

Graduate Students' Perspectives and Challenges in Academic Research Writing at a Philippine State University

Romel M. Acheron

College of Teacher Education, Batangas State University JPLPC Malvar — The National Engineering University,
Philippines

Email: romelaceron@g.batstate-u.edu.ph

ORCID: 0000-0002-1738-5643

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ABSTRACT:

The attainment of advanced degrees elevates higher education standards, enhances individual competencies, and contributes to national development. However, universities face challenges in ensuring quality of students' theses and dissertations. Graduate programs must align academic practices with current standards to produce relevant research outputs. In the Philippines, only about three percent of students in Batangas State University graduate annually, revealing systemic issues in writing, advising, and evaluation which call for improved research mentoring and institutional reforms. This research empirically examined the graduate students' perspectives on thesis and dissertation writing, advising, and critiquing practices as well as challenges they faced regarding research knowledge, instruction, resources, finances, and scheduling. A researcher-made survey instrument, validated by members of the Research Council, was employed to collect data from the respondents (n=17). The data were subjected to appropriate statistical analyses, including correlation tests that examined relationships between demographic variables and respondents' research writing experiences and challenges, during the 2023 academic year. The Research Development Manuals (2008 and 2017) of the university were reviewed to provide contextual grounding for the findings. The findings reveal that only gender had a significant relationship ($p = 0.038 < 0.05$) with writing experiences, indicating that male and female respondents differ in certain aspects of their research writing experiences, while other variables showed no significant correlation. This suggests that gender may influence approaches or engagement levels in research-related tasks. The results show that most students had generally good experiences throughout the different stages of the research writing process. Although they encountered some difficulties in a few areas, these challenges occurred only occasionally and did not greatly affect their ability to complete their research work. This suggests that while difficulties in research writing were present, they were generally infrequent and did not pose major obstacles to the students' progress. Based on these findings, the study provided inputs for the development of an Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM) for the university, aimed at improving graduate student completion rates, attract more enrollees, and enhance faculty research productivity. The study further recommends institutionalizing the ARWM, strengthening research mentoring and advising systems, and fostering a sustained culture of

research productivity among students and faculty members.

Keywords: Academic Research Writing Manual; Batangas State University; Research Challenges; Research Writing; Structural Equation Model.

1. Introduction

Background of the Study

The attainment of higher and advanced degrees serves as a critical determinant in elevating the standards of higher education, both within the Philippine context and on a global scale. Such academic advancement enhances individual potential and competencies, thereby contributing to personal growth, fostering economic productivity, and reinforcing national growth and stability. In this regard, educational institutions face the formidable challenge of meeting the demands of quality assurance and internationalization. Addressing this challenge requires that universities and colleges offering graduate programs—particularly those with thesis and dissertation writing as a full and terminal requirement for the degree—ensure alignment with current academic and industry trends while generating a substantial volume of high-quality research outputs.

An empirical observation of the thesis and dissertation writing, advising, and critiquing processes in the Graduate School of Teacher Education at Batangas State University reveals that slightly more than three percent of enrollees successfully graduated in a given terminal or academic year. This low completion rate has been attributed to systemic issues in the writing, advising, and evaluation processes, as reflected in unsolicited student feedback and documented complaints. These include: students who exceeded the maximum residency period in the program before graduation; students who discontinued their studies due to the prevailing culture and processes, at the graduate school; students who withdrew and shifted to other degree programs; and students who transferred to other institutions where they perceived greater assurance of completing their degree requirements within a reasonable timeframe.

Specific issues include: the adviser's limited ability to provide adequate guidance and support to the advisee; insufficient time allotted for reviewing

student work; unreasonable delays in checking and correcting manuscripts; late return of papers, which affects the student's schedule for revision and oral defense of the manuscript; adviser's ambiguous or vague feedback that hinders improvement; and overly generalized comments that tend to discourage rather than motivate students. Similarly, the critiquing process has been found to contribute significantly to delays in manuscript completion, defense schedules, and eventual graduation. These challenges stem from, but are not limited to: some panel members' limited subject-matter knowledge of the topic which affects the quality and timeliness of the feedback; instances where panel members strongly assert their perspectives during academic deliberations resulting in less than cohesive interaction among panel members; and (d) inadequate coordination and communication between the panel, the adviser, and the student which inadvertently impede student progress

Furthermore, the absence of an Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM) in the Graduate School of Batangas State University (BSU) has motivated the researchers to undertake this study. The findings are envisioned to serve as essential inputs for the development of a comprehensive ARWM that will guide research professors, thesis and dissertation advisers, panel evaluators, research critics, editors, and the Research and Development and Extension Services (RDES) Office. The issues previously enumerated highlight the need to systematically describe and analyze the processes of thesis and dissertation writing, advising, and critiquing within the graduate programs of BSU. Addressing these areas is expected to strengthen student research writing skills, enhance the quality of advising and coaching, and improve the critiquing practices of panel members. Ultimately, the realization of these objectives will significantly contribute to achieving the goals of the Research and Development Office, in alignment with the Strategic Plan of BSU. Thus, this study primary aims to elevate the quality of graduate theses and

dissertations while refining research processes and procedures within the university.

Given the growing emphasis on effective writing assessment at various levels of education, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on writing evaluation by examining how graduate students perceive and respond to assessment frameworks in academic writing. Aligned with the scope of Assessing Writing, the study considers key aspects of writing assessment, including the evaluation of research writing needs, the effectiveness of existing assessment mechanisms, and the role of feedback in improving writing outcomes. The study further examines how institutional assessment practices influence graduate students' development of scholarly writing skills and how these assessments align with international standards in academic writing evaluation. Additionally, the research situates itself within the broader context of writing assessment by considering factors such as faculty expectations, test development, and the integration of assessment-driven learning strategies.

Research Objectives

This paper attempted to describe and explain the thesis and dissertation writing, as well as the advising and critiquing processed in the University. Specifically, this research paper aimed to:

1. Review the existing research writing manual for graduate students of Batangas State University and other universities and colleges in the Philippines;
2. Describe the respondents' demographics and their research writing experiences and problems encountered in thesis/dissertation writing;
3. Test the significant relationship between respondents' profiles and their writing experiences and problems encountered; and
4. Provide inputs for developing an Academic-Research Manual to help enhance the thesis and dissertation writing, guiding/advising, and critiquing in the university.

Hypothesis Statements

Based on the specific objectives outlined in the study, here are the hypothesis statements for each

objective to be tested using the Structural Equation Model (SEM):

1. Respondents' Demographics (RD)

Hypothesis 2a (H2a): There is a significant relationship between respondents' demographics (RD) and their research writing experiences (RWE). This establishes a concrete link between individual characteristics and the nature of experiences encountered during the thesis/dissertation writing process.

Hypothesis 2b (H2b): There is a significant relationship between respondents' demographics (RD) and the problems encountered in thesis/dissertation writing (PE). This sheds light on the influence of demographic factors in shaping the challenges faced by students during their academic writing endeavors.

2. Research Writing Experiences (RWE)

Hypothesis 3a (H3a): Positive research writing experiences (RWE) are positively related to the proposed inputs for the Academic-Research Manual (ARM). This emphasizes the constructive impact of positive experiences on the development of guidelines for academic research writing.

Hypothesis 3b (H3b): Positive research writing experiences (RWE) are negatively related to problems encountered in thesis/dissertation writing (PE). This looks into favorable experiences which may correlate to reduced likelihood of encountering challenges during the writing process.

3. Problems Encountered (PE)

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Problems encountered in thesis/dissertation writing (PE) are negatively related to the proposed inputs for the Academic-Research Manual (ARM). This hypothesis espouses the need to address challenges as these are integral to the development of effective guidelines for academic research writing.

These hypotheses are framed based on the expected relationships between the latent constructs in the SEM. Through statistical testing, the results provide insights into the significance and strength of these relationships, contributing to a better understanding of the factors influencing the thesis and dissertation writing process in the university.

Conceptual Framework

The process through which the researcher gathered the necessary data to support data analysis is shown in Figure 2. In the input stage, researcher collected existing research manuals and research papers and reviewed the literature relevant to the study. Next is the analysis of the respondents' responses and

statistical analysis of the significance of the variables. Once this initial step had been completed, the researcher proposed inputs for inclusion in the Academic-Research Writing Manual, with the recommendation and approval of the office of the vice president for academic affairs for university-wide purposes.

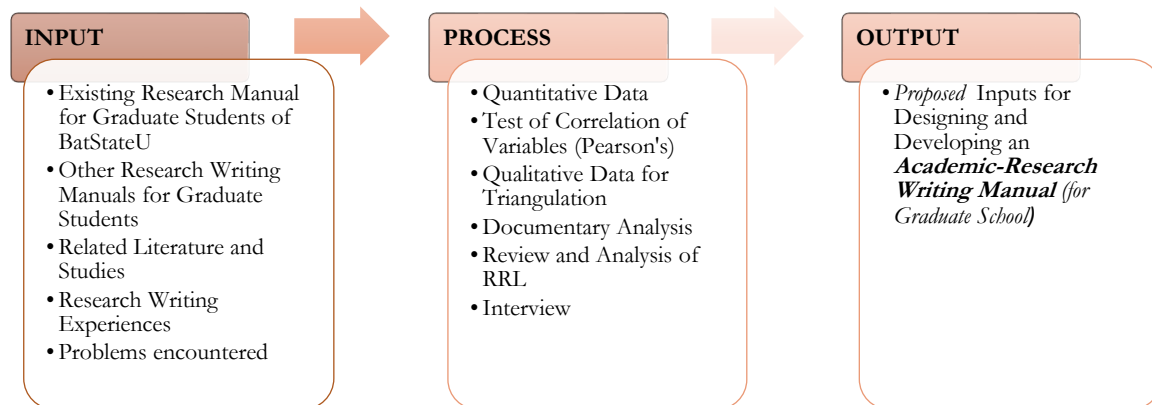


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Literature Review

One of the challenges graduate schools in the Philippines have faced is the fact that a high percentage of the enrolled students do not graduate on time. In addition, many graduate students are not able to finish their thesis or dissertation. Reasons cited vary such as the students' knowledge (Bitchener, Basturkman, & East, 2010; Wang & Yang 2012; Ekpoh, 2016; Manchishi, Ndhlovu, & Mwanza, 2015; Rodriguez, Griffith, & Juarez, 2017); institutional-related factors (Golde & Dore, 2001; Noonan, Ballinger, & Black, 2007; Ismail & Hassan, 2011; Ekpoh, 2016); and students' relationship with their professors or fellow classmates (Ismail & Hassan, 2011; Schramm-Possinger, 2015; Blair, 2016) and their own attitudes to research writing.

Some impacts to students not finishing their theses and dissertations on time are reported in various studies. Preisman (2019) and McGill (2019) delve into national attrition issues in doctoral programs and the professionalization challenges in academic advising. Rauf (2016) stressed that non-completion of thesis becomes as a waste of student energy, hope, and financial resources and the unproductive usage of faculty time and effort and it is viewed as a sign of waste and inefficiency and

therefore, poses negative outcome for both the faculty and the institution.

Institutional and Mentorship Support to Students

In the study of Agatep and Villabos (2020) on graduate school students of one state university in the Philippines, the study found that respondents perceived their capabilities in writing research proposal and publishable research paper both as "Moderately Capable". The respondents perceived the availability of facilities, time, training, funding, other resources and support from agency in doing research as "Moderately Available". In another study, support from the institution became a challenge to graduate students.

Support to students undergoing theses and dissertations can come in my forms. One of these is the support from the mentors from the academic programs. Wallin (2007) argued that mentors play a crucial role in helping students overcome these hurdles and embrace the transformative potential of research. With the many challenges university students faced, Lu (2001) underscores the importance of collaboration among experts in supporting students through the research process. Lategan (2009) stated that postgraduate supervision is the active engagement by the supervisor through the research process to guide the student to solve a

research problem. Identifying a suitable supervisor who can assist the student to identify the research problem, apply correct methodologies to address the research problem and find appropriate solutions to the stated problem is highly emphasized. Supervisor-supervisee working relationship could result in delay in thesis completion. Unclear motives and purposes of supervision (Wallace, 2003), supervisors' preference of some supervisory roles over other roles (Vilkinas, 2002), and lack of research training among supervisors were also identified as major hindrances to thesis completion. Odena and Burgess (2017) espoused that respondents in the study who were graduate students reported the perceived benefits of individually tailored supportive feedback from supervisors of their theses.

In the study of Quinto (2022) on thesis writing among undergraduate students, study identified advisor unavailability, unclear feedback, and lack of coordination among supervisors as reported obstacles. Although this study is at the undergraduate level, many of these dynamics mirror graduate supervisory challenges, especially when time constraints or remote instruction amplify communication difficulties. Casanova et al. (2021) in Occidental Mindoro documented that graduate students employ coping mechanisms—frequent consultations, seeking help from other faculty, or using technology—to offset supervision gaps. Their findings imply that instruction and supervision remain core influences over students' ability to translate research ideas into sound methodology and writing.

Challenges in Academic Research Writing

Institutional related factors in the challenges experienced by graduate students were also examined in various literatures. These include school or university's infrastructures which challenges institutions to involve students in hands-on research experiences to enhance their learning (Marke, 2003 in Tan 2007). In foreign contexts, students often report that inadequate institutional support—poor library collections, limited access to databases, weak technological infrastructure—hamper their access to up-to-date journal articles, data sources, or analytical tools (Singh, 2015). In the

Philippines, Agatep's 2020 study shows that while resources were rated as "moderately available," respondents noted constraints in funding, training, equipment, and support from agencies. Grana (2021) (Caraga region) also documented writing issues including limited access to reference works, software, or research aids that constrain students' capacity to engage with contemporary literature or empirical data.

Financial support is likewise seen as a challenge especially in the Philippines. Hommadia (1990, In Rauf 2016) highlighted that inadequate allocation of funds for research work in the third world countries has become an obstacle. In a sampled 129 graduate candidates from different careers at a private university in Peru in the study Bayona-Oré, S., & Bazan, C. (2020), it stressed that money is one of the resources needed for students to finish their theses, aside from supervisor performance. In the Philippine setting, Casanova et al. (2021) found insufficient funds to be among the key challenges encountered by graduate students. Students described difficulty in paying for data collection, printing, binding, or accessing paid journals. Agatep (2020) likewise reported that funding limitations were cited among the constraints perceived by respondents.

Students' Attitudes toward Academic Preparation for Thesis or Dissertation Writing

Students' ability to complete their theses can be influenced by their attitude toward the research process. Ekpoh (2016, in Ballena 2019)) argued that success in thesis writing entailed students' preparation for the program or their ability to write. This is further highlighted with the extent of knowledge or training acquired by the students themselves in the graduate program and their motivation to finish or complete the program. Ballena and Liwag (2019) pointed out that students found writing skills being the most important skills that form part of their academic preparation. They identified paraphrasing, summarizing, organizing details, and citing materials as among the skills they need to have in dealing with their theses. Extensive preparation in terms of students' knowledge on research writing is cited in various literature. Bitchener, Basturkman, and East (2010), explaining

on the student-related factor, contended that unlike in the undergraduate level where explicit instructions are given to learn new knowledge, this is not always the case in the graduate level especially when writing a thesis since the instruction usually comes in the form of written or oral feedback. Graff (2015 in Rodriguez, Griffith, & Juarez, 2017) also noted this similarity when they contended that writing a thesis or dissertation would necessitate—extensive knowledge of one's area, interdisciplinary problem solving, critical thinking, and a great deal of knowledge of—research procedures, which could have helped the students had they been prepared for it when they had their course works (p. 55).

Castulo's (2025) recent Philippines study also reflects similar constraints: graduate students noted difficulty selecting researchable problems, limited access to the latest published articles, and insufficient motivation—all of which impede the information/knowledge dimension of writing. Lacaba's (2019) qualitative work likewise reports that some students avoid or is reluctant to re-enroll in thesis writing course due to the burden and anxiety associated with the process; pursuing academic requirements merely for salary adjustment without completing the program; focusing more on reviewing English grammar than on the substance and content of their research; and experiencing financial difficulties that hinder progress in their studies.

In terms of writing literature review sections specifically, Shahsavar and Kourepaz (2020) in a mixed-methods study found many postgraduates struggle to move beyond summarizing prior studies to synthesizing, critiquing, and building their own academic voice. Other challenges include insufficient subject knowledge, time constraints, and supervisor neglect in guiding structure and expectations. In terms of classroom instruction, Gupta (2022) reported less often singled out in dissertation literature, the instructional environment and supervision significantly influence student progression. In studies of international graduate writing, instructors and supervisors acknowledge that students frequently lack orientation on writing norms, expectations, and discourse styles—

particularly in interdisciplinary or second-language contexts

Moreover, in some foreign studies of doctoral writing, mismatches between faculty expectations and student perceptions of feedback quality or structure often led to frustration or extended revision cycles (Gao, 2021). When supervision is inconsistent, the “classroom” for graduate writing becomes fragmented and students suffer from ambiguity over acceptable quality levels. Thus, the design of classroom support—writing seminars, structured proposal defense, staged drafts, writing workshops—alongside formal supervision protocols is widely recommended in the literature as a buffer against attrition and delay.

In summary, the reviewed literature underscores that graduate students' challenges and perspectives in research writing are shaped by multiple interrelated factors—ranging from limited research-related knowledge, insufficient instructional and advisory support, inadequate facilities and resources to financial constraints. While most students demonstrate motivation and positive attitudes toward scholarly inquiry, these systemic and contextual barriers often hinder timely completion and affect research quality. Both foreign and Philippine studies highlight the importance of sustained mentorship, structured academic writing support, access to research materials, and institutional investment in facilities and funding. Addressing these concerns through comprehensive academic writing programs, faculty development, and equitable resource allocation can enhance students' research competence, foster a culture of scholarly productivity, and ultimately improve graduate completion rates.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were generated in 2023 from two primary sources: survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The respondents (n=17) included students currently enrolled in thesis or dissertation writing courses, as well as graduates from the various Graduate Programs of Batangas State University. Since the number of students

enrolled in thesis/dissertation writing was relatively small, the entire accessible population was considered based on records from the University Registrar's Office. To enrich the findings and ensure reliability, graduates who had previously completed thesis and dissertation requirements were also included as participants. Prior to data collection, formal communication was sent to inform potential participants of the purpose of the study and to assure the respondents of the confidentiality of their responses.

The quantitative data were collected using a survey questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was subjected to content validation by research experts and language specialists before distribution. Surveys were administered online via Google Forms and disseminated through email and social media platforms. Respondents who consented to participate answered structured questions using appropriate scales. To interpret the perceptions of the respondents towards research, the mean ranges and their verbal descriptions are used as: 1.00-1.49 (Never); 1.50-2.49 (Rarely); 2.50-3.49 (Sometimes); 3.50-4.49 (Often); 4.50-5.00 (Always). In the same manner, the mean ranges and their verbal descriptions were used for the interpretation of the assessment on respondents' problems encountered towards research as: 1.00-1.49 (Not True); 1.50-2.49 (Seldom True); 2.50-3.49 (Sometimes True); 3.50-4.00 (Always True).

For qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with both current students and graduates. These sessions explored participants' experiences, challenges, and difficulties related to thesis and dissertation writing, advising, and critiquing. A set of guide questions was prepared, with follow-up questions that the researcher asked to clarify or deepen responses.

To analyze the data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize participant responses, while means were computed to describe perceptions regarding thesis and dissertation writing. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients was employed to examine relationships among the selected variables. Complementing this, qualitative data from interviews were coded and

thematically analyzed to capture recurring patterns. The study was limited to graduate students and graduates of BSU and focused specifically on the processes of thesis/dissertation writing, advising, and critiquing. The final output of the research—a proposed Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM) for the Graduate School—underwent multiple stages of editing, proofreading, and similarity checking through Turnitin. An in-house review by the University's Research Management Office ensured alignment with institutional standards, after which revisions were incorporated based on expert feedback.

3. Results and Discussion

Review of Existing Research Writing Manuals for Graduate Students at Batangas State University and other Universities and Colleges in the Philippines

A review of institutional documents revealed that Batangas State University has a Research Manual providing general guidelines, but no academic research writing manual has been formally adopted by its graduate schools. Draft departmental policies were identified, yet these did not address the specific needs of academic writing. Discussions in research colloquiums and councils further underscored this gap, which inspired the present study to develop a much-needed resource for graduate students.

The University's Research and Development Manual, last revised in 2008 under Resolution No. 12, S2008 and updated in 2012, serves as the primary guide for research planning, implementation, and dissemination. The revisions included adjustments to organizational structures, team qualifications, incentives for paper presentation and publication, and recognition for outstanding research. These efforts aimed to strengthen the University's research culture and align with institutional mandates.

Although the Research and Development Manual of BSU outlines the organizational structure, team qualifications, incentives, and awards for research, however, it still lacks practical presentations and examples to guide student writers. Its focus remains broad, addressing university-wide research rather than specific graduate programs. The 2017 revision, though expanded, still omitted

objectives relevant to academic writing support. Research colloquiums and council sessions further confirmed that no Academic Research Writing Manual exists for graduate students. Reviews of other manuals likewise revealed a deficiency in structured presentations and examples—resources crucial for enhancing students' research and writing skills.

In terms of graduation status, 35.3% of respondents have not yet graduated since their initial enrollment, primarily due to challenges such as work commitments and unfinished manuscripts. Among those who completed their studies, 29.4% graduated in 2018–2019, 17.6% in 2020–2021, while the remainder graduated in the previous years. The findings reveal inconsistencies between enrollment and graduation timelines, highlighting delays often caused by prolonged feedback and processing from professors, advisers, and panel members. Several respondents even reported the need to re-enroll due to these extended waiting periods, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Demographic Profile of Graduate Students

The demographic profile of graduate students, including factors such as gender, age, degree program, specialization, status, year started, and year graduated, plays a pivotal role in academic research

writing. According to the survey, the majority of respondents (65%) identify as female, while 35% are male, indicating a notable gender distribution among graduate school enrollees. Nearly half (47%) are within the 26–35 age group, followed by 24% in the 36–45 range. Seventeen percent are 25 years old and below, while the remaining 12% are 56 years old and above.

The profile data on degree programs shows that the largest group of respondents (34%) are pursuing a Master of Arts in Education (MAED). Other programs represented include Doctor of Public Administration/Doctor of Business Administration (DPA/DBA), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Science (MS), Doctor of Education (EdD), Doctor of Technology (DT), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Master of Engineering (ME), and Master of Technology (MT), each accounting for 6% of the respondents. In terms of specialization, English and Computer Science and Technology are the most common at 17%, followed by Technology, Business Administration, Electrical, Public Administration, and Educational Management, each at 12%. Social Science Teaching and Financial Management comprise the remaining 6% each.

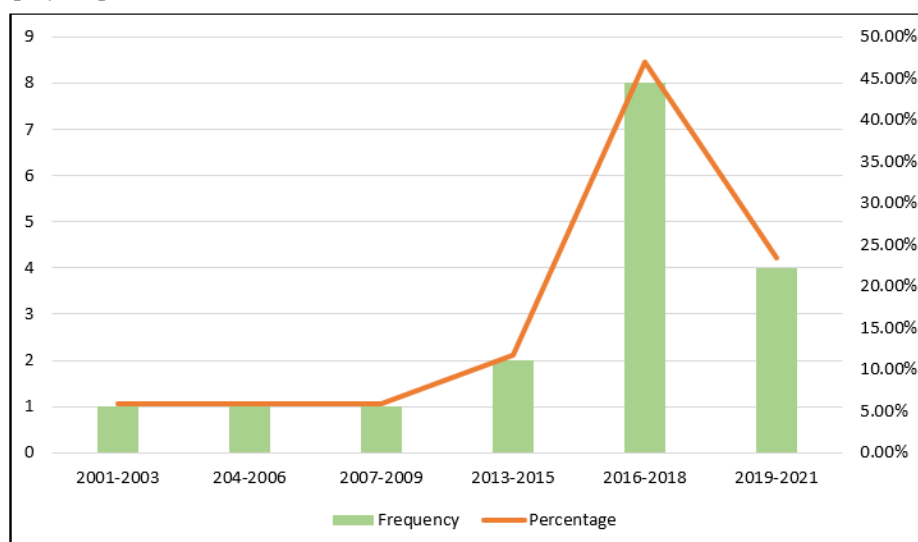


Figure 1. Profile of the Respondents by Year of Enrollment

With regard to academic status, 65% of respondents have already graduated, while 35% remain enrolled or in progress. Many graduates exceeded the expected timeframe for completion,

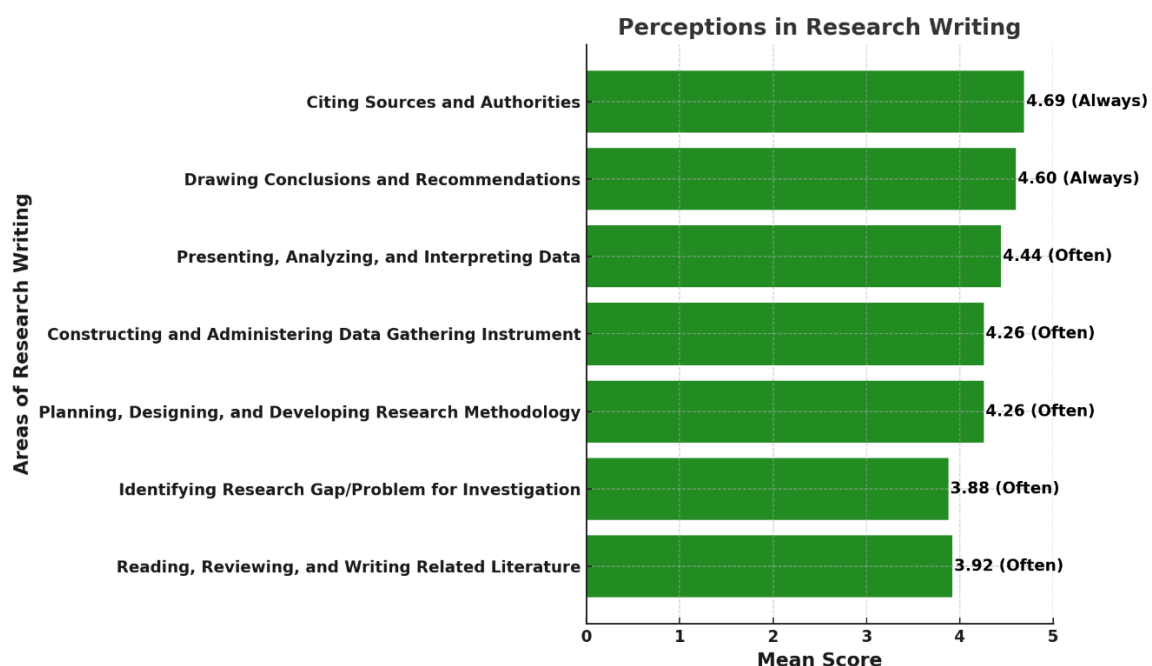
often due to challenges or prolonged revisions of their research papers. Those still enrolled continue to maintain active communication with their advisers for consultations (Figure 8). Examining

year of program commencement, the majority (47%) began between 2016 and 2018, followed by 23.5% in 2019–2021, 11.8% in 2013–2015, and 5.9% each during 2001–2003, 2004–2006, and 2007–2009 (Figure 9). Finally, in terms of graduation, 35.3% have not graduated since enrollment, facing challenges such as work commitments or uncompleted papers. Of those who graduated, 29.4% completed their studies in 2018–2019, 17.6% in 2020–2021, and the rest in various years. The study exposes discrepancies in enrollment and graduation duration, indicating delays attributed to prolonged waiting periods for

responses from professors, advisors, and panels. Some respondents disclosed re-enrolment due to extended processing times as shown in Figure 1.

Respondents' Perceptions toward Research

In thesis and dissertation writing, researchers are expected to meet the standards of academic research, addressing each section from the introduction to the list of references. This section focuses on assessing how respondents perceive and experience research throughout the process of completing their thesis or dissertation. Table 2 below presents the composite mean results.



(Legend: 4.50-5.00- Always; 3.50-4.49- Often; 2.50-3.49- Sometimes; 1.50-2.49- Rarely; 0.00-1.49- Never)

Figure 2. Mean Results on Respondent's Perceptions Toward Research

The study assessed respondents' research writing experiences in reading, reviewing, and writing related literature. They consistently recorded bibliographic details and key concepts ($M = 4.41$) and frequently applied techniques such as paraphrasing, quoting, and evaluating studies aligned with their objectives ($M = 4.24$). Respondents often wrote relevant concepts, findings, implications, and considered recommendations for future research ($M = 3.94$), but only sometimes consulted library resources such as books, journals, and theses ($M = 3.06$). As shown in Figure 2, the composite means of 3.92 indicates

that respondents often engaged in reviewing and writing related literature, a practice that enriches their work through synthesis and identification of similarities, differences, and research gaps from existing studies. The findings corroborated the study of Ballena and Liwag (2019) in which they found that students identified paraphrasing, summarizing, organizing details, and citing materials as among the skills they need to have when writing their theses.

In terms of assessment of research writing experiences related to identifying research gaps or problems, respondents reported that they always

analyze phenomena or existing issues relevant to their context—such as schools, communities, or broader national and international challenges ($M = 4.24$). They often consider workplace issues affecting job performance and self-efficacy ($M = 4.12$), as well as needs for growth and development in fields like education, agriculture, industry, and technology ($M = 3.94$). However, mapping and addressing the needs of underprivileged groups was only sometimes practiced ($M = 3.29$). The composite means of 3.88 indicates that respondents often identify research gaps or problems for investigation. This suggests an awareness that a research problem must be novel, addressable, and significant, serving as the basis for theses or dissertations. Such identification not only contributes solutions to existing issues but also adds to the body of knowledge and generates study's meaningful impact, particularly for communities and direct beneficiaries of the study.

In assessing research writing experiences on planning, designing, and developing research methodology, respondents reported that they always follow institutional formats and detail procedures related to design, respondents, setting, sampling, instruments, data analysis, and statistical formulas ($M = 4.41$). They also compare prescribed formats with other models ($M = 4.24$) and consult published research for accuracy in methods, design selection, and statistical tools ($M = 4.24$). Clarifying appropriate statistical treatments for hypotheses was rated slightly lower ($M = 4.00$). The composite means of 4.26 indicates that respondents often plan, design, and develop research methodology, demonstrating awareness of its essential components and effort to meet both major and minor requirements.

On respondents' writing experiences regarding constructing and administering data gathering instrument, the study revealed that respondents consistently demonstrated a high level of awareness and responsibility. They reported that they always analyze and focus on their set of objectives or research questions to be investigated, ensuring that these are addressed within the scope and target of the study. Likewise, they concentrate on the contributing factors that may influence the

performance of respondents, both explicitly and implicitly, which together obtained the highest mean of 4.59. These practices show that respondents carefully align their data-gathering tools with the goals of their research.

Following this, the results indicated that respondents often prepare a clear plan, including a review of relevant literature and studies, to guide them in developing a self-made questionnaire as their primary instrument ($M = 4.12$). They also reported that they often select statement items for each factor or variable to be investigated in a way that ensures fairness and equal opportunity among respondents ($M = 4.06$). Additionally, they often make sure that the items are specific, measurable, attainable, reliable, and time bounded. To further ensure quality, these items are validated by experts, pilot-tested, and checked for reliability prior to administering them to participants, with proper consent ($M = 3.94$). Overall, the composite means of 4.26 suggests that respondents generally had positive experiences in constructing and administering research instruments. Their responses highlight not only a sense of responsibility in carrying out these activities but also a commitment to ensuring that the tools they use are valid, reliable, and appropriate for their intended research purposes.

In assessing research writing experiences on presenting data, respondents indicated that they always performed their tasks in research courses, with items 3 and 4 obtaining a mean of 4.47 and items 1, 2, and 5 a mean of 4.41. The composite means of 4.44 shows that graduate students consistently exerted effort in presenting, analyzing, and interpreting data from surveys or constructed instruments, reflecting responsibility and commitment in carrying out their research work.

In assessing research writing experiences related to drawing conclusions and recommendations, respondents reported consistently high ratings, with all items obtaining mean scores in the "always" range. The composite means of 4.60 indicates that graduate students strongly believe they consistently perform research tasks involving the formulation of conclusions and recommendations. Lastly, the study assessed

research writing experiences in terms of citing sources and authorities. Results show that respondents consistently rated this area with perfect mean scores across all items. The mean of 4.69 indicates that graduate students strongly believe they always perform research tasks related to proper citation of sources and authorities. The overall mean results of 4.29 shows that the respondents often had positive experiences across seven areas of the research writing processes.

Assessment on Problems Encountered towards Research

This section presents the problems encountered by the respondents across key areas affecting their research journey. Specifically, it examines challenges related to research scheduling and duration, knowledge and skills, financial constraints, classroom instruction, availability of facilities and resources, and issues with.

Legend 3.50-4.00 Always true ; 2.50-3.49 Sometimes true; 1.50-2.49 Seldom true; 1.00-1.49 Not true

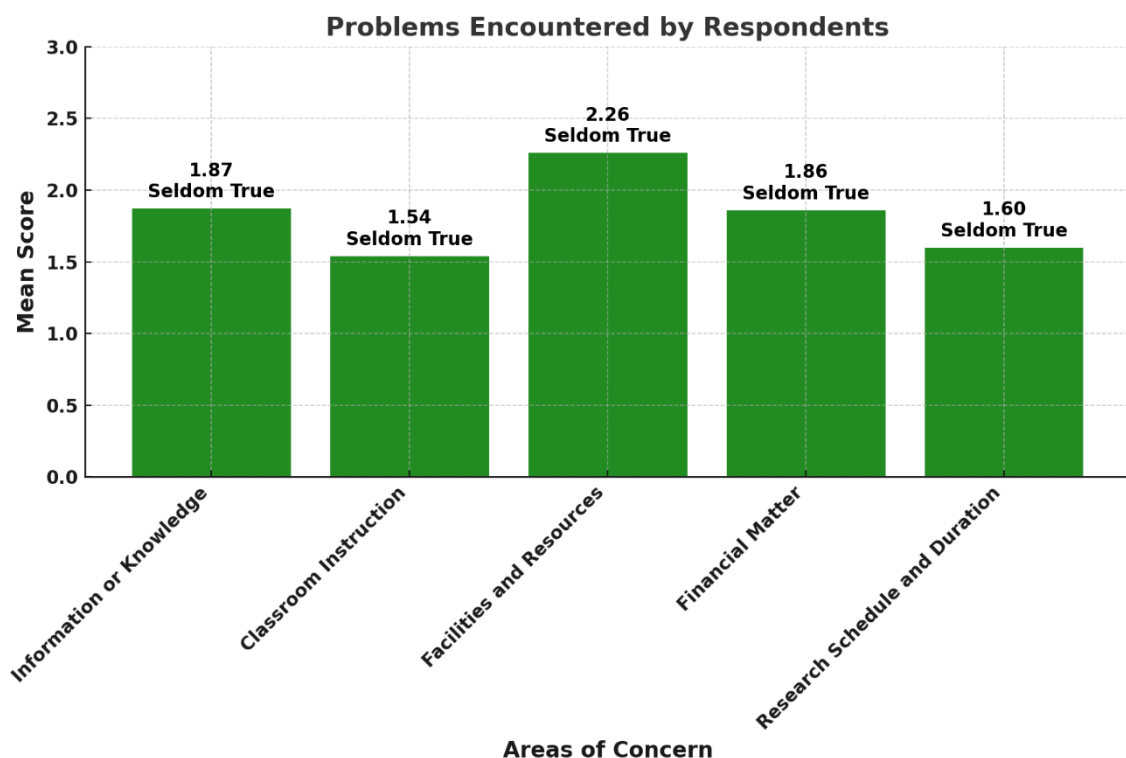


Figure 3. Mean Results on Problems Encountered Towards Research

The study assessed the problems encountered by students in terms of. Results show in Figure 3 indicates that students seldom failed to take down notes during discussions ($M = 2.47$), rarely struggled to provide additional information when topics were unclear ($M = 2.29$), and seldom withheld sharing knowledge due to uncertainty or fear of disapproval ($M = 1.88$). Conversely, they disagreed that they ignored their instructors during discussions ($M = 1.29$) or failed to understand research tasks and objectives ($M = 1.41$). The composite mean of 1.87 indicates that respondents seldom encountered problems related to research information and knowledge.

In assessing problems encountered in research related to classroom instruction, the respondents generally indicated that they did not experience significant issues. The composite means of 1.54 suggests that classroom instruction did not pose difficulties for them. This finding implies that graduate students exerted effort and performed their research tasks effectively, demonstrating competence that contrasts with some of the shared accounts of instructional challenges.

With regard to facilities and resources, respondents reported occasional limitations. They sometimes experienced a lack of books and other

reading materials in the library ($M = 2.65$) and seldom reported limited internet access within classrooms or on campus ($M = 2.41$). Similarly, they seldom encountered a shortage of theses, dissertations, or research journals ($M = 2.29$) and seldom lacked access to adequate facilities or equipment while conducting research ($M = 2.18$). However, they disagreed that they had difficulty encoding, printing, or uploading research files ($M = 1.76$). The composite means indicates that, overall, facilities and resources in the university were adequate to support research activities.

In assessing the problems encountered in research related to financial matters, respondents indicated that they seldom experienced financial difficulties. They reported that expenses for books, internet access, downloading materials, and photocopying or compiling instructional resources occasionally posed minor challenges. However, they disagreed that they lacked sufficient budget or were unable to pay for research-related expenses. The composite means of 1.86 suggests that financial concerns were seldom a major obstacle in conducting research. It should be noted that

although the respondents in this study experienced minor challenges in terms of financial aspects, however, in some schools, especially in the Department of Education and private schools, graduate students still face financial constraints. This is consistent with Hommadai (1990, In Rauf 2016) who had highlighted that inadequate allocation of funds for research work in the third world countries has become an obstacle.

Regarding research schedule and duration, respondents generally agreed that they did not experience significant problems in managing their time for research activities. All indicators under this category were rated as "Not True," resulting in a composite mean of 1.60. This implies that most respondents were able to maintain their research schedules and complete their tasks within the expected timeframe.

Relationship Between the Respondents' Demographic Profile and Writing Experiences

This study presents the summary computations on tests of the relationships between the respondents' demographic profile and writing experiences.

Table 1. Summary of Computations on Tests of the Relationships Between the Respondents' Demographic Profile and Writing Experiences.

Profile Variable	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Gender	0.506	0.038	Reject H_0	Significant
Age	0.166	0.524	Accept H_0	Not Significant
Degree Program	-0.166	0.523	Accept H_0	Not Significant
Specialization	-0.314	0.220	Accept H_0	Not Significant
Status	0.240	0.335	Accept H_0	Not Significant
Year Started	-0.448	0.072	Accept H_0	Not Significant
Year Graduated	0.019	0.942	Accept H_0	Not Significant

Legend: *Significant at $p < 0.05$*

The table presents test results of the relationship between respondents' profile and their research writing experiences using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r). The study utilized this statistical treatment to determine the relationship between respondents' demographic profiles and their research writing experiences. The findings revealed that **only gender** had a significant relationship ($p = 0.038 < 0.05$) with writing experiences, indicating

that male and female respondents differ in certain aspects of their research writing experiences, while other variables showed no significant correlation. This suggests that gender may influence approaches or engagement levels in research-related tasks. It must be noted that as reported in Figure 2, respondents consistently demonstrated strong research skills in drawing conclusions, making recommendations, and citing sources. With high composite means of 4.60 and 4.69, they strongly

believed they always performed these tasks effectively, reflecting their competence, critical thinking, and adherence to proper academic standards in research writing.

Meanwhile, age, degree program, specialization, status, year started, and year graduated all obtained p -values greater than 0.05, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This implies that these variables do not significantly affect respondents' research writing experiences. Overall, the findings suggest that research competencies and experiences are generally

consistent across different demographic and academic profiles, with gender as the only distinguishing factor. This reflects the respondents' competence, critical thinking, and adherence to academic writing standards.

Relationship Between Respondents' Demographic Profile and Problems Encountered

This study also presented the summary of computations on tests of the relationships between respondents' demographic profile and problems encountered.

Table 2. Summary of Computations on Tests of the Relationships Between Respondents' Demographic Profile and Problems Encountered

Profile Variable	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Gender	-0.217	0.403	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Age	0.190	0.465	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Degree Program	-0.405	0.107	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Specialization	-0.228	0.380	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Status	-0.379	0.134	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Year Started	0.422	0.092	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Year Graduated	-0.303	0.236	Accept Ho	Not Significant

Legend: *Significant at $p < 0.05$*

The results of the correlation analysis revealed that none of the respondents' profile variables—gender, age, degree program, specialization, status, year started, or year graduated—showed a significant relationship with the problems they encountered in research, as all p -values were greater than 0.05. This indicates that the null hypothesis was accepted across all variables. The findings suggest that the challenges students faced in conducting research were not dependent on their demographic or academic backgrounds. Regardless of age, academic status (from enrolment to graduation), or program affiliation, respondents experienced similar levels of difficulty in the research process. The lack of significant correlation implies that research problems are more systemic in nature, arising from common academic and institutional factors rather than individual differences. This supports the notion that research-related challenges are collective experiences among graduate students, shaped by shared learning environments, academic structures, and available institutional support.

Specifically, the study revealed that the most common problems encountered by respondents were related to information and knowledge, facilities and resources, and financial constraints. Students seldom failed to take down notes or share insights during research discussions due to uncertainty, yet they admitted to occasional difficulties accessing adequate reading materials, research journals, or updated references in the library. Limited internet connectivity in classrooms and on campus, as well as occasional lack of research facilities or equipment, were also reported. Some respondents mentioned minimal but notable financial concerns involving expenses for books, photocopying, or online resource access. Despite these challenges, students generally disagreed that classroom instruction or scheduling issues hindered their progress. The results imply that while logistical and material constraints occasionally disrupted research activities, graduate students remained resilient, resourceful, and capable of managing such issues effectively, thereby maintaining satisfactory research performance across demographic groups.

Proposed Inputs for Designing and Developing an Academic-Research Writing Manual for Graduate Students

The development of an **Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM)** aims to establish a unified, standardized, and comprehensive guide for graduate students of Batangas State University – The National Engineering University, Philippines. This initiative seeks to enhance research quality, ensure consistency in academic writing, and align institutional practices with national and international standards. Below are the inputs for recommended steps in crafting the ARWM.

1. Consultation and Policy Alignment.

Conduct meetings with the Academic Research Council to discuss the inclusion of the design and development of the Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM) for utilization across all graduate schools. The meeting will establish the content structure, policies, guidelines, procedures, strategies, and implementation activities to ensure institutional alignment and academic coherence.

2. Formation of the Instructional Manual Committee.

Create an Instructional Manual Committee composed of experts in various academic disciplines with recognized publications and research experience. Preference will be given to authors accredited by the National Book Development Board (NBDB) of the Republic of

the Philippines and faculty researchers acknowledged for their expertise in academic writing and publication.

3. Review of Existing Graduate Research Frameworks.

Conduct a comprehensive review of the existing thesis and dissertation formats, policies, and components used in the graduate programs to ensure that they are updated, integrated, and aligned with international academic standards.

4. Revision and Standardization of Format and Style.

Modify and enhance the current thesis and dissertation formats to make them more comprehensive, research-oriented, and suitable for publication, patenting, and utility model application. The proposed format may adopt the IMRaD (Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion) structure as recommended by Feak and Swales (2004, 2008).

5. Institutional Acceptance and Endorsement.

Seek formal acceptance and recognition of the ARWM by Batangas State University – The National Engineering University as an institutional resource that supports the academic and research community. This initiative aims to encourage faculty and students to contribute to the advancement of knowledge through high-quality research writing and publication.

Table 3. Academic-Research Writing Process Flow

Phases/Stages	Process / Flow	Task	Description
Planning	Understanding Research Objective	Define the research topic and objectives	Clearly identify the research focus and goals; review university or publication guidelines.
	Literature Review	Conduct a comprehensive review	Examine existing literature to identify knowledge gaps and relevant scholarly sources.
	Formulation of Research Questions / Hypotheses	Develop research questions or hypotheses	Construct clear, focused questions or hypotheses aligned with research objectives.
	Description of Methodology	Explain methodology in detail	Present the research design, data collection, and analytical methods used.

	Research Design	Choose an appropriate design	Select a research design and methodology consistent with the research questions.
	Data Collection	Gather relevant data	Collect accurate and ethical data using selected instruments and validated procedures.
Writing	Creating Outline	Organize structure	Plan the thesis or paper structure with logical headings and subheadings.
	Writing Introduction	Draft the introduction	Contextualize the research problem, outline objectives, and state significance.
	Integrating Literature	Synthesize related studies	Incorporate relevant literature to strengthen arguments and show theoretical grounding.
	Presenting Results	Display findings	Present results using tables, charts, or narrative text appropriate to the data type.
	Data Analysis	Analyze data	Apply suitable statistical or qualitative techniques; interpret patterns and trends.
	Discussion and Interpretation of Results	Discuss findings	Explain results in relation to research objectives; highlight implications and limitations.
	Drawing Conclusion	Summarize findings	Restate objectives, highlight major insights, and propose recommendations or future directions.
Evaluating	Proofreading and Editing	Review the manuscript	Correct grammar, spelling, and formatting errors; ensure clarity and consistency.
	Peer Review	Obtain feedback	Seek comments from peers or mentors to improve content and structure.
	Final Revisions	Implement suggested changes	Revise the paper based on feedback to enhance clarity and coherence.
Submission	Formatting Manuscript	Apply style guidelines	Format according to university or journal requirements (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).
	Submission of Manuscript	Submit final work	Follow institutional procedures and deadlines for submission.
Sources and Cited Works	Listing of References	Compile references	Create a comprehensive reference list following the prescribed citation style.
Outcomes and Impact	Reflection	Reflect on process	Evaluate lessons learned, personal growth, and research experience outcomes.

Table 3 presents the Academic Research Writing Flow, which outlines the stages, tasks, and corresponding descriptions involved in producing quality research output. The process begins with the (1) planning stage, encompassing key tasks such as understanding research objectives, conducting a literature review, formulating research questions or hypotheses, describing the methodology, designing the research, and collecting data. At this stage, graduate students are expected to define their research focus clearly, review existing guidelines, identify relevant literature and research gaps, develop clear and measurable research questions, and design appropriate methods for data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations and data accuracy are also emphasized as essential components of sound research planning.

The second stage involves (2) writing and (3) evaluation, which includes creating an outline, drafting the introduction, integrating literature, presenting and analyzing data, interpreting results, and drawing conclusions. Graduate students are expected to organize findings logically, contextualize their research problem, and synthesize relevant literature to support their arguments. They must also present results clearly through tables, graphs, or text, interpret findings in relation to objectives, and formulate meaningful conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation stage follows, focusing on proofreading, peer review, and final revisions. Students are encouraged to refine their manuscripts by checking grammar and formatting, seeking constructive feedback, and revising based on mentor and peer suggestions to ensure clarity, coherence, and overall research quality.

Moreover, the (4) submission stage includes formatting and submitting the manuscript, where students are expected to follow university guidelines and adhere to prescribed submission procedures and deadlines. The (5) sources and cited works stage involves preparing a comprehensive reference list consistent with the required citation style. Finally, under (6) outcomes and impact, students are encouraged to reflect on the entire research process—acknowledging lessons learned, challenges encountered, and personal or

professional growth gained through the research writing experience.

4. Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This section presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. The majority of respondents (34%) are enrolled in the MAED programs, with others in doctoral and master's programs across various disciplines. Most specialize in English or Computer Science (17%). About 65% have graduated, while 35% remain enrolled. Many began between 2016–2018, with delays mainly due to advisement and revision processes.

On respondents' perspectives on the research writing activities, the study revealed that graduate students demonstrated strong research skills across all stages of the research process. They often engaged in reading, reviewing, and synthesizing related literature, and effectively identified research gaps relevant to their context. Respondents consistently adhered to institutional formats in planning and developing methodologies and showed responsibility in constructing and validating data-gathering instruments. They exhibited high competence in presenting, analyzing, and interpreting data, as well as in formulating sound conclusions and recommendations. Moreover, they consistently practiced proper citation, reflecting academic integrity. Overall, their responses indicate proficiency, diligence, and commitment to producing quality research outputs.

On problems in Research, the study revealed that graduate students seldom experienced major problems in conducting research. Minor issues were noted in taking notes, clarifying unclear topics, and accessing certain learning materials, but students generally demonstrated attentiveness and understanding. Classroom instruction and faculty guidance were not considered problematic, and available facilities and resources were viewed as adequate despite occasional limitations. Financial constraints were minimal, and most respondents effectively managed their research schedules and timelines. Overall, the findings indicate that graduate students possess the competence, discipline, and resourcefulness necessary to

overcome minor challenges and successfully complete their research tasks.

Incorporated into the academic research writing manual (ARWM) are the stages or research flow that serves as a guide for any undergraduate or graduate student. The research flow highlighted six key stages: planning, writing, evaluation, submission, citation, and reflection. The planning stage involves defining objectives, reviewing literature, formulating questions, and designing appropriate methodologies with attention to ethics and data accuracy. The writing and evaluation stages focus on organizing ideas, integrating literature, presenting and analyzing data, and refining manuscripts through proofreading and peer review. The submission stage requires adherence to formatting and university guidelines, while citation emphasizes proper referencing. Finally, reflection encourages students to assess their research journey, lessons learned, and professional growth throughout the academic writing process.

Conclusions

The results of the study revealed that comprehensive reviews and analyses of BatStateU's existing Research Development Manuals (2008 and 2017), along with those from other universities, were conducted. Findings showed that the demographic profile of graduate students included only age, gender, degree program, specialization, status, year started, and year graduated. Respondents generally reported positive research writing experiences and encountered only minimal problems. Statistical analysis indicated a significant relationship between gender and research writing experiences, while no significant relationships were found for other demographic variables. Based on these results, the study proposed key inputs for designing and developing an Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM) for graduate students. The development of the ARWM poses significant increase in the number of students successfully completing their respective programs, attract more applicants to the graduate programs of the university, and an increase in the research productivity of the faculty members.

Recommendations

1. **Develop and Institutionalize the Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM).** The university should formally adopt and implement the Academic Research Writing Manual (ARWM) across all graduate programs. After modification or revision, the manual may serve as a standardized reference for students, advisers, and panel members, ensuring consistency in research structure, formatting, and methodology, thereby improving the overall quality and completion rate of theses and dissertations.
2. **Enhance Research Mentorship and Advising Systems.** Strengthen the capacity of research advisers and panel members through regular training, workshops, and peer review activities. This will improve the quality of feedback and reduce delays in advisement and revision processes, ensuring timely completion of research projects.
3. **Improve Access to Research Resources and Digital Libraries.** Expand access to up-to-date journals, theses, dissertations, and other research materials through enhanced digital library subscriptions and online databases. This will address the minor issues identified in information access and further support students in conducting comprehensive literature reviews and data analysis.
4. **Promote a Culture of Research Productivity and Reflection.** Encourage both students and faculty members to engage in research publication, conference presentation, and reflective research practices. Integrating reflection as a required component in the research process fosters critical thinking, lifelong learning, and continuous improvement in research performance and academic output.
5. **Consider other factors.** To replicate the study, future researchers are to consider widening the factors to be included in the respondents' demographics such as work and income, status as full time or part-time students, and the socio-economic status of the students.

Finally, the proposed inputs for designing and schools/students can be reviewed, modified, developing the ARWM for graduate approved, and implemented.

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