesis • Name of the author, matriculation number, postal address, e-mail address, submission date.
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Preview" of the actual work, contains summary of the aims, conclusion and implications of the work. • In German and in English • Length: 100-250 words • Usually contains no or only a few citations/references
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance: Why is the topic of the work important? What is the (societal) problem? • Contribution of your work: Which research gap or problem does your work address? • Aim of the work and research questions: What overarching question(s) does the work aim to answer? • Brief description of the structure of the work
Main part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and definition of central concepts • Presentation of central theories and overview of the state of research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The central theories and findings should not only be listed, but be set in relation to each other (e.g. by drawing comparisons or pointing out contradictions, as well as summarizing essential conclusions). ○ In addition, you should identify limitations of the current state of knowledge. • Tables and figures: You can also use tables or figures, for example, to give an overview of the studies discussed or of the research field.
Conclusion and implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly review your central research question • Conclusion: What did your literature review reveal in relation to your research question? • Implications: How can future research link to your literature review? What do the findings mean for practice? • Take Home Message
Bibliography	
If applicable, appendix, list of tables, list of figures	
Affidavit	

Appendix: Template for the Master's thesis exposé

Exposé for empirical theses

Title: *Enter the title of your thesis here¹*

Author: *Enter your name*

Matriculation number: *Enter your matriculation number*

Study program: *Enter your degree program (including the current semester)*

Supervision by: *Please state the name of the first supervisor*

Date: *Enter the date of submission of your exposé*

¹ Please remove all blue notes (in the entire exposé) after completing the form.

General information on the topic

Introduction to the topic (max. 300 words):

Briefly describe the topic that you would like to examine in your scientific work. In addition, explain the relevance of the topic.

Theory

Theoretical background and state of research (max. 500 words):

Explain the theoretical background of your thesis as briefly and precisely as possible. In particular, refer to existing theories and models. In addition, explain previous empirical findings and possible research gaps. How can you derive your research question from the theoretical background?

Research question (max. 2-3 sentences):

Formulate the question(s) to be addressed in your thesis. The question should be clearly derived from the theory and the state of research and be as concrete and precise as possible.

Hypotheses:

If your work is a quantitative study, additionally formulate hypotheses.

Methodological procedure

Sample:

Describe the sample of your thesis. Is the entire data set used or only a partial sample?

Measuring instruments/materials:

For quantitative thesis: Indicate which variables or scales you would like to use to operationalize your hypotheses.

For qualitative thesis: If you are collecting data yourself, explain the structure of the interview guide or similar if necessary.

Analysis strategy:

For quantitative work: Briefly explain which statistical method(s) you would like to use to investigate the research question (and hypotheses).

For qualitative work: Explain which procedure (e.g. qualitative content analysis) you would like to use to analyze your data.

Outline

Create an initial, preliminary outline of your entire thesis. This should serve as a guide, but may change in the course of the process.