

BOOK REVIEW

Mgbemene, C. A., Okoye, U. O., & Akpan, P. U. (2018). *A practical guide to academic project/research work for engineering, physical sciences, social sciences and education students*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria press, LTD. Pp. 102, ISBN: 978-978-8525-26-8

The book written by team of experts including professional engineers, social scientist and science writers (Mgbemene, Okoye & Akpan 2018) sought to practically guide students in all academic endeavour towards their project writing and other research work. This is very crucial against the phobias, confusions and indifferent attitudes that characterize students' project writing especially in this 21st century. The authors who hail from Nigeria, and equally academic staff of University of Nigeria, Nsukka have certainly demonstrated great and unreserved efforts in unearthing the rudiments pertaining practical steps or guide to achieve academic project and other research work that can suit global trends.

In the past, serious efforts have been made by various authors, scientists, scholars from various disciplines within Nigeria and across the globe in order to equip young students or would-be-scholars with some pieces that prepare them to achieve or demonstrate scholarship. However, these pieces to my best of knowledge dealt more on the theoretical domains of project writing. Thus, the efforts of Mgbemene, Okoye and Akpan (2018) has identified these shortfalls and sought to bridge the gap by demonstrating practical guides towards successful scholarship. This they did using charts, figures, concrete layouts/slides to typify and buttress their points. For instance, with illustrations and some sketches, the authors were able to show some expectations of students at every stage of their project or research work. These include expectations from the supervisors and supervisees, possible things in the choice of project, how a student begins his/her project, typical format of project layout etc.

According to the authors, for any research work from students to have an international recognitions and acknowledgements, one must plan the research systematically. Thus for students overcome the confusions that greet them during project writing and enhance their writing skills and ability, reading this book is a must as the authors have in the book demonstrated how this can be done. They structured the writing process into three stages which include planning, the execution, and testing. These stages involve breaking the

project writing in bits ranging from idea which culminates into formulation of topic to preliminary literatures survey where gap in literatures are found. This is followed by conceptual outline/sketch and extensive theoretical studies, design calculations/experimental setup, drawing, production, test and analysis, presentations which could be made on two stages (proposal stage and the defence stage). However, there may be other presentations to be made in-between these two in order to show “work-in-progress”. This is followed by method of assessment, reporting and finally the domain of the project.

Going further, effort was made by the researchers to show some of the rudiments of project reporting. This implies that some rules must be applied in academic writing which students must be acquainted with. These include the use of language, sentence variety and accuracy of information and paragraphing. Also, students must be knowledgeable about the format for reporting in project as explained by the authors with concrete illustrations. To them, a project must have a title page, certification and approval, acknowledgement, abstract, table of contents, all the chapters and things that are expected to see in the chapters and finally references and appendices.

So far, the work of Mgbemene, Okoye and Akpan (2018) have provided enabling ingredients for hitch-free project writing and research work. The authors’ wealth of knowledge and experiences from series of research occupations and engagements has been translated into written form that can stand the test of time. However, there are still, some shortfalls that were observed. First, according to the authors, “a conventional report contains only five chapters” (p.26). Since five chapters is a conventional method of reporting, the authors should have maintained or used the conventional format in all their examples without adopting any format peculiar to any discipline. For instance, in some parts/sections, the book was faculty-specific in the sense that the explanations were narrowed down to suit requirements in particular faculties although some general explanations were made in some sections. The book adopted some terminologies peculiar to a particular faculty which to a large extent may derail other students from other faculties. I suppose a book of such importance should cut across all disciplines and faculties for a well balance scholarship.

In conclusion, the book is an encouraging piece to committed students and other scholars who desires to be reckoned with in field of research and academic writing. The choice of words which seems unambiguous is a potent tool in making the book a useful and important piece for all without discrimination.

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