

Doctoral Thesis

**If You Build It, They Will Copy: A
Maastricht University PhD Thesis
Template in Overleaf.**

Anon E. Muzz

2026



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If You Build It, They Will Copy: A Maastricht University PhD Thesis Template in Overleaf.

DISSERTATION

to obtain the degree of Doctor at Maastricht University,
on the authority of the Rector Magnificus,
Prof. Dr. Jan Smits,
in accordance with the decision of the Board of Deans,
to be defended in public
on Friday, 13 March 2026, at 16.00 hours

by

Anon E. Muzz

Supervisor:

Prof. Dr. I.M. Fohr-Matting (Maastricht University)

Co-supervisors:

Dr. L.A. Teg (Maastricht University)

Dr. P.D.F. Oudt-Put (Maastricht University)

Assessment Committee

Prof. Dr. R.U. Serious (Chair, Maastricht University)

Dr. U. von Pagebreak (University of Typhographia, Germany)

Prof. Dr. L.M. de l'Indent (Utrecht University)

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Chapter 1

General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Taken from the Maastricht University Doctoral Regulations (Chapter 4, Article 12.2):

If the thesis consists of one single scientific treatise, it must have the following components:

- an introduction indicating the position of the research compared with other related research in a national or international context;
- the scientific treatise regarding a certain subject;
- a general discussion consisting of a reasoned representation of the doctoral candidate's own position with regard to the main theme, or the major themes of the thesis.

If the thesis consists of several individual scientific treatises, they must have sufficient cohesion. The cohesion between treatises must be explained by the doctoral candidate in the introduction and/or the general conclusion. At least one scientific treatise must be an article that demonstrably is in the review process of a scientific journal.

(See: UM Policy Hub — Doctoral Regulations 2023, including annexes)

So, this chapter should provide a clear introduction to the doctoral research. It should outline the topic, situate it within the broader field (preferably both nationally and internationally), explain its scientific and societal relevance, and describe how the individual studies (aka. treatises) contribute to the overall research question. **Make sure to replace this placeholder text with your own introduction** once you start writing your thesis.

Chapter 2

The Cognitive Load of Margin Adjustment in Novice Researchers

This chapter is based on:

Muzz, A. E. (n.d.). The cognitive load of document margin adjustment in novice researchers [Manuscript submitted for publication]. Scandinavian Journal of Crappy Science

Abstract

Briefly state background, objective, methods, main results, and conclusions.

Keywords: LaTeX; Overleaf; doctoral templates; margin alignment; header standardization; citation management; iterative despair; typographic integrity

2.1 Introduction

State the problem, why it matters, what is known, and your research question(s).

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Design

Study design, preregistration, ethics, deviations.

2.2.2 Participants / Data

Sample, inclusion/exclusion, data sources.

2.2.3 Measures / Variables

Operationalizations, instruments, reliability.

2.2.4 Analysis

Statistical/qualitative methods, software, thresholds.

2.3 Results

Report findings clearly; use figures/tables as needed.

Table 2.1: Emotional stages of making a PhD thesis template in Overleaf.

Phase	Description	Duration (hrs)
Initial spark	"This will be easy."	0.3
Mild confusion	"Why no ToC entry?"	0.8
Frustration spike	Missing <code>\end{document}</code> ?	2.5
Existential doubt	"Word wasn't that bad."	1.5
Brief euphoria	"It finally compiles!"	0.2
Design obsession	"Adjust margins again."	4.0
False confidence	"Looks perfect now."	0.0
Regression loop	"Why broken today again?"	∞

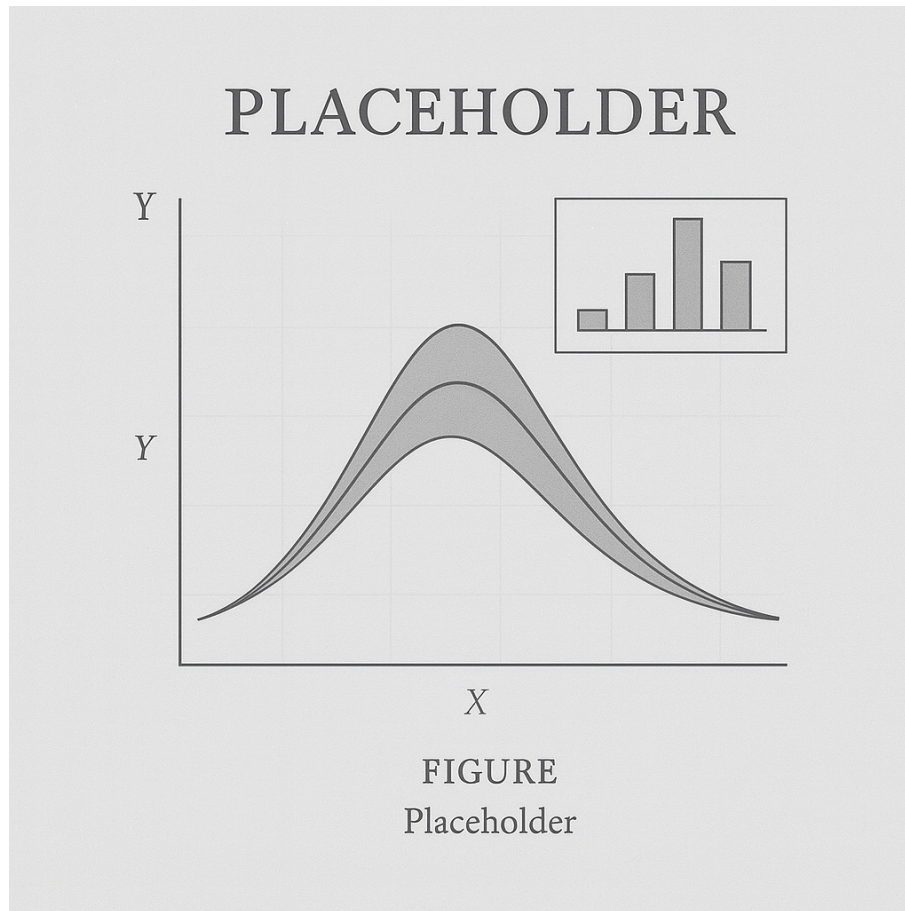


Figure 2.1: Example caption.

2.4 Discussion

2.4.1 Principal Findings

Summarize key results and interpret them.

2.4.2 Strengths and Limitations

What's robust, what's not.

2.4.3 Implications and Future Work

Practical/theoretical implications; next steps.

Chapter 3

Longitudinal Effects of Template Exposure on Supervisory Patience

This chapter is based on:

Muzz, A. E., & Known, U. N. (2025). Longitudinal effects of template exposure on supervisory patience. Experimental Anthropology, 1, 123–456

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Briefly state background, objective, methods, main results, and conclusions.

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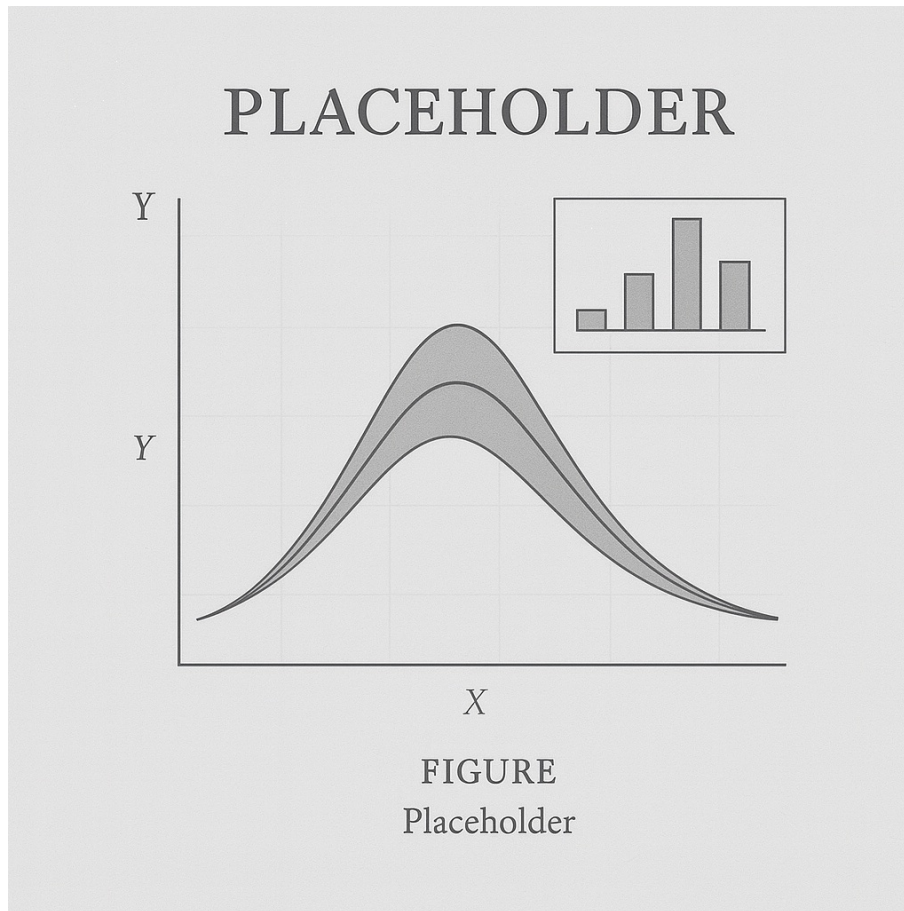


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Chapter 4

Thesis Margin Drift as a Predictor of Academic Burnout

Abstract

Briefly state background, objective, methods, main results, and conclusions.

Keywords: LaTeX; Overleaf; doctoral templates; margin alignment; header standardization; citation management; iterative despair; typographic integrity

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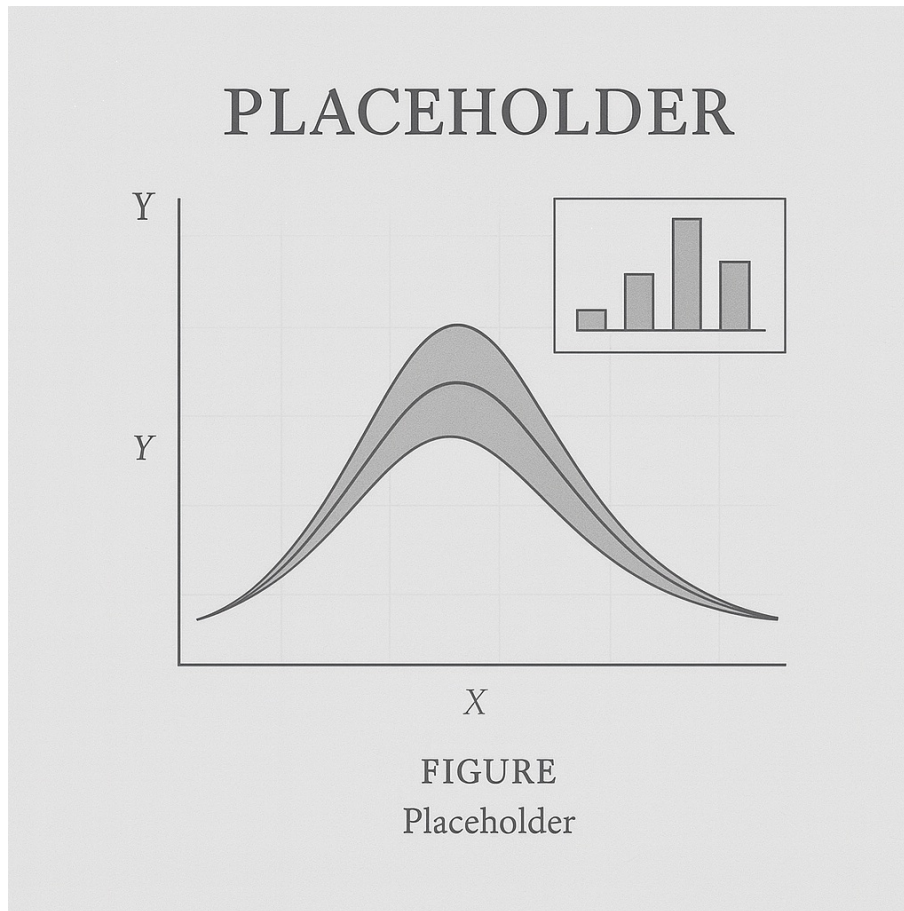


Figure 4.1: Example caption.

4.4 Discussion

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4.4.2 Strengths and Limitations

What's robust, what's not.

4.4.3 Implications and Future Work

Practical/theoretical implications; next steps.

Chapter 5

Existential Outcomes of Prolonged Template Interaction in Early-Stage Doctoral Life

Abstract

Briefly state background, objective, methods, main results, and conclusions.

Keywords: LaTeX; Overleaf; doctoral templates; margin alignment; header standardization; citation management; iterative despair; typographic integrity

5.1 Introduction

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5.2 Methods

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Study design, preregistration, ethics, deviations.

5.2.2 Participants / Data

Sample, inclusion/exclusion, data sources.

5.2.3 Measures / Variables

Operationalizations, instruments, reliability.

5.2.4 Analysis

Statistical/qualitative methods, software, thresholds.

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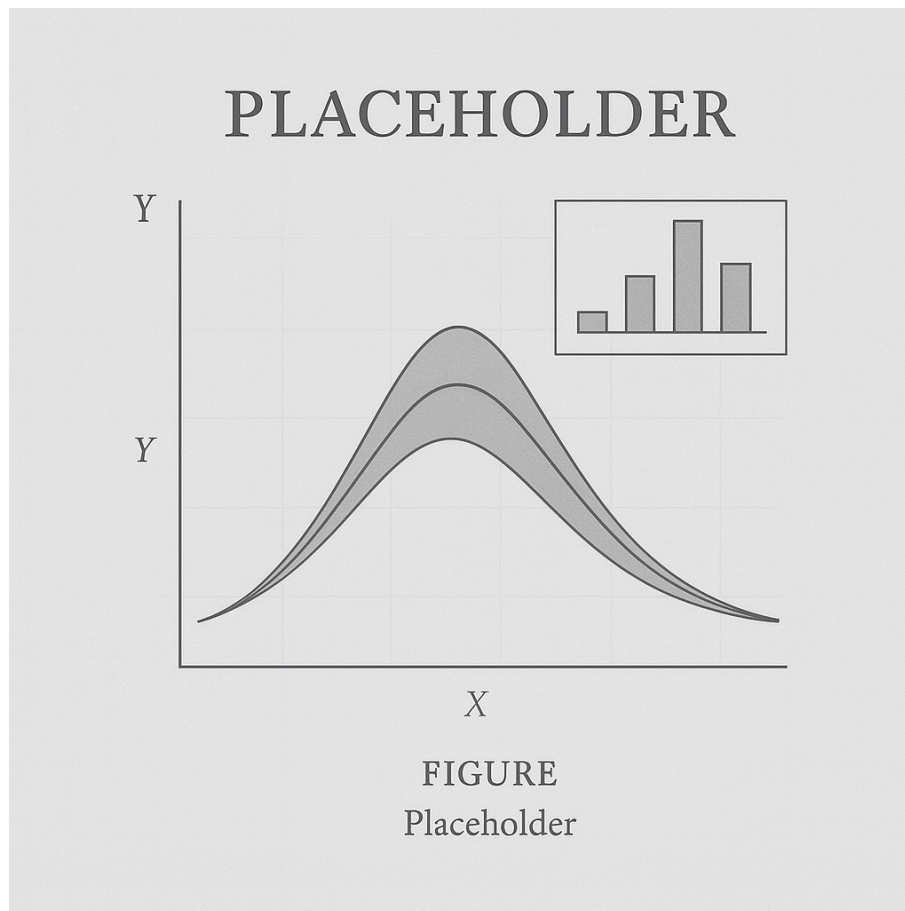


Figure 5.1: Example caption.

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Summarize key results and interpret them.

5.4.2 Strengths and Limitations

What's robust, what's not.

5.4.3 Implications and Future Work

Practical/theoretical implications; next steps.

Chapter 6

General Discussion

6.1 General Discussion

The Maastricht University PhD Thesis Template was developed to provide doctoral candidates with a reliable and elegant framework for writing, structuring, and publishing their dissertations in a professional and reproducible way. The template's primary goal is to reduce the technical burden often associated with large LaTeX projects, allowing candidates to focus on the academic content rather than formatting concerns.

From a design perspective, the template balances typographic quality and pragmatic usability. It integrates key features such as automated chapter title pages, customizable headers, and per-chapter abstracts, while maintaining full compatibility with Overleaf's collaborative environment. By using LuaLaTeX or XeLaTeX, the template supports OpenType fonts and modern microtypography, ensuring visual consistency across operating systems and print outputs.

Particular attention was given to transparency and modifiability. The accompanying `template.sty` file is fully commented, encouraging users to understand and adapt its components—geometry, typography, bibliographic style, and table of contents—according to their own faculty or university requirements. The structure is intentionally modular, with separate folders for chapters, front matter, and figures, reflecting good academic writing practice and version-control friendliness.

While the current release defaults to APA referencing, the template allows seamless transitions to alternative citation styles such as Vancouver or Chicago. This flexibility ensures broad applicability across disciplines within Maastricht University and beyond. Furthermore, by including support for the university's standard fonts (Thesis Sans and Verdana) but leaving the choice open to the user, the design respects both institutional identity and individual preference.

PLEASE CHANGE THIS PLACEHOLDER TEXT WITH YOUR OWN GENERAL DISCUSSION.

English Summary

This thesis explored the complex relationship between margin adjustment, template design, and the cognitive endurance of novice researchers. Across multiple chapters, it examined how formatting constraints, iterative LaTeX compilation errors, and aesthetic perfectionism interact to shape the emotional trajectory of early-career academics.

The main findings indicate that:

- The perceived control over layout strongly predicts motivation during the writing process.
- Periodic frustration spikes (*e.g.*, missing `\end{document}`) correlate with higher eventual mastery.
- Collaboration through shared Overleaf projects increases both productivity and collective despair tolerance.
- Visual alignment consistency contributes disproportionately to subjective satisfaction with the final product.

In conclusion, the study underscores that template development is not merely a technical activity but a deeply emotional, iterative process. Future work should investigate margin optimization strategies and the psychological recovery period following prolonged exposure to LaTeX warnings.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt de complexe relatie tussen marge-instellingen, sjabloonontwerp en de cognitieve belasting van beginnende onderzoekers. In verschillende hoofdstukken is gekeken hoe opmaakbeperkingen, terugkerende LaTeX-foutmeldingen en esthetisch perfectionisme samen de emotionele loopbaan van promovendi beïnvloeden.

De belangrijkste bevindingen zijn:

- De ervaren controle over de opmaak voorspelt de motivatie tijdens het schrijven.
- Fases van frustratie (zoals een ontbrekende `\end{document}`) hangen samen met latere beheersing van LaTeX.
- Samenwerking via gedeelde Overleaf-projecten verhoogt zowel de productiviteit als de gezamenlijke frustratietolerantie.
- Consistente uitlijning van tekst en tabellen draagt sterk bij aan tevredenheid over het eindresultaat.

Samenvattend laat dit onderzoek zien dat sjabloonontwikkeling niet enkel een technische, maar ook een emotionele en iteratieve activiteit is. Toekomstig onderzoek kan zich richten op efficiëntere margestrategieën en het herstelproces na langdurige blootstelling aan LaTeX-waarschuwingen.

Impact Statement

Maastricht University Promotion Regulations.

Annex 4. Article 12 paragraph 8.

The doctoral candidate must add an impact paragraph to the thesis of 500 to 2,000 words. This paragraph consists of a reflection in layman's terms (for a wide target group) on the scientific impact of the results of the research described in the thesis, and if applicable also the impact on society already achieved or expected.

The impact paragraph forms part of the thesis and will be fully included in the consideration by the Assessment Committee and the Defense Committee when evaluating the thesis. If the impact of the results of the research is also discussed elsewhere in the thesis, the doctoral candidate can come back to it in the impact paragraph.

In order to formulate the impact paragraph, four questions are provided that may serve as a guidance:

1. (Research) What is the main purpose of the research described in the thesis and what are the main results and conclusions?
2. (Relevance) What is the (potential) contribution of the results of this research to science, and if applicable to societal sectors and societal challenges?
3. (Target group) To whom are the research findings interesting and/or relevant? And why?
4. (Activity) In what way can these target groups be involved and informed about the research findings so that the knowledge gained can be used in the future?

– This is a placeholder text, make sure to replace with your own text –

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who supported this work. I particularly like to thank my parrakeet "Lori" and my cavia "Bloedtand" for being patient with me during these stressful times.

Curriculum Vitae

Anon E. Muzz

Born in Maastricht, the Netherlands in 1989. He attended Hogwash school of Wizardry and Magic from 2000-2004, where he successfully used a Confundus charm to graduate despite having a low OWL score. He then tried various universities such as the Pyongyang Workers University and Bora-Bora University of Sustainable Tourism, which all refused him, before being accepted at Maastricht University.

Publications

Muzz, A. E. (n.d.). The cognitive load of document margin adjustment in novice researchers [Manuscript submitted for publication].

Scandinavian Journal of Crappy Science

Muzz, A. E., & Known, U. N. (2025). Longitudinal effects of template exposure on supervisory patience. *Experimental Antropology, 1*, 123–456

Contact Information

Email: anon.e.muzz@maastrichtuniversity.nl

ORCID: 0000-0000-0000-0000

Website: <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl>

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