



Students invariably have to undergo project work as part of the curriculum. Here is a guide to helping students in researching on a topic and subsequently making a report. This is the first part of the article.

Report writing for starters

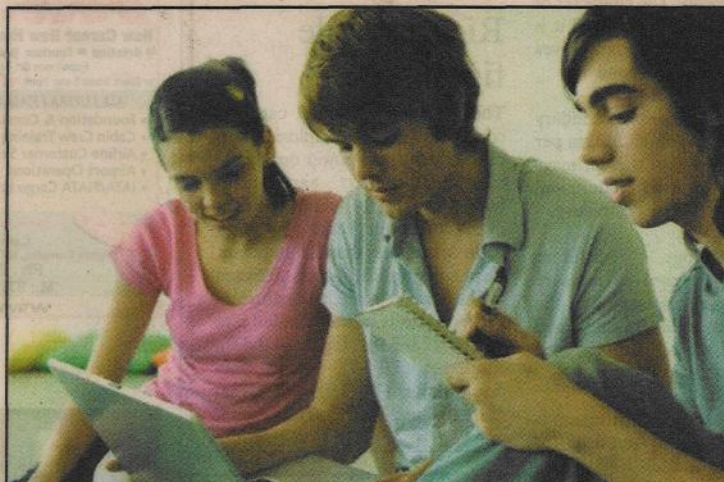
Researchers generally approach teachers for a specially allotted research guide with plenty of questions. The article is an attempt to answer common questions raised by researchers and to provide guidelines to proceed for quality project work and in time for completion of the task. It is focused on researchers pursuing management education. But the same steps can be applied for research in social sciences. The article has been specifically prepared keeping in view the amateur researchers who undertake the research as part of their curriculum. It would benefit the researchers to structure, outline, systematise and present their research work. Owing to the fact that no specific guidelines are available for research work and its presentation, the researcher often gets perplexed and ends up with a mediocre presentation in spite of the hard work. The project report and viva voce based on it, carries equal weightage, same as any other subject as far as university exams are considered.

Project work preparation

Project work is the most crucial part of management studies. This is the only opportunity wherein student/researcher is out of campus, has to put theory into practice with industrial experts within a limited time frame. An expert's panel, through viva-voce, examines the course. Researcher hardly gets an opportunity for rework. Mostly researcher's placement is also dependent on the same, so a researcher should be serious and must prepare thoroughly for undertaking a project.

A researcher should prepare for the following aspects:

- They should be acquainted with



terminologies in research methodology because it is expected that the researcher should take a live problem and strive to find an appropriate solution. One method to do this is research.

- The industrial unit may assign a researcher with the project topic. Alternatively researcher should be ready with the management area in which they wish to go for the project. The researcher also should be ready with a selection of the sub-functional areas and tentative topics in those areas. They should not ask for topic with experts in an industrial unit or with a research guide. After selection of the management area, sub functional area and topics; they should prepare a synopsis and get it reviewed from a guide.
- A researcher must know what exactly they have to do. It helps generation of exact data is stipulated time. After selection of topic, researcher should

review literature and prepare theoretical chapters very carefully. Unless the researcher peruses theory they cannot decide upon variables to be used in research.

Theoretical reading also helps to understand conceptual scope of study. There is neither a substitute for this homework nor for books. One cannot think of doing project work without necessary theoretical background.

- A researcher should always give a thought to various matters pertaining to their project as to what is the topic, scope of topic, objectives set to achieve, data required, method of collection of data, completion status of work, pending work and possible ways of completion and the like.
- It is advisable for the researcher to carry chapter wise files and do proper assortments of documents and data

collected so as to facilitate the status of completion and highlight the part that is lagging. Maintaining a daily work report is a good practice. After finalising the topic, the researcher should plan for framing a questionnaire and subsequent tabulations.

Choosing a topic

At the time of approaching industrial unit and joining the unit for project work following points must be kept in mind:

The subject matter must be within the reach of understanding ability of the researcher. The project should be specific and not vague. It should be limited in scope. The subject chosen for project must be capable of being completed within an allotted time frame. The subject matter should be such that adequate data must be available for the same and the management should be ready to make it available to the researcher without reservations. Otherwise it is advisable to change the topic if not then change the industrial unit.

While writing a project report...

- Write only on one side of the paper.
- Leave a clear margin to the extent of 1/3 of the breadth of the paper on the left, for rough manuscript, so it will leave enough space for correction by the guide.
- Write legible and in separate letters or type in double space.
- Use small sentences, use words known to you.

In the next part, we shall go into further details of writing a project report.

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II

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Indicators to report writing

This is the second part of the article. There is more to report writing than a mixture of words and statistics. A good report must be planned and executed in every possible way.



Last week, we introduced the topic of report writing and had just started the section on grammatical usage. We continue with the grammatical part in this article.

Use past tense for:

- Citing findings of others (e.g., Nishikant found that...)
- Describing how you conducted the study (eg. A structured questionnaire was developed and pre tested....)
- Reporting specific past behaviors of your subjects (eg. Some of the sample respondents were not readily available...)

Use present tense for:

- Presenting the findings of your study (eg. The factors which consumers consider most in selecting brands are...)
- Stating generalisations (eg. From above table it is revealed that...)
- Gender: Do not use masculine nouns and pronouns when the content refers to both genders. The generic use of 'man', he, his and him to refer to both men and women is not only misleading in many instances but also make the readers visualise and think of male persons.

referring to females.

- Use plural when referring to a mixed group (eg. The individuals who display prejudice in their personal relations....)
- For the general explanation of statistics or tables, use the third gender.
- Do not use any short forms. All words must be written in full.
- Do not repeat similar information in different places.

The matter to be presented to the guide must be in perfectly organised manner. This means the following aspects are taken care of:

- The matter is organised in the form of chapters, complete with preface, contents, appendices and bibliography.
- The chapter number and chapter headings are given. They should be in a single line

and in capital letters.

- Within the chapter appropriate sub-headings should be given. These sub-headings should be grouped and sub-grouped properly by using capital or small alphabets as required or serial numbers or roman figures to indicate their relative position or relationship or relative importance with each other.
- Do not write certain words unnecessarily in capital form.
- If the sentence is, to begin with a figure then, write the figure in words.

See more details on report writing in the next part of the article

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To avoid this confusion:

- Use male pronouns when referring to males.



WRITING AND SUBMITTING REPORTS

Researcher shall prepare the final draft of project reports in a neat and legible manner and get it certified from the concerned teachers. The following instructions shall be strictly followed in respect of typing of the project reports:

- The paper used for typing and its size shall be A4 executive bond sheet.
- Black ink shall be used for typing. Few authorities allow colour headings and graphs.
- A margin of at least one and half inches should be allowed at the left and of at least one inch at right, top and bottom.
- Bordering or any type of decoration should be avoided.
- The typing shall be double-spaced.
- The typing shall be done on only one side of the paper.
- Five copies of the project report shall be typed. (This may vary according to the rules of institution).

Project report details

Following is the discussion about conduct of project work chapter wise. The detailed discussion has been held initiated from title, chapter scheme, annexure and bibliography.

Title

In the books of research methodology one finds

the popular statement about research problem i.e. 'The statement of research problem is a restatement of management problem'. Research problem is crystallised from management problem.. Management problem is vague in nature. It may address to several disciplines. Research problem is specific in nature, it should be short, crispy and should reflect management problem.

Mandatory disclosures

After the title, researcher needs to produce formal documents as follows:

Cover page : Cover page contains title of study, name of university,

degree/diploma for which researcher is submitting this project, name of candidate, name of guide and submitting authority, academic year.

Institution

recommendation :

Institution recommendation stating eligibility and signed by Director or head of institute.

Organisation certificate:

After successful completion of project report organization issues the certificate to researcher. The certificate must be on company's letterhead, signed by concern authority, sealed. Certificate must have date of issue, outward number, name of

candidate, subject on which study has been undertaken.

Guide certificate :

Certificate issued and signed by research guide stating originality of project.

Declaration of

researcher: Researcher's declaration signed by researcher stating originality of project.

These documents are mandatory. Standard formats of these documents are generally made available to researchers by institution. The above formal documents followed by a page of acknowledgement, index page and executive summary.

Acknowledgement : It is

exclusive page of researcher. The name of individuals, organisations who have helped in completing the project work is expected to be mentioned to express gratitude.

Index page : Page of acknowledgement is followed by page of index.

Here the contents of the project report are to be given. Usually they are given in the following manner in tabular form.

Chapter No.

- Serial number of the chapter.
- Heading of the chapter
- Page numbers
- The sub headings of chapters should be given below the chapter

heading one below the other prefixing a letter or a small roman number.

The chronological order followed in chapters and within the chapters should be followed in the contents.

After chapter index i.e. contents, index of tabulation, index of graphs and index of charts and diagrams should be given.

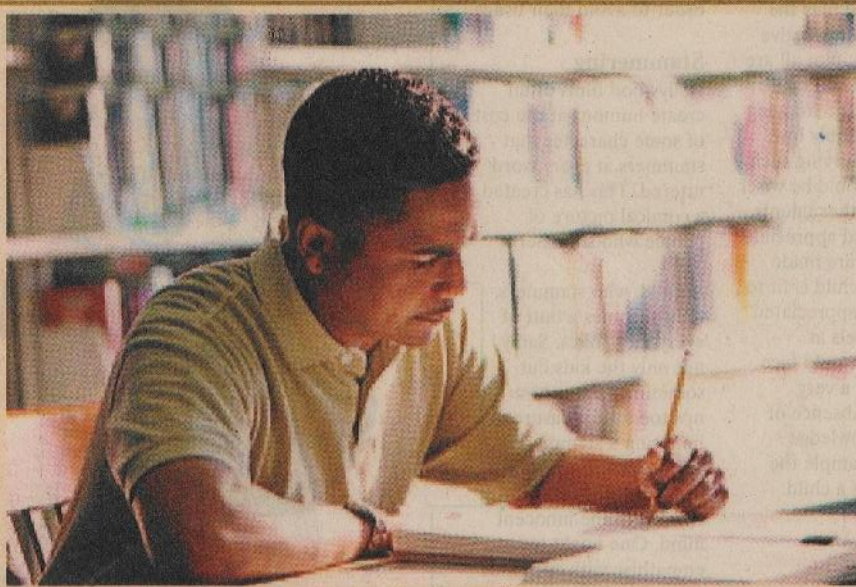
Synopsis/ Executive Summary

Synopsis means chapter wise summary of the project report. In the corporate world term executive summary is used synonymous to synopsis. Executive summary includes brief of each chapter in one paragraph. The sequence of paragraphs should be according to the sequence followed in the project. The synopsis is written after all chapters have been finalised. This should reflect the crux of the study; non-technical data should be presented. The key conclusions, and suggestions should be given and policy suggestions and contribution to the original study should be highlighted in executive summary.

The synopsis/executive summary should be typed in single spacing.

In the next part we shall focus on the main body of the report.

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This is the third part of the article. We are concerned here with project report writing and their submissions.



Going right into it

We get down to serious business here, with the creation of the main body of the report. A serial order, chapter number and can be maintained to form a logical sequence.

Main body of report

Chapter I- Methodology adopted for Research Study

This chapter narrates about research methodology adopted for the study. It is expected to write in the words of research using research terminologies.

This chapter is sub divided into the following sub heads:

Management problem Research problem

Hypothesis - Hypothesis is skeptical assumption about desired results. It is generalised statement about population. If a researcher formulates any hypothesis (which is not mandatory at project level) it need to be tested by using relevant statistical tools. Testing should be done at the end of Data Presentation and Analysis chapter.

Objectives of the study or project - Here the objectives behind undertaking the project should be stated. The objective(s) of the study is/are the statement for which the study has been undertaken. The statement should be small, clear and should carry a specific meaning. One objective statement should not inter-link with another objective, which may be misleading to reader. The statement of objective should start with word 'To'. The objective should be related with title of project study.

Scope of the study - The scope or the extent

We have been talking about report writing for few weeks now, today we get into its core aspect, the main body of the report.

or depth or coverage of the study is to be stated here. The information about the following aspects is necessary.

Period covered by the study - i.e. period work in case of primary data and records used over a time span in case of secondary data. Units or departments covered in the study. The scope of the project study should also include the, geographical scope, conceptual scope, analytical scope and functional scope (like offering meaningful suggestions for improving the research problem).

Importance of the project - the reasons why researcher considers project undertaken to be important or significant are to be stated. It could answer how project is helpful to organisation or industry.

The study methodology contains the following aspects:

Data Required: What exact data is required to satisfy set objectives needs mention here. It is expected that researcher should prepare exhaustive list of data requirement.

Data Sources: From which sources researcher is going to collect data whether it is primary source, secondary source or both.

Instrument: If the researcher needs data from primary source then instrument (i.e. questionnaire, schedule or observation sheet) to be used should be specified. Nature of instrument (i.e. structured questionnaire, codified, un-codified etc.) should also be specified.

Sampling: After design of instrument researcher decides on sampling. Nature of population, sampling size, and sampling method should be mentioned. Sampling unit (s) should also be specified.

Data Analysis: A researcher needs to specify tools and techniques to be used for data analysis, i.e. tabulation, descriptive presentation, statistical techniques and the like.

Concept and operational definitions - Sometimes researcher makes use of working definitions or develop formulae or key words of the criterion considered which are of basic importance for the study are to be given.

Organisation of Research: this explains the chapter scheme designed to present research report. Generally all academic research reports are inductive type i.e. these reports has a beginning, middle and an end.

Limitations - The difficulties, faced by researcher are to be stated here. The

difficulty of communication with labour that do not understand your language or non-availability of certain data, which is confidential in nature for organisation, which has not been made available to researcher and the like. But duration of study, or complete non-cooperation from organization to make available the data is not limitations of study.

Profile of a Unit / Industry

This chapter is expected to narrate industry profile in general and industrial unit in specific. Usually, the information in relation to the following points may be included in this chapter.

- Name of the industrial unit.
- Location of the unit (address)
- Name(s) of the subsidiaries and locational details
- Brief history of the unit: date and purpose of establishment

History of promoters

The information about product(s) of the company, services provided, etc. is to be included under this head. Researchers especially who wish to pursue marketing management as their specialization should mention product line analysis, competitors scenario, distribution strategy, pricing methods and the like.

Financial position - This should include information in brief about capital structure, assets, sale,



Contd. from page 3

Going right into it

turnover, profits etc. preferably of last three years and the researcher's comment on the same from financial management point of view for which ratios can be used. The information regarding the financial position can be gathered from the organisation's balance sheet.

Manpower - This should include the information about the headcount according to the department and category. The tabular presentation of data is expected. Important milestones achieved by the unit, e.g. received ISO 9000 certification, development of new version of product, commencement of



exports, strategic decisions as the like.

The organisational chart has to be attached at the end of this chapter to give bird's eye view of the unit. If the unit has not prepared an organisational chart then the researcher is expected to prepare it.

If the product is not a commodity or generally known then the pictures of products can be given in annexure but proper references should be given in the main body. It is expected that this chapter should give the overall picture of the industry and the unit.

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Theory, presentation and conclusions

In this part, we shall discuss the theoretical background, the presentation and data analysis, and finally talk about how to conclude and write suggestions.

Theoretical background

This chapter should mention the theoretical basis of the topic of the project undertaken by the researcher in detail. Suitable theoretical background should be carefully presented in a precise and specific manner.

The text from a secondary source (textbook, journals or printed published/unpublished work) should not be copied out as it is. A researcher should present the same in their own words after proper understanding.

The definitions, quotations, graphs, diagrams and charts borrowed from the secondary sources should be properly acknowledged through footnotes. The footnotes are given at the bottom of the page. The footnote should be presented in the same fashion, as a bibliography, and numbering should be done to referred text and respective footnotes. (In MS-Word; function insert - footnote can be used).

Presentation and data analysis

The collected data is systematically presented in this chapter. The researcher has to present descriptive in relation to quantitative data in the same chapter. Present data in a sequential manner. If required, this chapter can be divided into parts as per the sample unit (e.g. analysis of distributors, analysis of dealers and analysis of retailers and customers can be presented in different parts).

Quantitative data is expected to be presented in tabular form. Researchers must know skeleton of table. Every table must be numbered, titled, introduction should be given to table, unit, source of data should be clearly mentioned.

After presentation of the table, analysis should be done. It is the discussion of figures mentioned in tabulation. In interpretation, a researcher gives meaning to data and draws conclusions out of it. A researcher needs to establish correlation among various variables. If the data is descriptive then crude analysis should be done.

In both descriptive and quantitative analysis, facts can be compared with standard norms established by

We conclude the section on the main body of the article in this part.

competent authority for industry.

At the project level, a separate chapter for analysis and interpretation is not required, but if the data is vast, then the researcher should make separate chapters for data presentation and data analysis.

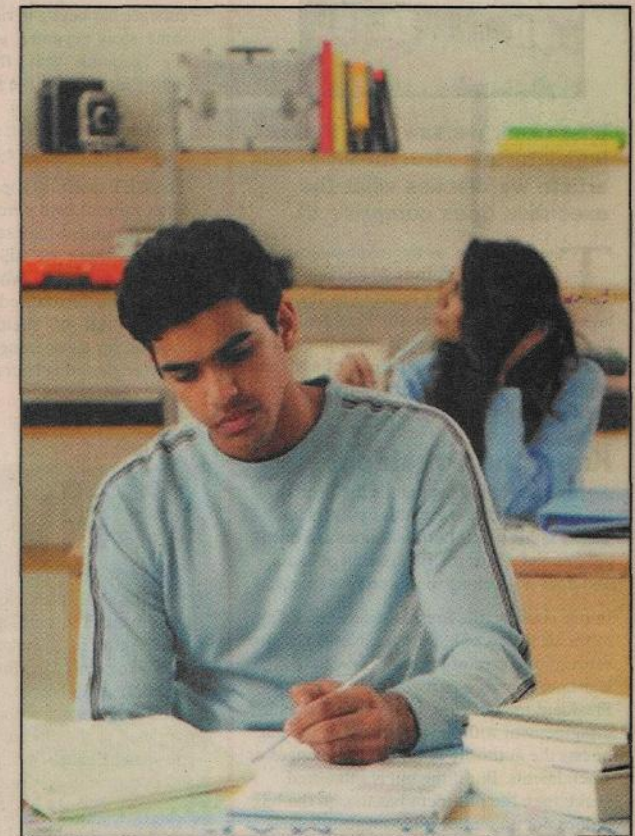
Conclusions and suggestions

This chapter depicts conclusions extracted from analysis of data in the previous chapter. Conclusions are self-explanatory statements. The researcher has liberty to state suggestions. Researchers should remember that conclusions are drawn from conducted analysis and suggestions must be based on conclusions. Conclusions and suggestions are to be presented into two subsections.

A researcher can also state conclusions based on overall observations, experiences and picture. But these conclusions need to be presented separately. On the basis of these conclusions, a researcher can give suggestions - to be presented separately under the heading, general conclusions and general suggestions. In such case the ideal sequence of presentation would be:

- General conclusions
- Specific conclusions
- General suggestions
- Specific suggestions

The specific conclusions should be stated according to the sequence of data presentation (tabulation). The specific suggestions should be stated



according to the sequence of conclusions. It is not necessary that every conclusion must have a suggestion. Suggestions are remedial measures prescribed by a researcher to improve the current situation or to overcome problems.

A conclusion can have many suggestions or array of suggestions. The suggestions could be in the form

of development of software, marketing plan, designing of policy and procedures, designing of manuals, layout of production flow, strategies and its implementation, restructuring, reengineering and the like. The main body of project report ends here.

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The finishing line

Having covered the main part of report writing, we now talk about the appendices, bibliography, collective university guidelines and more.

After completion of the main part of the report, the finishing touches remain. These include the appendices, bibliography, and the collective university guidelines and more.

Appendices

Appendices or annexures are an addition to the main body of report. The document charts, questionnaires, tables, and schedules, that are actually referred to in the body of the project report are to be included under the appendix. So, the appendices may include:

- Questionnaires used for collecting information.
- Schedules used for collecting information.
- Tables formed for data presentation.
- Documents/forms etc., referred to in the body of the project report.
- Diagram, graphs etc. referred to in the body of the project report.
- Photographs referred in the body of the project report.
- Every annexure must have title, which is self explanatory in nature and numbered.
- The reference number of the annexure should be



mentioned in the body of the project report, wherever particular annexure is referred.

- The very purpose of this annexure is to provide insight into instrument, documents, formats so that no query is left unanswered.

Bibliography

Bibliography means list of books, journals, published work actually referred to or used in writing of project report. This is not a separate chapter. The bibliography has to be written in a specific manner. For example, for book - single author.

Last name of author and initials or full name (surname first); year of publication; title of book (in italic font and in single inverted comma); name of publisher; place of publication and edition number. For detailed information, the researcher should refer <http://www.library.uq.edu.au/useit/>

University guidelines for project work

Few universities in India have issued guidelines to conduct project work. These guidelines are for both for researcher and research guides. The following guidelines are common extraction of various universities guidelines and do not represent any specific university. The guidelines are also extracted from the speeches of experts on project preparation.

At the end of the fourth semester of MBA, third year of BBA and for DBM course every researcher is examined in "Project Work". A researcher has to take project work at the end of first year second semester of MBA, second year of BBA.

Management projects are done individually. It can be done in a group, (generally engineering projects are done in group) but every researcher needs to be given a distinct topic or problem in a different functional area of management to handle. A researcher should take guidance from an allotted guide.

Three copies of "Project Work" should be submitted to the Director of the Institute in the stipulated time. (The number of copies may change as per the rules of respective Institution and University). Along with the final copies, the researcher should submit four copies of their project synopsis. (These copies of synopsis could be forwarded to external expert panel members of viva-voce appointed by the respective university).

Project synopsis should contain, introduction of project, objectives, scope, importance of project, methodology adopted for study, major findings and researchers (researcher's) major suggestions.

The nature of project work should be such that it could be useful for the concerned organisation, industry and researchers as well. The subject internal guide shall duly assess the project report, and the marks shall be communicated by the Director to the University after receiving the seat numbers from the University along with the marks of internal credit from theory and practically communicated for all other courses.

The project report should be submitted in a format prescribed by the University, which also specifies the contents and the method of presentation. The project work will carry 50 marks for internal assessment and 50 marks for external viva. The external viva shall be conducted by a minimum of two external examiners. This assessment criterion is subject to change.

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