Cooperative Education Report:

Conducting Data Centered Research at Kathmandu College of Management

Written By

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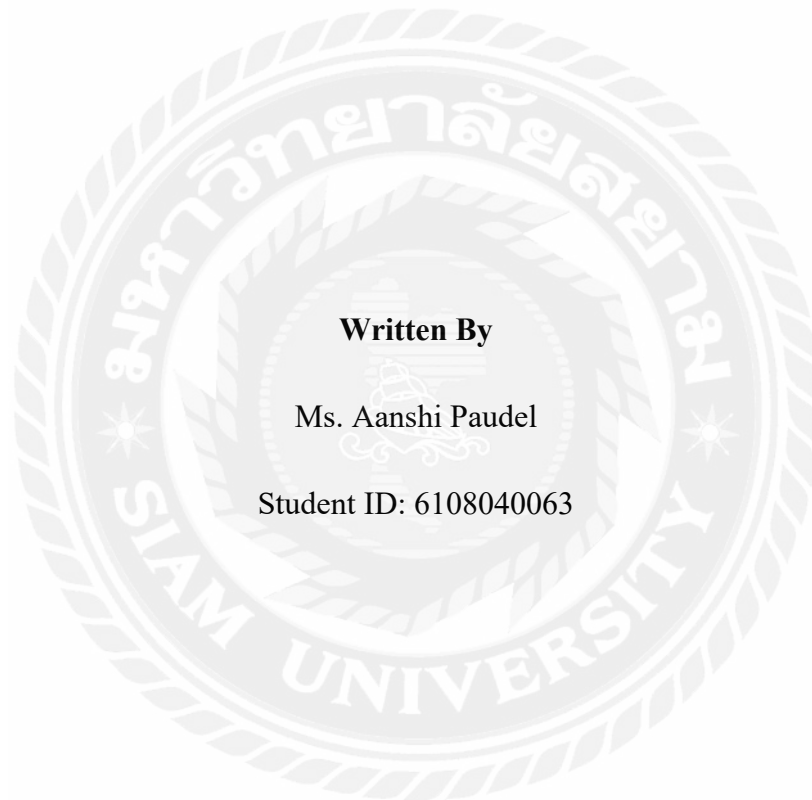
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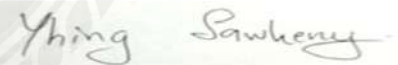
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ABSTRACT

This cooperative report entitled 'Conducting Data Centered Research at Kathmandu College of Management' includes the research activities conducted by the Research Consultants at the Center for Research Excellence (CRE) department of Kathmandu College of Management (KCM). KCM is an educational institution established in 1997 as the first BBA College in Nepal. KCM has been engaged in producing management graduates who can effectively contribute to the world of business and management. CRE department at KCM undertakes several research initiatives to foster research culture among the members of the college as well as to find new information.

I joined KCM as a Research Consultant where I was a part of two research projects- academic and industrial. Under academic research, a journal book titled 'New Perspective-Journal of Business and Economics' was prepared while under industry research, the research project titled 'Bridging gender digital divide among women entrepreneurs in Nepal', was conducted which was assigned by an organization named South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF). The project's objective is to identify the factors that prevent Nepali women entrepreneurs from using technology for their business.

My intention to join the company was to understand different research techniques and conduct data analysis to transform raw data into valuable information. Alongside editing and preparing journals, I was a part of SAWDF's research project from the beginning where I completed its exploration phase and instrument development phase. The project is still ongoing, and I will be part of this institution till the project gets completed.

This cooperative education has helped me utilize my academic knowledge in conducting real-world projects. It has equipped me with organizational, analytical, and technical skills required for me to foster in the corporate world.

Keywords: research, journal, technology, analytical

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The four-month Co-op courses I did would not have been possible without the assistance of a number of individuals and organizations who contributed in making this internship a success.

I want to thank Siam University for providing me with the opportunity to participate in Co-op studies as part of my program. It aided my career advancement by allowing me to apply my theoretical knowledge in a practical setting. I'd also want to thank Mr. Vithaya Sintharapantorn, my academic advisor at Siam University, for providing me with the feedback I needed to prepare my report.

I want to express my gratitude to Kathmandu College of Management for providing me with the opportunity to contribute to the business while also furthering my personal knowledge and abilities. Mr. Ritesh Thakur, my job supervisor, cannot be thanked enough for his continual guidance and assistance throughout the term. I'd also like to express my gratitude to all of the faculty members at KCM, as well as all of my coworkers, for their assistance in making my internship experience as fruitful as possible.

Aanshi Paudel

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

KCM: Kathmandu College of Management

BBA: Bachelor's in business administration

CRE: Center for Research Excellence

KCMSC: Kathmandu College of Management Student Council

RA: Research Assistant

SAWDF: South Asian Women Development Forum

UNESCAP: United Nations – Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

NTA: Nepal Telecom Authority

DOIT: Department of Information Technology

FWEAN: Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Associations of Nepal

FNCSI: Federation of Nepali Cottage and Small Industries

UN: United Nations

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Company's Profile

Kathmandu College of Management (KCM) is an educational institution established in 1997 to provide a BBA degree in Nepal. The college is known as the first college to introduce the BBA program in Nepal. (Kathmandu College of Management, 2022)

Affiliated with Siam University, Thailand, the institution consists of 300+ students and 40+ faculties. The programs offered by the college are BBA Finance and Banking and BBA Marketing. The finance and Banking curriculum is ideal for students seeking a strong theoretical foundation in finance and banking or for students seeking to pursue a professional career in the finance industry, particularly commercial and investment banks, finance, and insurance companies, stock markets, etc. BBA Marketing focuses on international marketing practices to provide students with extensive knowledge using real-life practices.

The KCM life is fascinating and beneficial because of the quality education, exciting range of courses, brilliant peers, competent teachers, supportive staff, and an environment that pushes students to challenge, expand, and discover themselves. The college works persistently toward helping its students frame their success by equipping them with appropriate knowledge and experiences to help them make ready for the corporate world.

The college also has a research facility named the Center for Research Excellence (CRE) which was initiated with the objective of developing a research culture among the members of the college, students, and faculties, to better educate the students about the importance and benefits of research, build their capacities for conducting research, as well as to conduct need-based research in partnership with corporate and development sector. (Kathmandu College of Management, 2022) It is run by the Executive Committee members under the guidance of its advisory board members who are experts in different fields.

1.1.1 Company Mission

The mission of the institution is to instill in students an academic rigor that would prepare them to meet the challenges and avail of opportunities in the international arena.

1.1.2 Company Vision

The vision of the institution is to help its students explore, evolve, and excel in the corporate sector.

1.1.3 Strategies of the Company

- Students First

"Students Come First" is the philosophy that drives all that happens at KCM, a student-centered college. Students are the focal focus of any college event or activity. Students are given top priority by all college personnel and instructors.

- Teamwork

KCM stands apart from other colleges because of its emphasis on teamwork. Teamwork among students, faculty, faculty, and students, and faculty and management is an important aspect of KCM culture in every curricular and co-curricular activity. The college places a high value on teamwork, which contributes to the programs' extraordinary effectiveness.

- Learning by Doing

KCM believes that students benefit from hands-on learning. Students are being provided with several opportunities to study each subject through participation in a variety of assignments, projects, papers, presentations, and cases that add value to the learning process.

- Students' Initiatives

Taking initiative is the first thing students learn at KCM. Whether it's academics or extracurricular activities, the emphasis is on them taking charge. At KCM, they create an environment that encourages learning through their own initiatives, which are aided by professors and management. One such notable initiative of KCM students is the Kathmandu College of Management Student Council (KCMSC) which has the goal of providing a platform for students' complete development with a focus on co-curricular activities.

1.2 Organizational Structure

Kathmandu College of Management consists of a unique and diverse set of professionals. The organizational structure is as follows:
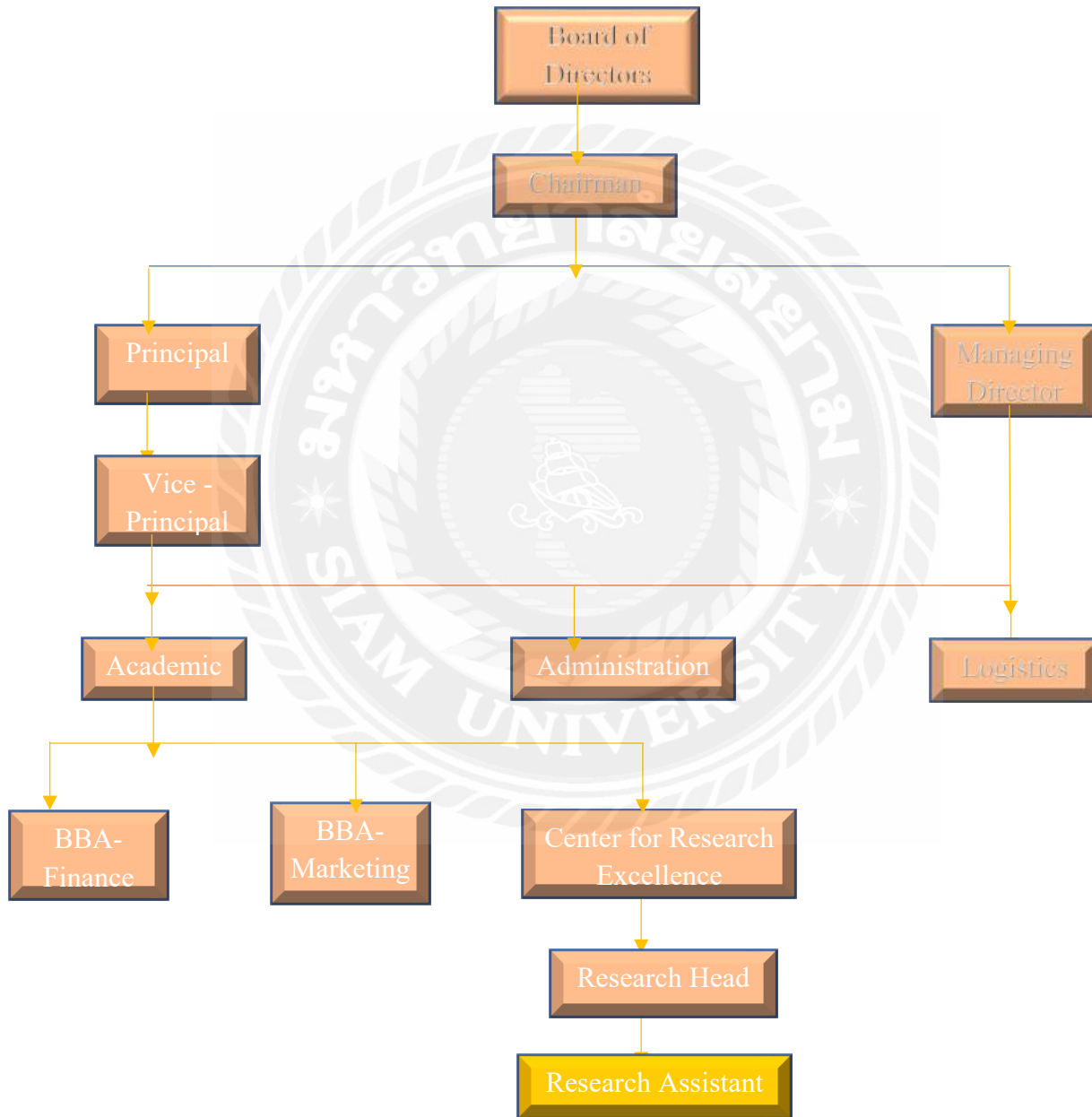
1.2.1 Diagram of the organizational structure

Fig 1: Organizational Structure of KCM

1.2.2 Job Position

I was assigned as a Research Assistant (RA) in the Center for Research Excellence (CRE) department of KCM. Major tasks of a research assistant are conducting a literature review, gathering and managing data, maintaining files, scheduling, and conducting interviews, collecting and presenting feedback, maintaining data collection files, performing data analysis, and generating reports and presentations.

1.2.3 Job Position in the company's organizational structure

The key departments of the institution are Academic, Administration and Logistics. The Academic department consists of BBA Finance and Banking, BBA Marketing, and the Center for Research Excellence (CRE). This particular department is responsible for the planning, implementing, and managing of the academic program of the institution. CRE department is one of the sub-departments of an academic department and is handled by the Research Head. My job position which is the research assistant falls under the research head.

1.3 Intention and motivation to choose the company

The CRE department of KCM is a self-contained research institution that conducts a multidisciplinary study of modern market economies, business, and management methodologies. The center's mission is to foster a fact-based and research-based culture among students and professionals. It also aspires to develop and disseminate new information that is relevant to people and organizations through an active research agenda. Below are the reasons for my intention and motivation to choose KCM as a part of my Co-op studies:

- Working at KCM in the CRE department would give me the opportunity to gain experience in researching, analyzing, and discussing an international-level research project.
- It would aid my comprehension of research methods, core research tasks, and data analysis approaches.
- Conducting a variety of fact-based research would allow me to improve my critical thinking and analytical writing skills.

- Working at KCM would allow me to broaden my network by exposing me to a diverse range of experts and would help me understand the professional culture.

1.4 Strategic Analysis of the Company

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Pioneer of Management Education • Diversified Students • Experienced professors and teachers • Great learning culture • Brilliant networking opportunities • Successful alumni • International degree association	• Rising fee rates • Rigid management system • A limited number of academic programs • Less reach in digital platform
OPPORTUNITY	THREATS
• Growth of businesses in Nepal • Rise of entrepreneurship culture among youths in Nepal • Youth's preference of an international degree over national ones.	• Similar management colleges are nearby. • Dissatisfied graduates. • Youths entering foreign colleges to get an international degree

Table 1: SWOT Analysis of KCM

1.5 Objectives of this Co-op study:

My ambition is to work as a data analyst, using research and data analysis to tackle corporate, financial, and societal issues. I wish to work in the data analytics department in the future. Although advanced technical expertise is vital for a data analyst, mastering the basics and laying a solid foundation in data and data analysis is equally important. Understanding the context of the data, knowing the data gathering method and means of identifying available data, understanding standards for cleaning data, and knowing techniques for evaluating data may all

help a data analyst build a solid foundation. Hence, **my main goal for this Co-op study is to polish my data analysis skills by laying a solid foundation for them, so that when I need to undertake sophisticated data analysis in the future, this solid foundation will be a great help.** I intend to improve the above-mentioned core abilities required for data analysis by conducting research and generating data from it. The sub-objectives of the co-op studies are to make myself know the corporate culture and equip myself with organizational skills such as time management, coordination, communication, and some others.

CHAPTER 2: CO-OP STUDY ACTIVITIES

2.1 Job Description

As a Research Assistant, I was assigned to conduct two types of research activities. The first type of research was academic. Under this, I was supposed to prepare KCM's journal book titled New Perspective-Journal of Business and Economics. I was required to prepare a well-formatted and well-edited article from a report and make it ready for the press by designing it. The second type of research was industrial. Several industrial research projects are assigned to the CRE department. This year, South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF) in partnership with United Nations-Economic and Social Commission for the Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) decided to conduct a research project under the title 'Bridging the gender divide in the digital ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in Nepal.' This research project was assigned to the CRE department of KCM. I was the in-charge of this research endeavor where I had to conduct full-fledged research and prepare a report about it.

2.2 Job Responsibilities and Work Duties

My job responsibilities and work duties changed from time to time because developing a research project is a process. The jobs I completed, however, were all interconnected. My job responsibilities were as follows:

2.2.1 Edit Journals

The academic research task of journal editing entails finalizing reports prepared by KCM students on various topics to be included in the Journal Book. The reports that have been chosen will next be edited into an article format through the process of long editing.

2.2.2 Present Journal to the Press

After the journal has been brought down into an article format, the articles are presented to the press. The design is selected, experimented with, and reviewed. After everything is settled, the journal book is ready for publication.

2.2.3 Conduct a Meeting with the client for a research project

The industrial research project assigned to the CRE department by its clients should be discussed with the clients first. As a result, a client meeting must be scheduled in which the project's concept notes, as well as the clients' expectations and requirements, must be discussed.

2.2.4 Explore the research topic

The research topic must be well studied, well clarified, and comprehended before beginning the project. A thorough write-up regarding the research scope must be done. Before beginning with the project, the final proposal should be prepared which later must be approved by the client.

2.2.5 Identify concerned stakeholders

Information from appropriate stakeholders must be gathered to extract more information about the research issue. It enables the research project to be formed using accurate and up-to-date data. Hence, the concerned stakeholders must be identified with the help of clients.

2.2.6 Perform Field visits

To enhance the knowledge of the research topic, the field visits must be done to interact with the concerned stakeholders. A set of questions that need to be asked must be prepared beforehand to ensure that the meeting runs smoothly and effectively.

2.2.7 Draft the information collected from the field visit

After the information has been collected from different stakeholders, the information should be compiled and analyzed and should further be discussed with the client.

2.2.8 Conduct literature review and develop Variables

The variables serve a great purpose in any research. So, with the references from the literature review, appropriate variables, as well as sub-variables, must be identified. The variables should later be discussed with the client for confirmation.

2.2.9 Develop Instruments

After the variables are identified, the survey instrument which in this case is a questionnaire must be developed. The questionnaire should be designed in such a way that it covers information regarding all the variables that are going to be studied in the project.

2.2.10 Construct a Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework, which is a visual representation of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables must be constructed. The researcher's synthesis of the literature on how to explain a phenomenon is represented by a conceptual framework.

2.2.11 Get ready for the survey

With the questionnaire ready, the final stage before conducting a survey is to finalize the survey spot and sample population. The survey location and sample population must be selected in a way that broadly covers the project's objective.

2.3 Activities in coordinating with co-workers

Every day's activities were carried out in coordination with the research director and fellow interns. I was put in charge of the team. The work was usually assigned to me directly by the research head, and I communicated it to my other interns. We interns would plan how to do each task before beginning it and then work accordingly. When necessary, we would divide the labor tasks, but for the most part, we would work together.

For example, when gathering information on a specific topic, we would divide the sub-topics and conduct separate research on each sub-topic. We were able to obtain more information and suggestions because of the work division. A task like creating a questionnaire, on the other hand, was completed in partnership. The collaboration gave a variety of perspectives and thoughts on the research endeavor, which enriched our understanding of the problem.

We would conduct a meeting with the Research Head once a week to demonstrate the activities we completed over the week. We'd do some brainstorming on how to move the tasks/projects forward at the meeting. I didn't feel uneasy dealing with the people I worked with because they

were all from KCM. We were successful in establishing a fantastic team and achieving the desired outcomes.

2.4 Job Process Diagram

Below are the flowcharts as well as the description of my work process in academic and industrial research.

2.4.1 Academic Research
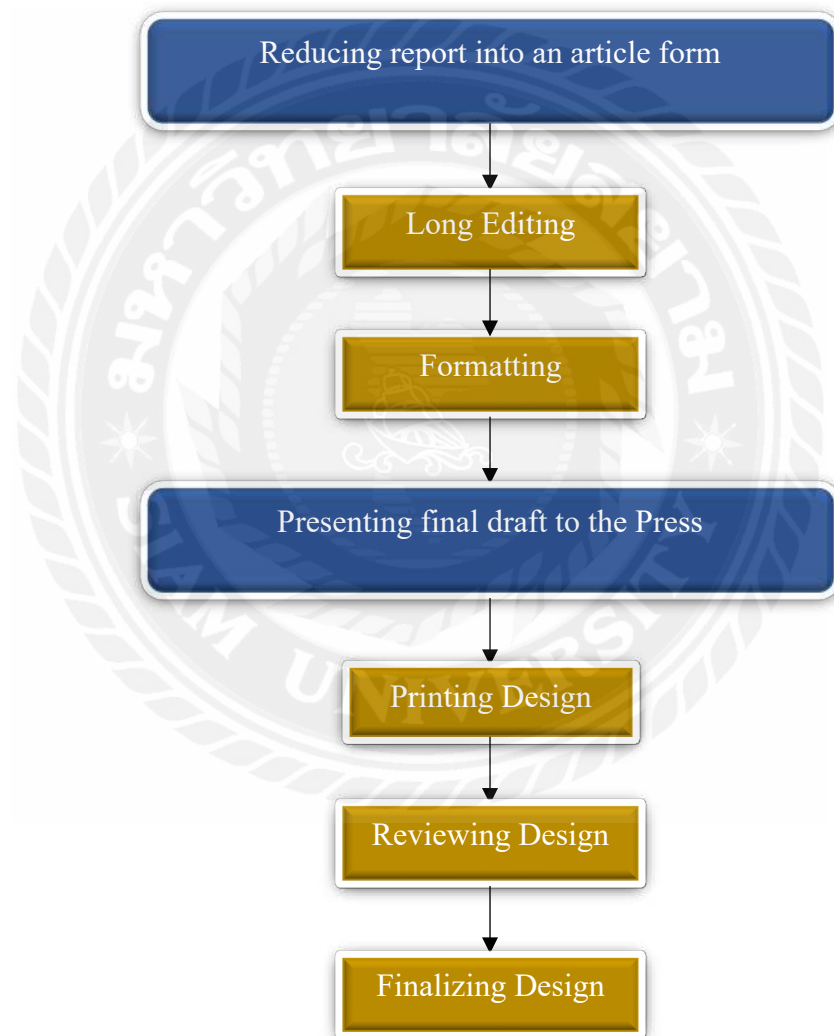
Fig 2: Flowchart of the work process of academic research

- Reducing Report into an article format

Eight different reports prepared by the KCM students were selected to be published in the journal book titled 'New Perspective: Journal Book of Business and Economics.' The reports were selected mainly based on how clearly the research question has been answered. Then the long editing was formulated. The lines were rearranged such that the writing flowed easily. When necessary, the wording was changed. Grammar and spelling were also reviewed thoroughly. Lastly, the articles were put into the desired format and were made ready for printing.

- Presenting the final draft to the press

The articles were presented to the press after the final draft was completed. The Journal Book's design was discussed and put into practice. The design was examined and updated to meet the college's requirements during the final inspection. The general design was then finalized.
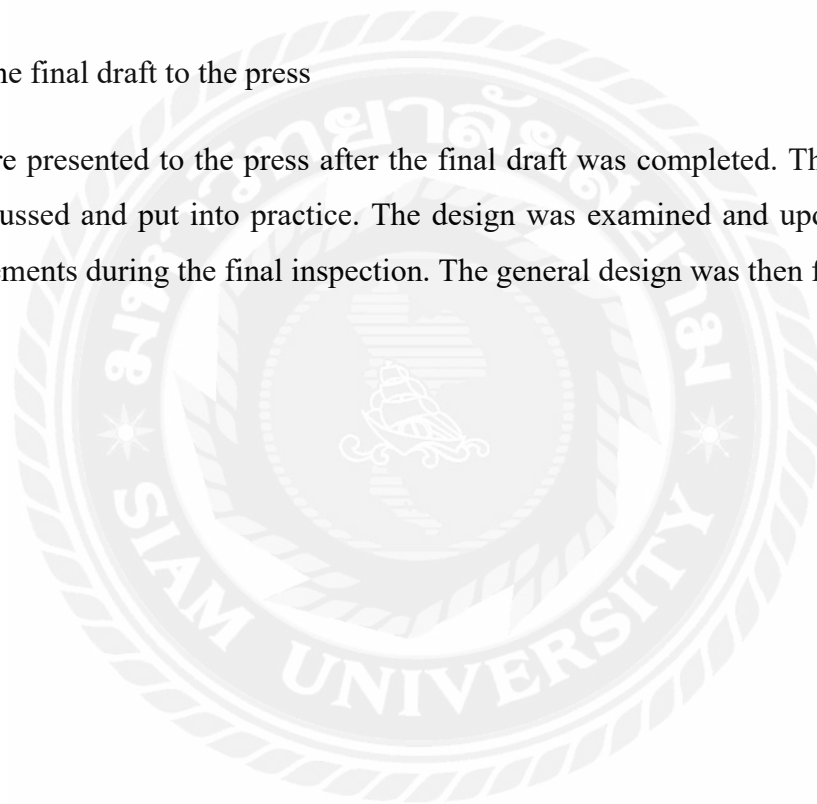
2.4.2 Industrial Research

Fig 3: Flowchart of the work process of the industrial research

- Meeting with the client – SAWDF, for the research project 'Bridging the gender divide in the digital ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in Nepal'

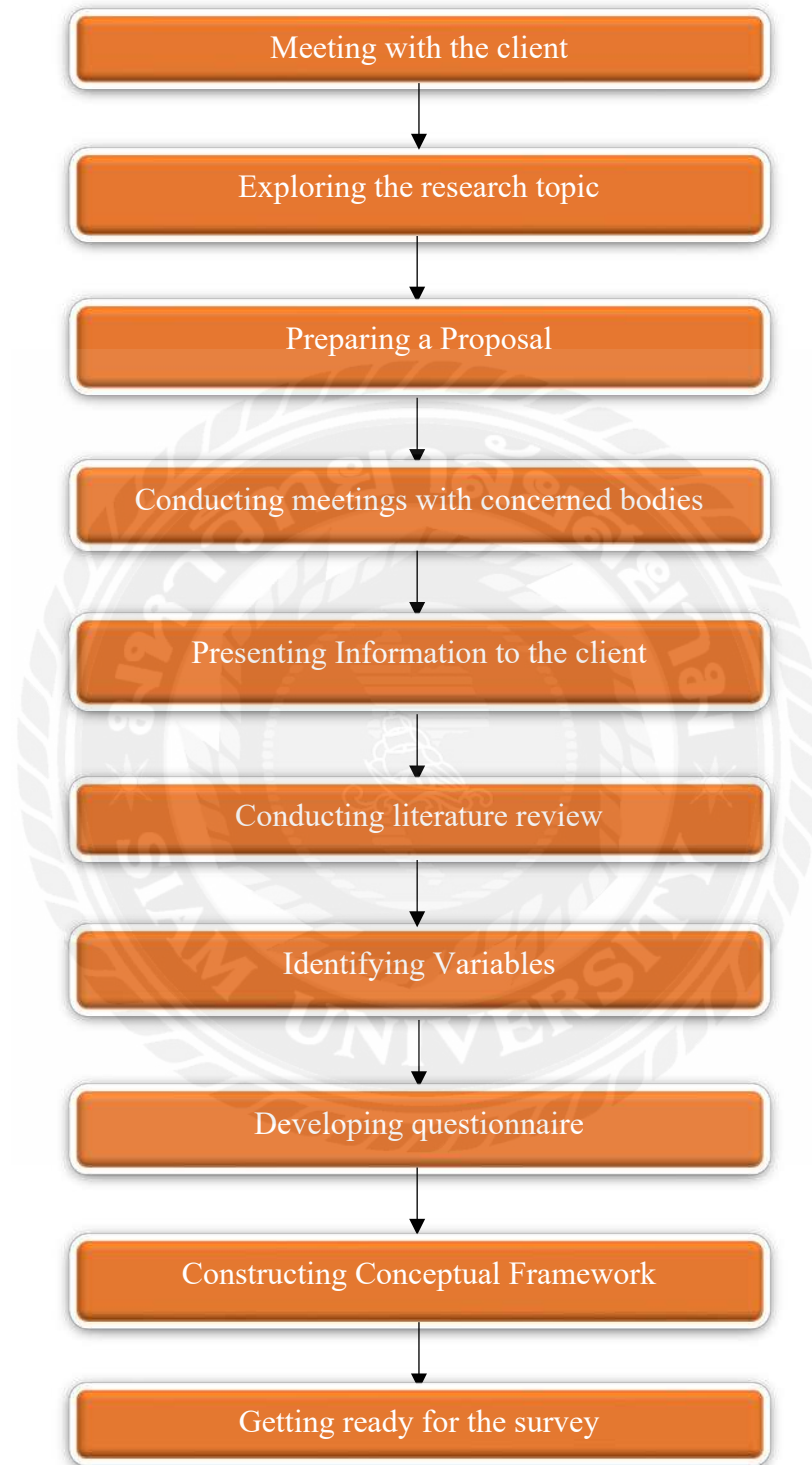After the completion of the academic research, I was a part of industrial research. The industrial project was assigned to the CRE department by SAWDF. So, before getting started with the project, we conducted a meeting with our client-SAWDF. We mostly reviewed the concept note of our research project at the meeting, where we discussed the title of the study, the study's area, the study's background, the study's statement of the problem, and the study's objectives. The notion also aided in the finalization of the research project's budget. Client requirements and expectations were also reviewed in detail.

- Exploring the research topic

As previously stated, our research project's title was 'Bridging the gender divide in the digital ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in Nepal.' The goal of the study was to evaluate the gender and digital divide for women entrepreneurs in the context of current legislation and make recommendations for future solutions to close the gaps. As a result, we dug deep into the subject to learn more about the current state of women entrepreneurs in Nepal's digital setting. We were able to comprehend the current state of Nepal's digital infrastructure in all of its districts. Then we determined how many women entrepreneurs live in each area, as well as how many of them use digital tools to operate their enterprises and how many do not. This gave us a general idea regarding the subject.

- Preparing a Proposal

We prepared a working proposal for the research project. The proposal consisted of the objectives and sub-objectives of the research project as well as a methodology. It also included the timeframe of the project which is divided into five phases: exploration phase (Phase I), instrument development phase (Phase II), data collection phase (phase III), data analysis phase (phase IV), and preparation of the final report (Phase V). The proposal was presented to the client and upon reviewing it, the client provided us with some feedback as well as corrections to be made. We incorporated the feedback and presented the final draft.

- Conducting meetings with concerned bodies

Then, to know more about the existing scenario of digital infrastructure as well as women entrepreneurs (in a digital context) in Nepal, we scheduled meetings with different organizations such as the Manushi, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Nepal, Nepal Telecom Authority (NTA), Department of Information Technology (DOIT), Federation of Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (FWEAN) and Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI). The organizations provided us with a good sense of the existing status of policy regarding the usage of digital means by women entrepreneurs, infrastructure for the access of the digital means, the digital ecosystem, the status of women entrepreneurs in terms of digital context, and much more miscellaneous information. The organizations also provided us with recommendations on which areas to conduct research and agreed to connect us with the women entrepreneurs during the survey.

- Presenting information to the client

After exploring knowledge regarding the research topic through the self-conducted research as well as through field visits, we compiled all the relevant information and presented it to the client. Together we analyzed the information and data and developed a clearer picture of how, where, and when the project will be carried out.

- Conducting literature review

Then we moved on to reviewing the literature. A literature review would help us get a better grasp of the existing research and discussions regarding our research subject and field of study. So, we spent a significant amount of time reviewing twenty-five different articles from various sources such as an online library, capacity media, science hub, and many others.

- Identifying the variables

Taking references from the literature review, we identified seven variables to understand why women entrepreneurs lack in using digital means. The variables we identified are:

i. Policy and Regulations

ii. Infrastructures

iii. Innovation

iv. Skills

v. Socio-cultural factors

vi. Online safety

vii. Attitude towards technology

- Developing a questionnaire

Then, taking every variable and its sub variable into account, we developed a set of questionnaires to be asked to the women entrepreneurs in the survey. The questionnaire was developed in such a way that it covered all the variables that we were going to study. Initially, we devised a set of 116 questions, but we eventually pared it down to 35. We converted the questionnaire into the Nepali language to make it convenient for all the people.

- Constructing conceptual Framework

The variables were visually represented through a conceptual framework. The independent variables are all the above-mentioned variables we had identified while the dependent variable is the access to digital means.

- Getting ready for the survey

The survey location was finalized based on our self-conducted research and information gathered from field visits. The survey was supposed to be conducted in four provinces of Nepal. The provinces were selected in such a way that they covered women entrepreneurs from Hilly, Himalayan, and Terai regions residing in both rural and urban locations. The women entrepreneurs with whom we were going to conduct the survey were connected to us via different women-led organizations.

We're all set for the survey now. I will be a part of this study endeavor till it is completed. Following the survey data collection, we will analyze the data using several statistical approaches and prepare a final report for the client.

2.5 Contribution as a Co-op student in the company

I, as a Research Assistant, was able to make several contributions to the company specially to the CRE department. The contributions I made are as follows:

- Published a journal book of KCM: I assisted the CRE department in the preparation of a Journal Book, which KCM publishes every year, and which serves as an asset to the university in terms of showcasing student knowledge as well as branding. Other students, particularly those in their first and second years, might use the Journal book to take notes and broaden their knowledge.

- Conducted academic research: The academic research helped the college understand how their students apply theoretical knowledge in pragmatic matters.

- Managed meetings with several organizations for industrial research: I was able to successfully coordinate between the representatives of the organizations and the Research Head. I made sure that there is a proper flow of information between the two parties. I also scheduled meetings, drafted questions to be asked in the meeting, and prepared meeting minutes.

- Helped the CRE department strengthen its brand: Conducting an international-level project would strengthen the CRE department. Researching one of the happening societal issues and presenting it to one of the big women-led organizations would add up to the department's value.

- Worked towards the goal of the CRE department: As mentioned before, the CRE department conducts research activities to build a research culture among students. With the academic and industrial research that I was a part of, the students at the college will gain insight into the research activities and well as their value.

CHAPTER 3: LEARNING PROCESS

3.1 Problems and issues of the institution

There are several problems and issues of the institution that I noticed/encountered during my internship period:

i. The CRE department's internal awareness is lower

The purpose of the CRE department is to promote a research culture among students and to teach them the value of research. Many students at the college, on the other hand, are unfamiliar with the department, its work, and the products it generates. When I told a few of my juniors that I was working in the CRE department, the first question they asked was whether the department existed at all. To be honest, I was a little embarrassed. The department conducts good research; however, it appears that most of it has gone unnoticed by KCM students. This type of unawareness not only jeopardizes the department's goals but also casts doubt on the students' knowledge.

ii. Lack of technical expertise

A good research project is not only about finding new and relevant information, but it is also about how the information is processed and analyzed. At KCM, research tasks are well-conducted but the number of technical tools it uses to conduct data analysis of the research is quite limited. The qualitative, as well as quantitative data analysis tasks, felt very chaotic and time-consuming due to the lack of the usage of technical tools.

iii. Lack of staff at the CRE department

Another major problem with the CRE department was the lack of research experts. The research head, who is a faculty himself at the institution and is a part-time student, has to work solely on various functions. When my fellow intern and I had questions about our assignment, we had trouble reaching out to the research director right away. Hence, the institution was lacking employees in the CRE department.

iv. The varied proportion of work task

Many of the work duties that were assigned to me were out of proportion to one another. Sometimes the work task would be relatively simple and less time-consuming, allowing us to have spare and unproductive time, while other times the task would be quite stressful and difficult, requiring us to commit all our time at once. Our daily routine was hampered by this imbalance.

3.2 Solving the problem

According to the literature review, the possible solutions for the above-mentioned problems could be:

i. Organizational Awareness

Organizational awareness refers to a level of understanding of various aspects of an organization, such as its operations, structure, and culture. (Catherine, 2022) The most critical aspect in managing proactive change in an organization is organizational awareness. It aids in, teamwork, communication, culture, and leadership effectiveness.

External and Internal awareness are the two elements of organizational awareness. External awareness is about how an organization interacts and presents itself to the outer world while internal awareness is the knowledge of the process and functions of an organization.

ii. Intermediate technical knowledge

One of the most significant research skills is technical knowledge. The better the research outcome, the more technically concentrated the data analysis is. Intermediate-level technical data analysis knowledge aids researchers in gaining additional analytical understanding and producing comprehensive results. Technical expertise allows for more data to be used in the decision-making process. (Diligent, 2018)

iii. Employee Addition

Having additional personnel allows for job division, which can be quite useful during busy periods. In addition to that, different individuals with different ideas, experiences, and knowledge create synergetic benefits in the organization. For the deeply analytical task like research, having more employees or contributors to the research project would help generate broader ideas regarding the issue. An organization should add employees to the department when the workload increases and there is a demand for new ideas. (FreshBooks, 2019)

iv. Work timeline

Experts say that there are numerous benefits of the work timeline. One of the major benefits is the equal task division that ensures a balanced workflow. Other benefits include proper time management, improved motivation, and easy track of projects. (Sambol)

3.3 Recommendations to the Company

Following are a few recommendations that would help the institution in resolving its problems:

i. Increase awareness of the CRE department among the students

To make the students aware of the CRE department, the institution could focus on the following things:

a. Clearly define the department's values and mission
b. Engage more students in the department
c. Properly communicate the department's strategy
d. Demonstrate to the students the industrial research it does and the output it produces

ii. Concentrate on improving technical expertise to undertake research

Hiring specialists to teach students new technological skills, particularly those connected to data analysis, could improve their technical understanding. The students could then be assigned other assignments to complete using their technical expertise to further their education. This would assist students in producing more advanced and analytical research results.

iii. Increase the contributors in the CRE department

To make the procedure easier, the department could hire more professionals in the CRE department. It would also allow for group debates on how to differentiate the projects. When academic and industrial research projects overlap, the workload could be distributed among the personnel to ensure a seamless workflow.

iv. Create a weekly work timeline

The entire task to be completed in a week could be divided among the days using a weekly work timeline. The responsibilities should be evenly distributed so that no one day has a particularly heavy workload.

3.4 Learnings during the co-op studies

My focus of the co-op studies was to equip myself with the required knowledge and experiences to help me prepare for my future goal of becoming a research and data expert. I did learn many new skills and techniques required for data analysts and research enthusiasts. Following are the knowledge and skills I gained throughout the internship:

- Understanding the depth of projects

Prior to beginning any research assignment, I understood that it is critical to devote significant time to investigate the research topic itself. A researcher must lay a solid basis for the topic under investigation. The knowledge must be explored through a variety of sources to not circumscribe our understanding of the topic. The knowledge must be examined by self-learning/self-conducted internet research or field visits that include interacting and discussing with the persons concerned, or both.

- Analytical techniques

There is a lot of information that researchers come across while obtaining information for the project. With so much information available, I discovered that one should properly review it all, analyze it, and then choose the most relevant and appropriate ones based on their correctness,

relevance, and reliability. During the literature review, field trips, instrument (questionnaire) preparation, and variables identification tasks, I learned the most about analytical techniques.

- Editing and formatting techniques

I learned numerous editing and formatting strategies while conducting academic research when I converted eight reports into an article style. I learned how to properly position text in an article and how to edit in a way that does not disrupt the workflow. I also learned how to improve the readability and general appearance of documents by managing their format and layout.

- Major research techniques and skills

As a result of my participation in academic and commercial research, I gained a better understanding of major research instruments. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were taught to me. Finding proper information, paying attention to little details, managing time, preparing notes, and problem-solving are some of the skills I learned.

- Reporting skills

Another unique skill that I was able to develop was reporting skills. Whenever I'm working on a report, I realize how important it is to be comprehensive and meticulous to ensure the report's appropriateness and accuracy. Reporting is one of the most important aspects of any research project and I was able to gain a thorough understanding of how it should be done.

3.5 Applying knowledge from coursework

The most incredible aspect of the internship was being able to apply my theoretical research expertise to real-world research initiatives. I was constantly able to connect the dots between theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

In the 4th semester of the BBA program, we were assigned to do a group research project as a part of a curriculum under the subject 'Research in Finance'. During the six months of studying the subject, I had a better theoretical understanding of topic selection, literature review, data collection, research strategies, research methodologies, research designs, data analysis, and

report writing. In the academic and industrial research, I did during my internship, I was able to apply all the above-mentioned theoretical knowledge to practical matters. For instance, during the literature study, I had previously learned that the information I needed could be found by researching a few sub-topics. I used the same skills on the industrial research assignment and was able to evaluate ten literatures in a single day.

Also, a business intelligence project was assigned during the 7th semester of the BBA program under the subject 'Business Intelligence.' Throughout this project, I learned a lot about how to choose acceptable data and how to extract insights from raw data. This theoretical understanding came in handy when it came to selecting and assessing data from self–conducted research and field visits.

3.6 Special skills and new knowledge learned

- Organizational skills

Working at KCM gave me the opportunity to hone a variety of organizational skills that were critical to producing high-quality results. Deadlines must be met, teams must be managed, leadership must be demonstrated, goals must be created, and decisions must be made in any business context. I'm grateful to have learned these abilities at KCM throughout my internship.

- Communication and Leadership

Communication and leadership are two other soft talents that I have mastered. The majority of the projects we worked on required constant communication with the client, the Research Head, and my fellow interns. I learned how formal communications are made during meetings with concerned government officials. In addition, as a team leader, I was able to demonstrate my leadership talents and improve them.

- Empathetic skills

While working on the research project, I also honed my empathetic abilities. We were supposed to design the most relevant and relatable questions for women entrepreneurs during the

questionnaire preparation phase. It was crucial to demonstrate sensitivity and empathy and understand the situation from their perspective. This aided my ability to be empathic.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

4.1 Summary of highlights of Co-Op studies

The CRE department of KCM undertakes several research initiatives to enhance knowledge and build a research culture among its students as well as to identify new information regarding business, economics, and society. As the department's goal aligned with my area of interest, I joined KCM as one of the contributors to the department. The research tasks I was assigned which are academic and industrial were both quite different from one another. The academic research I did involve more of editing, formatting, and writing research articles. Industrial Research on the other hand involved more advanced tasks like planning, exploring knowledge, gathering information, analyzing information, and making decisions.

Being part of the Co-op studies also made me understand where I stand as an individual. I had a clearer picture of my strengths and weaknesses. My strong side mainly involved critical thinking, technical ability, time management, and punctuality. My weaknesses or the areas of improvement included multi-tasking and adaptability. Hence, the Co-op study gave me the opportunity to flaunt my strengths and improve on my weaknesses.

Moreover, getting a platform like KCM to develop and enhance my soft skills was another big opportunity. Staff at KCM are known for having excellent organizational skills such as time management, networking, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Spending four months at KCM brushed up my soft skills which have made me more confident and ready to become a part of the corporate sector.

4.2 Evaluation of the work experience

My experience as a Research Assistant was remarkable. As mentioned earlier, my career goal is to become a data analyst and solve business, financial and societal problems through data analysis. Because data analysis is an integral part of the research, being part of these two types of research tasks (academic and industrial) made me understand data analysis from the basics. I understood how data is generated, selected, processed, manipulated, and analyzed. I also understood how important it is to understand the background of the data that is going to be

analyzed. This information has provided me with a solid foundation in data analysis and has increased my confidence in performing sophisticated data analysis in the future. Hence, the work experience I gained throughout the co-op studies has helped me in my career development.

Also, the industrial research project was assigned by one of the renowned women-led organizations - SAWDF in collaboration with UNESCAP, a UN body. So firstly, as a fresher, I was apprehensive about taking responsibility for such a big project. However, due to the guidance of the research head and coordination with my fellow interns, the research task felt like a journey where we were successfully able to bring desired output in each phase. Moreover, the research project was about finding the reasons why women entrepreneurs do not use digital means for their business. As a feminist, the research topic itself was very personal and sensitive to me. I enjoy identifying gaps in societal problems and finding ways to solve them. Hence, the experience of conducting such a critical project of such a renowned body was challenging yet phenomenal.

Moreover, me and my fellow interns were able to form a good team and were able to make the most out of the teamwork. The long tedious activities felt easy and monotonous tasks seemed interesting because of the comfortable and enjoyable work environment created by our team. The comprehensive guidance of the research head made my internship journey a lot easier.

4.3 Limitations of the Co-Op studies

As fruitful as it was, there are a few limitations of the Co-op studies that I noticed. The limitations are as follows:

- The Co-op studies began with no guidance on the type of job we should pursue based on our career objectives. Such sessions would have been an additional benefit for us in forming a clearer picture regarding the work type and making the most out of the internship.
- The Co-op studies classes used to be at 11:45 am (Nepali time) on Saturdays. Working throughout the week from Sunday to Friday and attending classes on Saturdays was very hectic. So, the classes could have been managed differently.
- Because Co-op studies sessions were held virtually, I felt a communication gap between the professors and students.

- The ongoing global pandemic hampered my Co-op studies at the workplace. For the month of February, we had to work from home due to the rise of the COVID cases. We did manage to complete the task assigned but I felt the communication gap and the lack of teamwork while working from home. Some of the interviews with concerned authorities were taken online. I felt the physical meetings would have been more interactive and informative than the ZOOM Meetings.

4.4 Recommendations for the company and Co-op studies

Below are a few recommendations I would like to make to my workplace and to the organizers of the Co-op studies to make the internship better for the upcoming candidates.

4.1.1 Recommendations for the improvement of Cooperative Education Preparation Courses

- A short consulting session may be arranged by Siam University before Co-op studies to provide guidance to each student regarding their appropriate internship/job type.
- The Co-op studies sessions may be held at an appropriate time for all participants.
- The organizers of the Co-op studies may find ways to erase the communication gap by arranging some sessions solely for students to present their co-op experience as well as share their knowledge regarding how to function in the workplace.

4.1.2 Recommendation for the improvement of Co-op work

- The institution, in general, should find ways to make the remote class/job as effective as the physical ones. It could do this by ensuring that there is a proper flow of communication between the two parties, setting deadlines for the task assigned, and maintaining regular schedules.

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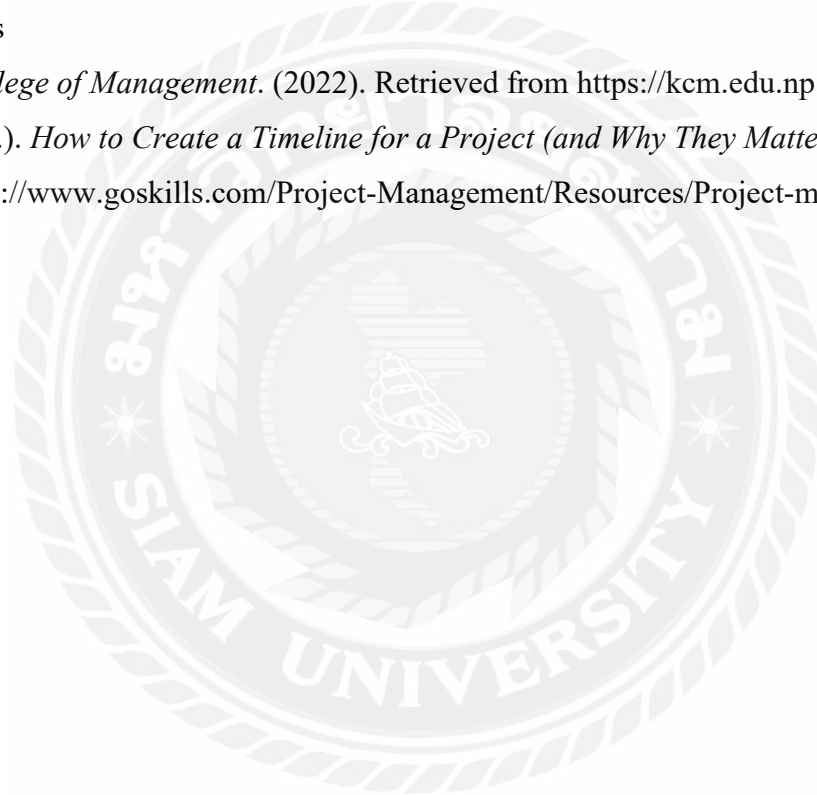
Annex

Pic 1: Conducting a virtual meeting with Ms. Ramola Sthapit, Office Manager, FWEAN

Pic 2: Research Consultants with the Research Head at Kathmandu College of Management

Pic 3: Organizing a group meeting with the Research Head while working remotely due to the pandemic.

Pic 4: Formulating the work plans with the Research Head

Pic 5: Me working on the project

Pic 6: Research Assistants along with the Research Head performing a group task

Pic 7: A group picture at the KCM Lobby

Invitation for the Zoom meeting

Aanshi Paudel <aanshi2022@kcm.edu.np>
to manushimc, Ritesh

Dear Shova Ma'am,

On behalf of SAWDF, I, the research consultant, would like to invite you to a virtual meeting on February 15th, 2022, at 12:30 p.m. We are very excited to have you attend the meeting because I am confident that the topics discussed will be extremely beneficial to SAWDF's research project. Mr. Ritesh Thakur, Research Head, Center for Research Excellence (CRE), Kathmandu College of Management, will lead the meeting.

Please see the attached file for more information regarding the project.

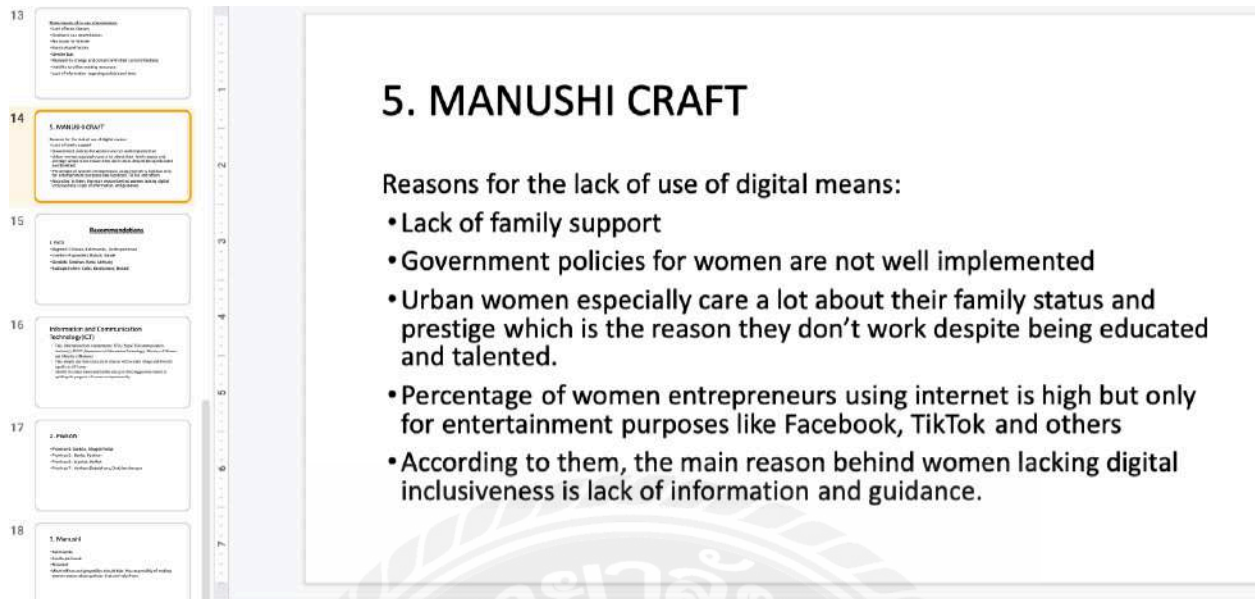The details of the Zoom meeting are as follows:

Topic: KCM's Zoom Meeting
Time: Feb 15, 2022, 12:15 p.m. Kathmandu

Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/l/95461843256?pwd=am5rK29maHovaHBqb09lZEh0TWZGdz09

Pic 8: Sending emails for the Zoom meeting

Pic 9: Me working on the project

Pic 10: A glimpse of the presentation prepared for the client

19. What kind of activities would you use it for if you were given internet services?
20. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on the internet?
    Less than 1 hr. 1-2 hrs. 2-3 hrs. 3-4 hrs   more than 4 hrs
21. How often do you use it?
    a. Social Media
    b. Gaming
    c. Music
    d. Shopping
    e. Business

22. Where do you use the internet?
    Home. School. Café. Library. Friend's or family's house. Cyber

23. How do you access the internet?
    Mobile phone. Computer. Laptop. Tablet/iPad

24. What is the main channel of communication with your client?
    Online. Offline

25. If online, what is the main way of communication with your clients?
    Voice call(Mobile). Video call(Mobile). SMS E-mail. Messenger Viber. Instagram
    (DMs). Whatsapp.   Website

26. How many online clients do you have?
27. How did you initially get connected to your online clients?
    Voice call(Mobile). Video call(Mobile). SMS E-mail. Messenger Viber. Instagram
    (DMs). Whatsapp.   Website

Pic 11: A small part of the questionnaire prepared for the survey