

RESEARCH ARTICLE



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## An Investigative Study Focusing on Some Problems Encountered by ESL\ EFL University Undergraduate Candidates in Conducting Individual Research Projects

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### ABSTRACT

Excellent academic writings have good research projects. They are not merely descriptive, but involve discussions, experiments, comparisons, contrasting and usually, agreements and disagreements. The professional writers write with specific focuses and a limited aims, in addition to a wide interest. Those academic writers confidentially know their investigative studies and experiments in a good way. But their writings do not consist of a passive recitation of facts. It rather marshals research data within an interpretative framework and analytic goals.

This article discusses and argues how the research projects can be individually conducted to help the graduate candidates to be aware of the strategies and techniques used to establish successful research projects. English second and foreign University undergraduate candidates' research writing skills are weak and need to be enriched, strengthen and improved around the world.

The author of this article wrote this study including introduction to the research methods and a process of research writing, such as selecting a research topic writing, formulating the research aims and goals, literature review writing, selecting data collection, analysing data and writing conclusions and recommendations. The author also collected a data through a structured oral interview according to the goals of the article as expressed through the specific research questions and hypothesis.

**Key Words:** Researcher, Academic, Professionally, Works, Readers, Studies, Writings.

### Introduction

Professionally academic research projects include beneficial footnotes. Their notes are not comprised solely of a series of proof texts and page references. They give the readers a trail of their researcher's studies among the sources. Academic works are done in a professionally clear and effective prose. In these works, readers do not have to think and predict at what the researchers are trying to say. Excellent academic works employ

active (and vivid) verbs and usually go easy on the adjectives and adverbs.

Researchers have to consider their own specifications for the format, structure and the length of their papers to be submitted or to be published. However, there are a lot of sources and references available to be used by the researchers. There are books, journals, magazines dairies, or some electronic sources such as electronic books, Web blogs, Web sites, colloquiums, Wikis and

encyclopaedias. All these sources can control the structure and the length of any research work. Consulting the APA, MLA and Chicago style manuals would be a good idea.

The academic writers answer the "What, Why, When, Where, Who, and How?" questions. Those academic works do not leave the receivers and the readers wondering why they should care about the contents. Rather, these works attract careful attention by making their value very clear, leaving the readers without a doubt as to the importance of their specific point(s).

In writing any research paper, the writer should take careful note of his work's divisions. The research paper has essential parts although, of course, there may be additional parts depending on the supervisor's suggestions, ideas and information. The basic principle to be considered in writing a research work is that a researcher should first consider and familiarize himself with the "works" of others and then they try to compare them with their ideas.

#### Statement of the Problem

Many ESL\EFL University undergraduate candidates do not have enough informative background of writing independent research projects properly.

#### Research Questions and Hypothesis

This research article focuses and investigates some matters related to the difficulties of establishing a individual research projects by some ESL\EFL University undergraduate candidates, and improving their skills in writing their graduation research projects.

It was hypothesized by the author of this research article that there is an unpredictable number of undergraduate candidates who cannot write a professional and high quality research papers at the time of reaching the last step of their graduation from their universities and institutions. Those candidates have different problems and usually they do not even know how to start their graduation research thesis.

To test the hypothesis given by the author of this article, an oral structured interview administered by the author, and it was found that most of the undergraduate candidates have no knowledge of doing valuable research projects. The

author used tables to analyze the data related to her study.

#### Literature Review

#### Research Process

John Dudovskiy reports in details in his e-Book "The Ultimate Guide to Writing a Dissertation in Business Studies: A Step-by-Step Assistance, January 2018 edition", and he says that a typical research process contains the following stages:

1. Selecting the research area. The researcher expected to state that he/she has selected the research area due to professional and personal interests in the area and this statement must be true. The importance of this first stage in the research process is often underestimated by many students. If the researcher finds research area and research problem that is genuinely interesting to him it is for sure that the whole process of writing his dissertation will be much easier. Therefore, it is never too early to start thinking about the research area for his dissertation.

2. Formulating research aim, objectives and research questions or developing hypotheses. The choice between the formulation of research questions and the development of hypotheses depends on one's research approach as it is discussed further below in more details. Appropriate research aims and objectives or hypotheses usually result from several attempts and revisions and these need to be mentioned in Methodology chapter. It is critically important to get the research questions or hypotheses confirmed by the supervisor before moving forward with the work.

3. Conducting the literature review. Literature review is usually the longest stage in the research process. Actually, the literature review starts even before the formulation of research aims and objective; because a researcher has to check if exactly the same research problem has been addressed before. Nevertheless, the main part of the literature review is conducted after the formulation of research aim and objectives. It is necessary to use a wide range of secondary data sources such as books, newspapers, magazines, journals, online articles etc.

4. Selecting methods of data collection. Data collection method(s) need to be selected on the basis of critically analyzing advantages and disadvantages associated with several alternative data collection methods. In studies involving primary data collection, in-depth discussions of advantages and disadvantages of selected primary data collection method(s) need to be included in methodology.

5. Collecting the primary data. Primary data collection needs to be preceded by a great level of preparation and pilot data collection may be required in case of questionnaires. Primary data collection is not a compulsory stage for all dissertations and would be skipped in this stage during conducting a desk-based research.

6. Data analysis. Analysis of data plays an important role in the achievement of research aim and objectives. Data analysis methods vary between secondary and primary studies, as well as, between qualitative and quantitative studies.

7. Reaching conclusions. Conclusions relate to the level of achievement of research aims and objectives. In this final part of your dissertation you will have to justify why you think that research aims and objectives have been achieved. Conclusions also need to cover research limitations and suggestions for future research.

8. Completing the research. Following all of the stages described above, and organizing separate chapters into one file leads to the completion of the first draft. The first draft of a dissertation needs to be prepared at least one month before the submission deadline. This is because a researcher will need to have sufficient amount of time to address feedback of his\her supervisor.(1)

**Parts of the Research Paper:**

**1- Title**

The title should not be limited nor it should be general too.(2)

**2- Abstract**

The abstract is a summary of a researched paper. It comprises aims, goals, results, and conclusions. It is usually one of the last parts of the paper to be written.(ibid)

**3- Introduction**

The introduction also has three main purposes. First, it provides background and motivation for the topic (usually includes a review of current literature on the topic). Second, it describes the focus and purpose of the paper the researchers are writing. Third, it gives an overview of what is contained in the paper's various sections.(ibid)

**4- Methods/Procedure**

This section describes what the researcher did, how he\she did it, gives strategies, sample calculations, diagrams and circuits, and descriptions of equipment. The goal here is to give the reader sufficient information to be able to repeat any work if desired. (Of course some "standard techniques" can be simply referenced).(ibid)

**5- Results**

This section is where the author proves his\her point with the data. Give graphs and tables of costs, profits, whatever his\her data is. Also it gives some description or guide to help the reader recognize their important points.Here the author should state what he has learnt or proved. What are the "take home messages" or major accomplishments of this work? He may also describe interesting observations, new questions, and future work here.(ibid)

**6- Bibliography**

A list of the references the author used in the work & writing the paper.(ibid)

**Discussion of the Results**

There were statistically varieties in the achievements and answers of the structured oral interview administered by the author herself among the ESL\EFL University Undergraduate Candidates results. The findings show that those undergraduate students in writing research projects skills refer to the poor level of the knowledge they have.

| Research Project Process | Correctly Answered | Incorrectly Answered | Did not try to Answer | Total |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Number of the Candidates | 40                 | 60                   | 50                    | 150   |
| Percentages              | 26.6%              | 40%                  | 33.3%                 | 100%  |

It can be seen that the techniques of research process was correctly used by (40) of the subjects. But it was incorrectly used by (60) subjects, whereas it was not attempted by (50) subjects. Therefore, the percentages were (26.6%), (40%) and (33.3%) respectively. It can be said that the majority of the subjects used this technique incorrectly. This clearly signifies that most of the subjects were not able to conduct individual research projects.

This study shows that some ESL\ EFL University undergraduate candidates should be trained by their lecturers and by guides to be able to conduct a high quality research projects. This research article reports that, there should a great effort be done for all ESL\ EFL University undergraduate candidates before reaching the level of graduation to be aware of the research projects knowledge.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Choosing to narrow of a topic or one that doesn't have much information about it can really make trying to write an eight to ten page research paper frustrating. When a researcher chooses his topic he tries to make it something that he knows that he has enough sources that he can relies on to help his construct his argument.(3)

If a researcher just accepts the random choice and it is something that can be easily researched then he should just stick with it. It doesn't always turn out to be as interesting as he may has hoped but other times it is something that he ends up becoming really intrigued by. A random choice does require him to have discipline to keep writing even if the topic is boring but just he should be sure to have a couple of random choices to filter out the bad ones.(4)

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